

PM expresses deep grief

LONDON (APP): Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif on Sunday expressed deep grief and sorrow over the loss of precious lives in the mine explosion in Tabas, Iran. He offered his heartfelt condolence to Iran's President Masoud Pezeshkian and the Iranian people on the loss of precious lives and injuries in the coal mine explosion. "Our thoughts and prayers are with the victims and their families," the prime minister said.



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Public rejects politics of chaos: Shehbaz

Says people endorses government's sound economic policies

LONDON (APP): Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif on Sunday said that the public had rejected the politics of chaos and instead prioritized the need for sound economic policies that directly address inflation and improve the living standard of the people. "The people want a reduction in inflation, solutions to their problems, and economic betterment," the prime minister said in a statement issued by the PM Office. The prime minister, stressing the urgency of addressing the public's economic concerns, called for a shift in political priorities, arguing that instead of focusing on rallies and political gatherings, the immediate need was to improve the economic condition of the masses.

"We will hold rallies in 2028; but right now, it is time to work hard to fulfill the pledges made to the people." He linked the success of the country's economic recovery directly to political stability, warning that political chaos would disrupt efforts to provide relief to the public. "Economic recovery is tied to political stability; political chaos means affecting the process of providing relief to the people," he said. He praised the people for their role in supporting economic growth by promoting political stability and emphasized that national unity was crucial for sustaining this progress. "National unity for political stability will prove to be the guarantee of Pakistan's bright economic future and relief from inflation," he remarked. To address the country's ongoing economic and security challenges, the prime minister called for collaboration between political parties, institutions, and provinces. "To tackle economic challenges and terrorism, the nation, political parties, institutions, and provinces must work together," he urged. Recalling the past political instability, PM Shehbaz Sharif lamented that a lot of time had been wasted in political chaos therefore wasting more time was not in the interest of the country and the nation. On the economic front, the prime minister was optimistic about the country's progress, noting that

inflation had returned to single digits and that Pakistan's overall economic situation was improving. "Thank God, inflation has returned to single digits, and the economic situation is improving," he said, highlighting key indicators such as rising exports, the stability of the rupee, increasing remittances, and declining interest rates. Looking forward, the prime minister underscored that the current International Monetary Fund (IMF) program should be the last one for Pakistan, saying "if it is so, it will be a true success". He warned that abusive language, violence, and chaos would not lead to progress, urging every province and institution to play its role in solving the public's problems.

SWAT: View of the police van damaged in blast targeting foreign envoys travelling to Malam Jabba from Mingora.



SWAT: View of the police van damaged in blast targeting foreign envoys travelling to Malam Jabba from Mingora.

Police van guarding foreign envoys targeted Blast kills one cop, injures four in Swat

Diplomats unhurt in blast: FO

Shafi Ullah

SWAT: At least one police constable was martyred, and four others were wounded in a bomb blast targeting a police van guarding a convoy of foreign envoys heading to Malam Jabba from Mingora. The blast tore through the police van on Malam Jabba road Jehanabad area of Swat.

District Police Officer (DPO) Zahid ullah Khan confirmed the explosion, stating the attack targeted a group of foreign diplomats, resulting in one officer losing his life and four others being injured.

DPO Zahid Khan detailed that the affected mobile van was leading the convoy of 11 foreign diplomats, adding that the martyred policeman was identified as Burhan Ali while four wounded cops include a sub-inspector Sarzamin, Aman ullah Constable and Habib Gul Constable were seriously injured.

Police officials informed the media that all envoys were safe after the explosion and had been shifted to Islamabad.

They added that the diplomats were heading to Malam Jabba after attending an event at the Chamber of Commerce in Mingora when the

explosion occurred in the area of Jehan abad.

The police confirmed that the foreign ambassadors in the convoy included representatives from Russia, Portugal, Ethiopia, Indonesia, Tajikistan, Kazakhstan, Iran, Vietnam, Zimbabwe and other countries.

