

Earthquake jolts Swat F.P. Report

MINGORA: An earthquake measuring 4.7 on the Richter scale jolted Swat and its surrounding areas on Saturday. According to the NSMC, reported media. The earthquake's depth was recorded at 89 kilometers, with its epicenter located in the Hindu Kush Mountain range. Tremors were felt across Swat and adjoining regions, causing brief panic among residents.



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KARACHI: PPP Chairman Bilawal Bhutto Zardari cutting cake on the occasion of his 36th birthday.

PTI's Lahore rally comes to dramatic end — city administration clampdown at dusk

F.P. Report

LAHORE: The much-anticipated power show of Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) came to a dramatic end in Lahore as the lights were switched off moments after the expiry of 6pm deadline.

The DJ sound system was also plugged off as the deadline expired. The dejected PTI workers started leaving the venue when police and district administration took control of the stage. Earlier, the caravan of PTI reached Lahore from several parts of the country.

However, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Chief Minister Ali Amin Gandapur couldn't make it to the venue as his convoy was at Kala Shah Kaku interchange when the deadline for public rally expired. Earlier, the party workers had refused to leave the venue without listening to the speeches of central leaders.

The PTI was demonstrating its public strength in Lahore's Kahna area on Saturday. The rallies from Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, led by KP Chief Minister Ali Amin Gandapur, were cruising along the M2 motorway from Islamabad towards Lahore. A number of PTI workers from all over Punjab used motorway and GT Road to reach Lahore.

Considering the pace of the movement of rallies, it could be easily anticipated that the rally would not be able to finish at the time as per the SOPs provided by the deputy commissioner in Friday night. The deputy commissioner notified that the rally must end before 6pm.

Meanwhile, preparations for the rally were completed. The stage has also been prepared and the sound system installed. Supporters, carrying party banners and posters, reached the venue. Salman Akram Raja, Mian Azhar and other local leaders reached the venue amid reports of government efforts to place containers.

The district administration granted conditional permission for a rally at Ring Road's Kahna area. The deputy commissioner has already issued the official notification. The district administration has allowed the PTI to hold the rally from 3pm to 6pm. According to the notification,

organisers will be responsible to ensure security for both men's and women's enclosures, manage crowd control, and parking through private security and volunteers. Additionally, the chief minister of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa is required to apologise for a speech he made on Sept 8 in Islamabad.

The notification stipulates that incoming groups from outside the city should not disrupt daily life. No slogans or statements against the state or institutions will be allowed during the rally according to the notification. Furthermore, no absconders will be allowed to participate or appear on stage; failure to comply will result in legal action against the organisers.

Other conditions include a ban on displaying Afghan flags, appointing focal persons to liaise with local police, and cooperation with traffic police to establish a detailed traffic plan. The organisers will also be responsible for setting up barbed wire along the Lahore Ring Road and Kahna to secure the area.

Additionally, entry with sticks or weapons is strictly prohibited. The use of fireworks and incendiary slogans is forbidden, and burning effigies or flags of any political or religious group will not be tolerated. The district administration has mentioned that security within and around the rally site is the responsibility of the organisers who will be held accountable for any unforeseen incidents.

Given the overall security situation and potential threats, organisers are reminded to take all necessary precautions to ensure the safety of participants and the public. Additionally, caravans from Peshawar, led by the KP chief minister, are also expected to make their way to Lahore to join the rally. Earlier, the Lahore High Court (LHC) directed the deputy commissioner to make a decision regarding the PTI rally by 5pm on Friday. The directive was issued during a hearing on a petition filed by PTI leaders Aliya Hamza and Sheikh Imtiaz Mehmood, seeking permission for a rally at Minar-e-Pakistan. The case was heard by Justice Muhammad Tariq Nadeem and Justice Farooq Haider.

PTI dares not to hold another Jalsa after flop show: Tarar

F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: Minister for Information, Broadcasting, National Heritage and Culture Attaullah Tarar on Saturday said the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) would not dare to hold another public gathering anywhere in the country after a flop show in Lahore which witnessed a minimal turn-out of the people.

Talking to the media, the minister said the PTI had miserably failed to galvanize the support of their workers for the public gathering in Lahore, despite the all-out facilitation by the administration which not only kept the roads completely open but also provided a fool-proof security in the designated area.

No obstacle was placed in any city, including Islamabad, Attock, and Mianwali, from where the PTI had asked their workers to participate in the public gathering, he said, adding their leadership and workers were given free access to enter Lahore from across the country. He said similarly, the PTI had failed to gather the people in their public gathering of Islamabad, which also saw the presence of a small number of the people.

The minister challenged the PTI leadership to release drone shots of their public gathering in Lahore, which exposed their support among the masses. Tarar said this showed that the people of Pakistan had rejected them

completely, showing full confidence in the governance of Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif and Chief Minister of Punjab Maryam Nawaz Sharif, who have been taking crucial steps to provide relief to the masses.

He said the people of Pakistan knew that the inflation had been reduced to a single digit, which, during the tenure of the PTI, reached a double digit from the four percent that was achieved under the leadership of Nawaz Sharif. The international financial institutions are acknowledging that the Pakistani economy was taking off, while Bloomberg identified Pakistan's stock market as an emerging and best market in Asia, he said, adding Fitch and Moody had improved ratings for Pakistan as well.

He said there has been 14 per cent increase in exports, current account deficit was shrinking, and the policy rate was reduced to attract foreign investment. The progress of Pakistan under the leadership of PM Shehbaz had stunned the opposition which was hell-bent on creating a situation of chaos and anarchy in the country to halt the development process, he added. The minister recalled the letters written by the PTI leadership to the International Monetary Fund against the bailout package to default the country.

Their all efforts, including public gatherings and press conferences, were aimed at getting the PTI

founder released from jail, which is tantamount to an attempt for an NRO-like relief from the government, he said, adding due process of law would be followed in his cases such as May 9 mayhem and others. He said the PTI leadership did not have any knowledge about their own narrative, resorting to abusive language and hollow threats. On the other hand, Punjab had kept its tradition of showing hospitality to them, providing them security and a place to hold a flop show.

The minister specifically condemned the language used by PTI leader Latif Khosa against the Chief Justice of Pakistan, demanding a notice against him for the contempt. Tarar also criticized Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Chief Minister Ali Amin Gandapur for his poor governance and asked him to compare his performance with CM Punjab Maryam Nawaz, who has been furthering the 10-year legacy of Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif in the province.

Tarar said Punjab has been progressing by leaps and bounds under the leadership of Maryam Nawaz who has been setting new records by initiating new projects in health, education social, and IT sectors. He said special subsidies have been given in Punjab and federation on the electricity to provide relief to the masses. On the other side, CM KPK had completely failed in politics, administration and governance of his province.

Reserved seats: PTI approaches SC

F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: The Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) on Saturday approached the Supreme Court (SC), requesting it to restrain the Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) from allocating reserved seats to any other political party.

PTI Chairman Barrister Gohar Ali Khan filed a plea through Aziz Karamat Bhandari after National Assembly Speaker Sardar Ayaz Sadiq wrote a letter to the ECP. Sardar Ayaz Sadiq through his letter asked the ECP not to allocate reserved seats to the, maintaining that the Supreme Court's (SC) ruling is now "incapable of implementation" after the amendments to the Election Act 2017.

Following the letter, the PTI moved the apex court and sought its clarification on the letter written by the NA speaker National Assembly Speaker Ayaz Sadiq and Punjab Assembly's custodian Malik Muhammad Ahmad Khan to the Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) on the matter of reserved seats. In the fresh plea, PTI's Barrister Gohar argued that the NA speaker's letter does not set out the correct constitutional and legal position and has no legal effect on the SC's 12 July order that declared the party eligible for reserved seats. "ECP is bound to implement the short order in letter and spirit," the petition read. The court was requested to restrain the ECP from allocating the subject reserved seats to any other party till the matter is decided.

He expressed this in his message on International Day of Peace. Today the International Day of Peace is being observed to affirm our commitment to principles of peace among nations worldwide. The theme of this year's International Day of Peace "Cultivating a culture of

Pakistan reports 3 new polio cases

F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan reported three new cases of polio on Saturday, with one case each emerging from Balochistan, Sindh, and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, according to the National Polio Emergency Center.

In Balochistan, a child in the Qila Abdullah area was diagnosed with the virus, while another case was confirmed in a child from Karachi's Kemari area. The third case was detected in a child residing in Mohmand district of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. The Anti-Polio Laboratory confirmed that all three children were infected with wild poliovirus type 1. These new cases bring the total number of polio cases in Pakistan this year to 21.

Ayesha Raza Farooq, the prime minister's focal person for anti-polio efforts, expressed deep concern over the latest cases. She urged parents to ensure their children are vaccinated, stressing that immunization is crucial to preventing further spread of the virus. "The government is more determined than ever to eradicate polio from Pakistan," Farooq stated, reiterating the government's commitment to protecting future generations from the disease. Earlier this month, Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif had launched a special anti-polio campaign to completely eradicate polio from the country.

The Frontier Post

F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif on Saturday called for fostering peace and stability in the region through dialogues.

"To effectively achieve this end, it is essential to resolve the longstanding disputes," he said in a message on the occasion of the International Day of Peace. He emphasized that the foundation for any lasting resolution in the region hinged solely on one critical factor: achieving a fair and just settlement of the Jammu and Kashmir dispute peacefully through an impartial plebiscite and relevant UN Security Council Resolutions.

"As we contemplate the significance of peace, we must not overlook the plight of the innocent people of Palestine, who are courageously facing state aggression," the prime minister said, adding that for lasting peace in the Middle East, peaceful resolution of the dispute according to the UN resolutions and aspirations of the Palestinians was the need of the hour. He said on the International Day of Peace, the government and the people of Pakistan joined the global community to reflect on the shared values of tolerance, compassion, and cooperation for a peaceful world, free of war and conflict.

"On this World Peace Day, we recognize the importance of fostering dia-

Shehbaz departs for New York to attend UNGA session

F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif on Saturday departed for the United States to attend the 79th session of United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) set to take place from September 23-27, 2024 in New York.

In his address at the UN General Assembly, the prime minister will reaffirm Pakistan's steadfast commitment to multilateralism and express support for the role of the United Nations in forging global peace, security, and prosperity. He will also emphasize the importance of addressing long-standing issues on the agenda of the UN Security Council, including the question of Palestine and Jammu and Kashmir.

In his social media post on X before his departure, the prime minister said he looked forward to a busy week full of engagements. "During our interactions, we will take up global issues, promoting peace, development and climate action. Will represent Pakistan's perspective to the world, advocate our interests and strengthen international partnerships," he added.

During his participation in the UNGA session, the prime minister will also attend several high-level meetings on the sidelines of the UNGA session, including the High-level Meeting on Existential Threats Posed by Sea-level Rise and the UN Security Council's Open Debate on Leadership for Peace.

Earlier, Foreign Office Spokesperson Mumtaz Zahra Baloch in a statement informed that Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Mohammad Ishaq Dar will not proceed to New York to participate in the UNGA session due to important diplomatic commitments and preparations for the upcoming Shanghai Cooperation Organization summit to be held in Islamabad.

logue and understanding among diverse communities for a peaceful and sustainable world," he remarked. He said, "In a world often marked by conflict and division, it is essential to bridge the differences and work towards the common goal of peace."

The prime minister said

Pakistan recognized the critical importance of promoting a more peaceful and inclusive world for everyone and was ready to work with the global community. "It is only by working together now that we can build a peaceful tomorrow for our future generations," he concluded.

President stresses need to raise voices against injustice

F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: President of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan Asif Ali Zardari has stated that we need to raise our voices against injustice and oppression.

The priority of the world should be to address the problems being faced by humanity, including poverty, hunger, injustice, oppression, inequality, and the violation of basic human rights rather than disputes and conflicts.

He expressed this in his message on International Day of Peace. Today the International Day of Peace is being observed to affirm our commitment to principles of peace among nations worldwide. The theme of this year's International Day of Peace "Cultivating a culture of

peace" calls upon us to promote a culture of peace, tolerance, and coexistence among the comity of the nations. Today the world is facing geopolitical tensions and conflicts in certain regions threatening world peace. Regrettably Israel has unleashed a reign of terror in Palestine and is committing a genocide by killing thousands of people in Gaza. He stated that similarly, the Hindutva-inspired Modi regime is committing grave human rights violations in Indian Illegally Occupied Jammu and Kashmir and is persecuting Muslims and other minorities in India and depriving them of their fundamental rights. These blatant violations of international law and human rights endanger global peace and security.

We need to raise our voices against injustice and oppression. The priority of the world should be to address the problems being faced by humanity, including poverty, hunger, injustice, oppression, inequality, and the violation of basic human rights rather than disputes and conflicts. The world cannot achieve progress and development in the absence of peace as wars and conflicts increase the problems and miseries of people. So, let us reaffirm our commitment to work collectively for promoting a culture of peace, tolerance, and respect for the dignity of all human beings. Together, we can shape a peaceful future and a better world where our successive generations could live in peace and harmony, he concluded.

PPP celebrates 36th birthday of Bilawal

F.P. Report

KARACHI: Pakistan People's Party (PPP) Chairman Bilawal Bhutto Zardari celebrated his 36th birthday today with party leaders and workers cutting cakes at ceremonies throughout the country.

As Bilawal Bhutto-Zardari marked his 36th birthday on Saturday, his sister Bakhtawar also took to her social media to wish him with a video of a cute interaction between her brother and her son, Mir Hakim Mahmood Chaudhry.

In the heart-warming video, reposted by Bakhtawar, 34, on her Instagram story, Bilawal can be seen engaging in a creative activity with her two-year-old son with whom he seems to share a special bond. "Happy 36th Birthday," she wrote on her Instagram Story and mentioned the PPP chairman's official Instagram handle. She also dotted the text with three red heart emojis.

Bilawal who is the grandson of Shaheed Zulfikar Ali Bhutto and son of Shaheed Benazir Bhutto and

President Asif Ali Zardari was born in Karachi on September 21, 1988. He completed his education from Oxford University and also got his political education from his mother Shaheed Benazir Bhutto, ex-prime minister of Pakistan.

After the tragic death of his mother and ex-prime minister of Pakistan Benazir Bhutto in December 2007 he was elected as chairman of Pakistan People's Party. Bilawal Bhutto Zardari first elected as Member National Assembly (MNA) in 2018 from Larkana constituency but he also took part in elections from Lyari.

He was elected as MNA from Larkana in 2023 elections but did not formed his government and decided to join hands and extend full support to the incumbent government. He also introduced a renowned slogan (Democracy is the best revenge) in society.

Nowadays he is playing vital role inside and outside the Parliament. President Asif Zardari on different occasions express his desire to see Bilawal Bhutto Zardari as the prime minis-

ter of Pakistan as he has all the qualities to become prime minister of Pakistan. Bilawal Bhutto Zardari also served as foreign minister from 27 April 2022 to 10 August 2023. On the occasion of Bilawal Bhutto Zardari's 36 birthday, workers of Pakistan Peoples Party holding different functions across the country by cutting cakes, and praying to Almighty Allah for his long life and prosperity.

Bilawal reaffirms party's commitment to ideals of peace, justice and democracy: The Chairman of Pakistan People's Party (PPP) Bilawal Bhutto Zardari has issued a message on the occasion of International Peace Day, reaffirming the party's commitment to the ideals of peace, justice, democracy and human dignity.

He stressed that peace is not just the absence of conflict but the presence of justice, equality, and respect for human rights. "True peace can only be achieved when every individual, regardless of their background or beliefs, is treated with fairness and dignity," he said.

Dr Zakir to visit Pakistan F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: Renowned religious scholar Dr Zakir Naik along with Sheikh Faruk Naik has announced a visit to Pakistan this year. He and Sheikh Faruk will visit Pakistan on the invitation of the Government of Pakistan. The social media post also mentioned the schedule of Dr Zakir Naik's visit to Pakistan, which stated that he would address public gatherings.

Non-bailable arrest warrants issued for KP CM, others

F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: The Anti-Terrorism Court (ATC) of Islamabad has issued non-bailable arrest warrants for Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Chief Minister Ali Amin Gandapur and several other leaders of the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI).

The PTI leadership are booked in a case at the I-9 police station of Islamabad under various charges, including terrorism, vandalism.

During the hearing of Gandapur's bail application on Saturday, his lawyer filed an application for exemption from appearance. Judge Tahir Abbas Sipra, presiding over the case, rejected the application, noting that Gandapur had been granted an exemption on Sept 4 on the account of an illness, but on Sept 8, he seemed to be in good health during a public meeting.

Lawyer Zahoor Al Hasan argued for an exemption today, ensuring that his client would appear in the next hearing. This observation led the court to issue the non-bailable warrants. In addition to Gandapur, the ATC also issued arrest warrants for PTI leaders Wasiq Qayyum Abbasi and Rashid Hafeez. The court further declared another PTI leader, Umar Tanveer Butt, as a proclaimed offender. Meanwhile, PTI Senator Faisal Javed, who also faces charges, successfully had his request for exemption from attendance accepted.

The prosecutor in the case argued that the accused had repeatedly violated court orders and displayed a pattern of non-cooperation. "The court should take note of the accused's continuous violations," the prosecutor urged. Meanwhile, the chief minister is also involved in a case concerning the recovery of alcohol and arms. The hearing for this case will be held today in the court of Judicial Magistrate Shaista Kundi.

Earlier, the court had issued a warrant for Gandapur's arrest, which was later canceled after his lawyer assured the court that Gandapur would appear in person. The court accepted this assurance, backed by personal surety, and canceled the warrant. At the previous hearing, Judge Kundi had indicated that a verdict on Gandapur's acquittal petition might be announced today. However, the proceedings remain ongoing. This case was registered against Gandapur in 2016 at the Bhara Kahu police station.

PTI challenges Ord in LHC

F.P. Report

LAHORE: A day after President Asif Ali Zardari signed the Practice and Procedure Ordinance, Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) lawyer Azhar Siddiqui on Saturday challenged it in the Lahore High Court (LHC).

The federal government and others have been made respondents in the petition. It has been argued in the petition that the presidential ordinance was based on mala fide intentions. It said that the apex court had given its verdict on the Practice and Procedure Act, adding that powers of the SC couldn't be changed through the ordinance.

The applicant pleaded that the court should nullify the ordinance and stop any action taken under the act until final verdict by the court. The federal cabinet approved the Practice and Procedure Amendment Ordinance 2024 which gives more powers to the chief justice. The ordinance, which amends the Supreme Court Practice and Procedure Act 2023, was sent to the president for approval which he approved. Under the amendment to the Act, the chief justice of Pakistan can nominate a judge in case of unavailability of a committee member.



CM Murad suspends DIG, SSP Mirpurkhas

KARACHI (APP): The Sindh Chief Minister (CM) Syed Murad Ali Shah has suspended Deputy Inspector General (DIG) of Mirpurkhas Javed Jaskani.

He also suspended Senior Superintendent of Police (SSP) of Mirpurkhas Captain (Retd) Asad Chaudhary. The Chief Secretary (CS) of Sindh Asif Haider Shah has issued a notification in that regard.

Free Wi-Fi service scope widens

LAHORE (APP): Punjab Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz has expanded the scope of the "CM Maryam Nawaz Free Wi-Fi" project. According to the details, free Wi-Fi service has been provided at over 230 locations in Lahore, Kasur, Nankana Sahib, and Sheikhupura.

In line with the vision of Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz Sharif, the reach of the free Wi-Fi service in Punjab continues to grow. The Safe City project provides free Wi-Fi at 200 points in Lahore, 10 in Kasur, 15 in Sheikhupura, and 5 in Nankana Sahib.

From June 16 until now, in just three months, 7.7 million users have consumed 111 TB of data, with an average availability of 98.7 percent. A spokesperson for the Safe Cities Authority stated that the free internet service is facilitating education, business, and social connections. "We are transforming Punjab into a digital province, and the free Wi-Fi service is an important step in this direction. Citizens are utilizing the free Wi-Fi service to ease their daily lives," the spokesperson added.

7 dead, 1527 injured in 1377 RTCs in Punjab

LAHORE (APP): Seven persons were killed and 1527 injured in 1377 Road Traffic Crashes (RTCs) in all 37 districts of Punjab during the last 24 hours. Out of these, 645 people with serious injuries were shifted to different hospitals, while 882 victims with minor injuries were treated at the incident site by Rescue Medical Teams thus reducing the burden of hospitals.

Furthermore, the analysis showed those 763 drivers, 71 underage drivers, 192 pedestrians, and 579 passengers were among the victims of road traffic crashes. The statistics show that 266 RTCs were reported in Lahore which affected 300 persons placing the Provincial Capital at top of the list followed by Faisalabad 105 in with 110 victims and at third Multan with 94 RTCs and 104 victims.

According to the data 1256 motorbikes, 71 autorickshaws, 126 motorcars, 30 vans, 13 passenger buses, 35 truck and 105 other types of auto vehicles and carts were involved in these road traffic accidents.

Punjab ministers say people rejected PTI call for rally

LAHORE (APP): Punjab ministers have stated that the people of Pakistan have rejected the Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) by boycotting its rally in Lahore.

In a joint press conference on Saturday, Punjab Information Minister Azma Bukhari, Health Minister Khawaja Imran Nazir and Law Minister Sohaib Barath declared that the PTI's inability to gather a large crowd in Lahore exposed the party's diminishing influence.

Azma Bukhari emphasized that the Punjab government ensured that no roads were blocked and that all entry points to the city, including Shahdara, Thokar Niaz Baig, and the Ring Road, remained open. She claimed that fewer than 3,000 people attended the rally from across the country, which highlighted the public's disinterest in PTI's politics. She also accused PTI of using Khyber Pakhtunkhwa's resources for political activities in

Punjab and criticized KPK Chief Minister Ali Ameen Gandapur for prioritizing political gatherings over public service.

Bukhari alleged that the PTI government in KP had failed to address the needs of its people and was wasting resources on rallies. She expressed gratitude to the people of Punjab and Lahore for rejecting PTI's "agenda of unrest" and supporting the current government's performance.

Addressing the PTI founder, Bukhari claimed that Khan is attempting to seek an NRO through his rallies, particularly concerning the 190 million pound case and the Toshakhana case. She refuted PTI's allegations that the government obstructed the rally, saying the containers used by PTI had gotten stuck under bridges due to their own mismanagement.

Health Minister Khawaja Imran Nazir echoed these sentiments, stating that the people

have recognized the negative politics of the PTI. He highlighted Punjab's advancements in health-care, including the establishment of hospitals that have attracted patients from KPK, and credited Punjab's Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz Sharif for her dedication to public service, including the recent launch of a pediatric cardiac program.

Law Minister Sohaib Barath criticized PTI leaders for using infrastructure built by the PML-N, such as the Motorway, while accusing the opposition party of failing to provide for its own constituency. He stressed that the public can no longer be deceived by empty slogans and demanded that PTI show tangible results for its governance.

The ministers concluded by asserting that PTI's sole agenda is to destabilize the country, while the PML-N remains focused on progress and public welfare.

70 new dengue cases reported in Punjab

LAHORE (APP): The Punjab Health Department confirmed on Saturday that 70 new cases of dengue have been recorded across the province in the last 24 hours.

According to a spokesperson, out of these, 60 cases were reported in Rawalpindi, three cases in Lahore, while Chakwal, Lodhran, and Attock each recorded 2 cases. One case in Gujralwala.

Over the past week, 326 new cases of dengue virus infections have emerged, bringing the total number of cases in Punjab to 958 for 2024.

A spokesperson from the Primary and Secondary Healthcare Department assured the public that preventive measures are fully in place. Government hospitals have been stocked with necessary medicines, including treatments for dengue.

In response to the rising cases, the Health Department has issued an advisory, urging citizens to maintain clean and dry surroundings to prevent mosquito breeding. Cooperation with health teams on the ground was essential to control the outbreak.

Additionally, a free helpline (1033) has been set up for treatment information or complaints related to dengue.

Cathedral Church organises peace rally

LAHORE (APP): A peace rally was organised in the Cathedral Church in connection with World "Peace Day" under the aegis of Commission for Inter-Religious Dialogue, here on Saturday.

Organised by the Commission for Inter-Religious Dialogue, a rally was held at the Cathedral Church Lahore.

Candles of peace were lit by the inter-religious leaders. Maulana Muhammad Asim Makhdoom, Dr. Badr Munir Mujaddadi, Sohail Ahmad Raza, Sahibzada Talha Badr, Father Asif Sardar, Pastor Aminul Khokhar, Father Ashfaq Anthony and Dr. Badr Munir Mujaddadi specially participated in the rally. Addressing the participants, Maulana Mohammad Asim Makhdoom said that today the World Peace Day is being celebrated all over the world, followers of all religions live in Pakistan and all minorities are safe here.

Father Asif Sardar said that religious tolerance is being promoted in the country. He said that they have planted olive trees in places of worship of all religions, adding that olive is a symbol of peace and respected by all religions. He said that every citizen has to use his abilities to establish peace in the country.

CM Punjab message on Inte'l Day of Peace

LAHORE (APP): Punjab Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz Sharif has emphasized the critical importance of sustainable peace as a foundation for Pakistan's development.

In her message on International Day of Peace being celebrated on Saturday, the CM underscored that lasting stability is crucial for fostering economic growth, social harmony, and overall national progress. Emphasizing the significance of peace, the CM said "Peace is a great blessing, while unrest leads to decline."

CM Maryam Nawaz

paid glowing tribute to the martyrs, acknowledging that the sacrifices made for the establishment of peace will always be remembered.