The wounded officers were rushed to the Saidu Sharif teaching Hospitals for medical treatment. The hospital has been declared emergency and the injured personnel's condition is reported stable.

Heavy contingents of law enforcement agencies were deployed in the area following the incident and search operation underway, bomb disposal unit collecting evidence.

Meanwhile, the Foreign Office Spokesperson on Sunday confirmed that the diplomats traveling with the convoy that was hit by an improvised explosive device (IED) near Malam Jabba, Swat remained unhurt and have safely returned to Islamabad.

In a press release, the spokesperson said that a police convoy escorting a group of diplomats near Malam Jabba, Swat, was hit by an impro-

vised explosive device (IED), resulting in the martyrdom of one policeman and injuries to three others.

The group of diplomats was traveling to Islamabad after their trip to Malam Jabba and Swat.

"Our sympathies are with the families of the Shaheed policeman and three injured in the incident," the spokesperson said.

"We honour our law enforcement authorities that remain steadfast in the face of terrorists. Such acts will not deter Pakistan from its commitment towards the fight against terrorism," the spokesperson added.

President Asif Ali Zardari on Sunday strongly condemned the bomb blast near a police van in Swat. In a statement issued by the President House, he paid tribute to the police officer who was martyred in the incident.

He also expressed condolence to the bereaved family and prayed for the swift recovery of those injured in the explosion. Terrorist elements are enemies not only of the country and nation but of humanity itself, the president said.

He reaffirmed his commitment to continue efforts for the complete eradication of terrorism.

Israeli strike kills seven in Gaza school compound

CAIRO (Reuters): An Israeli airstrike killed seven people in a school sheltering displaced families in Gaza City on Sunday, Palestinian health officials said, with the Israeli military saying it had targeted militants operating from the compound.

The strike hit Kafr Qasem School in Beach camp at around 11 a.m. (0800 GMT), the officials said. Among those killed was Majed Saleh, the director of the Hamas-run Public Works and Housing ministry, they added.

Israel's military said the strike targeted Hamas fighters there, and that it had used aerial surveillance and taken other steps to limit the risk to civilians.

Hamas, the Islamist militant group that rules Gaza, has regularly denied Israeli accusations that it uses hospitals and other civilians buildings for military purposes in the near year-old war.

The attack and other reported violence in Gaza came amid a surge of strikes further north between Israel and the Iran-backed forces of Hezbollah across the border with Lebanon - a parallel conflict that had stoked fears of wider regional unrest.

Six other Palestinians were killed in separate airstrikes in central and southern parts of Gaza, the medics said. They put the number of Palestinians killed in Israeli strikes so far on Sunday at 16.

In Rafah, near Gaza's border with Egypt, residents said Israeli tanks advanced towards the western parts of the city, where the army has operated since May, and took positions over some hilltops overseeing the coastal road.

Israel's demands to keep control of the southern border line between Rafah and Egypt have been a major sticking point in international effort to conclude a ceasefire deal between Israel and Hamas.

Hamas's armed wing said fighters have mounted several attacks against

Israeli forces in Rafah, firing anti-tank rockets and detonating bombs in houses where Israeli troops had taken positions.

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.

On Sunday, Gaza's health ministry warned that all services in all hospitals could halt in 10 days because of the shortages in essential spare parts, and oil needed to operate the fuel-powered generators.

Adding to the turmoil and misery, heavy rain flooded tent encampments overnight.

"Ten minutes of rain were enough to sink the tents. What if it rained all day? Tents are already worn out and can't stand winter," said Aya, displaced with her family in the central city of Deir Al-Balah, where around a million people are sheltering.

"We don't want new tents. We want the war to end. We don't want temporary solutions in hell," the 30-year-old told Reuters via a chat app.

More shelters and supplies to help people cope with the coming winter were needed, Juliette Touma, Director of Communications of the U.N. Palestinian refugee agency UNRWA, said.

"With rain and temperatures dropping, people are likely to fall ill especially children who are most vulnerable to colds and flu," Touma told Reuters.

This war in the decades-old Israeli-Palestinian conflict was triggered on Oct. 7 when Hamas attacked Israel, killing 1,200 people and taking about 250 hostages, according to Israeli tallies. Israel's subsequent assault on the enclave has killed more than 41,300 Palestinians, according to the local health ministry, and displaced nearly the entire 2.3 million-strong population.



3 martyred as ATF officials ambushed

ZHOB (INP): Three Anti-Terrorism Force (ATF) officials were killed in an ambush by armed assailants on a police vehicle in Zhob, Balochistan, on Sunday.

According to police, the terrorists opened indiscriminate fire on the ATF vehicle on the D.I. Khan National Highway. One ATF official was killed instantly, while three others were injured. The deceased and injured were immediately transported to Zhob Hospital.

Following the incident, a heavy contingent of police and Levies personnel arrived at the scene and collected evidence. Police have registered a case and are taking steps to apprehend the perpetrators.

Two of the injured ATF officials succumbed to their injuries, raising the death toll to three. One injured official remains hospitalized.

The deceased officials have been identified as Amir Muhammad Mangalzai Sherani and Shafiqullah.

Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif on Sunday strongly condemned the firing on Anti-Terrorism Force personnel in Zhob.

The prime minister, offering his heartfelt condolences to the bereaved families, prayed for the elevation of ranks of the martyred in Jannah.

"The entire nation salutes the martyrs who sacrificed their lives in the fight against terrorism," the prime minister said.

"We are determined to eradicate the menace of terrorism from its roots," he added.

Federal Interior Minister Mohsin Naqvi has condemned the attack on an ATF vehicle on the National Highway in Zhob, Balochistan, and paid tribute to the three police officers who were killed in the firing. He also expressed deep sympathy and condolences to the families of the martyrs.

UNITED NATIONS (APP): World leaders on Sunday adopted a Pact for the Future aimed at strengthening global governance to address challenges ranging from conflict to climate change and human rights, despite last-minute objections from a group of countries led by Russia.

UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres, who organized the "Summit of the Future," had billed it as a "once-in-a-generation opportunity" to reshape human history by rekindling international cooperation

The pact aims to strengthen global governance and tackle key challenges facing humanity, including sustainable development, international peace, and technological innovation, youth and future generations and transforming global governance. It also proposes detailed action plans to address these challenges.

The adoption of the text faced a brief delay when

Russia's deputy minister of foreign affairs, Sergey Vershinin, introduced an amendment emphasizing the "principle of non-interference in the internal affairs of states" and urging the U.N. to avoid duplicating efforts. Russia's objections were backed by allies Belarus, North Korea, Iran, Nicaragua and Syria, but its amendment did not pass in a motion to take no action. Pakistan and China abstained.

As the President of UN General Assembly, Philémon Yang of Cameroon, banged the gavel to signal the adoption of the Pact, loud applause ranged out in the packed hall where dozens of world leaders and high-level delegates were present

Asked by APP for comments, Pakistan UN Ambassador Munir Akram said that while the documents was "not perfect", it will advance world community's common objectives. "Pakistan has worked

diligently for the successful adoption of the Pact for the Future," he stressed.

"Our primary goal has been to ensure that the Pact upholds the fundamental principles of the UN Charter, enhances equity among and within nations, accelerates progress on Agenda 2030 and the SDGs (sustainable development goals), and strengthens the UN's ability to advance peace, development and human rights."

Ambassador Akram added, "While the negotiation process was not satisfactory, and the Pact is not perfect, we believe it will advance these common objectives of the international community."

In the adopted version, leaders pledged to bolster the multilateral system to "keep pace with a changing world" and to "protect the needs and interests of current and future generations" facing "persistent crisis."