She praised the services of security forces, including the military and police, stating, "Their sacrifices for maintaining peace are unforgettable."

The chief minister recognized the efforts of peace advocates, saying that those striving to resolve conflicts deserve commendation. She added from peace, the flowers of prosperity bloom, and happiness

spreads everywhere.

She urged every member of society to play their part in establishing peace, declaring that "those who choose the path of violence and chaos are enemies of Pakistan's peace and stability. Sabotaging peace under the guise of differing opinions is condemnable."

The CM prayed that may there be peace and prosperity in Pakistan at all times and everywhere. She also articulated that peace in Kashmir, Palestine, and around the world is a collective dream.



ISLAMABAD: Federal Interior Minister, Mohsin Naqvi in a meeting with Chinese Minister for Political and Legal Affairs Chen Mingguo. —APP Photo

Mohsin Naqvi meets Chinese delegation

ISLAMABAD (APP): Interior Minister Mohsin Naqvi met with a high-level Chinese delegation led by Minister for Political and Legal Affairs Chen Mingguo, on Saturday.

Minister for Interior warmly welcomed Minister Chen Mingguo and his delegation upon their arrival at the Ministry of Interior.

During the meeting, it was agreed to enhance cooperation in various fields, including counter-terrorism, cross-border cooperation, anti-smuggling, and anti-narcotics efforts.

During the meeting, Pakistan-China relations, particularly with Xinjiang, and matters of mutual interest were discussed.

During the meeting, it was agreed to conduct joint police and paramilitary forces exercises in Gilgit-Baltistan or Xinjiang and train Gilgit-Baltistan police officers at the

Xinjiang Police Academy.

During the meeting, it was also agreed that comprehensive measures would be taken against terrorism which is a global issue. It was also decided that a Pakistani delegation, led by the Federal Secretary of Interior, would soon visit Xinjiang to enhance mutual cooperation.

Chinese Minister Chen Mingguo also invited Federal Interior Minister Mohsin Naqvi to visit Xinjiang.

Mohsin Naqvi said that Xinjiang province is of vital importance for Pakistan in its relations with China. He underscored that besides being Pakistan's neighbor, we have a 600-kilometer-long border with Xinjiang.

He added that the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) project also passes through Xinjiang. He emphasized that Pakistan wants to completely eliminate smuggling of

drugs, arms, and all other goods.

He noted that the visit of the Pakistani delegation to Xinjiang would open new avenues for strengthening mutual cooperation.

Minister Chen Mingguo expressed the desire to enhance relations with Pakistan in all fields.

He said that terrorism is a common problem, adding that Xinjiang had suffered from it for many years.

He highlighted that Pakistan can benefit from Xinjiang's experience in counter-terrorism. Pakistan-China relations, particularly with Xinjiang, and matters of mutual interest were discussed during the meeting.

The Chinese delegation included Xinjiang's Deputy Secretary of the Committee of Parliamentary and Legal Affairs, Executive Director General of Police, and Vice President of Xinjiang Police Academy.

Pakistan's role unforgettable

KARACHI (APP): The Governor of Sindh Kamran Khan Tessori in his message on the occasion of 'World Peace Day', has said that Pakistan's role in maintaining world peace was unforgettable.

According to a spokesman for Governor Sindh, Tessori said Pakistan had played a vital role in the global war against terrorism.

He said that every conspiracy of terrorism against world peace was foiled. The Governor said that today, world peace was facing serious threats from India and Israel. The international community must react to every action against peace. Tessori said that world had to make efforts for peace in Palestine and Indian Illegally Occupied Kashmir (IIOJ&K).

Alhamra's kids carnival kicks off

LAHORE (APP): The Lahore Arts Council (Alhamra) launched its much-anticipated Kids Carnival, a vibrant event that will introduce children to their cultural roots through the magic of art, here on Saturday.

The two-day festival, from September 21 to 22, at the Alhamra Arts Center, the Mall, is designed to provide children with a memorable and educational experience while entertaining the whole family.

The event features a diverse and impressive lineup of activities for all ages, ensuring something for everyone. From magic shows, puppet theatre, storytelling, and a gaming zone to live face painting and outdoor play areas, every child is guaranteed to find something exciting to do. Various stalls are also set up, offering interactive experiences and cultural insights.

Executive Director Alhamra Sarah Rashid emphasized the crucial role of such events in fostering creativity and cultural awareness among children. She remarked, "Alhamra is not just an arts council, but a nursery of creativity where children can immerse themselves in their cultural heritage from an early age. This carnival is a significant step towards instilling pride in our traditions and providing quality family entertainment."

The Kids Carnival marks a significant effort by Alhamra to engage the younger generation in cultural activities.

SSWMB extends contracts

ISLAMABAD (PPI): The provincial steering committee of the Sindh Solid Waste Management Board (SSWMB) has granted an extension of three years in contracts awarded to private contractors for providing end-to-end garbage disposal services in the Malir, West, and Keamari districts of Karachi.

According to SSWMB information on Saturday, Sindh Local Government Minister, Saeed Ghani, on Saturday chaired the third session of the provincial steering committee of the SSWMB. The Local Government Minister on the occasion was given a detailed briefing on the findings of a research study conducted on the waste disposal work in the three districts. The

The committee also approved the proposals that the contractors engaged for providing waste disposal services in the three Karachi districts will be paid their fee in Pakistani rupees instead of US dollars. The committee was told that the renewal of contractors would help reduce by 25 per cent the expense of waste disposal work in District Malir while the same expenditure would be slashed by 28 per cent in the case of West and Keamari districts.

The Local Government Minister on the occasion was given a detailed briefing on the findings of a research study conducted on the waste disposal work in the three districts. The

new contracts will ensure beefing up waste lifting and disposal work in these districts along with an effective monitoring system to oversee the waste management services. The committee also decided to float a tender to procure the services of a contractor in the District East of Karachi.

A company will provide the same services in the district till completion of the tendering process. A proposal came into consideration to consult town municipal corporations in Karachi to propose a fee against waste collection work in residential, commercial, and industrial areas of the city to generate income for the SSWMB.



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Climate Change and Vulnerable Communities

The Unequal Burden of a Global Crisis

Ali Ashiq Sindhu

A stark reality emerges during the quiet hours of the morning, when the world appears to be at its most tranquil. Climate change, a term often shrouded in scientific jargon and political debate, is fundamentally a human story. It's about the fisherman whose nets run dry as oceans warm, the farmer whose fields turn to dust, and the families forced to flee their ancestral homes in pursuit of a safer, more stable future.

These stories, while diverse, share a common theme: they take place on the front lines of a struggle against an unseen enemy, with the stakes being nothing less than our planet's future.

Human activity's release of greenhouse gases into the atmosphere is causing the Earth to warm at a rate

never seen before. While the effects of global warming are not felt equally in every place, some are more affected than others, with some seeing increased sea levels, more extreme weather patterns, and ecological changes. The implications impact livelihoods, health, and food security in addition to the environment and the economy and society.

However, this difficulty also presents a chance for creativity, invention, and leadership. Green infrastructure, sustainable agriculture, and renewable energy technologies are seeing a revolution as a result of the global reaction to climate change. Together, scientists, politicians, and entrepreneurs are working to lower emissions, improve resilience, and move towards a low-carbon economy. These initiatives aim to imagine

a future that is equal, economic, and sustainable, in addition to reducing risk.

The story of climate change also functions as an appeal for solidarity. This is more than just an environmental issue; it is a matter of social fairness. The communities who have contributed the least to climate change are suffering the most from its consequences.

It is critical to ensure that these communities have access to the resources and support they require to adapt. It is about fairness, compassion, and understanding how we are all interconnected in the global ecology. It pushes us to reconsider how we interact with the environment, consider whether our purchasing habits are sustainable, and support laws that safeguard the ecosystem and its inhabitants.

It serves as a reminder that everyone has a responsibility to mitigate the effects of climate change, whether that responsibility is to lower our carbon footprint, support environmentally friendly companies, or spread awareness of the issue.

As we stand at this crossroads, the decisions we make today will shape the legacy we leave for future generations. The struggle against climate change is overwhelming, but there is also hope. Communities around the world are putting themselves together to take action, motivated by the belief that a better future is possible. From the halls of power to the streets of our cities, a movement is gaining traction, driven by the belief that we can reverse the tide on climate change by working together.

Year’s first polio case detected in KP: CM takes notice, suspend 2 officials

PESHAWAR (INP): Two health officials were suspended on Saturday when the first polio case of the year was detected in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa as poliovirus in a nine-month-old girl from District Mohmand was confirmed.

The Chief Minister Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Ali Amin Gandapur while taking notice has ordered an inquiry into the matter, directing the health secretary to immediately suspend the concerned district health officer and polio coordinator.

The Chief Minister further ordered that all others responsible for the botched polio campaign in Mohmand district should also be identified.

Gandapur directed that action should be taken against the concerned government officials as well as the concerned staff of the partner institutions.

The chief minister instructed quality of polio campaign should be ensured in all other districts as well. He said that no compromise will be made on the quality of polio campaign.

Concerned authorities should reform themselves or get ready for punishment, Gandapur warned.

The Chief Minister Khyber Pakhtunkhwa said eliminating poliovirus from the province is one of the top priorities of the present provincial government.

Cop involved in facilitating blast arrested

PESHAWAR (INP): In a major breakthrough, Peshawar Police arrested one of their colleagues Wali Khan for facilitating and providing support and information to terrorists who bombed the Police Lines in the provincial capital on Saturday.

Wali Khan who is a resident of Dilzak Road arrested after credible information provided by terrorist commander Omar who was also in police custody.

Moreover, the arrested policeman was performing his duties in the Police Lines at the time of the bomb blast. The arrested cop provided map and information about different routes leading to the Police Lines to the main suspect and the suicide-bomber.

After the incident, the arrested policeman got himself transferred to BRT Wireless Headquarters.



PESHAWAR: Managing Director SS Institute Zia ul Haq presenting a shield to MNA Sajid Khan Mohmand. — F.P. photo by Ghulam Murtaza

Sherpao ask political forces to join hands to strengthen democracy

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: Quami Watan Party (QWP) Chairman Aftab Ahmad Khan Sherpao on Saturday asked the political forces to join hands to strengthen the parliament and democracy.

Speaking at a meeting of QWP office-bearers from Swat and Buner districts, he expressed concern over the worsening law and order in the country particularly in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa.

Earlier, the meeting discussed the prevailing political situation in the country. The meeting discussed efforts to strengthen the QWP at the grassroots level.

Aftab Sherpao said the country was faced with political instability, which was also having a bad impact on the economy. He said economic stability was linked to political stability.

He said the rulers were

needing to bring the constitutional package in a bid to save their government, which he maintained would be a futile exercise keeping in view the political polarization.

He said though the government convened the joint session of the Parliament to pass the constitutional amendment at midnight to pave the way for the establishment of the constitutional court, even its lawmakers and allies had not read the draft of the legislation and had agreed to support it blindly.

He said the big political parties claimed that the establishment of the constitutional court was part of the Charter of Democracy but this was not even mentioned at the time of bringing the 18th Amendment.

Questioning the establishment of the constitutional court, he said that the judiciary was already playing its role then why the

need was felt to set it up, adding that this was an attempt to divide the Supreme Court.

He recalled that it was the QWP leadership which had suggested the name “Pakhtunkhwa” for the province. “It is written in the report of the 18th Amendment that I had suggested the name Pakhtunkhwa,” Aftab Sherpao said.

The QWP leader said all state institutions should work within the constitutional ambit which was the only way to strengthen democracy and put the country on the path to progress.

He even did not rule out the possibility of holding the fresh general election to bring an end to the “hybrid” system imposed on the country after the 2024 general election. Underscoring the need for the supremacy of parliament, he said that there was a dire need to let

the people choose their true representatives. He said that experiments should be stopped so that democracy could take root. He maintained that a truly elected government could work for the welfare of the people. He advised the government to stop victimizing its political adversaries as this would prove counterproductive.

He was also critical of the provincial government and said the PTI rulers were least bothered to secure and protect the rights of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa.

He said bad governance was at its peak while the writ of the government was shrinking due to worsening law and order.

Aftab Sherpao feared the situation would further deteriorate if corrective steps were not taken.

He said corruption was rampant and the people had lost hope and trust in the incumbent government.

Saif slams Punjab govt for arrest of PTI workers

PESHAWAR (INP): Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Information Adviser Barrister Saif on Saturday said that the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) was not afraid of any tactics employed by the Punjab government to stop PTI’s power show in Lahore.

In a statement about the PTI’s Lahore rally, Saif lashed out at the Punjab Police for illegally arresting as many as 20 PTI workers from the corner meetings, adding that a reign of fear was being spread by the police under the stewardship of the Punjab government.

“Maryam Nawaz will be responsible for her actions. This fake government should give up its fascist tactics, and shouldn’t deprive people of their basic rights. We want a peaceful environment for the rally which must be ensured by the government. All standard operating procedures must be complied by the government as well,” he maintained.

4 kg ice recovered, three held

PESHAWAR (APP): Khyber Police on Saturday recovered four kilogram Ice and arrested three smugglers within limits of Ali Masjid Police Station.

According to details, a team of police led by Station House Officer Ali Masjid, Nafees Khan intercepted a car and recovered four kilogram Ice drug.

The contraband was hidden in secret compartments of the car. Arrested smugglers were identified as Muhammad Sufyan, Asif and Aryan.

Smugglers were residents of Jamrud and involved in smuggling narcotics from Afghanistan for supplying to various cities in the country.

Spokesman: No appointments in Rescue 1122

PESHAWAR (APP): Rescue 1122 authorities have warned people urging them to be vigilant and avoid paying any amount to elements that are deceiving public for giving appointment letters of jobs in emergency rescue service.

Recruitment of any kind is not underway and all the appointments from grade 1 to 18 would be made through Education Testing and Evaluation Authority.

PHC Senior Puisne Judge inspects jails

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: Senior Puisne Judge Peshawar High Court Justice Ijaz Anwar visited the sub jails in the districts Swabi and Nowshera. His Lordship was accompanied by Barrister Ikhtiar Khan, Registrar of the Peshawar High Court.

Upon arrival at both sub jails, His Lordship was welcomed by the District and Sessions Judges, Additional District and Sessions Judges, and Senior Civil Judges cum Judicial Magistrates. Local administration officials and

police were also present during the visit.

During the inspection of the sub jails in Swabi and Nowshera, His Lordship was briefed on various aspects, including the jail buildings, staff, inmate population, and available facilities.

He thoroughly inspected different sections and barracks of the jails, interacted with the inmates, and attentively listened to their concerns regarding the jail environment and pending court cases. Immediate directions were issued by His Lordship to resolve several matters on the spot.

During the visit, a total number of 36 prisoners from Sub Jail Swabi and 18 prisoners from Sub Jail Nowshera were released whom were involved in minor offenses.

In addition, the Honorable Judge briefly visited the District Courts of Swabi and Nowshera, where he met with the judicial officers, commending them for their prompt and efficient case management. Informal discussions were held with the judicial officers, and His Lordship also took the opportunity to meet with various litigants on the court premises.

POWA threatens to paralyze criminal judicial system

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: Prosecution Officer Welfare Association (POWA) Khyber Pakhtunkhwa threatened to paralyze Criminal Judicial System in case of failure to fulfill their demands, on Saturday.

The strike by government prosecutors in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa entered its third day, affecting court proceedings across the province.

The strike has halted mutual investigation between

prosecution, police, and CTD, stopped case investigations, slowed progress on new cases.

Moreover, the strike had stopped trial proceedings in old cases, caused difficulties for prisoners and increased burden on jails. Prosecution Welfare Association KP stated that the strike will continue until fulfillment of their demands.

POWA demanding establishment of an independent Prosecution Department, creation of a Prose-

cutor General’s Office and service structure.

POWA leaders Sangin Shah, Javed Mehmud, Waheed Asim and Zulfiqar Ali visited protest camps, boosting morale among prosecutors.

The association presented a 9-point charter of demands to the government, warning that if unmet, they will paralyze the entire criminal justice system. POWA displayed protest banners in their offices, highlighting their demands.

District admin launch awareness campaign

PESHAWAR (APP): In the wake of surge in dengue cases in the district, the district administration on Saturday launched an awareness campaign as well as preventive measures to contain the spread of the disease.

According to an official release, the district administration was actively working with the health department

to control the dengue epidemic and had started fumigation in different areas including hospitals.

Apart from these separate wards had also been set up for dengue patients in hospitals. The administration has appealed to the public to use mosquito repellent lotion, immediately cover the clean water containers and waste the

standing water in and around the houses.

It further advised that children should use mosquito repellent lotion, socks, gloves and long-sleeved clothes while going to school and at home, avoid playing in the open air during morning and evening as dengue mosquito mostly attacks at these two times.

Advisor KP crackdowns against spurious drugs

PESHAWAR (APP): Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Adviser for Health Ehtesham Ali has directed Director General Drugs and Pharmacy Services to launch a campaign against spurious, substandard drugs in the province.

Health Advisor Ehtisham Ali has said that the supply of fake and substandard medicines in the market is unbearable for the health department, for which Director General Drugs and Pharmacy Services Dr. Abbas and his team have been tasked to

start from Chitral. He directed to launch a massive crackdown on the suppliers and sellers of fake and substandard medicines in all districts up to Waziristan.

He appealed to the public to inform the concerned officials about any Any unregistered medicine warehouse or a factory in their localities.

On the other hand, DG Drugs Dr. Abbas has instructed the drug inspectors of all districts to carried intelligence-based operations in collaboration with FIA.

ASIP successfully conducted 16th Residential Course

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: The Alternate Solutions Institute Pakistan successfully conducted its 16th Residential Course from August 21st to August 25th, 2024, titled “Economic Freedom and the Foundation of a Free and Responsible Society” in the scenic town of Khanaspur Ayubia, Abbottabad.

This year’s course attracted participants from across the country, reflecting a diverse mix of ages, genders, religions, and ethnic backgrounds.

The registration process began in May 2024 and received an overwhelming response, with over 35 participants engaging in an

interactive learning experience. The course emphasized collaboration, encouraging attendees to connect and discuss key topics related to Pakistan’s economic challenges.

Throughout the workshop, a wide range of critical issues was addressed, including inflation, unemployment, poverty, the rule of law, and the philosophical foundations of freedom. Participants explored the relationship between economic and political freedom, as well as how these concepts relate to democracy in Pakistan. Discussions were supported by a comprehensive manual featuring writings from renowned political scientists and

economists.

This course is the oldest of its kind in Pakistan, focusing on economy, politics, and philosophy, and this year marked its 16th consecutive session. It has gained popularity among Pakistani youth and professionals, providing a platform for transformative discussions. Some participants, particularly those with left-leaning ideologies, engaged in debates that challenged their perspectives, potentially influencing their future political views. Resource persons emphasized the importance of establishing the rule of law as essential for building a free, peaceful, and prosperous society.

The workshop attracted a diverse group, including students, NGO founders, youth activists, religious scholars, political activists, tech experts, lawyers, and human rights defenders. Adnan Sohail coordinated the event, ensuring its smooth execution, while esteemed speakers included Dr. Khalil Ahmad, Dr. Raza Ullah, Ali Salman.

On the first day, participants traveled to Khanaspur Ayubia and engaged in discussions relevant to the workshop’s objectives. The second day began with Dr. Raza Ullah outlining the course objectives and facilitating discussions on pressing national issues. Ali Salman introduced con-

cepts of economic freedom, while Dr. Ullah connected these ideas to their historical context and significance.

Throughout the course, statistical data illustrated the correlation between economic freedom and societal well-being, highlighting the need for restructuring state-owned enterprises to address economic challenges. Prof. Sareer Badshah, the guest speaker, elaborated on the significance of statistics in economic and human development.

The workshop concluded with participants gaining a deeper understanding of economic freedom and its implications for society. Key publications, including the translated book “Foundation of a Free Society” by Eamonn Butler, were introduced, emphasizing the historical benefits of economic freedom. The Urdu translation of Eamonn Butler’s work on economic freedom served as foundational literature alongside the course manual as a reading resource for participants.

The final day included an excursion to local attractions, providing networking opportunities among participants. As they departed, attendees left with newfound knowledge and a positive outlook for promoting a free and responsible society in Pakistan.

PML-N spokesman accuses PTI of using KP resources to hold public meeting

PESHAWAR (APP): Spokesperson for PMLN Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Ikhtiar Wali Khan has accused that PTI is misappropriating resources of KP for holding public gathering in Lahore. In a statement issued here Saturday, PMLN KP Spokesman said that it is evident from the rally of PTI that how huge amount of 2800 billion were gobbled up and misappropriated and adding that corruption has drained out KP province of its resources. He accused that employees of provincial government are part of the rally that was led by Chief Minister, Ali Amin Gandapur. He said that refugees were hired from Shamshatoo Refugee Camp on five thousand rupees to participate in the rally. He regretted that those who want to sell universities have introduced indecency in politics and are misleading people by deceit. He said facilities under Sehat Card were stopped by PTI who manipulated and misled people on the name of same card.

Monkey bite surge, experts blame tourists feeding for change in primate behavior

PESHAWAR (APP): Monkeys’ attack on human and bite incidents have registered an alarming spike of 95 percent in current summer season in Galiyat region of Abbotabad while wildlife experts are blaming feeding by tourists as reason behind changes in behavior and life style of the primate.

We have registered around 56 cases of monkey attacks and bites cases in Nathia Gali, Dona Gali, Bara Gali and other adjacent areas in the year 2023 to August 2024, informed Dr. Wasif, a medical official at Kala Bagh Heath Center.

In the year 2023, around 19 cases were registered while in the current year till last month of August, a total of 37 cases are reported.

In response to attack by monkeys and claw injury to human, the medical practitioners after doing dressing, prescribe them to get antibiotics jab to avoid future health complications, informed Dr. Wasif.

He said monkeys population is increased in the region and incidents of attacks are also showing upsurge with the passage of time especially during summer season when thousands of tourists visit the

scenic site.

Meanwhile, Wildlife experts when asked for comments blamed feeding of monkeys by tourists as main reason behind change in behavior of the animal.

“Feeding monkeys by tourists in Galiyat and other scenic sites including Margalla hills has disturbed the eating habits of the animal which is creating a lot of problems for locals, wildlife protectors and visitors themselves,” observed Muhammad Waseem, Manager WWF Pakistan.

Talking to APP, Muhammad Waseem said nature has kept food for monkeys in forest, but providing

food by locals and tourists has affected the habits of the animal, disturbing the natural process by making them dependent on humans.

Waseem also considers increase in herd size of monkey as reason behind attack on humans.

He said from 1978 to 84 a UK based University’s Professor and some students did a survey in Galiyat and found the herd size of monkey around 40 to 44.

However now, he continued, the troop size of monkey has been swelled to more than 100 and availability of food from tourists

and junk food on roads, these monkey have migrated from dense forest to human populated areas.

“Feeding by humans are depriving different wild species of their instinct of wilderness and making them dependent on humans thus damaging the ecosystem,” comments Daud Khan Yousafzai an M.phil scholar from Buner whose research was on same subject.

Shifting from natural food to human provided items is also affecting ecosystem because these monkeys plays an important role in regeneration of different plant species through

distribution of seed through fecal.

Sajid Hussain Field Assistant Common Leopard WWF-Pakistan when contacted echoed the same reason of tourists feeding as reason behind change in habit of monkeys.

Monkeys have totally changed their eating habits and are dependent on feeding from human besides snatching or stealing of food from human settlement ensuing in animal-human clashes and attacks, Sajid told APP.

Monkeys are seen eating snacks like lays chips, bread, biscuits which

reflect total change in food of the animal, Sajid explained.

Human feeding has also altered the habitat of monkeys in Galiyat from dense Forest to human settlement besides change in eating habits, he added.

Sajid also agreed with Waseem’s point of view that population or troop size of monkey is also increased and those monkeys which cannot get food during distribution by tourists, attacks on feeding humans.

He said a tourists can carry such a stock of food which can feed only a couple of monkeys, but he is

surrounded by 80 to 100 animals within no time and is attacked due to lack of food.

Sajid also made a disclosure that in most of the cases of monkey bite in mountainous region, local people did not get antibiotics treatment due to lack of availability of vaccine in the area and lack of financial resources of going to Abbotabad city for getting proper treatment.

“Wildness in monkeys has gone long ago otherwise they will never come close to humans like this, Lets be part of wild nature’s welfare,” Sajid suggested.



In brief

Judge PHC visits Sub Jail Swabi F.P. Report

SWABI: Judge Peshawar High Court (PHC), Justice Ejaz Anwar on Saturday visited Sub Jail Swabi and visited its various sections. He was accompanied by Registrar PHC, Ikhtiar Khan and Additional District and Session Judge, Zahim Ahmad. Justice Ejaz Ahmad inspected jail building, visited jail barracks and inquired about the number of inmates and facilities being provided to prisoners. He also met with inmates and listened to their problems. He also directed to free 36 prisoners involved in petty nature crimes. Later, he also visited Swabi Judicial Complex and met with judicial officers.

Scholar defends M.Phil thesis F.P. Report

LOWER DIR: Mr. Kashif Subhan, an M.Phil Scholar at Department of Education, University of Malakand (UoM) has successfully defended his thesis titled "An investigation of educational opportunities to imprisoned juveniles in Malakand division" under the supervision of Dr Asghar Ali, Department of Education, UoM. The External Examiner was Dr. Zahoor Ul Haq, Assistant Professor, Department of Education, Bacha Khan University Charsadda. The Chairman, Department of Education, UoM Dr. Ibar khan and faculty members congratulated the Scholar and his supervisors in this regard.