"We believe there is a path to a brighter future for

all of humanity," the document says

The pact outlines 56 "actions," including commitments to multilateralism, upholding the U.N. Charter and peacekeeping.

It also calls for reforms to international financial institutions and the U.N. Security Council, along with renewed efforts to combat climate change, promote disarmament, and guide the development of artificial intelligence.

During the negotiations phase, Guterres had urged nations to show "vision" and "courage," calling for "maximum ambition" to strengthen international institutions that struggle to respond effectively to today's threats.

The fight against global warming was one of the sticking points in the negotiations, with references to the "transition" away from fossil fuels having disappeared from the draft text weeks ago, before being re-inserted.

NAB KP rescues of Rs168.5 bln in BRT project

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: NAB KP successfully rescued the Government of KP from the contractor's claim of 31.5 billion rupees in the International Court of Arbitration (ICA).

According to a press release, in 2018, NAB initiated an inquiry into the allegations of illegal award of contract, misappropriation of government funds and submission of bogus performance guarantees by the contractors in BUS Rapid Transit (BRT) Project Peshawar.

Progress in the case remained stationary for few years; however, the

investigation was paced up under the command of the present DG and saved Rs168.5 billion through effective and efficient conclusion of investigation into a large scam of corruption.

Sources claim that this huge success could have been possible due to active collaboration of NAB with the Provincial Cabinet, Provincial Administration and the PDA and their positive role throughout the process of settlement agreement.

NAB investigation revealed that 6 contracts of civil works were illegally and unlawfully awarded to 04x Joint Ventures (JVs),

consisting of 2 Pakistani firms and 3 international firms for 3 contracts of Roads (Reach-I to Reach-III) and 3 contracts of Buildings (Lot 1 to Lot 3).

According to the record submitted by contractors to Peshawar Development Authority (PDA), 03x international firms had 60 to 70 percent shares in the 04x JVs. However, NAB investigation revealed that the JVs between local and international firms were merely on paper, in order to grab the mega contract illegally and fraudulently by the local contractors through leveraging the goodwill and financial capacity of the international

firms.

After winning these contracts illegally, the local and international firms made supplementary contract agreements, according to which the actual work was carried out by the local firms while the international firms were paid 2% of the total tender value in return for leveraging their names and financial capabilities.

In this way, these 3 foreign firms not only played their part in cheating a government agency (PDA) but also received about one billion rupees without doing any work.

Hence, NAB widened the scope of investigation

and thoroughly analyzed more than 400x bank accounts related to the firms wherein it was corroborated that the local firms have transferred the amount to the bank accounts of the international firms on the same dates as mentioned in the supplementary contract agreements.

It is pertinent to mention here that PDA paid a 20 percent premium on the schedule rate to the contractors in order to complete the contract on international standards within a period of 06x months so that the better resources, modern technology and machinery of international

firms be utilized in completion of the project.

However, in violation of these agreements, the contractor neither completed the project in 06x months nor the international firms ever visited Pakistan for completion of the project.

The investigation also revealed that the contractor had submitted 02x bogus local bank guarantees worth Rs2 billion to PDA. In addition to the above, 08x foreign bank guarantees amounting to Rs6.5 billion were also submitted in violation of the agreement.

The local contractors had also submitted audit reports which were proved

bogus by NAB through SECP and the Chartered Accountant of these firms.

It was also proved that the staff of the international firms claiming to work on the project, had visited Pakistan for eight to ten days only in the last five years.

The respective Embassies of the international firms fully cooperated with NAB in calling up of these firms. This Bureau in collaboration with their anti-corruption agency enforced the foreign firms to cooperate in the investigation.

As per PDA record, a claim of Rs11.653 billion payable to the contractors

on account of retention money, pending IPCs and claims/bills decided by the Dispute Resolution Board in favour of the contractors was pending with the PDA.

Additionally, a claim of Rs55 billion on account of cost escalation, variation orders and interest on delayed payments was also submitted by the contractors with PDA. Moreover, the project cost was also escalated through revised PC-I.

However, the effective NAB investigation resulted in the retention of the original project cost and a huge sum of Rs. 9 billion of the exchequer was saved.

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Sarhad Chamber of Commerce elections

SBA's historic campaign sets the stage for victory



F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: Prominent business leaders Malik Mehr Elahi, Syed Sirajuddin, and Muhammad Ishaq have called upon the business community to fully support the Sarhad Business Alliance (SBA) in the upcoming Sarhad Chamber of Commerce elections. Speaking at a series of campaign events, they emphasized that this election should not be taken lightly, as the SBA, under the leadership of Former Governor Haji Ghulam Ali and Syed Zahir Ali Shah, has run a historic campaign that has captivated the hearts of voters.

The SBA has presented a strong, merit-based manifesto, with highly

qualified and experienced candidates from various business sectors, promising real change and progress for the business community of Peshawar. "This time, the elections are not a prepared platter for those who have long monopolized the Chamber for personal interests. The SBA's comprehensive approach has already signaled a shift in power," the leaders stated.

During the campaign events held at Pabbi GT Road, Toyota Frontier, Furniture Association, University Road, and Sikandar Pura, Former Governor Haji Ghulam Ali and Syed Zahir Ali Shah, accompanied by SBA candidates, received a warm and enthusiastic reception from the business community. They were lauded for their leadership and tireless efforts

in uplifting the Chamber and restoring its credibility.

"Under the fearless leadership of Haji Ghulam Ali, the business community has found a new hope. The SBA is committed to making the Sarhad Chamber a beacon of positive change and a fortress for the business sector," speakers said at the event.

Looking ahead to the election on September 25, they expressed confidence in the SBA's success, stating, "The entire business community stands shoulder to shoulder with SBA, and we anticipate the dawn of a new era for the Sarhad Chamber."

In response, Haji Ghulam Ali, Syed Zahir Ali Shah, Malik Mehr Elahi, and Muhammad Ishaq thanked the business community for their unwavering support. They vowed to continue working diligently for the success of Peshawar's traders, ensuring that the Sarhad Chamber becomes the strongest and most influential business body in the province.

The SBA leadership called on all eligible voters to cast their ballots on September 25 and make their voices heard by voting for the SBA candidates, listed from serial numbers 11 to 20. "Together, we will end the struggles of the business community and bring about meaningful change," they concluded.



Iranian Consulate celebrates Rabi-ul-Awal

F.P. Report

KARACHI: A ceremony was held at the Iranian Consulate in Karachi to commemorate the month of Rabi-ul-Awwal, hosted by Iranian Consul General Hassan Nourian. Sindh Senior Minister Sharjeel Inam Memon, along with Provincial Ministers Syed Nasir Hussain Shah, Saeed Ghani, Syed Zulfikar Shah, and others, participated in the event.

Senior Minister of Sindh Sharjeel Inam Memon while addressing the event as a special guest said that the month of

Rabi-ul-Awwal, which marks the birthday of our beloved Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him), is very important to us. It is a great honor to take part in this occasion.

He said that the teachings of our beloved Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him), centered on compassion, justice, and unity, serve as a beacon for us. He stated that Pakistan-Iran relations are deep and enduring, founded on a shared heritage, mutual respect, and cooperation.

Culturally, both Iran and Pakistan are rich sources of

common traditions, literature, and art.

Senior Minister Sharjeel Inam Memon said that the shared experiences of our people through art, music, and literature promote mutual understanding and provide valuable opportunities for connection.

He said that through the promotion of artistic expression and educational initiatives, we can strengthen mutual understanding and foster respect.

Senior Minister Sharjeel Inam Memon said that we are facing global challenges in the fields of food

security and sustainable development. Pak-Iran cooperation is not only crucial for promoting regional stability but also for advancing agricultural expertise, resource exchange, and modern knowledge. The challenges of malnutrition can be addressed through collective action.