2 bodies found near Kharan

KHARAN (PPI): Two unidentified mutilated bodies were recovered in Muskan Kalat area of Kharan in Balochistan province on Saturday. According to rescue sources, two unidentified mutilated bodies were found lying in Muskan Kalat area of Kharan. The bodies were taken to the morgue of Civil Hospital Kharan for completion of necessary medico-legal formalities and identification. Further investigation is being conducted by the concerned authorities.

Five employees terminated

PATTOKI (INP): Assistant Manager (Operation) Lahore Electric Supply Company (LESCO) Halla Sub-Division terminated five employees over negligence in duty and dispatched the termination orders to high officials. According to details, LESCO Halla Sub-Division official Hafiz Muhammad Tayyeb Zakir terminated five Assistant Linemen over negligence in duty. The terminated LESCO Assistant Linemen included Kashif Javed, Shehzad Boota, Muhammad Kamran, Muhammad Ali and Naem Arshad. The termination orders of the fired employees were sent to high officials of LESCO.

Man kills daughters

FAISALABAD (INP): A man killed his two minor daughters after he had a quarrel with his wife at Allama Iqbal Colony in Faisalabad, police said on Saturday. During the exchange of hot words, Akmal's wife Zainab asked him to divorce her. She said she would also take her two daughters, seven-year-old Iman Fatima and six-year-old Noor Fatima, with her. This infuriated Akmal, who strangled his two daughters to death. Soon, a police team, headed by SP Iqbal Division Usman Munir Saifi, reached the crime scene and arrested the man.

Crackdown on substandard goods

Shafi Ullah

MINGORA: in a bold move to safeguard consumers, the Swat Consumer Court, led by District and Session Judge, has destroyed expired and sub-standard goods at the Mingora dumping ground. Assistant Director Industries, Commerce, and Consumer Protection, Asif Raza Khan, spearheaded the operation, joined by consumer court staff and an Environmental Protection Agency representative.

Fake and Substandard Products, Cartons of counterfeit Glaxose D, hundreds of packets of fake cigarettes, expired perfumes, and low-quality chips. Expired Medical Supplies, Drip sets past their expiration dates.

Other Harmful Goods, Various items recovered from main dealers in Mingora city and surrounding areas. These raids were conducted under the Consumer Protection Act 1997 (amended 2017), following orders from the Director-General of Industries and Commerce KP, Director Administration



Industries and Commerce KP, and the Honorable Judge of the Consumer Protection Court Swat.

According to Asif Raza Khan, "This crackdown aims to protect consumers from hazardous products and promote quality and accountability among Swat businesses." By enforcing the Consumer Protection Act, authorities demonstrate their commitment

to protecting citizens' rights and well-being. This operation is part of a broader effort to ensure public safety and promote fair business practices in Swat. The Swat Consumer Court's proactive stance serves as a deterrent to unscrupulous businesses and reinforces the government's dedication to consumer protection.

‘Punjab govt turning bureaucracy into a slave’

GUJAR KHAN (INP): In a recent media briefing in Abad, Shoaib Shaheen, a prominent leader of the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI), expressed strong support for Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Chief Minister Ali Amin Gandapur, asserting that Gandapur would not seek forgiveness from anyone.

Shaheen criticized those demanding apologies, suggesting they should first reflect on their own actions. Shaheen further accused the Punjab government of turning the bureaucracy into a "slave" and labeled the province a "police state." He criticized a letter from the Speaker of the National Assembly, calling it dishonest, and claimed that a full court decision was being disre-

garded. "They want no justice in the country," he stated, emphasizing concerns over arbitrary detentions under the guise of national security.

Asserting that a lawyers' movement has commenced, Shaheen vowed it would gain traction across Pakistan, declaring, "They will fail no matter what they do." He recalled past statements that criticized the Chief Justice for forming a bench of his choosing.

Addressing corruption, Shaheen accused coalition government members of stealing openly, further rallying support for the PTI. In related news, the PTI has received approval from the district administration to hold a rally in the Kahana area of Lahore on

September 8, 2024, from 2:00 PM to 5:00 PM. The administration stipulated that Chief Minister Gandapur would address the audience regarding his previous speeches. An apology was also a condition set by the authorities.

The notification emphasized that no provocative or blasphemous slogans would be tolerated, nor would the burning of effigies or flags be allowed. Organizers are responsible for security at the venue and must ensure the safety of participants and the public, taking precautions against any potential threats. This rally comes amid heightened tensions in the political landscape, with PTI leaders emphasizing their commitment to justice and accountability.

‘Bilawal supporting undemocratic individuals’

F.P. Report

SWABI: Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) leading member Asad Qaiser berated Bilawal Bhutto Zardari for supporting undemocratic individuals to abolish constitution of 1973.

The PTI leader was referring to the support of Bilawal Bhutto for the PML-N led incumbent government on proposed constitutional amendment. Addressing a public gathering in Swabi, Asad Qaiser raised the question on the claims of PPP calling itself

champion of democracy, saying he was dismayed at the PPP involvement in the conspiracy.

He stressed that grandson of Bhutto Bialwal Bhutto was equally guilty in this conspiracy, supporting undemocratic quarters to nullify the 1973 constitution. The PTI leader claimed that the coalition government was making efforts to amend Article 8 of the constitution pertaining to fundamental human rights.

Asad Qaiser alleged that the government was aimed

to implement martial law across the country. He also revealed that Maulana Fazlur Rehman and Akhtar Mengal were provided different drafts of constitutional amendments. He requested the public to boycott Bilawal Bhutto Zardari.

Asad Qaiser stated that Aimal Wali Khan was maligning his grandparents and their politics. The PTI leader stressed to keep their struggle alive for supremacy of the constitution, independent judiciary and powerful Parliament.

Residents hold protest against load shedding

F.P. Report

MARDAN: Residents of different areas of the district took to street against the pro-longed and unscheduled load shedding of electricity and gas.

The protest demonstration which was held in front of Mardan Press Club was also attended by PTI provincial lawmakers including Abdus Salam Afridi, Tariq Mehmood Aryan, ex-MNA Moulana Shuja-ul-Mulk accompanied by prominent elders of the area Lakhkar Khan,

Sajid Iqbal and Abdullah Abid and large number of other people.

The PTI MPAs and other key members among the protesters addressed on the occasion. They alleged that the relevant officials of WAPDA department had increased duration of electricity and gas which had created lots of difficulties for consumers.

They deplored that the government had not only carried out the prolonged load-shedding but had also increased prices of gas and electricity facilities,

adding that it badly affected the traders as business activities in the district had become equal to nothing.

Leaders of protesters demanded of the federal government to take up the issue of gas and electricity load-shedding as serious and in this connection, take effective measures to decrease prices and duration of the said facilities. They also asked the central government to avoid discriminatory behavior with the people of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province.

Attack on primary school teacher condemned

F.P. Report

SUJAWAL: Teachers of district Sujawal have condemned an attack on a teacher during duty hours in Jati Taluka of district Sujawal on Friday. According to information provided by the spokesperson of Primary Teachers Association, Ashraf Ali, a dedicated primary school teacher was present at the School when a group of armed men led by Ali Hassan and Jan Muhammad Janu stormed primary school

located near Begna area of Jati Taluka and attacked him.

The teacher asked son of Ali Hassan regarding his constant absence from the school on which he became annoyed and complained to his father who along with a few local goons barged his way to the school and manhandled the teacher. Officials of the teachers association revealed that the perpetrators had the backing of local political figures that had been causing hindrance in the way of legal action.

They further said that the teacher who came under the on slot had a significant track record and had been serving as in charge Head Master of the School for the past many years. The President of the Teacher's association revealed that they were trying to resolve the issue but also facing political pressure. On the other hand teachers including Zaheer Hussain, Imtiaz Ali, Najeer Sarvech and others urged concerned authorities to provide protection to teachers.

Formation of a developed society possible with peace: Bugti F.P. Report

QUETTA: Balochistan Chief Minister Sarfraz Bugti on Saturday said that survival of humanity and formation of a developed society is possible with peace.

In his message issued by Chief Minister's Secretariat on the eve of "International Day of Peace", he said "Peace" is the biggest challenge in today's world, adding that internal affairs were to be streamlined as Pakistan was in the grip of international conspiracies.

He said the negative role played by social media to disturb peace in Balochistan and the role played by international forces to deteriorate law and order situation in Balochistan could not be ignored. Handlers sitting abroad were keeping youth away from the state through social media by sowing the seed of hatred between the state and the youth, he said. He added, "We will have to realise the gravity of the situation", adding, "We are sending our youth abroad, including Oxford for seeking education".

He said restoring peace and protection of the lives of the people was the responsibility of the state, adding steps were being taken for durable peace in the province. "On the eve of "International Day of Peace", we commit to making Pakistan and Balochistan the cradle of peace", he said.

MDCAT exam to be held today F.P. Report

MARDAN: To ensure transparency in the MDCAT test scheduled to be held on Sunday (today), Commissioner Mardan Mian Behzad Adil along with authorities of Khyber Medical University visited the examination center established in Elizabeth Rani College of Nursing and Allied Sciences Mardan here on Saturday.

On this occasion, the officers of administration including Secretary to Commissioner Sara Tawab, Additional Deputy Commissioner Saeedullah Jan, Additional Assistant Commissioner Baraq Awan and Shagufta Sarwar and Traffic In-Charge were present. The deputy commissioner Mardan informed the Vice Chancellor in detail about the point selected for the MD-CAT test.

He told that a ban had been imposed under Section 144, and a security and traffic plan had also been drawn up by the police. He further said that during the MD-CAT test, no government officer or official would be allowed to enter, while Additional Assistant Commissioner Buraq Awan had been appointed as the focal person to supervise all activities. The Vice-Chancellor expressed satisfaction over the arrangements made for the MD-CAT test. Deputy Commissioner Mardan issued necessary instructions to all other officers in this occasion.

Bialawal's birthday celebrated F.P. Report

SUKKUR: To commemorate Chairman Pakistan People's Party Bilawal Bhutto Zardari's 36th birthday, a dignified ceremony was organized at a local hotel in Sukkur here on Saturday.

Chairman of District Council Sukkur, Syed Kumail Hyder Shah was the chief guest of the ceremony. Besides other distinguished attendees included local Pakistan People's Party leaders, elected municipal representatives, members of PPP Ladies Wing, and a large number of senior workers. They cut the 36th birthday cake of Chairman Bilawal Bhutto Zardari and extended congratulations to the PPP Chairman.

Syed Kumail Hyder Shah, while addressing the ceremony and talking to Media extended warm felicitations to all on the occasion of PPP chairman Bilawal Bhutto Zardari's birthday.

Ongoing uplift schemes in Mardan reviewed

Fazal Haq

MARDAN: Under the chairmanship of Khyber Pukhtunkhwa Minister for Food Zahir Shah Toru, a review meeting regarding ongoing development schemes was held in Mardan, in which provincial assembly members Iftikhar Ali Mashwani, Ameer Farzand Khan, Chairman District Development Advisory Committee Zarshad Khan, Tariq Mehmood Aryan and Deputy Commissioner Mardan from all other departments chiefs attended.

In the meeting, the provincial minister and members of the assembly were briefed in detail about the progress on development projects. Provincial Food Minister Zahir Shah strictly directed the officers to perform their duties efficiently and provide maximum relief to the people. In the meeting, the officers of all the departments were instructed to complete the ongoing development projects as soon as possible so that the public can benefit from the ongoing projects. He said that timely completion of development

schemes is one of the top priorities of the government and no lapse will be tolerated in this regard.

MDCAT: To ensure transparency in the MD-CAT test to be held on September 22, Deputy Commissioner Mardan Mian Behzad Adil along with Jalil Khan Vice Chancellor Khyber Medical University visited the examination center established in Elizabeth Rani College of Nursing and Allied Sciences Mardan. On this occasion, the officers of administration including Secretary to Commissioner Sara Tawab, ADC Saeedullah Jan, AAC Baraq Awan and Shagufta Sarwar and Traffic In-Charge were present. On this occasion, Deputy Commissioner Mardan informed the Vice Chancellor in detail about the point selected for the MD-CAT test.

A ban has been imposed under Section 144, and a security and traffic plan has also been drawn up by the police. He further said that during the MD-CAT test, no government officer or official will be allowed to enter, while AAC Baraq Awan has been appointed

as the focal person to supervise all activities. The Vice-Chancellor expressed satisfaction over the arrangements made for the MD-CAT test. DC Mardan issued necessary instructions to all other officers in this occasion.

Protest arranged: A protest was held in front of the press club against the load shedding of electricity and gas in Mardan and slogans were raised. The protesters were led by MPA Abdul Salam Afridi, Tariq Mehmood Aryan, PTI leader Sajid Iqbal, Ravi Kumar and others.

Addressing the protesters, Abdul Salam Afridi said that the massive load shedding of electricity and gas in the entire province, including Mardan, has made it difficult for the people to live and people are suffering from severe pain and want to harass the people of the province by federal to bring them to the streets against the provincial government. He announced that if the problem of load shedding in Mardan is not resolved by next Friday, people will once again come out on the streets and protest inside the WAPDA offices.

Tareen inspect progress on key welfare projects

Saqib Mushtaq

LODHARAN: Jehangir Khan Tareen visited Lodhran to review the progress on welfare projects. Jehangir Khan Tareen reviewed the construction works of Tareen Institute of Computer Education and Resources (TICER) and Amna Girls College Lodhran and expressed satisfaction over the speed and quality of the construction works.

Tareen Education Foundation CEO Akbar Khan was also present. Jehangir Khan Tareen directed to complete both the projects on time. The construction of TICER University will cost more than one billion 25 crore rupees while the construction of Amna Girls College will cost more than 65 crore rupees.

Jehangir Tareen said that with the construction of ACER, the students of South Punjab, especially Lodhran and Bahawalpur, will be able to get modern education facilities of infor-



mation technology and computer. God willing, Tycer will be an ideal institution where children from low income families will also be able to build their brilliant future. He said that Ahalyan will continue to serve Lodhran selflessly through welfare projects.

Drugs seized: The mission to make the district drug-free is ongoing and the Lodhran police has achieved significant success against drugs. DSP Dunyapur Mian Abdul Rauf along with SHO Police Station City Dunyapur Muhammad Rais Ansar said that SHO City Dunyapur, while taking

action against drugs, recovered 10 kg 691 grams of hashish.

Acting on a tip-off, the police arrested the notorious drug dealer Mujahid Teli. 1900 rupees were also recovered. The accused was carrying the drugs on a motorcycle, on which the police, acting on a secret tip, arrested the accused. Muhammad Rais congratulated Ansar and the team. On this occasion, DPO Kamran Mumtaz said that the district police is continuing its crackdown against drug peddling. There is no place in the district for drug dealers, all will go behind bars.

Commissioner reviews preparations for MDCAT

Sahibzada Afridi

KOHAT: Commissioner Kohat Division Syed Motasim Billah Shah has along with the Deputy Commissioner Kohat Abdul AKram visited Cadet College Kohat to ensure the transparent and peaceful holding of the upcoming MD CAT test to be held in Kohat for admissions to the medical colleges. He reviewed the preparations for conducting the MD CAT test and directed the authorities concerned to follow the proposed action plan for conducting the test.

Commissioner Kohat said that cheating in exams is a scourge and strict measures are needed to eradicate it as it deprives the talented and intelligent



people of its due rights, so strict and foolproof arrangements should be made for clean and transparent conduct of MD CAT test. Deputy Commissioner Kohat on this occasion

gave necessary directions to the authorities concerned to provide security, parking facilities and other administrative and technical resources for the transparent holding of the said test.

More franchises of USC's to be opened in Dir

F.P. Report

LOWER DIR: The Pakistan Muslim League Nawaz candidate for NA 6 Haji Rohullah Shakir has said that more utility stores franchises will be established in the Jandol and Maidan areas. Talking to local journalists at Munda here the other day, he said that gas facilities would be provided to local residents on merit in different areas.

The PML-N leader welcomed the cooperation from the heads of government departments and said that through mutual under-

standing and cooperation the needy people would be provided with facilities of gas on their doorstep. He said that he had recently met the SNGPL district in-charge Mahmood Khan, general manager of utility stores and chairperson Benazir Income Support Programme (BISP) Rubina Khalid in Islamabad. He said that although the people had not voted for the PML-N in the general election, yet he was determined to serve the poor people for local development.

The PML-N leader said the BISP chairperson

Rubina Khalid had a detailed discussion regarding the programme and said that millions of poor people were benefiting from it. He said that efforts were being made to remove the difficulties faced by the people in getting the BISP stipend. He said that Ms Rubina Khalid issued orders for the approval of Benazir Income Support Program Center in the Munda area of Lower Dir as hundreds of poor people of Munda tehsil, especially women, were facing difficulties in going to the BISP offices in far off areas.



Residents told to stay indoors as air pollution blankets Kyiv

KYIV (AP): Authorities in Ukraine advised residents in the capital Kyiv to stay indoors as air pollution, partly caused by fires in the region, blanketed the city.

Ukraine's Ministry of Environmental Protection and Natural Resources said the pollution was a result of the burning of peatlands and other wildfires in the region combined with autumn temperature fluctuations. The capital woke up to thick smog with the rancid smell of blazing fires in the air. Some people were spotted wearing masks.

The Ukrainian capital topped a list of the most polluted major cities in a real-time database by IQAir, a Swiss company that monitors air quality levels. Its air quality appeared to have improved somewhat since as the city came down in the ranking later in the day. Kyiv's Department of Environmental Protection and Climate Change said that "the likely cause of this is fires in the Kyiv region."

Fires have been reported in the Vyshhorod district, around 20 kilometers (around 12 miles) north of the capital. Officials warned about an increased concentration of suspended particles, such as dust, soot, and smoke, in the air. In some areas of the city, air pollution levels have reached the maximum of the 100-point scale.

While human-driven climate change does not directly cause fires, it can increase the risk of wildfire as



warming temperatures and increasingly dry air, trees and soil can make it easier for fires to spread. Forest fires around the world have worsened in recent years, with almost twice as much tree cover burning in 2023 than 20 years ago, according to the World Resources Institute. Wildfire smoke can cause air quality to deteriorate even many miles away from fires. The main concern from the wildfire smoke is fine particle pollution, known as PM2.5. Fine particle pollution can cause short-term problems like coughing, as well as long-term impacts on the lungs and heart.

Pollution is a major health concern — with one major study estimating that pollution kills around 9 million people globally a year. Residents in Kyiv were advised to close their windows, limit time spent outdoors, drink plenty of water, and use an air purifier. "Particular attention should be paid to these recommendations by people with respiratory and cardiovascular diseases," said a statement from the Ecology Ministry. Autumn temperature variations trap harmful substances in the air, worsening pollution and reducing air quality, the ministry added.

US soldier who fled to North Korea sentenced

SEOUL (BBC): Travis King, the US soldier who fled from South to North Korea last year before being returned home, has been sentenced to one year of confinement and dishonourably discharged from the military.

He faced charges including desertion in July 2023 and assault of a non-commissioned officer. But with time already served and credit for good behaviour, the 24-year-old Army private walked free, his legal team told the BBC.

At hearing at Fort Bliss, Texas, he pleaded guilty to five of the original 14 military charges that had been filed against him. The other counts were dismissed. King joined the army in January 2021 and was in South Korea as part of a unit rotation when he crossed into North Korea.

At the hearing, King told military judge Lt Col Rick Mathew that he had decided to flee the US Army because he was "dissatisfied" with work and had been thinking about leaving for about a year before he wanted to desert from the US Army and never come back," King said, according to reporters inside the courtroom.

He also said he had been diagnosed with mental health conditions, though he maintained he was fit to stand trial and understood the charges. King's lawyer, Franklin Rosenblatt, said in a statement that his client accepts full responsibility for what happened and added that King "faced significant challenges in his life, including a difficult upbringing, exposure to criminal environments, and struggles with mental health."

All these factors have compounded the hardships he faced in the military," Mr Rosenblatt said. King illegally crossed into North Korea while on a civilian tour of the village of Panmunjom, located on the heavily guarded Demilitarised Zone (DMZ) between North and South Korea.

He joined the civilian tour after he was released from a South Korean prison where he had served nearly two months on charges that he assaulted two people and kicked a police car. After his release, he was taken to the airport so he could return to the Fort Bliss base to face disciplinary action. But instead of getting on the plane, King joined the civilian tour and ultimately bolted into North Korea, where he was detained by local authorities.

At the time, North Korean media reported that he had fled because of "inhuman treatment" and racism within the US military. He became the first American to be detained in North Korea in nearly five years. King was released two months later after "intense diplomacy," US officials said at the time. He was taken by a state department aircraft to a US airbase in South Korea.

One dead and several missing after rains in Japan

TOKYO (AFP): One person has died and seven others are missing, officials said, after "unprecedented" rains caused floods and landslides in the coastal quake-hit region of Ishikawa in northern Japan. Japan Meteorological Agency (JMA) on Saturday issued its highest "life-threatening" alert level for the Ishikawa region, following torrential rains which are expected to last until midday on Sunday.

More than 40,000 people across four cities have been ordered to evacuate after at least a dozen rivers in the region burst their banks. Two of the missing were carried away by strong river currents, according to Japan's public service broadcaster NHK. Meanwhile, another four workers carrying out road repairs following a deadly New Year's Day earthquake are also unaccounted for.

More than 120mm (4.7in) of rain was recorded in Wajima on Saturday morning, NHK reported, the heaviest downpour in the region since records began. JMA forecaster Sugimoto Satoshi told reporters: "This level of downpours has never been experienced in this region before. Residents must secure their safety immediately. The risk to their lives is imminent."

Footage aired by NHK showed an entire street in Wajima submerged under water. Government official Koji Yamamoto told AFP that 60 people had been working to restore a road hit by the quake in the city of Wajima, but were hit by a landslide on Saturday morning. "I asked [contractors] to check the safety of workers... but we are still unable to contact four people," Mr Yamamoto said.

Rescue workers who had tried to gain access to the site, he said, were "blocked by landslides". A further two people have been seriously injured, according to government officials. Some

6,000 households have been left without power, with an unknown number of households without running water, AFP agency reported. The cities of Wajima and Suzu and the town of Noto have ordered some 44,000 residents to evacuate and seek shelter in Ishikawa prefecture, Honshu island.

Meanwhile, another 16,000 residents in the Niigata and Yamagata prefectures north of Ishikawa were also told to evacuate, the AFP news agency said. Wajima and Suzu, in central Japan's Noto peninsula, were among the areas hardest hit by a huge 7.5 magnitude earthquake on New Years Day that killed at least 236 people. The region is still recovering from the powerful quake which had toppled buildings, ripped up roads and sparked a major fire. Japan has seen unprecedented rainfall in parts of the country in recent years, with floods and landslides sometimes causing casualties.

Son of Uganda's president ends 2026 election bid

KAMPALA (Reuters): The son of Uganda's long-serving leader Yoweri Museveni said on Saturday he had abandoned plans to run for presidency at the next election in 2026, urging his supporters to endorse his father instead.

President Museveni, who has led the country for 38 years, is widely expected to run for re-election even though he has not yet confirmed his candidacy. "I would like to announce that I will not be on the ballot paper in 2026," said Muhoozi Kainerugaba in a post on social media platform X, formerly Twitter. "I fully endorse

President Yoweri Museveni in the next elections," he said, urging his supporters to back his father for a seventh term. Kainerugaba, currently the head of the country's military, is widely expected to eventually become his father's chosen successor but is also known for making controversial comments. Museveni apologised to Kenya in 2022 after his son threatened on Twitter to invade the neighbouring country. Uganda's opposition has long accused Museveni of seeking to impose a monarchy on Uganda -- a claim the president denies.

Museveni, 80, has

ruled Uganda since 1986 and has changed the constitution twice to extend his rule. Human rights activists and his political opponents including pop star turned politician Bobi Wine have long accused Museveni of using security forces to jail, intimidate or torture opposition supporters. Museveni denies such accusations. Wine came second at the last presidential election in 2021. He rejected the results, alleging ballot stuffing, intimidation and abductions of his supporters. Museveni called it Uganda's fairest ever vote.

Pilot hostage freed by Papua rebels 'very happy' to go home

WELLINGTON (BBC): A New Zealand pilot who has been freed more than 19 months after being taken hostage by separatists in Indonesia says he is "very happy" to be going home to his family.

Philip Mehrtens was kidnapped by West Papua National Liberation Army fighters in February 2023 and was released after lengthy negotiations into the care of Indonesian officials on Saturday. He appeared before cameras looking thin and with a full beard but is said to be in good health.

The 38-year-old was kidnapped after he landed a small commercial plane in the remote, mountainous area of Nduga. "Today I have been freed. I am very happy that shortly I will be able to go home and meet my family," Mr Mehrtens, speaking in Indonesian, told reporters in Timika. "Thank you for everybody who helped me

today, so I can get out safely in a healthy condition."

His release follows months of "critical" diplomatic efforts by authorities in Wellington and Jakarta. New Zealand Prime Minister Christopher Luxon welcomed the release and New Zealand foreign minister Winston Peters added: "His family will be absolutely over the moon."

Indonesian police spokesperson Bayu Suseno said Mr Mehrtens was released and then picked up in a village called Yuguru in the Maibarak district before being flown to the city of Timika. Several days before the release, rebels told the BBC Indonesian service they would free Mr Mehrtens "safely and in accordance with international standards for the protection of human rights". "We the West Papua National Liberation Army (TPNPB), remain committed to upholding the values of

peace, respect and dignity in this situation," spokesman Sebby Sambom said.