He said that through dialogue and cooperation, we can enhance economic partnerships, promote cultural exchange, and foster mutual collaboration. Today, we must renew our commitment to strengthening Pak-Iran relations.



LAHORE: A large number of students gather outside LCWU Jail Road to participate in the medical entrance test (MCAT). —APP Photo

Up-gradation of inside city hospitals begins

LAHORE (APP): On the direction of Chief Minister Punjab Maryam Nawaz Sharif, the up-gradation of all hospitals inside the city has commenced.

This was disclosed by Punjab Minister for Primary and Secondary Healthcare Khawaja Imran Nazir during the inauguration of a new nursery and blood bank at the Govt Maternity Hospital New Karol on Sunday.

The minister said the addition of these facilities was a part of larger up-gradation process aimed at improving the hospital's services. He emphasized that each hospital would be thoroughly assessed, and any missing or inadequate facilities would be provided on a priority basis.

Khawaja Imran Nazir announced the opening of clinics for hepatitis and Non-Communicable Diseases (NCD) under the chief minister's directive, further enhancing the healthcare system in the city. The newly inaugurated nursery and blood bank at New Karol Hospital were expected to significantly improve the quality of care for local patients.

The minister added that up-gradation would help manage the growing patient load in these hospitals, ensuring better healthcare access for the city's residents. He also revealed that a phase-wise up-gradation of city dispensaries had begun, with consultants set to be appointed to strengthen these healthcare units.

Death anniversary of Guru Nanak concludes

LAHORE (APP): The 485th death anniversary (Joti Jot) of Guru Nanak Dev Ji was commemorated at Gurdwara Sri Darbar Sahib, Kartarpur, with large-scale participation from Sikh pilgrims from both Pakistan and India.

The ceremonies concluded with the Bhog Akhand Path and a series of special events celebrating Guru Nanak's legacy, said a press release issued here on Sunday. On the final day, a statue of Bhai Mardana, Guru Nanak Dev Ji's Muslim companion, was unveiled at the "Bhai Ajita Ji Bazaar" by the Chairman

of the Evacuee Trust Property Board (ETPB), Syed Ata-ul-Rahman, along with Provincial Minister for Minority Affairs Sardar Ramesh Singh Arora. The act was hailed as a strong symbol of Sikh-Muslim friendship.

As part of the celebrations, the "Kheti Sahib" witnessed the planting of various vegetable seeds and fruit-bearing plants. The cultivation of organic vegetables on 3 acres of Baba Ji's farmland was also inaugurated, with plans to use the produce for the Gurdwara's langar (community kitchen).

Additionally, dates harvested from the Kartarpur plantation were distributed as Prasad to the pilgrims.

Speaking on the occasion, Evacuee Trust Property Board (ETPB) Chairman Dr. Ata-ur-Rahman praised the Kartarpur Corridor as a gift to the global Sikh community and lauded the installation of Bhai Mardana's statue as a symbol of interfaith unity.

The event was attended by government officials, including members of the PSGPC, ETPB Secretary Fareed Iqbal, and other dignitaries.

Action on illegal wildlife trade geared up

LAHORE (APP): Senior Provincial Minister Marriyum Aurangzeb has affirmed that the Punjab government's crackdown on the illegal trade and smuggling of rare wildlife and birds is gearing up.

Following a tip-off, the Wildlife Department, in collaboration with police, conducted a successful operation in Taunsa, resulting in the arrest of a suspect. During the operation, a rare eagle valued at over \$36,000 was recovered, and the bird was found to be in good physical condition.

The arrested individual is believed to be involved in the smuggling of rare birds abroad. Senior Minister Marriyum Aurangzeb praised the Wildlife Department on behalf of the Chief Minister Punjab, stating that the recovered eagle will be fitted with a tracker before being released back into the wild. She emphasized the critical role that birds play in maintaining ecological balance.