The pilot, a father-of-one, is being flown to Jakarta to be reunited with his family. He was kidnapped after his small passenger plane - which belongs to Indonesia's Susi Air - landed in Nduga in February last year. He was meant to return a few hours later after dropping off five passengers but shortly after landing, rebels targeted the single-engine plane and seized him.

The five other passengers, who were indigenous Papuans, were released. The kidnapping was part of a long-running, often brutally violent conflict between the Indonesian government and West Papua's indigenous people. In April, at least one Indonesian soldier was killed after being ambushed by rebels while searching for the kidnapped New Zealander in the Papua region.

Germany's Welcome Culture sours to Auf Wiedersehen

BERLIN (BBC): On Sunday, voters in the eastern German state of Brandenburg will vote for a new regional parliament. The anti-migrant far-right Alternative for Germany, or AfD, could win the most votes. On 1 September the AfD won a major German election for the first time, coming first in the eastern state of Thuringia. In Brandenburg polls show the AfD leading with 28%.

To undermine support for the AfD, Chancellor Olaf Scholz's left-winged government introduced checks for migrants on all of Germany's borders. He also wants to increase deportations of people whose application for asylum is unsuccessful. Opposition conservatives meanwhile want the borders closed to asylum seekers altogether.

This is a very different country to the Germany of Angela Merkel. Almost a decade ago the then-chancellor refused to shut the borders to hundreds of thousands of people fleeing war and persecution in Syria and Afghanistan. "Wir schaffen das", or "We can do it", she famously said.

In 2015 and 2016 Germany took in around 1.5 million refugees and migrants, mostly from the Middle East. They were greeted at train stations with signs saying "welcome" and smiling volunteers handing out food and toys. A new German word was invented, "Willkommenskultur" or "welcome culture", and many Germans were suddenly proud of the country's new-found identity as a

safe haven for refugees.

Today, many of those refugees are becoming German themselves. A record 200,000 people became German citizens in 2023. The largest group came from Syria. These are the New Germans. The "2015 generation" is described as highly motivated by experts. Many could have stayed in Lebanon and Turkey, but pushed themselves on to Germany to make a new life. They are on average younger than the native-born population - 26 years old compared to the German average of 47 - and statistically more likely to be in work: 84% of the Syrian men who arrived in 2015 are in employment, compared to 81% of German-born men.

But with the rise of the AfD and an ever harsher tone towards migrants in mainstream politics, the 2015 "welcome culture" is hard to find today. Fewer refugees are now coming to Germany, with new arrivals down this year by 22% compared to the same period in 2023. But overall 3.48 million refugees are now living in the country — more than at any time since the 1950s. A third are from Ukraine.

Some local councils say they are struggling to cope logistically and financially. Right-wingers and the AfD say numbers are too high. Left-wingers blame the finance ministry's obsession with balancing the books and refusal to take on new debt. Add that to an enormous boost in military spending after Russia's full invasion



of Ukraine, and there is a nervousness in Germany that money and resources are tight. Chancellor Olaf Scholz's argumentative and divided coalition government has not helped voters feel more secure in the country's leadership. So how do the New Germans feel about this shift in mood in Germany?

Parvin was one of those who arrived in 2015, travelling for months, mostly walking, from Afghanistan to Germany with her three-year old son and disabled nephew. They were shot at by border guards and she feared for her life when the overcrowded dinghy they were in starting sinking in the Mediterranean. She has now just

received her German citizenship and this summer qualified as a social worker. A refugee success story, you might think. But she says the atmosphere has got worse for migrants since 2015. "I don't feel welcome here," she tells me.

"The rise of the far right and the hate towards refugees is mostly because of the bad picture of refugees in German media," she says. "When one refugee does something bad, the media makes it really big. And then of course people think that all refugees are bad." The latest political debate over migration started in August, after a stabbing in the town of Solingen, in which three people were killed. The suspect is a Syrian

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Rehmat Shah Afridi (Late)

Founder

Bilal Shah Afridi

Chief Executive

Jalil Afridi

Managing Editor

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Peshawar Office: 091-5700095, 0300- 9009001

Peshawar Fax: 091-5703687, Post Box No. 573

E-mail: fppeshawar@thefrontierpost.com

Lahore Office: 0335-4026284

Email: fplahore@thefrontierpost.com

Islamabad Office: 0321-5066253

Email: mahmoodafridi@thefrontierpost.com

Karachi Office: 021-32213411, 0300-8340907

Email: fpkarachi@thefrontierpost.com

*USA and Canada Toll Free Number 1-800-5905747

Common cause

A few months ago, two highly significant meetings took place in Beijing. The third plenary session of the 20th Central Committee of the Communist Party of China, where the deepening of reform policies to advance China's modernization was approved, highlighted how China is deepening its reform policies to continue developing Socialism with Chinese Characteristics, which adapts Marxist theory to China's specific reality. And the Conference Marking the 70th Anniversary of the Five Principles of Peaceful Coexistence showed the world a path toward peacefully resolving international conflicts through negotiation, within the framework of the United Nations' founding principles.

From a Marxist analysis of the current geopolitical situation, it is evident that the theoretical and practical principles stemming from the conclusions of these two meetings are directly interrelated in their strategic perspective. There can be no social, economic and cultural development of nations if a large portion of state resources is dedicated to sustaining a spiral of militarism, rather than being directed toward development aid projects that could eradicate poverty globally and build a future of peace and progress for all humanity in harmony with nature.

For this reason, highlighting certain elements from the conclusions of these two important meetings is essential to advance the development of 21st-century Marxism and adapt it to the reality of other countries that need it. While the path to building Socialism with Chinese Characteristics should not be imitated since it is a specific application of Marxism to China's reality, it does contain ideas and proposals that can be studied and adapted to the diverse and plural realities across the globe.

Continuing the reform policies will create the conditions necessary to achieve development goals and improve the quality of life for the Chinese people. However, reaching these objectives will be more difficult without an international relations framework prioritizing sincere dialogue and loyal cooperation over the Cold War mentality that divides the world into disconnected and opposed blocs, forcing countries into an absurd increase in military spending. For this reason, the comprehensive deepening of reforms is accompanied by an offer to the international community of the basic principles for peaceful coexistence, demonstrating China's international responsibility.

In this era of significant challenges for humanity, it is not only about achieving economic development but also about advancing the development of ideas and socialist ethics, ensuring that the people remain at the center of political life and seeking harmony with the ecological environment to guarantee security as the foundation of social stability.

No reform policy would be complete without recognizing that any modernization project must achieve harmony between humans and nature. This requires promoting measures to continue reducing carbon emissions and pollutants, actively combating climate change, and expanding green spaces to achieve ecological development.

Ultimately, it is about maintaining the successful pace of reform as an application of 21st-century Marxism. However, this will be more difficult if the importance of international issues is not addressed in an increasingly interconnected global community. The high-level modernization that China aims to achieve through deepening reform is closely tied to its offer to help create an international community that collectively faces the challenges of humanity and ensures a future of peace and progress in harmony. This is where the relationship between the Third Plenary Session of the 20th Central Committee and the 70th anniversary of the Five Principles of Peaceful Coexistence takes on its full importance, as it demonstrates China's determination to advance toward a community with a shared future for all humanity.

This approach is particularly significant at a time when NATO's recent summit continued to push for a Cold War mentality among its members, in which a nation's security must be achieved at the expense of others. This mentality divides the international community into disconnected and opposing blocs. Conversely, the Five Principles of Peaceful Coexistence are based on the need to consolidate mutual respect between states, adhering to the "Golden Rule" of non-interference in the internal affairs of other countries. This fully reflects the purposes and principles of the UN Charter and aligns with the fundamental interests of all peoples around the world. These principles address critical issues such as security policy, economics and diplomacy, promoting a just understanding of international law without allowing a hegemonic power to impose its will and interests on other countries. This framework calls for more equitable relations between the North and the South, strengthening South-South cooperation to lift many countries out of underdevelopment and poverty.

In an international community that includes multiple cultures, civilizations, religions, and different economic and social systems, the Five Principles of Peaceful Coexistence assert that no system or civilization can impose itself on others by force, and that all civilizations of the world have positive elements to learn from. Overcoming the politics of blocs and spheres of influence is the only way to help resolve the tensions and conflicts that affect dozens of peoples worldwide.

In this sense, the shared security model advocated by China aims to end the division of the world into a rich North that exploits a poor South, which remains dependent on the North. This model promotes more equitable relations between the North and South, and strengthens South-South cooperation to lift many countries out of underdevelopment and poverty. It is based on the principle that peaceful coexistence among all peoples on the planet is impossible without addressing poverty in countries of origin because a more prosperous world is a safer world. President Xi Jinping's proposal to move toward a community with a shared future for all humanity, based on the Five Principles of Peaceful Coexistence, is accompanied by the Belt and Road Initiative, along with the Global Development Initiative, Global Security Initiative and Global Civilization Initiative. These represent the most extensive and profound cooperation proposals for development ever known in history.

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Zelenskyy has a gamechanging plan to win peace

Timothy Garton Ash

EARLIER this week, I started a 3,000km, two-day journey back from the other end of Europe, where I witnessed Ukrainian resilience against Russian terror in the besieged city of Kharkiv. A university lecturer told me that from a 12th storey balcony in a north-eastern suburb she had actually seen the flashes of missiles taking off from launchpads just across the frontier, in the Russian city of Belgorod.

An S-300 missile can reach Kharkiv from Belgorod in about 30 seconds, so you have no time to hide. If it's not a missile, it's a glide bomb launched from a Russian warplane – and so, day after day, death rains indifferently down. After more than 900 days of the largest war in Europe since 1945, Ukraine is approaching a perilous moment of truth. The Ukrainian David has courage and innovation, but the Russian Goliath has ruthlessness and mass. In an underground location in Kharkiv, I was shown highly sophisticated, novel military uses of IT and drones. With its Cossack-style innovation, the country has developed more than 200 different kinds of drone.

A joke has it that two Ukrainian activists meet for a drink: "How's your drone company doing?" "Great, thanks, but how did you know I have one?" "Of course you do!" I find the bravery of Ukrainian soldiers constantly humbling, but they are being ground down by the sheer scale of Russia's assault and the Kremlin's willingness to use its own citizens as cannon fodder. Vladimir Putin has just ordered an increase of the Russian military on active service to a target figure of 1.5 million. "It's all about the numbers," a senior Ukrainian military intelligence officer told me. Ukraine's daring incursion into the Kursk region of Russia has given a psychological boost, but opinions are sharply divided about its strategic wisdom.

In the eastern Ukrainian region of Donetsk, there's a real danger of a Russian breakthrough if Putin's forces take the logistical hub of Pokrovsk. Ukrainians are exhausted. Trauma lurks just beneath the surface. Several times I saw the eyes of tough soldiers grow damp when they mentioned their fallen comrades. About half the country's energy infrastructure has been destroyed. This winter will be cruel. Meanwhile, the west continues to hesitate and hold back, fearful of escalation –

targeting technology – to strike more of the sites in Russia from which attacks originate. Many lives could have been saved if this had been given sooner. The head of the Kharkiv region –

As the UN general assembly meets in New York next week, Zelenskyy will personally present his plan to Biden. Top of the list is getting American permission to use western missiles – including British Storm Shadow missiles, which have US targeting technology – to strike more of the sites in Russia from which attacks originate. Many lives could have been saved if this had been given sooner.

led (if that's the word) in this regard by the US president, Joe Biden.

Seeing all this, Ukrainian leaders are making a new pitch. Having for two years talked only of total victory, defined as recovering all the country's territory in the frontiers of 1991, including Crimea and Donbas, they now speak of reaching a position where Ukraine can negotiate from strength. Unlike many in the west, however, they understand that the only way to get there is to turn the tide on the battlefield: to knock Goliath sharply back on his heels, if not his arse. The insight is crucial. A central Asian leader who knows Putin well was asked by a western interlocutor whether the Russian president will negotiate. Yes, came the prompt reply, "when his generals tell him he's losing".

That's what the president, Volodymyr Zelenskyy, had in mind when he told the Yalta European Strategy (YES) conference in Kyiv last week that we need "a gamechanger to make Russia make peace". As the UN general assembly meets in New York next week, Zelenskyy will personally present his plan to Biden. Top of the list is getting American permission to use western missiles – including British Storm Shadow missiles, which have US

al administration told me that in the few months since Biden – faced with a new Russian offensive towards Kharkiv this May – finally allowed limited strikes on targets across the nearby frontier, the number of S-300 missile attacks on Ukraine's second largest city has declined. (The air-launched glide bombs, however, have not yet been impeded.)

We don't know all the details of the Zelenskyy plan, but besides those deep strikes it will probably include a request for sustained funding, after this year's long delayed US congressional vote of \$61bn runs out; tightened sanctions on Russia and its Chinese and Indian enablers, plus the use of frozen Russian assets held in the west for Ukrainian reconstruction; and a bold bid for the shield of Nato membership to cover the roughly four-fifths of Ukraine's sovereign territory that Kyiv actually controls.

There are two problems with this plan. First, Biden's entire track record suggests he is likely to give only a fraction of what Zelenskyy asks. There's a fierce argument inside his administration about the deep strikes. Future funding would depend on Congress. He has certainly not committed to Nato membership for any part of Ukraine. Incrementalism

for fear of escalation has been a hallmark of the entire handling of the war by this president and his national security adviser, Jake Sullivan. As a Ukrainian friend nicely put it, "Ukrainians are triggered by Sullivan's 'escalation management'." What odds that the old man's approach will change dramatically now, in the twilight of his presidency?

Second, even if the US and its allies did all of this, would it produce such an effect that Putin's generals would "tell him he's losing"? How exactly would that be achieved? Perhaps by targeting Russia's own energy infrastructure? Understandably, top Ukrainian officials are keeping stumm on the military details of their plans, but well-informed defence analysts wonder how much they can realistically do in the next months. At the YES conference, Col Pavlo Palisa, the commander of Ukraine's elite 93rd brigade, spoke of the "tyranny of time". At the frontline you need to move super fast to hit five key enemy targets as they appear, but by the time the necessary weapons and permissions come through, it's too late and "there are now 50 targets". At the pace the US-led west is moving, time is on Russia's side. And, needless to say, Putin is waiting for Donald Trump to be reelected US president on 5 November.

All the more reason for the vice-president, Kamala Harris, who will inherit this major geopolitical challenge if she becomes president, and all those European allies who understand what is at stake, to urge Biden to leap over his own shadow and make the potentially gamechanging moves now. This may be the last chance to enable Ukraine to achieve something that can plausibly be called victory, which is the precondition for a lasting peace. Otherwise, Kyiv will probably be forced to sue for a cessation of hostilities sometime next year, negotiating from a position of weakness. That would not be peace, just a pause before another round of war. In Ukraine, there would be despair and fury; in the Kremlin, rejoicing; and in the rest of the world, most consequentially of all, swirling contempt for the weakness of the west.

The Guardian

Macron's Barnier appointment pushes France to the brink

Khattar Abou Diab

WHITE smoke finally rose out of the Elysee Palace on Sept. 5 after a wait of about two months following the early legislative elections. French President Emmanuel Macron had just given Michel Barnier, the former foreign minister and EU Brexit negotiator, the task of forming the next French government.

Was this a constitutional decision or an actual "coup"? The last elections resulted in a fragmented National Assembly, with the New Popular Front, a broad left-wing alliance with the Greens, gaining the largest number of representatives among the three main blocs, but without acquiring a majority in the parliament.

Macron, whose camp has been clearly defeated, continues to maneuver by relying on the constitutional power granted to the president to choose the new prime minister, and ignoring the tradition that demands the nomination of the major bloc's candidate. Within the political class, it was expected that the leader of the Elysee would embrace the tradition and appoint Lucie Castets, the New Popular Front candidate endorsed by Jean-Luc Melenchon's "Rebellious France" party. However, the president is using a sorry political spectacle, dominated by partisan squabbles and political calculations, as an excuse, claiming that Castets, a French civil servant, is not fit to form a credible and stable government.

Taking advantage of the seven-week Olympic Games interlude, Macron remained true to his style of vertical governance, attributing the political deadlock to the absence of a parliamentary majority and tactical party calculations, in order to impose his own choice. Instead of appointing a key figure from the leading party on July 7, Macron opposed the NPF's choice, proposing former Prime Minister, Socialist Bernard Cazeneuve, who was rejected by his own party and by the New Popular Front. Furthermore, Macron noted the rejection by the National Rally, led by Marine Le Pen, of the Matignon proposal by former right-wing minister Xavier Bertrand.

In order to break this deadlock, Macron propelled veteran Barnier, a member of the Republicans, to the forefront and put him in charge of forming the government. Thus, his game with the right – represented by his main party the Republicans – has a new twist, after having consistently weakened this party since 2017 in order to absorb its electorate. This time, the president has been forced to call in a tenor of the right to save what remains of his five-year term. There is no doubt that Barnier, a skilled negotiator, has been forced to compromise with the presidential camp. But can the right-winger turn the page? The new political landscape needs to be clarified, with the left denouncing Macron's "coup," and the far right keeping the new Matignon tenant under the threat of a censorship veto after indirectly endorsing his appointment.

A furious and divided left has responded angrily to Macron's strategy. Insisting that the elections have been "stolen from the French people," the left denounced the "coup" staged by the president, and the "collision" between the "Macronists" and the far right (National Rally). Marine Tondelier, leader of the Ecologists, said:

"The Barnier government embodies the alliance between the Macronists, the right and the far right." For his part, former French President François Hollande believes that Macron could have favored the Republican Front, and teases Barnier, who, according to him, has "been cleared by the National Rally." The New Popular Front, the leading force in the French National Rally, is furious to see a member of the Republicans, a party that came fifth in the polls, rise to the top of the state. The left sees Barnier as lacking legitimacy, and seems determined to censure him in order to change the situation.

However, the NPF is not without fault in the crisis of the regime, because of its adoption of the radical line imposed by the Rebellious France, and the imbalance within its components. In the face of the president's maneuver to divide the left in order to form a "decent" majority, the Union of the Left has been maintained as a facade. In reality, the "Bernard Cazeneuve to Matignon" hypothesis is leaving its mark on the Socialist Party. The "notables" of the SP, starting with its number one, Olivier Faure, and Hollande, did not give sufficient support to the Matignon candidacy of Bernard Cazeneuve, former prime minister (2016-2017) under Hollande, helping Macron to torpedo this choice and rush the appointment of Barnier as prime minister. Hence, Macron, judging that the country is made up of a predominant right-wing (taking into consideration electoral consultations), accommodates himself with this choice despite the risk of favoring the National Rally by designating it de facto as the arbiter of the fragmented political landscape.

On another note, several members of the Socialist Party, which has long been the leading party on the left, are urgently calling for a Socialist Party congress open to all the party's factions, so that the left can regain confidence, and some are openly demanding a break with the radical left. This view is shared by left-of-center centrists who believe that "radicalism has shown its limits" and that "the left cannot win without a strengthened Socialist Party." Still, within the NPF, the "sectarian drift" and "brutal style" of the leadership of the Rebellious France movement are not appreciated. For this, Faure (Socialist Party), Tondelier (the Greens) and Fabien Roussel (French Communist Party) are accused of being too lenient in the face of the domination of Melenchon's Rebellious France.

Despite these disputes, the NPF is united in denouncing Macron's denial of democracy, to the extent that the Socialist Party has agreed to sit in parliament without voting on the proposal put forward by 80 deputies from the NPF to dismiss Macron, in which members of the parliament appeal to Article 68 of the constitution, believing that the head of state has "failed in his duties" since the dissolution.

While waiting for the composition of the Barnier government to be determined by political calculations and personal considerations, the left has shown itself incapable of disrupting Macron's strategy of maneuvering to complete his mandate at all costs, with the risk of pushing the situation to the extremes and weakening national cohesion.

Arab News

Device bombs were in our living rooms, in our pockets, in our faces

Naji Bakhti

BY Tuesday afternoon, the wails of Beirut – of the country – could be heard not only from its rooftops and balconies but also from its kitchens and living rooms, from its hospitals and coffee houses, from its grocery stores and barber shops, from its cars and pavements.

The sirens of ambulances echoed through the city's streets. Emergency vehicles sped past terrorised pedestrians who were caught between calling their loved ones and discarding their electronic devices altogether. One of the first messages I received from a well-meaning friend was a plea to "stay away from your phone". She had presumably used her phone to send it, and I had used mine to read it. "You too," I texted back.

About 4,000 pagers, and a large number of electronic devices, belonging to Hezbollah members were

detonated by Israel in civilian and public spaces across Lebanon on Tuesday and Wednesday. The attacks killed 37 people, among them two children, and wounded about 3,000 people. Security sources, according to Reuters, confirmed that Israel was responsible for the attacks, though Israeli officials have yet to comment. As for the mechanism, speculation abounds. Analysts suspect supply-chain tampering or manipulation of the devices before they reached Hezbollah's hands.

It was not purely the scale of the attack – substantial though it was – that caused shock and disbelief among the Lebanese, but the pervasiveness of it. Doctors tossed away their pagers, wedding planners dispensed with their walkie-talkies, and parents disconnected their baby monitors. Misinformation soon followed the explosions. Wifi

routers, it was erroneously claimed, presented an immediate danger. In our living rooms, in our pockets, on our wrists, now sat intimate timebombs capable of ending or upending a life. The thought had occurred to me as I swiped away messages of concern from friends and family to read reports of exploding pagers.

I looked up from my phone in the chaos of the aftermath to see Lebanese men and women caressing their screens with their cheeks, serenading them, whispering sweet words of endearment into them: "Habibti mama, stay vigilant" or "God protect you, go home, I'll meet you there." Words that were meant for partners, parents, children, had been swallowed whole by ostensible instruments of war.

A large proportion of the injuries were facial and resulted in partial or total

loss of vision. Dr Elias Warrak, an ophthalmologist at Mount Lebanon University hospital, stated that in 25 years of practice, he had "never removed as many eyes" as he had been obliged to do on Tuesday. Hospitals around the country, but especially in the southern suburbs of Beirut and the south of Lebanon, were overwhelmed as they struggled to keep up with the sheer volume of victims who required urgent attention. Still, by Thursday blood donors were being turned away from hospitals. Enough blood had been taken for the time being.

In recent years, Lebanon has seen more than its fair share of devastation from the Beirut port explosion in 2020, which ripped through the city, killing 218 people and injuring thousands, to the continuing economic crisis, which has seen the col-

lapse of the local currency, with countless Lebanese losing their savings, their pensions or their jobs due to the corruption and negligence of the country's ruling elite (of which Hezbollah is a pivotal component). Over the past 11 months, Hezbollah and Israel have exchanged fire, with the south of Lebanon bearing the brunt of the latter's attacks on this side of the border.

If the aim of the attack was to spread fear and panic in the streets of Lebanon, then it succeeded. I saw the terror in the eyes of ordinary people who had recognised it in the eyes of others, who feared for their own lives and those of their loved ones. The indiscriminate detonation of explosive devices in public spaces resulted in the killing and maiming of innocent bystanders and children. The method may have been hi-tech, "audacious" and "unprecedented", but

the outcome is all too familiar, old-fashioned and on-brand for a state that is being investigated by the international court of justice (ICJ) for a "plausible" genocide in Gaza.

Not long after the second wave of explosions, I approached a parking attendant to retrieve the keys to my father's crumbling 96 Mercedes model. As I reached for change, I felt my mother's hands pulling at my elbow. With an unpractised smile, the attendant assured her that he was not carrying a pager.

He then asked whether I was in the habit of carrying one myself and concluded, before I could respond, that we would not still be having this conversation if I was. I placed 300,000 lira (£2.50) in the palm of his hand. "May you be compensated," he said, as he tossed me the keys and collapsed back into his white plastic chair.

With Kyiv visit, Modi affirms India’s strategic autonomy

NARENDRA Modi last month paid a seven-hour visit to Kyiv, the first visit by an Indian prime minister since Ukraine became a sovereign state in 1991. The visit took place just a few weeks after Modi’s high-profile visit to Moscow, where President Vladimir Putin had described Indo-Russian relations as “a particularly privileged strategic partnership.”

Since the start of the war in Ukraine in February 2022, India has refused to join Western nations in condemning the Russian invasion, despite New Delhi’s close political and economic ties with the US and its allies. Indian commentators have instead highlighted age-old defense, energy, economic and technological relations with Russia, which have largely remained in place. An Indian diplomat has described the Indian position as “a perfect blend of realism, pragmatism and tactical flexibility.”

Bilateral trade with Russia reached \$65 billion in 2023, largely due to India’s oil imports, which reached a record 2.1 million barrels per day in May this year. Russia still meets 50 percent of the country’s defense needs, while India is presently seeking the S-400 air defense system, nuclear-powered submarines, stealth frigates, fighter aircraft, helicopters and light tanks.

Not surprisingly, Modi’s Moscow visit evoked criticisms. A US State Department spokesperson conveyed “concerns” about

the relationship, while Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky viewed the visit as a “devastating blow to peace efforts” and specifically conveyed his dismay at the Indian leader hugging “the world’s most bloody criminal in Moscow.”

As part of an effort to reach out to non-Western nations, then-Ukrainian Foreign Minister Dmytro Kuleba had visited New Delhi in March. He encouraged India to play a larger role in helping to end the war. He also gratuitously reminded India of deepening Sino-Russian relations in the context of India’s ongoing border disputes with China.

This had little impact in New Delhi, as India participated in the “Summit on Peace in Ukraine” in Switzerland in June, but it refused to sign the joint declaration as Russia had not been invited to the conference. A little before Modi reached Kyiv, Ukrainian troops commenced their incursion into Russian territory in Kursk to strengthen their country’s bargaining position in later negotiations.

Modi’s visit to Kyiv took place against this fraught background. A senior Indian official said that the country had independent ties with both Russia and Ukraine and “would like to contribute in finding peaceful solutions to the conflict.” In Kyiv, without naming any country, Modi addressed Ukrainian sensitivities by referring to innocent children being killed, saying that “the heart bleeds and that pain is terrifying.”

Talmiz Ahmad

Minister of External Affairs S. Jaishankar said India had conveyed an offer to assist in peace talks in a “very back and forth discussion” between the leaders.

Modi and Zelensky signed a joint statement affirming their commitment “to further bilateral relations” and seek a “strategic partnership in the future.” The two countries agreed on the need to uphold international law, respect the sovereignty and territorial integrity of states and pursue the peaceful resolution of disputes through “dialogue and diplomacy.” The statement identified trade, agriculture, defense, education, science and technology and culture as areas for enhanced bilateral cooperation.

Opinion is divided on the significance of the Modi visit. A US-based commentator viewed the visit as a “subtle shift” away from Russia, noting the increasing value of India’s ties with the West, the decreasing role of Russia as India’s defense partner and Indian concerns relating to Sino-Russian ties. Another writer rather extravagantly thought that, with this visit, India was seeking to insert itself as a player in European and global geopolitical developments and emerge as a shaper of global security structures.

Other analysts have asserted that the visit would have no impact on India’s close and substantial ties with Russia. In their view, India sees no advantage in boosting the role of Europe in world affairs, as that would only

strengthen Western hegemony and stunt the emergence of a multipolar world order in which India expects to play a leading role.

A few Indian commentators have gone overboard and suggested that India could be a mediator in the Ukraine conflict. Some have even said that Indian National Security Adviser Ajit Doval carried a peace plan with him when he visited Moscow last week for the BRICS meeting of security officials. None of this has any basis in reality. India has no appetite for mediation and, given the intransigent positions of the two sides (and those of Ukraine’s Western backers), it sees no scope for a peace process at this point.

After Modi’s visit to Moscow in July, the US ambassador in New Delhi had said that, “in times of conflict, there is no such thing as strategic autonomy.” This reflects the self-centered and discredited US view that, “if you are not with us, you are against us.” It ignores the fact that an overwhelming majority of the world’s nations do not accept the division of the world into “us” and “them” and have no wish to join what is effectively the idea of a new cold war being promoted by Washington.

With Modi’s Kyiv visit, India has affirmed its commitment to strategic autonomy, while upholding the need for peace. India has also affirmed its place with the Global South in rejecting big power competition and promoting instead a multipolar order in which nations shape and pursue their interests without external pressures.

Was Kursk incursion a risk worth taking?

Luke Coffey

So far, it has been able to hold onto the territory it has captured, meaning that any future peace talks could involve trading the areas under Ukraine’s control for Russian-held territory. It is also likely that Ukraine had designs on the Kursk nuclear power plant, hoping to use it as leverage in negotiations for the Zaporizhzhia nuclear power plant, which Russia has controlled since the early days of the war. But so far Ukraine has come up short of achieving this

IT has now been several weeks since Ukrainian forces crossed into Russia’s Kursk Oblast. This move caught many by surprise, including Russia and Ukraine’s allies in the West. It marked the first time in more than 80 years that Russian territory had fallen under the control of an outside power. After initially allocating about 1,000 troops and dozens of armored vehicles for the operation, it is estimated that Ukraine now has several thousand troops and hundreds of armored vehicles operating in Kursk.

This is not the first time that forces aligned with Ukraine have entered the territory of the Russian Federation. In May 2023 and again earlier this year, anti-Putin Russian forces from the Freedom of Russia Legion and the Russian Volunteer Corps entered Russia’s Belgorod Oblast and captured a few border towns. However, it is now clear that Ukraine’s current operation in neighboring Kursk Oblast is different.

Earlier incursions into Russian territory relied on ethnic Russian units and, if Ukrainian military units played a role, it was not made public and was likely minimal. This time, the operation in Kursk Oblast is predominantly being carried out by regular Ukrainian units. Ukrainian flags are being hoisted over municipal buildings and videos on social media show Ukrainian troops engaging with the local population and providing humanitarian support. Many videos show troops speaking in Ukrainian to the local Russian inhabitants, as this region has close cultural ties to Ukraine. Interestingly, the current front lines in Kursk are approximately in the same location as the border between the short-lived Ukrainian People’s Republic and the Bolsheviks in 1918.

Unlike the earlier incursions, which were merely raids with no intention of holding the captured territory, it is clear that Ukraine has every intention of holding onto the Russian territory under its control. Open-source intelligence and commercially available satellite imagery show Ukrainian forces constructing defensive positions. Ukraine has already achieved most of its short-term objectives with the Kursk operation.

Kyiv was in desperate need of a change in the narrative of the war after failing to make much battlefield progress over the past year. Ukraine’s successful, albeit limited, military operation in Kursk has done just that.

Local authorities in Kursk, Russia’s internal intelligence services, the Ministry of Defense and the Kremlin have not coordinated their response effectively.

The Russians have taken weeks to mobilize forces to counter the Ukrainian advances and there are reports that Russia has started counteroffensive operations in Kursk. However, Moscow’s progress has been slow. As Russian forces begin to counterattack, the Ukrainians have not only held the front lines in Kursk

Kyiv was in desperate need of a change in the narrative of the war after failing to make much battlefield progress over the past year. Ukraine’s successful, albeit limited, military operation in Kursk has done just that. So far, it has been able to hold onto the territory it has captured, meaning that any future peace talks could involve trading the areas under Ukraine’s control for Russian-held territory.

objective. At the time of writing, Ukrainian forces were still about 50 km away from the Kursk plant.

One of Ukraine’s primary goals in entering Kursk may have been to force Russia to withdraw troops from other regions along the front line. In particular, the area around the small Ukrainian town of Pokrovsk in Donetsk has been a focal point of the fighting in recent weeks. The Ukrainians have fought staunchly to hold onto Pokrovsk because important regional rail and road networks converge in the area. However, Russia has been willing to sacrifice greatly to capture the town and is making weekly progress. Moving tens of thousands of Russian troops from one part of the battlefield hundreds of kilometers away to Kursk Oblast could take weeks, if not longer. Therefore, it is too early to tell if Ukraine’s incursion into Kursk will force Russia to pull back in other places, such as Pokrovsk.

Ukraine’s operation in Kursk has exposed a significant vulnerability in Russia’s defenses. It seems almost unbelievable that, after two and a half years of major warfare, Russia left an important section of its border largely undefended, allowing Ukraine to make rapid progress.

Russia’s slow response to Ukraine’s Kursk operation also indicates dysfunction within Russia’s internal security apparatus.

but have even made isolated tactical gains. If Kyiv intends to use the territory under its control in Kursk as leverage in future peace talks, it will be crucial for Ukraine to avoid overextending its forces in the region.

Ukraine’s Western supporters remain divided on whether the military operation in Kursk was a wise decision. Critics point out that Ukraine has a limited amount of manpower and every soldier and armored vehicle is needed along the most precarious sections of the front line to prevent a Russian breakthrough.

However, proponents of the Kursk operation argue that controlling Russian territory might force Moscow to pull back troops from the front lines. At the very least, Ukraine’s military success has boosted morale and reminded Ukraine’s American and European supporters that it can achieve battlefield victories when given the right equipment and support.

Time will tell whether Ukraine’s gamble was worth it, but it serves as a reminder to expect the unexpected in warfare. Few would have imagined that a war, which Russian military planners had hoped would last only a few days, would result in hundreds of thousands of soldiers dead and wounded and Ukrainian control over a small portion of Russian territory. As the war enters its third winter, there is no end in sight.

Global detente in Syria poses crucial questions for Turkiye

FROM the beginning, the conflict in Syria has been significantly shaped by external actors, particularly the US, Russia, Turkiye, Iran, and the Gulf states. Things became more complicated in 2015 after the US returned to the battlefield as the leader of the coalition to fight Daesh, which also coincided with Russia’s intervention in the war-torn country. Nonstate actors, namely Daesh, were considered the main threats by the two global powers.

As a result, the US and Russia intervened to some extent and the conflict turned into a proxy war between the two. Foreign interventions not only complicated the war but also led to an intense competition among global powers on both the international and regional level. The US and Russia became the dominant actors in the conflict, changing the balance on the ground in favor of the regime. This was largely due to the cohesion among the Russian elite. Division among the Washington elite, meanwhile, led to misguided US policies in Syria, fragmentation of the Syrian opposition, and empowerment of the Iranian-Russian axis.

However, following its full-scale invasion of Ukraine in 2022, Russia began to move some troops and weaponry from Syria to the front lines in Ukraine. These developments sparked initial optimism among Western observers about a

potential strengthening of US influence in the region. Many viewed the withdrawal as a positive development, hoping it would at least prevent a new era of regional rivalry among global powers.

Following Russia’s move, there were reports that the US might also reduce its presence in Syria. The US and Iraq have recently reached a deal to begin removing American forces stationed there by 2026. If the plan is successful, it will bring an end to the US military presence in a country still facing problems as a result of the invasion in 2003. Officials in Washington have rejected reports of the US withdrawing from Syria completely, saying that troops will remain there in order to prevent the resurgence of Daesh. There are reportedly 900 US troops still in the eastern part of Syria today.

However, US troops in Syria aim not only to prevent the resurgence of Daesh, but also to contain the influence of Iran and Russia, both of which also have a military presence in the country. Washington seeks to counter both by supporting its Kurdish allies, the People’s Defense Units, or YPG, the Syrian branch of the Kurdistan Workers’ Party, which is designated a terrorist organization by Ankara.

The US partnership with the

Sinem Cengiz

YPG is viewed by Ankara as a national security threat, and remains the most contentious issue in the relationship between the two countries. Due to the rise of YPG in Syria, Turkiye intervened militarily following the Russian and US interventions. At first Turkish operations sought to counter Daesh, but later focused on eliminating the YPG. Within this context, Washington’s potential exit has serious implications for Ankara.

Five key dimensions characterize the Syrian conflict: First: a possible resurgence of Daesh requiring a global response. Second: Syria’s integration into the regional system, which would require at least some stability in the country. Third: a possible decline in the global powers’ influence in Syria leading to a rise in Iranian influence. Fourth: Turkish-Syrian normalization tied to Turkiye’s military withdrawal from Syria; and, finally, the Gaza war, which risks further regional instability and could enable terrorist groups to thrive in Syria.

Then, the question arises: Why did reports of a potential US withdrawal from Syria come out now? Is it related to the US decision to withdraw from Iraq, or to the upcoming US elections, which many predict will result in victory for former President Donald

Trump? In early October 2019, Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan and Trump agreed on a partial US withdrawal. Trump later ordered a full withdrawal, but it was halted at the last minute by a decision to secure oil in Syria. Shortly after, Turkiye launched Operation Peace Spring and entered parts of northern Syria. However, Russia secured most of the territory left by the US following a deal between the YPG and Damascus. Last week, Turkiye’s Foreign Minister Hakan Fidan held a meeting with John Bass, acting US undersecretary of state for political affairs. This meeting is particularly noteworthy given Bass’ previous role as ambassador to Turkiye during a contentious period in US-Turkish relations due to Washington’s support for the YPG.

US involvement in the Syrian war is a complex story, so it is possible any withdrawal will be complex as well. The decision to stay or leave is a strategic one that will reverberate across the region. For Ankara, future US withdrawal from Syria might be a positive development. Yet, even if this happens, Ankara will be cautious regarding its implications. A poorly coordinated withdrawal by the US could pose significant risks for Turkiye, leaving the country alone in the face of multiple threats. So, for Ankara, the crucial question is how and when any departure will take place.

No wonder Britain is giving up hope, the country is run by amateurs

INFLATION is down to 2.2 percent, Nationwide has just introduced its first sub 4 percent mortgage deal in months, unemployment is at its lowest level since 1974 and Britain remains the fastest growing economy in the G7. After years of household budgets being squeezed – first by Covid and then the cost of living crisis – things are finally starting to look up. The public should be feeling positive about Britain’s future, but the latest figures show consumer confidence in the UK is actually falling. GfK’s Consumer Confidence Index tumbled seven points this month to minus 20. This confidence matters because it underpins economic growth as a significant driver of the public’s willingness to part with their cash.

Expectations for the general economy over the next 12 months fell by 12 points to minus 27, while the forecast for personal finances is down nine points to minus three. The figures, for once, cannot be blamed on “14 years of Tory failure” since they show the downturn occurred after the general election. Instead, they reflect just how badly Labour has managed its first 11 weeks in office.

We knew the headlines were bad – but this data reveals the true cost of self-defeating statements like “things can only get worse” and wrong-headed policies like robbing pensioners to pay public sector workers. Doom-mongering Sir Keir Starmer, along with his equally Cassandra-like Chancellor Rachel Reeves have basically trampled over the green shoots of our economic recovery by actively scaring people off spending.

As Neil Bellamy, consumer insights director at GfK, confirmed: “Following the withdrawal of the winter fuel payments, and clear warnings of further difficult deci-

sions to come on tax, spending and welfare, consumers are nervously awaiting the Budget decisions on October 30.” Justin King, who as former CEO of Sainsbury’s certainly knows his onions, agreed the upcoming Budget was to blame for the slump, saying: “The reality for most people has been positive for a while. Generally speaking, wage settlements have been ahead of inflation, household budgets have absorbed the shock of the cost of living crisis over the last couple of years, so it felt like things were getting a little better ... but obviously we’ve had this backdrop of bad news starting with government.”

Economic illiteracy is squared when you consider that Labour has gambled everything on “growth” – while refusing to spell out how that will be achieved beyond Milibandesque blather about conjuring up 650,000 green jobs from thin air. But this public crisis of confidence surely extends further than mere fears about the Budget, which Reeves has reportedly been stupid enough to have described as “the biggest opportunity since Black Wednesday to bury the Tories as they deserve”.

Reeves’ economic incompetence is compounded by her ideological zeal. That would perhaps explain why she is yet to react to the news that the Treasury has been handed an extra £10 bn fiscal headroom – despite her repeated insistence that everything she accounts for has been “fully costed”. Baroness Altmann, the former pensions minister, has rightly asked whether she’ll give the winter fuel allowance back to the 10 million pensioners about to be stripped of the £300 allowance. So far, no comment.

Perhaps she’s too preoccupied supporting the sisterhood stripping

Camilla Tominey

No. 11 of its male-dominated art collection and replacing it with works exclusively by or depicting women, which I am sure will bring much comfort to all those little old ladies choosing between heating and eating this winter. Because Reeves once worked at the Bank of England, she insists she knows how to “run a successful economy” (if not a successful art collection).

Notwithstanding the arrogance of that statement, it is perhaps worth noting that she joined Threadneedle Street straight from the London School of Economics, natch, and only ever worked in a fairly junior position. Sadly, she isn’t the only amateur in government masquerading as an expert. Recent events suggest that there is a shocking disconnect between the inflated egos of most those in cabinet and their real abilities. This week also witnessed Jonathan Reynolds, the Business Secretary, insisting he knows better than one of the most successful businesses in the world on the subject of flexible working. Criticising Amazon’s decision to order staff back into the office five days per week, Mr Reynolds, who has barely had a job outside of politics, suggested the \$2 trillion online retail giant was getting it wrong. Labour is preparing to introduce an Employment Rights Bill next month which will make flexible working a default right for staff from day one, with employers only able to refuse if working from home is not “practical”.

If they switched practical for productive, even the most ardent critic would be compelled to admit they were onto something. But deputy prime minister Angela Rayner, the party’s resident Citizen Smith, will be having none of that employer rights nonsense. Up with the unions

and all that. Meanwhile, we’ve got Foreign Secretary David Lammy sparking diplomatic incidents wherever in the world he walks in his scruffy trainers. First he angered Israel and the US by suspending around 30 arms export licences to Tel Aviv, and now he’s been branded “highly improper” and “callous” after writing that Azerbaijan had been able to “liberate” territory governed by ethnic Armenians in an act of forced population transference.

And where do we even begin with the complete lack of political nous displayed by Starmer and his chief of staff Sue Gray over Donorgate? Greedy Starmer’s £107,000 worth of freebies aside – why have we still not got clarification of who allowed Lord Alli to have a temporary pass to No 10 after performing his Trinny and Susannah act on the Starmers’ wardrobe?

The Labour peer was granted access after donating £10,000 to the election campaign of Liam Conlon, the son of Partygate inquisitor turned Downing Street gatekeeper Ms Gray, who was elected as the new Labour MP for Beckenham and Penge on July 4. It looks decidedly murky – and yet Mr Integrity himself insists there is nothing to see here. Having spent £2,485 of Lord Alli’s money on spectacles, he might want to consider having his eyes retested. The public seem to be viewing things with great clarity. Almost three months into this Labour government, they can see an administration full of political amateurs, led by a hypocrite full of sound bites but completely lacking in substance. They see a Prime Minister with no real plan, no new ideas and no substantive policies to take this country forward. Far from inspiring confidence, Labour’s 174 seat “loveless” landslide is fast resembling a confidence trick.

The Telegraph

Raising retirement age an overdue move

Chen Weihua

CHINA’S retirement age, set in the 1950s, should have been raised long time ago because of many reasons. The retirement age for men in China is 60 and women between 50 and 55. This would have made perfect sense in the 1950s when China’s life expectancy was merely 44 years. But they appear outdated today when the country’s life expectancy is more than 78.

China’s retirement age is among the lowest in the world, compared with even many developing countries. For many men and women to retire between 50 and 60 when they have developed precious and well-rounded perspective of work due to their decades of experience is a huge waste for society. This is especially true for many who join the workforce in their 30s after pursuing doctorate degrees.

During my conversation with European and American people over the past years, I’ve heard many of them express surprise when told that the retirement ages for men and women in China are 60 and 55 respectively. A few weeks ago, a friend who came to visit me in Brussels from Houston, Texas, sighed that officially she would have to work until 67 before she retires. The United States’ life expectancy was 77.5 years in 2022, slightly lower than China’s.

The average retirement age in the European Union is about 65 years, with some countries having raised it to 67. The Belgian

government plans to raise the retirement age to 66 in 2025 and 67 in 2030. You could argue that average life expectancy in the EU is about 81 years, higher than China’s, therefore EU countries are justified in raising the retirement age. But the EU’s life expectancy is lower than some Chinese cities’, including Shanghai’s 84 years.

Hence, the announcement last week by the Standing Committee of the 14th National People’s Congress, China’s top legislature, to raise the retirement age in the next 15 years to 63 for men and 58 for women is a move in the right direction and in line with the global trend and practice. More important, it suits the reality in China. Raising the retirement age would help reduce the waste of human resources, allowing many people who think they can still contribute to their profession and society to continue to work.

It’s absurd for many in China, including some media outlets, to refer to people in their 50s as elderly people or senior citizens because most countries and even the Merriam-Webster Dictionary define senior citizens as people aged 65 or above.

When some Chinese people in their 50s and early 60s claimed they were old, I often used to tease them by saying that in the US, you can contest the presidential election in your 80s. That was certainly the case just a few months ago

when the 2024 US presidential race featured octogenarian President Joe Biden and 78-year-old Donald Trump. That said, I am no fan of gerontocracy.

China’s rapidly aging population, too, calls for raising the retirement age to overcome the pension challenge before it is too late. China’s challenges are greater because it has become old before becoming rich, unlike Japan and many other industrialized nations. Overcoming the challenges posed by an aging population and building a society that is fit to deal with the changing demographics must be a priority for both the government and society. To me, even Shanghai, my home city and the largest metropolis in China, is ill-prepared to tackle this challenge.

There is also a need for more flexibility in the rigid retirement age system, including exploring sensible options for people trying to retire early and for those who want to continue to work after reaching the statutory retirement age. With a population of 1.4 billion and huge regional disparity, China’s situation is far more complex than many smaller countries. For example, the concern that whether raising the retirement age would make getting a job more difficult for youths given today’s tough job market is fully legitimate. There are many things to be considered and tackled. But raising the retirement age is clearly a move long overdue.



Pakistan's debt burden:

Every citizen now owes Rs295,000

ISLAMABAD (INP): Every Pakistani now owes PKR 295,000 to national and international institutions, a courtesy to successive governments' habit of running the state business on debt.

The average debt per citizen in Pakistan has reached PKR 295,000, according to the Ministry of Finance. This significant increase in debt highlights the growing financial challenges facing the country.

The Ministry of Finance has reported a significant increase in Pakistan's total debt, which has surged by PKR 8.36 trillion, bringing the total to PKR 71.24 trillion. This marks a substantial rise from the previous

fiscal year 2022-23 when the total national debt stood at PKR 62.88 trillion. The current debt level is equivalent to 67.2% of the country's Gross Domestic Product (GDP).

The domestic Pakistan debt has seen an increase of PKR 8.350 trillion, reaching a total of PKR 47.160 trillion. On the other hand, Pakistan's external debt now stands at PKR 33.062 trillion. Out of that, the net government external debt has reached PKR 21.75 trillion.

The documents also reveal an increase of PKR 292 billion in the debt owed to the International Monetary Fund (IMF), bringing the total IMF debt

to PKR 2.33 trillion.

Composition of domestic debt:

The largest portion of the domestic debt of Pakistan is attributed to federal government bonds, which amount to PKR 32.8 trillion. This includes Pakistan Investment Bonds (PIBs), which have exceeded PKR 28 trillion, and Sukuk bonds, which total PKR 4.77 trillion.

Additionally, prize bonds contribute PKR 345 billion to the domestic debt. The documents also indicate that foreign currency loans within the domestic debt amount to PKR 374 billion, and the Naya Pakistan Certificates account for PKR 84 billion.

The rising debt levels highlight the financial challenges faced by Pakistan. With every citizen now effectively owing PKR 295,000, the government faces the daunting task of managing and reducing this debt burden.

The increase in both domestic and external debt underscores the need for comprehensive economic reforms and prudent fiscal management to ensure long-term financial stability. The government's strategy will need to focus on enhancing revenue generation, controlling expenditures, and fostering economic growth to mitigate the impact of this growing debt.



ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Finance and Revenue Senator Muhammad Aurangzeb chairing virtual meeting of Cabinet Committee on State-Owned Enterprises (CCSOEs) at Finance Division.

NBP launches easy loan facility 'Cash N Gold' F.P. Report

KARACHI: National Bank of Pakistan introduces its latest service, "NBP Cash N Gold," offering a seamless way for customers to obtain quick loans against their gold items.

With the promise of easy terms, minimal paperwork and competitive processing, NBP provides a hassle-free experience for those in need of immediate funds.

Customers can borrow up to 70% of their gold's value, ensuring they meet their financial obligations without difficulty.

With a commitment to delivering exceptional services, NBP continues to cater to the evolving needs of the Pakistani public.

Tanveer reviews GMO Soybean production

ISLAMABAD (APP): Minister for National Food Security, Industries and Production Rana Tanveer Hussain on Saturday chaired a meeting to review genetically modified organisms (GMO) soybean production and export in the country.

He said that genetically modified seed has several benefits however it also has some drawbacks. Currently, these seeds are used for only cotton production across the country.

The issue of GMO production is under consideration in Cabinet, the minister said highlighting that the Ministry of Food Security has no obstacles to importing GMO soybean, however the Ministry of Climate Change has some reservations.

He said that a committee of the cabinet will be formed to consult the issue with the Climate Ministry and other stakeholders stressing the need to thoroughly evaluate all aspects before making such decision.

Govt decides to import 50% items

ISLAMABAD (PPI): Pakistan has decided to import fifty percent items including wheat, sugar and fertilizer through the Gwadar Port.

The rate of exports from this port will be further increased in future. The Gwadar Port is an international trade hub for Pakistan as well as a strategic asset, according to a Radio Pakistan's report.

The employment of the people of Balochistan and the economic stability of the province depend on the full functioning of Gwadar Port.

The full functioning of Gwadar Port will also reduce the burden of imports and exports on Karachi Port.

The foreign exchange generated from Gwadar Port will have a positive impact on the lives of the local population.

After the activation of Gwadar Port, there will be a clear reduction in the poverty line in the province and there will be a significant reduction in unemployment.

Locals will be given preference for jobs at Gwadar Port.

ICCI elects Nasir as president

ISLAMABAD (APP): The election for the office bearers of Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry (ICCI) was held at Chamber House on Saturday in which Nasir Mansoor Quresh was elected as President, Abdul Rahman Siddiqui, Senior Vice President and Nasir Mehmood Chaudhry, as Vice President.

All the candidates were elected unopposed and will formally take over the charge of their offices on October 1, 2024, said a news release.

Speaking at the occasion, the newly elected President Nasir Mansoor Qureshi said that he would strive hard for the progress and prosperity of business community by focusing on resolving its issues.

He said that the liaison with business related government departments and other relevant organizations would be further strengthened to address the problems of trade and industry.

He said that he would take the fraternity on board on important issues and for ease of doing businesses. He said that workable proposals would be given to the government for creating conducive environment for business activities.

There is a need to pave the way for international investment in the country at this time, by working on it and his team will create

opportunities for trade and investment in the global market by connecting local businessmen with the international market, he added.

President ICCI Ahsan Zafar Bakhtawari congratulated the newly elected office bearers and assured them of his full support and cooperation in their endeavors aimed at resolving the key issues of the business community.

He also thanked all the members for their votes to the candidates of the Founder Group and enabling them to achieve historic win.

He highlighted the key achievements of his tenure and expressed hope that the new team would accomplish many more milestones for ICCI and the business community.

Khalid Iqbal Malik, Chairman Founder Group congratulated the newly elected office bearers and said that their unopposed election reflected the trust and confidence of business community on the leadership of Founder Group.

He hoped that the new office bearers would work hard to take ICCI to higher levels of growth and development so that it could play more effective role in promoting the interests of the community.

Former President ICCI and Secretary General United Business Group (UBG) Zafar Bakhtawari

while congratulating the newly elected office bearers expressed the hope that they will leave no stone unturned in serving the fraternity and further promoting the image of the Chamber.

Newly elected Senior Vice President Abdul Rahman Siddiqui said that connecting local businessmen with regional and global markets and increasing trade will remain the part of their core vision.

Newly elected Vice President Nasir Mahmood Chaudhry said that they are well aware of the problems being faced by the community at present and are fully prepared to get resolved these challenges.

SVP Faad Waheed, VP Engr. Azhar ul Islam Zafar, Founder Group senior members Zubair Ahmed Malik, Khalid Javed, Abdur Rauf Allam, Mian Akram Farid, Mian Shaikat Masud, Muhammad Ejaz Abbasi, Ch. Waheed ul Din, Shaikh Tariq Sadiq, Group leader Blue area Yousaf Rajput, President All Pakistan Anjuman-e-Tajraan Ajmal Baloch and other have felicitated the newly elected office bearers of ICCI and expressed good wishes for them.

Chief Election Commissioner Zahid Maqbool, along with the Commission's members Khalid Chaudhry and Zaheer ud Din Babar announced the results.

PPP Alliance makes visits to major markets



F.P. Report

LAHORE: The candidates of PIAF Pioneer Progressive Alliance Associate Class along with its leaders including Chairman PPP Alliance Mian Anjum Nisar, Former President Lahore Chamber Muhammad Ali Mian, Haris Atiq, Abdul Wadud Alvi, Malik Khalid Gujjar, Usman Malik, Imran Asghar, Sheikh Sajjad Afzal and PIAF executive committee made successfully visits to several major important commercial centers of Lahore, Anar Kali, Abakari Road, Urdu Bazar, Maryam Tower and Chamber Lane Road.

Fahimur Rahman from Chamber Lane Road Market, representing his market, assured the full support of PIAF Alliance from the traders of his market. President Abid Pal, Vice President Fazal Javed, General Secretary Ali Raza and other officials and businessmen also welcomed the leaders of PIAF Pioneer Progressive Alliance and announced their support from Chamber Lane Road Market.

A large number of the supporters of PIAF Mian Anjum Nisar Group participated in these visits. Addressing the businessmen on this occasion,

Patron-in-chief Mian Anjum Nisar called to end family politics from Lahore Chamber. He pledged that he will come to power and solve all the problems related to businessmen and industrialists from the government.

He said that these markets have always played an important role in the elections of the Lahore Chamber. In the biggest election of the business community of Lahore, PIAF Anjum Nisar group will succeed once again with the support of businessmen and industrialists.

The leadership of PIAF is always active in solving the problems of the business community on all forums and will not spare any effort in the future. For the past years, PIAF has not lost a single seat.

The PPP Alliance this time will win all the seats, but despite this, hard work is necessary for elections. On the occasion hundreds of businessmen and industrialists from Urdu Bazar, Ganpat Road, Abakari Road, Anarkali and adjacent markets participated in the walk.

Ahmad Amin Malik will enter the field as a PIAF candidate in the Lahore Chamber elections. All members expressed their support for him in the meet-

ing. Senior Vice Chairman PIAF Nasrullah Mughal, Vice Chairman PIAF Tahir Manzoor Chaudhary, Former Chairman PIAF Muhammad Ali Mian, Senior Vice President Zafar Chaudhry, Vice President Adnan Khalid Butt and others were present.

The PIAF Chief observed that besides increasing exports and controlling imports the government will have to take administrative measures, as a large demand of cash dollars are seen in the market. He argued that this devaluation of the currency was dictated by the IMF through prior actions and it has nothing to do with macro-economic fundamentals.

He said that there was a complete breakdown of economic policymaking, as the country's fiscal policy had become subservient to monetary and exchange rate policies.

He said that the monetary tightening and exchange rate depreciation resulted in higher inflation, public debt and debt servicing. The government needs to devise a strategy on war-footing to increase foreign investment in Pakistan so as to stop the upward trajectory of the dollar, he added.

IBA and HEC collaborate to propel entrepreneurship with I-INCUBATE



F.P. Report

KARACHI: Institute of Business Administration (IBA), Karachi launched I-INCUBATE, an incubation program supported by Higher Education Commission (HEC) and organized by IBA Centre for Entrepreneurial Development (IBA-CED). The launch event took place at Aman Tower, IBA City Campus, and was attended by personnel from the local entrepreneurial ecosystem.

This initiative formally establishes IBA's incubation program following a highly competitive process, further strengthening the

Institution's commitment towards start up innovation. The HEC-funded I-INCUBATE is a thirteen-month program offering structured training, dedicated mentoring, goal setting, accountability, networking, and co-working space amongst many other resources and facilities.

The program aims to increase the sustainability of the selected student start-ups, empowering them to create positive societal impact through innovation, job creation, income generation and economic growth, while strengthening the entrepreneurial ecosystem.

The event commenced

with a welcome address by Dr. Lalarukh Ejaz, Director IBA-CED, while a program overview was given by Ms. Kanza Sohail, Lead Incubation Program, followed by an introduction to the selected startups.

Shortlisted startups from universities including IBA Karachi, University of Karachi, DHA Suffa University, Denning Law School, NED University, Jinnah University for Women, FAST-NUCES Karachi, and Iqra University will be participating in the I-Incubate program. These startups span industries including Edtech, Marketplace,

Online Earning, Lifestyle, Tourism, Agritech, Electric Bikes, Legal, Engineering, Circular Economy, Energy, Pharmacy, Fintech, Healthcare, B2B Commerce, and Employability.

The event concluded with a networking hi-tea, providing a platform for HEC representatives, IBA leadership, and key industry figures to engage and collaborate.

The Institute of Business Administration (IBA), Karachi, with almost seven decades of legacy, is a multi-disciplinary Institute. In 2020, the institution broadened its academic landscape by launching three new schools: the School of Business Studies (SBS), the School of Economics & Social Sciences (SESS), and the School of Mathematics & Computer Science (SMCS). This strategic expansion features IBA's commitment to advancing educational innovation and maintaining excellence across diverse fields.

Chinese company to invest \$5b to boost Pakistan's textile exports

ISLAMABAD (INP): China's RUYI Group has planned to invest Dollar 5 billion to boost Pakistan's textile exports, Gwadar Pro reported on Saturday.

The company's senior management team visited here the Special Investment Facilitation Council (SIFC) and announced their plan for the investors and to establish two export-oriented Green (Zero Emission) textile cities in Lahore and Karachi.

According to Jamil Qureshi, Secretary of SIFC, the group will collaborate with 25 leading companies from the China Textile Council and China Garments Association.

With an anticipated investment of around USD 5 billion, the project is

expected to generate significant annual value and boost Pakistan's textile exports by up to USD 10 billion.

Earlier, a nine-member delegation from RUYI Group, led by Chairman Qiu Yafu, met with Prime Minister Muhammad Shahbaz Sharif.

The group plans to establish international standard textile parks in Pakistan, aiming to increase the country's textile exports and position Pakistan as a global textile and garment hub. These textile parks are projected to create employment opportunities for 300,000 to 500,000 locals.

The prime minister praised the enduring friendship between Pakistan and China, noting that their economic ties grow stronger each day. He welcomed the Chinese textile group to Pakistan, com-

mending their investment in the country's textile sector.

He also highlighted that this firm was the first investor in the Sahiwal Coal Power Plant, a project under the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC).

The meeting also decided to form working groups in Islamabad and Beijing to address issues between Pakistan and the Chinese enterprises.

The Chinese textile group is a large-scale Sino-foreign joint venture enterprise with diversified shareholders.

It boasts the largest woollen garment and cotton dyeing industry chain in China and consistently contributes to the textile industry through its advanced technology.

Currently, the group's brand matrix includes more than 6,000 stores world-

wide, operating in 84 countries and regions, making it the most influential Chinese enterprise in the global fashion field.

According to the Ministry of Commerce, Pakistan's textile and apparel exports rose by 0.93 percent to USD16.655 billion during the fiscal year 2023-24 (FY24 July-June), marking a small gain from USD 16.501 billion in the corresponding period of the previous year.

The textile sector had earlier faced economic challenges but showed improvement in the later months.

The sector contributed 54.29 percent to Pakistan's overall exports of USD 30.676 billion from July 2023 to June 2024.

However, the share of the textile sector declined from its 59.52 percent share in the same period of the 2022-23 fiscal.

CCP scrutinizes misleading discount advertisements

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Competition Commission of Pakistan (CCP), while taking action against retailers advertising discounts as "up to a percentage" during the "End of Season Sales" issued notices to 20 brands, seeking clarification on their potentially misleading discount practices.

Such unspecified discount offers are akin to 'Bait and Switch Advertising' defined as a tactic to mislead buyers, whereby a seller advertises an appealing but spurious offer to sell a product or service that the seller does not actually intend to sell, said a news release.

Instead, the seller offers an unwanted alternative which is prohibited under Section 10 of the Act as Deceptive Marketing Practices.

Market Intelligence Unit/Office of Fair Trade of the CCP conducted a random survey in the twin

cities and identified various brands offering discounts "Up to Some Percentage" on their products.

The survey revealed that maximum (upper limit) discount was being offered on a small collection of least attractive articles and the most popular and frequently purchased items were available with minimal or no discount.

Consequently, a clear gap was observed between the advertised discounts and the real offers, compelling the customers to ask multiple questions to determine the actual discounts available on their chosen items.

Some of the brands were, however, offering flat discounts or concessions (discounts up to some upper limit) with adequate disclosures/disclaimers i.e. on the entire/limited or specified stock which is highly appreciated by the CCP.

The Commission advises various consumer brands offering discounts to preclude distributing any misleading information and ensure clear and adequate disclosures regarding actual and discounted prices with the details of the stock on offer with flat or differential discounts.

Undertakings, Brands and outlets violating this directive may face enforcement action by the CCP under Section 10 of the Competition Act, 2010. Similarly, consumers are also advised to exercise vigilance while availing discounts and sales offers to avoid falling victim to deceptive marketing practices.

CCP remains committed to its mandate under the Competition Act, 2010 continuously striving to ensure free competition, enhance economic efficiency, and protect consumers from anti-competitive behavior.

Court Notice

In the Court of Shamsul Huda Salarzai A.D.J-VII. Kohat. Appeal No. CA-140, date of hearing 01-10-2024, titled 'Doctor Ishfaq (etc.) Vs Asif Javed (etc.)' Notice against (25) Lrs Muhabat Khan S/o Khitab Gul (Late). (1) Gulzar Ahmad Khan, (2) Zulfiqar Ahmad Khan, (3) Iftikhar Ahmad Khan Sons, (4) Shafaqat Bibi, (5) Nusrat Bibi Dughthers and Lrs of Muhabat Khan (Late) R/o Islamabad, presently R/o (now in Abroad CANADA) (Respondents/Lrs). Whereas, the above plaintiff has instituted a Appeal against you Respondents/Lrs in which date of hearing 01-10-2024 is fixed for your appearance Since your intimidation/service is not possible through ordinary means/mode therefore you Respondents/Lrs is intimidated through this publication to appear before this court by person or by pleader on date fixed 01-10-2024 otherwise court shall be proceeded in accordance with law. Order issued on 14-09-2024 (Court of ADJ-VII Kohat).



In brief

Rashid achieves record ODI milestone

LEEDS (Agencies): Leg-spinner Adil Rashid became the first-ever England player to get 200 ODI wickets. Rashid is already England's leading spinner in the format, with Moeen Ali (111) and Graeme Swann (104) the only other spinners to take more than 100 men's ODI wickets. Sophie Ecclestone also has 100 ODI wickets for the women's team. Rashid achieved the feat when he dismissed Glenn Maxwell (7) in his sixth over in the second England-Australia ODI at Headingley. Maxwell tried to cart the leg-spinner out of the ground but hit straight to deep mid-wicket. Rashid played the first five of his ODIs after making his debut in 2009 but had to wait for almost six years before he featured again in the format. After his comeback Rashid became a white-ball regular, and along with Moeen Ali formed a potent spin partnership for England in ODIs. Australia won the first game of the five-match series by a comfortable margin of seven wickets. Regular wickets from England in the second ODI ensured that the Australia batters hadn't quite take off in Headingley. Rashid finished with figures of 2/42 in his spell.

Kasatkina to face Haddad

SEOUL (AFP): Russia's top seed Daria Kasatkina will face Brazil's Beatriz Haddad Maia in Sunday's Korea Open final after both came through their semi-finals in straight sets. Kasatkina beat compatriot Diana Shnaider 6-3, 6-4 on a busy Saturday in Seoul that saw all the quarter-finals and semi-finals played because rain had washed out the previous day's entire schedule. Number three seed Haddad Maia beat Russia's Veronika Kudermetova 6-4, 6-4 to reach her second final in three tournaments. Kasatkina came through her quarter-final when Britain's Emma Raducanu retired with an injured foot after losing the opening set. Shnaider also needed medical attention during the semi-final, but Kasatkina kept her cool to win a semi-final that saw 11 breaks of serve overall. "To reach the final at a tournament is always a great feeling - it means that you have done good through all the week," said Kasatkina, the world number 13. "I'm really happy to be in the final again. I'm taking as much time as I can here in Seoul." Haddad Maia made her experience count in a 6-2, 6-1 quarter-final win over Polina Kudermetova that earned her a semi-final against her beaten opponent's older sister. Haddad Maia again came out on top despite another day of challenging weather conditions in the South Korean capital. "During the last four days we had different type of conditions," said world number 17 Haddad Maia. "Today was very windy and the wind was changing direction so it wasn't easy. A lot of days were hot, also humidity." Kasatkina and Haddad Maia have faced each other three times previously, with the Brazilian winning two of those encounters. Kasatkina won their most recent meeting, in the semi-finals in Abu Dhabi in February. "I'm happy that I could find myself in this match," Haddad Maia said after beating Kudermetova. "I improved a little bit my game from the first match I had today so I'm happy. Tomorrow I have another opportunity to do it better."

Pakistan's cueists secure victories in World 6 Red Snooker C'ship

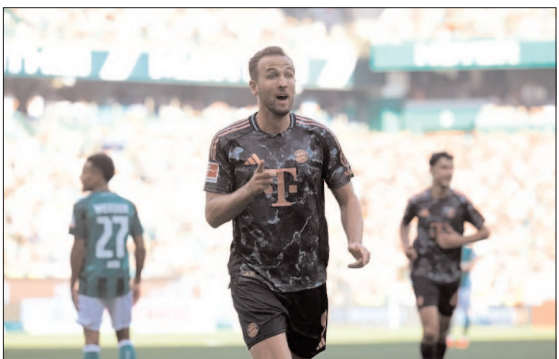


KARACHI (Monitoring Desk): Pakistan's Asjad Iqbal and Awaiz Muneer delivered stellar performances on the opening day of the IBSF World 6 Red Snooker Championship 2024, securing victories in their respective matches. Asjad comfortably defeated Mongolia's Ulziitogtokh Davaasuren with a 4-1 victory. He displayed exceptional skill, scoring two

impressive breaks of 75 during the match. The corrected frame scores for his win were 50-18, 75(75)-0, 82(75)-0, 0-73(73), 64(61)-0. Awaiz also made a remarkable comeback, defeating Mongolia's Mendsaikhan Bat-Erdene 4-2. Despite trailing in two frames, he fought back to claim victory. His corrected frame scores were

64(64)-0, 20-45, 0-54(47), 54-10, 53-21, 46-15. On Sunday, the second day of the championship, Asjad will compete against India's Pandurangaiah, while Awaiz will take on Jia Jun Ong from Singapore. Later in the evening, Asjad will go up against Iraq's Aljalil Ali, and Awaiz will compete with Shachar Ruberg from Israel. The championship, featuring 40 players from around the globe, has been divided into 10 groups, with the top two players from each group advancing to the knockout stages. The knockout stage matches will commence on September 22, with the last 20 and 16 rounds. The quarter-finals and semi-finals are scheduled for September 24, with the final of the snooker championship set to take place on September 25.

Kane and Olise run riot as Bayern thump Bremen



BREMEN (AFP): Michael Olise had a hand in four goals and Harry Kane scored again as Bayern Munich ran riot to win 5-0 at Werder Bremen in the Bundesliga on Saturday. Olise, who arrived from Crystal Palace in the summer, scored twice and laid on two more in the win, while Kane had a goal to go with his two assists. The big win continued Bayern's stunning week, with a 6-1 win at promoted Holstein Kiel followed by a 9-2 home victory over Dinamo Zagreb in the Champions League. Kane created Olise's 23rd-minute opener and the goalscorer then turned provider, dribbling down the right and threading a perfect pass for Jamal Musiala to score shortly afterwards. Olise then assisted Kane's 57th-minute goal, the England captain's 10th goal so far for Bayern this

season in six games all competitions. Olise scored again and Kane set up Serge Gnabry to make it five against Bremen, whose only win against Bayern dating back to 2008 came this January in Munich. Kane scored his first Bundesliga goal on debut at Bremen in August last year and now has 41 league strikes, more than any other English player. "We've got so much quality up front and we're having fun playing football," Musiala told Sky, adding "but we will face tougher opponents." Bayern host champions Bayer Leverkusen next Saturday. Fellow top-four rivals Leverkusen, Borussia Dortmund, Stuttgart and RB Leipzig all play on Sunday, but Bayern are guaranteed to finish the weekend in top spot as the

only side to have won all four of their opening league matches. Two goals in the opening six minutes put Union Berlin on course for a 2-1 win at home against Hoffenheim. Tom Rothe and Jeong Woo-yeong scored early for the home side but a 67th-minute goal from former Union forward Marius Buelter set things up for a nervy finish in the German capital. Union however dug deep to win their second match of the season and keep their unbeaten record alive, while Hoffenheim have lost their past three in the league. Freiburg scored three second-half goals to win 3-0 at Heidenheim, with Italy midfielder Vincenzo Grifo getting a double after Ritsu Doan opened the scoring. An 89th-minute goal from Shuto Machino snared a 2-2 draw for Holstein Kiel at Bochum, giving the promoted side their first-ever points in the top division. Kiel took the lead through a Benedikt Pichler goal after 15 minutes but Mats Bero and Lukas Daschner both scored to give Bochum a 2-1 advantage at halftime. Later on Saturday, Eintracht Frankfurt host Borussia Moenchengladbach.

NZ survive late scare to beat Australia in thriller



SYDNEY (Agencies): New Zealand survived a late rally to beat Australia 31-28 in the Rugby Championship in Sydney and retain the Bledisloe Cup. The All Blacks opened up a 14-point lead at the break but were restricted to just one penalty in the second half and lost two players to the sin-bin. Late tries from Hunter Paisami and Tom Wright moved Australia to within a score of a remarkable victory, but New Zealand held on. It is New Zealand's eighth successive win over their trans-Tasman rivals and means they retain the Bledisloe Cup for the 22nd year in a row. "It's a bit of a relief, to be honest," said New Zealand captain Scott Barrett. "In the last 15 [minutes], we found ourselves in a bit of a hole, but we hung on with a bit of scrambled defence. "It's the nature of the Aussies, they certainly don't lie down." The win moves

Scott Robertson's side above Argentina into second place before the Pumas' match against South Africa later on Saturday, though they cannot overhaul the Springboks in top spot. World champions South Africa can secure a first Rugby Championship title since 2019 with a victory in Santiago. Australia have taken just five points from their five games and are on course to finish bottom for the second Championship in a row. Joe Schmidt's side have lost nine of their past 10 games in the competition, including a record 67-27 defeat by Argentina earlier this month. New Zealand hold on in thriller New Zealand were looking to bounce back from successive defeats by South Africa that ended their hopes of winning the title. They raced into a 21-0 lead thanks to tries from Will Jordan, Rieko Ioane and Caleb Clarke, before

Fraser McReight dived over from Nic White's offload to reduce the deficit. Ardie Savea's score and Damian McKenzie's conversion moved the All Blacks 28-7 ahead, but Matt Faessler's try right on the hooter kept Australia in the match. McKenzie's penalty extended the lead shortly after the restart, before the All Blacks had a length-of-the-field try called back for a knock-on. Australia then began to work their way back into the game and Paisami went over in the 65th minute. Anton Lienert-Brown was sent to the sin-bin for an infringement in the lead-up to Paisami's try and Clarke followed six minutes later to leave New Zealand with 13 men. Australia had a try of their own ruled out for a knock-on before Wright's late score a minute from time set up a grandstand finish. "We're obviously gutted to not get the result," said Australia captain Harry Wilson. "Giving a 21-0 head start to the All Blacks was always going to make it tough for us, but I am super proud of the effort and the way we fought back. "We just didn't want to give up and played for each other." Wallabies prop James Slipper was a second-half substitute to win his 140th cap, breaking the record held by former captain George Gregan.



FAISALABAD: Saim Ayub reached his hundred in 92 balls, Panthers vs Stallions, Champions One-Day Cup.

Diaz fires Liverpool top of Premier League, Spurs bounce back

LIVERPOOL (AFP): Liverpool moved to the top of the Premier League with a resounding 3-0 win over Bournemouth as Tottenham eased the pressure on Ange Postecoglou by beating Brentford 3-1 on Saturday. Nicolas Jackson scored twice as Chelsea cruised to a 3-0 win at West Ham, while Aston Villa are level on points at the top after coming from behind to beat Wolves 3-1. Liverpool suffered the first setback of Arne Slot's early days in charge when Nottingham Forest shocked Anfield seven days ago. But the Reds responded in style to blow Bournemouth away before half-time. Luis Diaz was rested for an impressive 3-1 win at AC Milan to start Liverpool's Champions League campaign in midweek. Restored to the starting line-up, the Colombian struck twice inside two minutes. Diaz pounced on a misjudgement from Kepa Arrizabalaga to latch onto Ibrahima Konate's long ball and rounded the stranded Spanish goalkeeper before sweeping into an empty net. Trent Alexander-Arnold then teed up Diaz to fire in his fifth goal of the season. Darwin Nunez was making his first start of the season and ended his 14-game goal drought at club level in spectacular fashion by curling into the far corner. A three-goal margin of victory takes Liverpool ahead of Manchester City and Aston Villa, who also have 12 points, on goal difference. Solanke off the mark Spurs had won just one of their

opening four league games to continue a downward trend in form spilling over from the end of last season. Postecoglou's men also had a narrow escape with two late goals to avoid a League Cup exit to second-tier Coventry in midweek and got off to a nightmare start against Brentford. Bryan Mbeumo's thumping volley after just 22 seconds put the Bees in front. Yet, Spurs got the quick response they needed to stave off any revolt from the home fans. Dominic Solanke opened his Tottenham account with a tap in after Mark Flekken parried James Maddison's effort. Brennan Johnson then hit back at his critics with an accurate low finish. Maddison secured the points five minutes from time with his first goal since March. Villa also needed a turnaround for their fourth win in five games after Matheus Cunha blasted Wolves in front midway through the first half. Ollie Watkins' deflected effort equalised before a rare goal from Ezri Konsa put Villa in front. Jhon Duran then continued his scintillating form as an impact substitute with his fourth goal this season off the bench. Chelsea cruise Chelsea continued their positive start under Enzo Maresca as Jackson's double put a woeful West Ham to the sword at the London Stadium. The Senegal striker now has four goals in five Premier League games this season after two cool finishes beyond Alphonse Areola as West Ham were opened up at will.

Jackson turned provider for Cole Palmer to round off the scoring inside the first two minutes of the second half. West Ham have now lost their opening three home league games for the first time in their history to mark an inauspicious start for new manager Julien Lopetegui. "The points are important, but in this moment the most important thing is the way we progress," Maresca said after the Blues moved up to fourth in the table. Newcastle had the chance to go top but the Magpies' poor performances this season finally caught up with them in a 3-1 defeat at Fulham. Raul Jimenez fired the home side in front before Nick Pope let Emile Smith-Rowe's effort slip through his grasp. Harvey Barnes cut Newcastle's deficit just a minute into the second half. But Bruno Guimaraes' slack pass teed up Reiss Nelson to seal Newcastle's fate in stoppage time. Ipswich struck deep into added time to snatch a 1-1 draw in the battle of the newly-promoted sides at Southampton. Everton and Leicester are both also still looking for their first win of the season after a 1-1 draw at the King Power. Manchester United travel to Crystal Palace in the 1630GMT kick-off aiming to avenge their 4-0 humiliation at Selhurst Park back in May. The blockbuster clash of the weekend takes place on Sunday when champions City host Arsenal, who have finished second to Pep Guardiola's men for each of the past two seasons.

Bangladesh need 515 to win Test

CHENNAI (AFP): India declared their second innings on 287-4 to set Bangladesh an imposing victory target of 515 on day three of the first Test on Saturday after centuries by Rishabh Pant and Shubman Gill. The left-handed Pant, who made 109, and Gill, unbeaten on 119, put on 167 runs for the fourth wicket to ram home India's advantage in Chennai after they bundled out Bangladesh for 149 on day two. Earlier, Rishabh Pant announced his return to Tests in style on Saturday with an attacking century during his first five-day match since he was sidelined by a serious car crash in 2022. The wicketkeeper smashed the bowlers to every corner of the Chennai grounds on day three of the first Test against Bangladesh before a double off Shakib Al Hasan got him his sixth Test century. Pant took off his helmet and raised his bat to acknowledge a standing ovation from the dressing room and the weekend crowd. The left-hander finally fell caught and bowled by Mehidy Hasan Miraz for 109 after a 128-ball knock that included 13 fours and four sixes. Pant put on 167 runs with Shubman Gill in a match dominated by the hosts after Ravichandran Ashwin's 113 in the first innings. The 26-year-old has impressed since his return to elite cricket last year and has kept up form across formats, including India's T20 World Cup triumph in June. Pant termed his comeback to the game "nothing short of a miracle" after the 2022 crash, when his Mercedes flamed into a barrier, flipped and caught fire near New Delhi. Left with a damaged ligament in his right knee, a hurt wrist and ankle and abrasions to his back, Pant fought back after an intensive rehabilitation programme to lead Delhi Capitals during this year's Indian Premier League season.



Dominic Solanke (right) scored his first Tottenham goal against Brentford.

Norris pips Verstappen to dramatic Singapore pole

SINGAPORE (AFP): McLaren's Lando Norris beat Red Bull's Max Verstappen to pole position Saturday for the Singapore Grand Prix in a dramatic qualifying session red-flagged when Carlos Sainz crashed. Norris's lap of 1min 30.002sec was 0.155sec quicker than Verstappen. Lewis Hamilton was third ahead of Mercedes teammate George Russell. "It was good enough for pole and I'm happy with that, especially here in Singapore," said Norris, who is aiming to close a 59-point deficit to Verstappen in the drivers' championship. "A good feeling. I've felt good all weekend, I've felt confident, maybe not so much in qualifying but we got the job done," added the Englishman. But it was a disastrous Q3 for Ferrari pair Charles Leclerc and Sainz, the winner in Singapore 12 months ago, who will start down in ninth and 10th on the grid. Sainz's back end snapped out on the final bend sending him spinning into the barriers and halting Q3 with just over eight minutes remaining, leaving most drivers just one shot at a qualifying lap. Leclerc then had his only lap time deleted for breaching track limits at turn two.



Verstappen had only been 15th fastest in practice on Friday, so the Dutchman was pleased to be alongside his main title rival at the head of the grid. "I'm happy to be on the front row if you look at where we came from yesterday," said Verstappen. "Tomorrow is a bit difficult to say, in Singapore a lot of things can happen, but at least we have a shot at it like this." Hamilton had also struggled in practice but managed to put a great lap together when it mattered. "Qualifying has been a disaster for me all year long and I've been working, working and working trying to get myself back up there," said seven-time world champion Hamilton. "All of a sudden the car came alive for the first time in qualifying in a long time. "I hope we're in a good position to fight for the front tomorrow."

McLaren's Oscar Piastri was fifth fastest and Nico Hulkenberg of Haas will start alongside him on the third row. Fernando Alonso was seventh in an Aston Martin, with Yuki Tsunoda eighth in the RB. Verstappen's teammate Sergio Perez failed to make it to the shootout for pole position and will start from 13th on the grid. Along with Perez, the other drivers who failed to get out of Q2 were the Williams pair of Alex Albon and Franco Colapinto, Kevin Magnussen in a Haas and Esteban Ocon (Alpine). Daniel Ricciardo -- who is rumoured to be driving in F1 for the last time for RB -- was in the bottom five who were earlier eliminated in Q1. Also failing to make it to Q2 were Lance Stroll's Aston Martin, Pierre Gasly in an Alpine and the Sauber pair of Valtteri Bottas and Zhou Guanyu.



In brief

198,300 cusecs water released

ISLAMABAD (APP): Indus River System Authority (IRSA) on Saturday released 198,300 cusecs water from various rim stations with inflow of 138,200 cusecs. According to the data released by IRSA, water level in River Indus at Tarbela Dam was 1539.91 feet and was 141.91 feet higher than its dead level of 1,398 feet. Water inflow and outflow in the dam was recorded as 79,600 cusecs and 110,000 cusecs respectively. The water level in River Jhelum at Mangla Dam was 1223.65 feet, which was 175.65 feet higher than its dead level of 1,050 feet. The inflow and outflow of water was recorded 15,300 cusecs and 45,000 cusecs respectively. The release of water at Kalabagh, Taunsa, Guddu and Sukkur was recorded as 90,000, 112,600, 88,400 and 36,800 cusecs respectively. Similarly, from River Kabul, a total of 19,200 cusecs of water released at Nowshera and 4,300 cusecs released from River Chenab at Marala.

Over 678 PSVs impounded

RAWALPINDI (APP): Rawalpindi police are actively inspecting Public Service Vehicles (PSVs) for fitness, route permits, and licenses and have also impounded 678 vehicles on violation. So far, fines totaling over Rs. 5 million have been imposed on vehicles failing to meet legal standards. Action has been taken against 445 drivers for operating without licenses, and 27 drivers found guilty of negligence and their licenses were cancelled. In addition, 41 cases have been registered against both drivers and vehicle owners. The crackdown has been initiated on the special directives of City Police Officer (CPO) Khalid Mehmood Hamdani. The spokesman said that action would also be taken against the PSVs's owners and bus terminal managers found guilty of negligence. The special squad of City Traffic Police is also ensuring checking of vehicles at bus terminals, he informed. A special campaign was also launched for awareness of the citizens and drivers, he added.

SHO Sangjani arrested

ISLAMABAD (APP): Islamabad Capital Territory (ICT) Police arrested Station House Officer (SHO) Asim Ali Zaidi of Sangjani police station on Saturday for illegally detaining two citizens without filing any case against them. According to a police spokesperson, SHO Asim Zaidi had unlawfully detained two Kashmiri citizens, Shahbaz Sharif and Muhammad Saeed, at the Sangjani police station. He said that the SHO kept the individuals in custody for 19 days without filing any charges. According to the FIR (First Information Report), a case has been registered against SHO Asim Zaidi under Section 342 of the Pakistan Penal Code, which pertains to wrongful confinement, and C-155 of the Police Order, following a report by Deputy Superintendent of Police (DSP) Tarnol Circle Ansar Ahmed. The police spokesperson emphasized that the ICT Police strictly adheres to a system of self-accountability. He said following his arrest, the SHO was presented in court, where the police requested his judicial remand. Judicial Magistrate Muhammad Azhar Nadeem approved the request and ordered that the accused SHO Asim Ali Zaidi be sent to jail on judicial remand, he added.



ISLAMABAD: Chairman Senate, Syed Yousuf Raza Gilani addressing the closing ceremony of 1st International Rahmatul-lil-Aalameen Wa Khatamun Nabiyyin Conference. —APP Photo

Mohsin Naqvi pays homage to Martyrs on Int'l Peace Day

ISLAMABAD (APP): In his special message on International Peace Day, Interior Minister Mohsin Naqvi has said that the Almighty Allah created the world for peace and harmony.

He added that homes, streets, neighborhoods, societies, villages, cities, countries, regions, and continents look beautiful and livable only with peace.

He stated that chaos and disorder cause widespread devastation and pose multiple threats to peace.

The Interior Minister expressed concern that societies are currently divided into groups, factions, and sects, harming

the efforts for peace around the world. He said that regional conflicts have endangered peace in every region, severely affecting the desire for peace.

He emphasized that global powers must take practical and pragmatic steps toward sustainable peace beyond verbal commitments.

He reiterated that regions entangled in conflicts including occupied Kashmir, Palestine, and others yearn for peace, while the silence of global powers makes no sense.

Mohsin Naqvi also highlighted Pakistan's constructive role in ensuring global

peace, particularly during difficult times.

He said that Pakistan has played the role of vanguard in UN peace missions.

He added that several brave soldiers of Pakistan's peace missions were martyred during efforts to restore peace and stability in dangerous and turbulent regions.

He stated that the sacrifices of martyred brave officers and soldiers in the path of peace will always be remembered.

He also stressed the need to remember those people who sacrificed their lives to establish peace in the country.

Pakistan Railways announces reduction in train fares

ISLAMABAD (INP): Pakistan Railways has announced a 10% reduction in train fares, effective from September 23.

As per details, the fare cut will apply to all AC classes of express and mail trains, as well as all economy classes of passenger trains.

Earlier, the railway department decided to operate 10 passenger trains under the public-private partnership (PPP) mode.

According to Pakistan Railways officials, the first phase of the privatisation will commence soon and 10 trains will be handed over to private operators under the PPP mode.

The Pakistan Railways asked the interested parties to submit their applications. The technical bids will be opened on the same day.

The trains which will be privatised include Karachi Express, Awam Express, Hazara Express, Bahauddin Zakariya Express, Mehr Express, Sukkur Express, Chenab Express, Mehran Express, Mohenjodaro Passenger Train, Rawalpindi Passenger Train.

In a separate development, Pakistan Railways decided to revive the Sir Syed Express.

According to the notification issued by the Pakistan Railways, Sir Syed Express is being restored from September 1. The train will run between Karachi cantt. to Rawalpindi.

Bootlegger held, 80 bottles liquor recovered

RAWALPINDI (INP): The police arrested a bootlegger besides recovering dozens of bottles of liquor from a vehicle here on Saturday.

The Kallar Syedan Police during routine patrolling stopped a suspected car in its jurisdiction.

During search of the vehicle, 80 bottles of liquor were recovered and a bootlegger identified as Safdar was arrested.

The police impounded the car with recovered liquor and after registering a case against the detainee started investigations.

The SHO Kallar Syedan said that investigations were underway and other accomplices of the accused would also be arrested.

‘Govt measures show positive signs in each sector’

ISLAMABAD (APP): Chairman of the Prime Minister Youth Programme (PMYP) Rana Mashhood Ahmed Khan has said that the positive indicators show the remarkable achievements of the present government in every sector and the country is moving in the right direction.

Addressing the participants of the "Cycle For Life" rally held in collaboration with the Mujahid Group Of Industries, Federation of Pakistan Chamber of Commerce and Industry, Khubaib Foundation, Anti-Narcotics Force, Islamabad Administration, Capital Development Authority and Islamabad Cycling Association, he said that the objective of the rally was to promote environmental preservation, raise awareness about the dangers of drugs and engage youth in healthy activities.

Rana said that the coun-

try under the dynamic leadership of Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif was advancing towards the path of development and growth in the exports of textiles and Information technology, increase in the stock exchange index, and growth in other sectors reflected the result-oriented policies of the government.

The Chairman added that PM Shehbaz Sharif had inaugurated the National Volunteer Core to include the youth in the policy-making, development and governance engagements.

Mashhood said that Pakistan has talented youth and a pivotal role in advancing the country towards fast-paced development. "We are dedicated to preparing our youth to excel in diverse fields and they have to "Say no to drugs".

He said that the Green Youth Movement (GYM) an initiative of the Prime Minister's Youth

Programme was creating awareness and sensitizing Youth about the effects of climate change. "By harnessing the youth's creativity, energy, and commitment, we can drive meaningful change and create a legacy of sustainability for future generations," he added.

The Chairman PMYP added that Pakistan produces less than 1 percent of the world's carbon footprint and was suffering the biggest consequences of climate change which needed to be addressed with the help of the World Climate Change Organizations.

Mashhood said that PMYP had taken various initiatives in the fields of education, technical education, arts and culture, sports, science, math, innovation awards and others to empower youth. Many youths besides parliamentarians, journalists, sportsmen, and others participated in the cycle rally.

Motorway partially closed with traffic

ISLAMABAD (INP): Traffic on the Islamabad-Lahore Motorway has been partially closed, causing diversions for vehicles traveling from Islamabad to Lahore.

The diversion is being implemented at the Islamabad Toll Plaza, where drivers are redirected due to ongoing work or maintenance on the motorway.

However, the motorway remains open for traffic coming from Lahore to Islamabad, with all entrances to Lahore still accessible. According to a police spokesperson, there are no blockages preventing entry into Lahore, and footage from the Safe City

monitoring system confirms that the lanes are clear.

The spokesperson also clarified that no containers have been installed at Shahdara Chowk, ensuring that traffic is flowing normally over the bridge and throughout the area. Authorities are advising drivers to remain alert and follow the diversions as they navigate their journeys.

These clarifications come as the PTI prepares to hold a rally in Kahna area this afternoon. Despite the nominal arrangements, PTI workers have started arriving at the venue, which was designated at Jallo Park,

instead of the initially planned Minar-e-Pakistan.

Barbed wire has been placed up to two kilometres on the Ring Road and the police has asked participants not to enter the rally venue by crossing the road.

The police has also ordered that vehicles will not be allowed to be parked on the Ring Road, while a forklift and crane have been parked on the road to remove any vehicles violating the instructions. Although roads leading to the venue remain open, containers have been installed at several points on Ferozepur Road and on the entry points of the venue.

Karachi transforms into global cultural

ISLAMABAD (APP): President of Pakistan Arts Council Karachi Ahmad Shah on Saturday said that 'World Culture Festival Karachi' was all set to take place from September 26 to October 30.

"It is a significant step in promoting cultural diplomacy and showcasing Pakistan's commitment to peace and unity," he added.

"Karachi is set to become a global cultural melting pot from September 26 to October 30, Ahmad Shah said this during his interview with a private news channel.

"This transformation is likely part of the 'World Culture Festival Karachi', which will bring together 35 countries to showcase their rich cultural heritage," he added.

"The festival will feature a diverse range of cultural activities, including music, dance, art and food from participating countries," he said.

"This event will not only promote cultural exchange but also foster unity and understanding among nations,"

he said.

"Expect mesmerizing performances by artists from 35 countries, showcasing their traditional music, dance and theater with cheap rate tickets," he mentioned.

Collaborating with renowned musicians, dancers, visual artists, and performers, the festival aims to promote cross-cultural understanding, peace, and harmony, he said.

"Participating countries include China, India, Japan, UK, France, Australia, Italy, Russia, Ukraine, Brazil, UAE, Germany, Egypt, South Africa, and the USA, among others. The event will take place at various Karachi venues, including the Pakistan Arts Council, National Museum, Karachi Expo Centre and Beach Luxury Hotel, with tickets available online and at the venue," he added.

"The Sindh government is taking a groundbreaking initiative by hosting a 35-day festival, a first-of-its-kind event globally," Ahmad Shah

highlighted.

"With the government's full support, the festival promises to be an extraordinary experience, featuring an array of captivating activities, including mesmerizing folk music performances, stunning dance shows, art exhibitions, craft fairs, and delectable food festivals," he assured.

"The event will provide a platform for local 350 artisans, musicians and craftsmen to display their talents and connect with global audiences," he added.

"To ensure its success, the government has mobilized all necessary resources, infrastructure, Security and logistics, making this festival a beacon of Sindh's cultural resurgence and a testament to its warm hospitality," he said.

"By hosting this unique event, Sindh is poised to set a new benchmark for cultural festivals worldwide and will prove to the world that Pakistan is a peaceful country," he concluded.

RDA seals 108 under construction buildings

RAWALPINDI (APP): Rawalpindi Development Authority (RDA) accelerating its ongoing operation against the violators of dengue Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) has sealed 108 under construction buildings.

According to RDA spokesman, RDA team along with the officials concerned of Punjab Health Department conducted raids in different areas in Union Council, Chak Jalal Din to eradicate dengue larvae and took action in accordance with the law against the rules violators.

Before launching the grand operation, the field staff of the health department and the focal person of RDA inspected several under construction buildings to detect dengue lar-

vae. The teams found dengue larvae in several under construction buildings, he added.

The spokesman informed that the RDA and health department teams on the directives of the Commissioner Rawalpindi Division, Engineer Aamir Khattak and Director General, RDA Kinza Murtaza had accelerated their ongoing operations to take action against the violators of anti-dengue SOPs.

He further said that Additional Director General (ADG), RDA, Awais Manzoor Tarar had also directed the approved housing schemes to adopt all possible anti-dengue measures.

The ADG instructed the owners and sponsors of the housing schemes to take

solid steps to ensure implementation of the SOPs issued by the Punjab government to control dengue.

The ADG instructed the housing societies to nominate representatives and form teams under a focal person to implement anti-dengue SOPs. These focal persons would coordinate with the Assistant Director of Planning, RDA, and provide regular reports on their efforts to control dengue.

Awais Manzoor Tarar warned that FIRs would be lodged against those from whose properties dengue larvae would be detected.

He underlined the need to adopt immediate dengue control measures and preventive and long-term strategies to protect the environment and public health.



ISLAMABAD: CDA workers preparing ground for planting saplings on green belt area at Rawal Chowk. —APP Photo

Over 350 families returned

KABUL (BNA): More than 350 Afghan migrant families returned to Afghanistan from Pakistan and Iran, according to a report from the Taliban-run Bakhtar News Agency. The agency reported that 355 families were either deported or returned voluntarily. Of those, 91 families were expelled from Pakistan, while 254 came from Iran. The report noted that 33 families crossing from Pakistan used the Torkham border, and 58 others entered through the Spin Boldak crossing.

Nine Afghan detained

KABUL (Amu TV): Nine Afghan were detained on charges of using fake medical documents. The Afghans took advantage of the suspension of travel visas to neighbor country for Afghan nationals by presenting forged medical certificates. They claimed to be seeking medical treatment as a means to enter the country. The arrests highlight ongoing frustrations among Afghan citizens, who have repeatedly voiced concerns about corruption in the visa issuance process.

Normalization of IEA relations depends on its actions: US Envoy



KABUL (Ariana News): US Ambassador to the United Nations Linda Thomas-Greenfield said on Friday that any meaningful steps toward normalization of ties with the Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan (IEA) will be based on its actions, including its treatment of women and girls.

She said on X that the IEA's restrictions on women and girls are "deeply troubling." "The United States has been clear: Any meaningful steps toward normalization will be based on the Taliban's actions – including its treatment of women and girls," she said. Earlier on Wednesday, Thomas-Greenfield said that the situation for women and girls in Afghanistan continues to worsen under the Islamic Emirate. "We think we need to do more to hold them accountable, but also to push them to change," she said while addressing reporters at the Washington Foreign Press Center on UN Reform.

The Islamic Emirate has repeatedly emphasized that it is committed to ensuring the rights of women and girls in accordance with Sharia law, and this is an internal matter of Afghanistan.

Mines ministry signed contracts worth \$8b



KABUL (Ariana News): In the past year, the Ministry of Mines and Petroleum has signed 13 large mining contracts worth \$8 billion, officials said on Saturday.

Addressing a press conference, officials said that 167 small-scale mining projects are ongoing with an investment of 10 billion afghanis.

They emphasized that in the past year, the ministry conducted a new survey of

647 deposits in 28 provinces. Officials also announced that 1,700 emerald deposits have been surveyed and registered in Panjshir province, and 575 permits have been issued for its extraction, employing 15,000 people.

According to them, in the past year, 78,000 carats of emeralds worth more than \$5.5 million have been sold to local and foreign businessmen.

Officials also emphasized that the practical work of TAPI and Mes Aynak copper projects in the country is expanding and has provided employment opportunities for the people.

They also announced efforts to implement new projects in Ghor, Badghis, Maidan Wardak, Herat, Parwan, Bamyan, Kapisa and Nangarhar provinces in the near future.

Concerns grow over mistreatment of Afghans

KABUL (TOLONews): Some Afghan migrants in Iran have once again criticized the inappropriate behavior of the country's authorities. They state that they are facing various challenges in Iran.

Mohammad Akbar, a migrant, said: "The misery that Iran has brought upon Afghan migrants today is alarming. They have blocked our phone SIM cards, we are not given even dry bread, we are not provided with jobs, and we cannot easily leave our homes, living like prisoners."

Mohammad Khan Talebi Mohammadzi, a migrant rights activist, stated: "The problems of migrants need to be addressed. Both the diplomatic channels and negotiations that could improve the situation should involve our diplomatic apparatus—namely, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Ministry of Refugees—to take action in this matter."

Meanwhile, the Islamic Emirate has called on countries hosting Afghan migrants to treat them well and encourage them to return to Afghanistan.

Zabihullah Mujahid, the spokesperson for the Islamic Emirate, said: "We ask Afghans to consider returning to their country; living in other countries comes with its own problems. We also ask host countries to stop their mistreatment of Afghans and encourage them to return to their homeland."

Amir Khan Muttaqi, the acting Foreign Minister, during the presentation of the ministry's annual report, called on the Iranian government to cooperate with Afghan migrants who have contributed to the development of the country with patience and openness.

350 families returned

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The agency reported that 355 families were either deported or returned voluntarily. Of those, 91 families were expelled from Pakistan, while 254 came from Iran. The report noted that 33 families crossing from Pakistan used the Torkham border, and 58 others entered through the Spin Boldak crossing.

From Iran, 98 families entered Afghanistan through the Islam Qala border, while 166 crossed at the Pul-e-Abrisham border. Afghan migrants have expressed concerns about mistreatment. In Iran, the governor of Kerman instructed schools not to enroll Afghan students, warning of consequences for those who do. Afghan migrants in Pakistan have similarly complained of facing severe hardships, with many reporting significant mental and emotional stress.

Employment and alternative cultivation: Hanafi seeks United Nations's assistance



KABUL (TOLONews): Abdul Salam Hanafi, the Islamic Emirate's deputy prime minister for administrative affairs, in a meeting with the Deputy Representative of the United Nations, requested the UN and other aid organizations to cooperate with the caretaker government in creating job opportunities, promoting alternative crops for farmers, and preventing migration.

According to the statement from the Presidential Palace, the Deputy Representative of the UN said that the United Nations is committed to continuing

its assistance to the people of Afghanistan and expects the Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan to cooperate with them in delivering this aid to those in need.

Nabi Afghan, an economic analyst, said: "Afghanistan is an agricultural country. We can become self-sufficient from this point, escape poverty and misery, and find a good alternative to poppy cultivation. In this area, we should proceed with expertise and seek international assistance in a way that leads to self-sufficiency rather than out of desperation."

Additionally, in this meeting, the third Doha meeting and its commitments were mentioned, and the United Nations announced its plans in various sectors, including health, education, food security, and agriculture, and requested the cooperation of the Islamic Emirate for the implementation of these programs.

Abdul Shakoor Hadawal, another economic analyst, said: "Hopefully, the United Nations, donor countries, and aid organizations will continue their assistance to help resolve

the challenges faced by the people, as this aid plays a role in reducing the level of poverty."

Mir Shakeeb Mir, an economic expert, said: "Assistance should be directed towards sectors that create job opportunities for the people of Afghanistan and strengthen the country's infrastructure."

After the conclusion of the third Doha meeting on Afghanistan, Japan announced a \$10 billion aid package to support Afghan farmers and alternative cultivation in Afghanistan.

Minister calls for stronger Muslim solidarity at Tehran Unity conference

KABUL (BNA): The Deputy Minister Hajj and Religious Affairs, Sheikh Mawlawi Azizur Rahman Mansoor, emphasized the crucial need for unity among Muslims globally to protect their shared religious and spiritual principles.

Speaking at the 38th International Conference on Islamic Unity held in Tehran, Sheikh Mansoor highlighted that unity is a core pillar of Islam, calling it a religious obligation for the Muslim Ummah, while warning that neglecting this duty is sinful.

Sheikh Mansoor pointed out that Islamic unity brings about fraternity, harmony, and blessings, ensuring that Muslims across the world can maintain their religious and cultural ties. He further noted that through unity, the Islamic community could preserve its shared religious and spiritual values while advancing its cultural heritage.



In addition to these remarks, Sheikh Mansoor provided an update on Afghanistan under the Islamic Emirate's leadership, stating that since the Emirate's rise to power three years ago, Islamic Sharia has been implemented, national security has been fully restored, and narcotics cultivation and

trafficking have been eradicated. He also mentioned the initiation of large-scale development projects aimed at steering the country towards self-reliance.

The 38th International Conference on Islamic Unity aims to foster cooperation among Muslims worldwide, promote scholarly discussions among

religious leaders, and explore practical solutions to challenges facing the Muslim world.

Key objectives include enhancing solidarity among the Muslim Ummah, resolving critical issues faced by Muslims, and developing strategies to strengthen Islamic unity on a global scale.

Turkey arrests 32 undocumented Afghan migrants

KABUL (Khaama Press): Turkish media reported the arrest of 32 undocumented Afghan migrants in various parts of the country.

According to Turkish reports, 32 migrants from Afghanistan were arrested by police in the city of Edirne.

The reports indicate that these migrants had entered the country illegally without residence documents and were apprehended by Turkish police.

The arrested Afghan migrants were identified and detained during operations in the villages of Meric, Ipsala, Lalapasa, and Uzunköprü at checkpoints.

Meanwhile, Edirne city police recently announced that they have launched operations across the country to prevent illegal migration. The police further stated that this process will continue in the coming days. Previously, the Turkish government had announced that it would continue identifying and deporting undocumented migrants across all cities.

It is noteworthy that Turkey remains one of the main routes for Afghan migrants trying to reach Europe, with many of them entering the country through Iran.

Turkey's efforts to curb illegal immigration are intensifying as the country remains a key transit point for migrants seeking to cross into Europe, particularly from Afghanistan.

USIP: Int'l community lacks clear approach toward Taliban

KABUL (TOLONews): The United States Institute of Peace said that the international community does not have a clear approach for dealing with the Islamic Emirate. In a report, the institute said that three years have passed since the Islamic Emirate regained power in Afghanistan, and the citizens of this country are facing various challenges. However, the international community has not yet adopted a clear approach.

The report from the United States Institute of Peace reads: "Three years into Taliban rule, the Afghan people are beset by a host of human rights, economic and humanitarian challenges, with women and girls particularly impacted. Meanwhile, the international community still has no clear approach to dealing with the Taliban, with the regime rejecting a UN Security Council resolution calling for a special envoy to develop a roadmap for normalizing Afghanistan's relations with the international community."

"The world and regional countries do not have a unified stance regarding the Islamic Emirate, as regional countries do not want the US to return here," said Sayed Akbar Sial Wardak, a political analyst.

The United States Institute of Peace also mentioned in the report that due to the non-recognition of the Islamic Emirate by UN member countries, the representative of Afghanistan's caretaker government will not be present at

the upcoming United Nations General Assembly session, which is set to take place in a week. The US Institute of Peace added: "Lacking formal recognition from all member states, the Taliban will not be present at the UN General Assembly next week. Their absence speaks volumes about how the international community struggles to constrain a regime that has repeatedly defied UN treaties, sanctions and Security Council resolutions."

The Islamic Emirate has not commented on this matter so far, but has consistently deemed the appointment of a special envoy for Afghanistan unnecessary and considered discussions about Afghanistan at international meetings ineffective without the presence of the caretaker government's representative.

"In sessions where the representative of the Afghan people, the representative of the Islamic Emirate, is not present at the national and international levels, especially at the United Nations, I believe such sessions will not have an impact on the people of Afghanistan and the Islamic Emirate," said Salim Paigir, a political analyst.

Earlier, Roza Otunbayeva, the Special Representative of the Secretary-General and Head of UNAMA, encouraged UN Security Council members in December 2023 to reach a consensus on Afghanistan and engage in dialogue with the Afghan caretaker government.

Afghanistan Trust Fund reports earning \$337m

KABUL (TOLONews): Officials of the Afghanistan Trust Fund in Switzerland said that the fund has gained \$337 million in interest since its establishment.

A member of the fund's board emphasized that the trust fund operates independently, with the aim of maintaining currency value stability, price stability, and financial sector stability.

Shah Mohammad Mehrabi, board member of the Afghan Trust Fund in Switzerland, said: "The fund operates independently with the purpose of receiving, protecting, preserving and dispersing assets for the benefits of the Afghan people. Its goals include foreign exchange rate and price stabilization

with the primary objective being the stabilization of the financial sector. It is not designed or intended for humanitarian purposes."

The Ministry of Economy once again called on the international community to release Afghanistan's frozen assets.

Abdul Latif Nazari, Deputy Minister of Economy, said: "All of Afghanistan's assets that are frozen and blocked abroad are the legitimate and logical right of the Afghan people. Therefore, we demand that these funds be returned to the Afghan people and the Islamic Emirate as soon as possible so that they can be used for the economic growth and development of the country."

try."

Sakhi Ahmad Peyman, the First Deputy of the Chamber of Industries and Mines, said: "I hope the international community will lift these economic pressures so that the benefits can reach the Afghan people. For example, if the private sector could use these funds, it would help the economy, create job opportunities, and alleviate poverty."

After the political developments in August 2021 in the country, over \$9 billion of the country's assets were frozen in US and European banks, of which \$3.5 billion were transferred to the trust fund, but the fate of the remaining \$6 billion in assets is still unclear.

More than 2,000 women in Baghlan earn income from handicrafts



BAGHLAN (TOLONews): The Baghlan Directorate of Information and Culture said that after the return to power of the Islamic Emirate, over 2,000 businesswomen in the province are engaged in

producing handicrafts. According to officials, these women are carrying out their activities in designated areas while adhering to the Islamic Emirate's regulations.

Izzat Mir Haqqani, the

acting head of Baghlan's Department of Information and Culture, said: "2,000 businesswomen are engaged in handicrafts in the center and districts, earning a daily income to support their families."



COLOMBO: Voters queue outside a polling station to vote on the day of the presidential election, in Sri Lanka.

Iran unveils new drone, missile amid tensions

TEHRAN (AFP): Iran unveiled a new ballistic missile and an upgraded one-way attack drone at a military parade on Saturday, state media said, amid soaring regional tensions and allegations of arming Russia.

Iran stands accused by Western governments of supplying both drones and missiles to Russia for use in its war with Ukraine, a charge it has repeatedly denied. The solid-fuel Jihad missile was designed and manufactured by the aerospace arm of Iran's Revolutionary Guards and has an operational range of 1,000 kilometres, state news agency IRNA said.

The Shahed-136B drone is an upgraded version of the Shahed-136, with new features and an operational range of more than 4,000 kilometres, it added. Iranian President Masoud Pezeshkian attended the annual parade in Tehran,

commemorating the 1980-88 war with Saddam Hussein's Iraq. "Today, our defensive and deterrent capabilities have grown so much that no demon even thinks about any aggression towards our dear Iran," he said.

"With unity and cohesion among Islamic countries ... we can put in its place the bloodthirsty, genocidal usurper Israel, which shows no mercy to anyone, women or children, old or young." Supreme leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei delivered a similar tirade against Israel to delegates to an annual meeting of Muslim clerics hosted by Iran, calling on Islamic countries to "completely cut off their economic relations" with Israel and "weaken political ties".

"This inner strength can eliminate the Zionist regime, this malignant cancerous tumour, from the heart of the Islamic community in Palestine and get

rid of US domination and coercive interference in the region," he said. Middle East tensions have soared since Hamas attacked Israel on October 7, sparking conflict in Gaza and drawing in Iranian allies around the region.

The tensions have intensified in recent days as the focus of Israel's firepower has shifted north to the Lebanon border where its troops have been battling Hezbollah. An Israeli air strike on Hezbollah's Beirut stronghold on Friday killed 31 people, including two of its top commanders, Lebanese authorities said, hot on the heels of deadly sabotage attacks on the group's communications earlier this week.

Britain, France, Germany and the United States slapped new sanctions on Iran earlier this month, alleging that it had been providing ballistic missiles for Russia's war effort in Ukraine.

Mini-budget worth Rs1tr on cards

E.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: Following reports of Rs 150 billion shortfall in tax collection by the Federal Board of Revenue (FBR) a proposal to bring a mini-budget of one trillion is on the cards.

The FBR confirmed that there will be no extension to the September 30 deadline for filing income tax returns, despite an anticipated revenue shortfall. As of now, 1,926 million individuals have submitted their returns, marking an increase of 205,000 filers compared to last year. However, officials highlight that last year saw a total of nearly 6 million returns filers.

FBR officials have expressed concerns over a significant revenue shortfall, with an estimated deficit of Rs150 billion expected for September alone. The board is reportedly considering a mini-budget proposal worth approximately Rs 1 trillion to address the growing fiscal gap. The total revenue shortfall over the past two months is projected to exceed Rs250b, threatening the government's ability to meet the Rs12.97 trillion tax target for the fiscal year.

In response to the shortfall, the FBR is contemplating measures such as imposing a uniform sales tax by withdrawing current exemptions and imposing withholding taxes. With the IMF closely monitoring Pakistan's fiscal performance, the FBR faces immense pressure to meet its revenue targets, leaving little room for error. A new three-tiered policy targeting non-filers is under consideration to strengthen economic documentation. Under this proposed approach, non-filers will be barred from acquiring cars, immovable property, financial instruments, or opening bank accounts, except for the Asaan Account.

bility of the government to provide people protection, he said.

He further said that the PPP, Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N), and Muttahida Qaumi Movement (MQM) came to power through massive electoral rigging. He emphasized that the ruling elite—consisting of corrupt imperialists, feudal lords, and waderas—have been plundering the country's resources for decades. He stressed that unless the people unite and rise against this ruling elite, the nation will not progress.

Jl: PPP failed to provide relief to people of Sindh

E.P. Report

KANDHKOT: Emir Jamaat-e-Islami (JI) Hafiz Naeem ur Rehman has criticized the Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP) for its 16-year rule over Sindh, saying that it has failed to provide any relief to the masses.

Addressing a sit-in protest in Kandhkot on Saturday against the deteriorating security situation and the prevalence of lawlessness, he said, "Criminals have taken control of the province, kidnappings for ransom have become commonplace, the

security situation is dire, infrastructure is in ruins, corruption is rampant, and the government is protecting the mafia."

A large number of people participated in the sit-in, demanding improved security and a better law-and-order situation. Hafiz Naeem ur Rehman commended the participants for raising their voices against the criminal elements and overcoming their fear. He assured them that JI stands firmly with the people, urging them to support the party in this common cause. It is prime responsi-

Curfew imposed in S Lanka after polls close peacefully

COLOMBO (AFP): Sri Lanka imposed a night curfew across the country Saturday despite a peaceful presidential election that is effectively a referendum on an unpopular IMF bailout. Police announced the eight-hour curfew shortly after the independent Election Commission said Saturday's poll was the most peaceful in the country's electoral history.

President Ranil Wickremesinghe, who is facing an uphill battle to retain power, imposed the unexpected travel restriction "as an additional measure to protect people", police said in a statement. It urged people to remain indoors. Earlier in the day, the government declared Monday a special public holiday. Results of Saturday's election are expected on Sunday.

Turnout was at an estimated 75% when polling stations closed after nine hours of balloting, an election official said, citing provisional figures. The record for voter turnout in a Sri Lankan presidential election was set in 2019 with 83.72%. Wickremesinghe is seeking re-election to continue belt-tightening measures that stabilised the economy and ended months of food, fuel and medicine shortages after Sri Lanka's worst economic meltdown in 2022.

His two years in office restored calm to the streets after civil unrest spurred by the downturn saw thousands storm the compound of his predecessor Gotabaya Rajapaksa, who fled the country as anger mounted. "I've taken this country out of bankruptcy," Wickremesinghe, 75,

said after casting his ballot. But Wickremesinghe's tax hikes and other measures, imposed under the terms of a \$2.9-billion IMF bailout, have left millions struggling to make ends meet.

"The country has been through a lot," lawyer and musician Soundarie David Rodrigo told AFP after casting her vote in Colombo. "So I just don't want to see another upheaval coming soon." Wickremesinghe faces a tough challenge from two formidable contenders. One is Anura Kumara Dissanayaka, the leader of a once-marginal Marxist party tarnished by its violent past.

The party led two failed uprisings in the 1970s and 1980s that left more than 80,000 people dead, and it won less than four% of the vote in the previous parliamentary elections. But Sri Lanka's crisis has proven an opportunity for the 55-year-old Dissanayaka, who has seen a surge of support based on his pledge to change the island's "corrupt" political culture. He said at a polling station he was confident of securing the top job. "After the victory there should be no clashes, no violence," he said. "Our country needs a new political culture."

Fellow opposition leader Sajith Premadasa, 57, the son of a former president assassinated in 1993 during the country's decades-long civil war, is also expected to make a strong showing. Premadasa has vowed to fight endemic corruption, and both he and Dissanayaka have pledged to

renegotiate the terms of the IMF rescue package.

Political analyst Kusal Perera told AFP it was difficult to predict a winner from the three-way race — the first in the island's history. "What is clear is that no candidate will surpass the 50% mark" needed to win outright, he said. Officials would then carry out a count of second and third-preference votes to determine the winner, a process that could delay the final result.

More than 17 million people were eligible to vote in the election, with more than 63,000 police deployed to guard polling booths and counting centres in schools and temples. The government also banned the sale of liquor over the weekend and said no victory rallies or celebrations would be permitted until a week after the results were announced.

Economic issues dominated the eight-week campaign, with public anger widespread over the hardships endured since the peak of the crisis two years ago. Official data showed that Sri Lanka's poverty rate doubled to 25% between 2021 and 2022, adding more than 2.5 million people to those already living on less than \$3.65 a day. Experts warn that Sri Lanka's economy is still vulnerable, with payments on the island's \$46 billion foreign debt yet to resume since a 2022 government default. The IMF said reforms enacted by Wickremesinghe's government were beginning to pay off, with growth slowly returning.

Hezbollah in disarray after Israeli air strike kills leaders

BEIRUT (AFP, Reuters): Hezbollah said Saturday that a second senior commander was among 16 fighters killed in an Israeli air strike on its Beirut stronghold the previous day, highlighting the scale of the blow to its military leadership.

Israel said strike on the southern suburbs of Lebanon's capital killed the head of Hezbollah's elite Radwan Force, Ibrahim Aqil, and several other commanders. At least 31 people were killed in the airstrike, the Lebanese health ministry said on Saturday, including three children and seven women, in the deadliest strike in a year of conflict between Hezbollah and Israel.

Coming hot on the heels of sabotage attacks on communications devices this week that killed 37 people in Hezbollah strongholds, the strike raised new questions about the Iran-backed group's security arrangements and dealt a heavy blow to its fighters' morale. Hezbollah named the second commander as Ahmed Mahmud Wahbi, saying he had headed the group's operations against Israel from the onset of the Gaza war in October until the start of this year.

Confirming the death of Aqil, who was wanted by the United States for involvement in the 1983 bombing of the US embassy in Beirut, Hezbollah hailed him as "one of its great leaders." AFP journalists said Friday's strike left a massive crater and gutted the lower floors of a high-rise building. It was the second Israeli strike on the Hezbollah military leadership since the start of the Gaza war. An Israeli strike on Beirut in July killed Fuad Shukur, a top operations chief for the movement.

It also followed sabotage attacks on pagers and two-way radios used by Hezbollah on Tuesday and Wednesday, which killed 37 people and raised fears of a wider war. Stephane Dujarric, spokesman for UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres, said the world body was

"very concerned about the heightened escalation" and called for "maximum restraint" from all sides. The Israeli military said it conducted a "targeted strike" against Aqil, which a source close to Hezbollah said killed a total of 16 Radwan Force members.

The source said Aqil was "at a meeting with commanders" when he was killed. The United States had offered a \$7 million reward for information on Aqil, describing him as a "principal member" of an organization that claimed the 1983 embassy bombing, which killed 63 people.

Israeli troops and Hezbollah fighters have battled each other along the Israel-Lebanon border since Hamas militants triggered the war in Gaza with their October 7 attack. The focus of Israel's firepower for nearly a year has been on Gaza, but with Hamas much weakened, that focus has now moved to Israel's northern border.

Defense Minister Yoav Gallant said Israel's "enemies" would find no refuge, not even in Beirut's southern suburbs. Israeli military spokesman Daniel Hagari said after the strike that Israel was "not aiming for a broad escalation in the region." But Hamas called it a "brutal and terrorist aggression" and an "escalation." Iran's foreign ministry accused Israel of seeking to "broaden the geography of the war."

Iran's Supreme Leader, Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, said that Israel is committing "shameless crimes" against children, not combatants. Months of near-daily cross-border exchanges have killed hundreds in Lebanon, most of them fighters, and dozens in Israel, forcing tens of thousands on both sides to flee their homes. The latest blow to Hezbollah came after thousands of Hezbollah operatives' pagers and walkie-talkies exploded over two days, killing 37 people and wounding thousands.

Palestinians say Israeli strike killed 22

CAIRO (Reuters): Palestinians said an Israeli strike killed at least 22 people in a school sheltering displaced people in southern Gaza City on Saturday, while the Israeli military said the attack targeted a Hamas command center.

The Gaza health ministry said most of those killed were women and children. The Hamas-run government media office said 13 children, including a three-month-old baby, and six women were among the dead. The military said it hit a Hamas command center embedded in the compound that previously served as a school, repeating an accusation that Hamas uses civilian facilities for military purposes — a charge which Hamas denies.

In Rafah, in the southern Gaza Strip, the Gaza health ministry said four health workers were killed by an Israeli strike that hit ministry warehouses. Ambulance crews could not reach the dead or treat the wounded, it added. In a statement on Saturday, the Israeli military said forces, operating in Rafah since May, have killed dozens of militants in recent weeks and dismantled military infrastructure and tunnel shafts. Israel's demand to keep control of the southern border line between Rafah and Egypt has been a major sticking point in international efforts to conclude a ceasefire deal between Israel and Hamas.

We cannot allow Lebanon to become another Gaza: UN chief

NEW YORK CITY: With hostilities between Israel and the Iran-backed Hezbollah militia on the brink of all-out war, the UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres told Arab News in an exclusive interview that the world cannot allow Lebanon to become another Gaza.

The pager and walkie-talkie attacks across Lebanon last week, which left 37 dead and more than 3,000 injured, and which were followed by further exchanges of fire across the Lebanese border, have raised regional tensions to breaking point.

Guterres said an all-out war between Israel and Hezbollah "is something we need to avoid at all costs." Yet, against this backdrop, he says there is "a growing conscience that we must stop. We must stop this war in general. We must stop the war in Gaza." Speaking to Arab News ahead of the high-level week of the UN's 79th General Assembly, which takes place as the war in Gaza nears its grim one-year anniversary, Guterres acknowledged the conflict has exceeded his expectations in terms of its duration and the "unprecedented level of destruction and suffering."

As he reiterated his "vigorous" condemnation of the Oct. 7 Hamas-led attack on southern Israel, he again stressed "that can never justify the collective punishment of the Palestinian people." When asked about the UN's responsibility for the failure to end the war, Guterres made it clear that the responsibility lies with those who initiated the conflict.

He said the UN has consistently called for ceasefires and humanitarian assistance from the beginning of the hostilities, but added "it's impossible to convince those who do not want to be convinced." Guterres said he was saddened at not being able to do more for the people of Gaza, and attributed this to security concerns and restrictions imposed by Israeli authorities in the war ravaged enclave.

Calling for a two-state solution to resolve the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, he said: "There is no humanitarian solution for humanitarian problems. The solution is always political. That is why

we need to stop the war." Guterres also addressed the limitations of the UN's power, noting that while it is a strong voice for peace and adherence to international law, its effectiveness is often hindered by geopolitical dynamics, particularly within the Security Council.

Calling on the US to stop supplying weapons to Israel, meanwhile, is an exercise in futility, he said. "I simply know that that would not happen. It's not worth concentrating efforts where the results are impossible."

He was unequivocal, however, on the need to implement all the deliberation of the International Court of Justice, which in January ruled there was a risk that genocide is being committed in Gaza. Asked whether he is in favor of issuing arrest warrants for Hamas leader Yahya Sinwar and Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, Guterres said he supports "all the decisions of the ICC."

Q. Mr. Secretary-General, let's start with Lebanon. The latest pager attacks in Lebanon have left so far 37 killed and over 3,000 injured. Is this another example of total disregard for the civilian toll? And is this the new norm now in the Middle East conflicts?

A. It is a very serious escalation. But I think that even more important than the fact that you mentioned is the idea which we now know, that this was triggered now because there was a suspicion that they were being discovered. And so, as they were being discovered, they were made to explode, which means that the objective was not to explode them now. And this kind of devices, this kind of operation, makes sense as a pre-emptive strike before a major military operation. So, even more worrying than the events themselves is the fact that they show that there is a serious risk of an all-out war in Lebanon, and that is something we need to avoid at all costs. We cannot allow Lebanon to become another Gaza.

Q. Are you in touch with Israel and Hezbollah? What are you hearing? Is an all-out escalation non-avoidable at this stage? And is there anything the UN can do?

A. At the present moment, we are

witnessing an escalation, both a physical and a verbal escalation, but there is also a growing conscience that we must stop. We must stop this war in general. We must stop the war in Gaza. We must stop. And that it is absolutely essential to first start de-escalating, and second, to have a serious negotiation to solve once and for all the problems of demarcation on the Blue Line and to stabilize the relationship there without more casualties, especially without more civilian casualties.

Q. For almost a year now, the world has been watching some of the most traumatizing images of death and blood in Gaza. The longest and most atrocious war between Israelis and Palestinians. Did you expect this to take this long? And do you see an end in sight?

A. Sincerely, I didn't expect it to last. And since the beginning, I've been asking for a ceasefire, humanitarian ceasefire, since the very beginning. I condemned vigorously the horrible terror attacks that were made on October 7 (last year) by Hamas, but that can never justify the collective punishment of the Palestinian people. And what we have seen in the last almost one year, was a level of death and destruction that is unprecedented in my period as secretary-general. And as you know, on top of all civilian death, we have had almost 200 of our own staff, humanitarian staff, killed. And this is something that obviously, in any circumstance, would need a serious investigation.

Q. Do you or the UN take a personal responsibility for the failure to end the war?

A. Let's be clear: The responsibility for the war is of those that make the war. Normally, this kind of question is asked to divert the attention from who is causing the problem. Could the UN have done more? I sincerely never felt that we had an opportunity to really do more than what we have done from the very beginning. And from the very beginning, we have asked for ceasefire, for release of hostages, for effective humanitarian aid. Since the very beginning, our voice has been loud and clear. From the very beginning, we have put

pressure on all, namely, on countries that could have a direct influence on Israel. But let's be clear: It's impossible to convince those that do not want to be convinced.

Q. I was reading that during the Cambodian genocide, critics of the UN used to say, "Oh, look at the UN. They are distributing sandwiches at the gates of Auschwitz. And it got me thinking about Gaza today, where the UN is not even able to do that: distribute sandwiches in Gaza. Now, everyone who knows you describes you above everything else as a humanitarian. As a humanitarian, how do you feel about the fact that you haven't been able to get food and medicine into Gaza?"

A. Well, there has been consistently a series of obstacles, obstacles caused in many aspects, directly by the Israeli authorities, obstacles caused by the insecurity in the area, by the fact that law and order has completely broken in this dramatic situation. And you can imagine how deeply saddened I am not to be able to do much more. And the proof that we are not doing more because of the obstacles created to us is the vaccination of polio. When those obstacles disappear, humanitarian action becomes possible.

So, it's not that UN is not able to do more. It's not that the other agencies are not able to do more. It is that until now, we have not been allowed to do more. When we are allowed, we do and we deliver, as it was demonstrated. But once again, I was for 10 years the High Commissioner for Refugees, and I always said there is no humanitarian solution for humanitarian problems. The solution is always political.

That is why we need to stop the war. That is why we need to create a clear road map for a two-state solution, a two-state solution in line with all the deliberations that the international community has already taken allowing Israelis and Palestinians to live together in peace and security.

Q. I can't help but notice that you have avoided calling directly on the US to stop supplying arms to Israel, and you said many times that you prefer to focus

on things that are more achievable.

A. No, I simply know that that would not happen. I was very clear: I think I should concentrate my efforts on what can produce results. It's not worth concentrating efforts where the results are impossible.

Q. But given that 50,000 bombs have already been dropped on Gaza, and the ICJ has ruled that there's a risk of genocide in Gaza, has your view on conditioning aid to Israel changed at all?

A. My view is that all the deliberations of the ICJ should be fully taken into account and fully implemented.

Q. Many across the region and the world have a sense today that the UN has failed the Gaza test, and that fear has pushed this organization to retreat from international law itself, to self-undermine its own credibility as this war goes on unchecked. What is your answer to those, and do you agree that there is fear in this building to confront the US, to confront Israel?

A. There is no fear in this building to confront anybody. If I can be proud of anything, it is that my voice has been loud and clear in defense of the (UN) Charter, in defense of international law, in defense of international humanitarian law, and in defense of the right of self-determination of peoples, and in particular of the Palestinian people.

So, I don't think the UN can be accused of not being very clear in all these aspects, as we have been clear in Ukraine and as we have been clear in many other situations around the world. We have no real power, let's be honest. The body of the UN that has some power is the Security Council, and you know Security Council is paralyzed.

We have limited resources, but even without power and money, there are two things we have. One is a voice that nobody will shut up, and the second is the capacity to do our best to convene those with goodwill to put pressure on those that are responsible for the dramatic wars that we are witnessing, to make sure that those wars find their end as soon as possible.

Q. Do you support arrest warrants for Hamas political chief Yahya Sinwar and

Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu?

A. I support all the decisions of the ICC.

Q. You are the UN chief, so obviously you don't use the word "genocide" lightly. And I am well aware that the concept of genocide has often been subject to political abuse. But for months now, we have been hearing every genocide scholar, international human rights lawyer, warning against the genocidal nature of this war. In Gaza, homes, schools, churches, mosques, universities, water and electricity infrastructure, food systems, medical institutions have been all but wiped out. Disease, poisoning of the earth, sexual assault, torture and advanced weapons. Do you believe, months later, that Israeli actions leave any room for doubt that what is happening is genocide?

A. Our position has always been very clear: It's not for the Secretariat of the UN to classify acts like these. We rely on the International Court of Justice, and we will abide by the decisions of the International Court of Justice in the moment in which the International Court of Justice is dealing with it. So, as the UN, we have our court, and as the UN, we need to support in all circumstances the decisions of our court and not to replace it.

Q. Through the genocides of the past century, the Tutsis, the Bosnians, the Yazidi and the Rohingya, it was always afterwards that it became clear that the international community had failed in its duty to prevent mass atrocities, and ensure accountability for the perpetrators. Today, many are saying that the mandate of the UN genocide prevention office is more needed than ever. Why has your undersecretary, Alice Wairimu Nderitu, who was very vocal on Sudan and Armenia, to name two, been silent on Gaza?

A. She has not been silent. She has been active on Gaza and many other situations. It's not for her to declare what is a genocide or not. She is our envoy on the prevention of genocide, and I am very proud of the work that she has been doing. — Arab News