Marriyum Aurangzeb highlighted that under the Chief Minister's policy for the protection of forests and

wildlife, continuous operations are being carried out across the province. Numerous rare animals and birds have been rescued and transferred to zoos, while many others have received medical treatment to save their lives.

The senior minister asserted that the government is committed to preserving biodiversity and combating illegal wildlife trafficking in Punjab, while ensuring a safe and sustainable environment for both wildlife and local ecosystems.

Rank pinning ceremony for 53 inspectors

LAHORE (APP): Inspector General of Police Punjab Dr. Usman Anwar said that Punjab Police is facing the challenges of maintaining law and order, combating terrorism, religious intolerance, and extremism.

Despite limited resources, Punjab Police is bravely and diligently tackling all challenges. He expressed these views while addressing newly promoted Inspectors after pinning their new ranks during a ceremony at the Central Police Office here on Sunday. The IG Punjab directed the officers to

enhance their involvement in departmental affairs through high professionalism and smart policing.

He emphasized the use of modern technology, ensuring excellent service delivery, and providing quick justice to the citizens. He instructed the officers to treat the poor with more courteous behavior and politeness, deliver justice without bias, acquit the innocent, and hold the guilty accountable without any external pressure.

He announced that this year, over 2,000 promotions will be granted, including

600 Sub-Inspectors, 700 ASIs, and 800 Head Constables. He added that the promotion board for SPs of the Safe City Authority and officers of the Organized Crime Unit will be held soon. He encouraged the newly promoted officers to repay the debt of promotions and welfare by serving the country selflessly and ensuring fearless protection. The rank pinning ceremony for 53 officers promoted to Inspector was held at the Central Police Office.

The IG Punjab along with senior officers, pinned

the Inspector ranks on the promoted officers. A large number of the officers' parents, children, and families attended the event. IG Punjab and senior police officers congratulated the newly promoted Inspectors and their families. Yesterday, a promotion board meeting had approved the promotion of 110 Sub-Inspectors to the rank of Inspector. Additional IG Punjab Sultan Ahmad Chaudhry, DIG Headquarters Ahsan Younis, DIG Establishment I Suleman Sultan Rana.

Provision of basic amenities be priority: Ombudsman

KARACHI (APP): A case was presented before the provincial ombudsman Dr. Muhammad Sohail Rajput.

The Ombudsman, acting on Usman Khan's complaint, decided that the Karachi Water and Sewerage Corporation should immediately resolve the citizen's complaint and ensure uninterrupted water supply in the area.

The Provincial Ombudsman directed in his decision that the provision of basic amenities to the citizens should be the top priority of the government and related institutions and neglect of necessities like water will not be tolerated under any circumstances, a communique said.

Usman Khan, a citizen of Gulberg Town Karachi, filed an application against the Karachi Water and Sewerage Corporation to the provincial ombudsman on the issue of non-supply of water. Usman Khan's complaint was that the water supply in his area was constantly being affected, causing him and other residents of the area to face severe hardships.

The application was investigated by Regional Director Karachi Central District Nazir Ahmad Qidwai, who thoroughly investigated the issue.

E-challans system started

LAHORE (APP): The Lahore Traffic Police have started e-challans system for policemen riding motorcycles without helmets.

The Artificial Intelligence (AI) system has been activated against motorcycle riders without helmets. Traffic Police official sources told APP that the entry of motorcyclists without helmets was stopped on the entrance and exit routes and model roads of the city on Sunday.

In this connection, 22,7761 challan tickets were issued through the artificial intelligence system, while manual action has also been taken against 310000 motorcyclists without helmets.

Apart from this, entry of motorcyclists without helmets has also been stopped in traffic offices, as helmets have been declared mandatory for fresh license.

In this connection, parking without helmets would not be allowed, they said. According to CTO Amara Athar, there will be a challan for keeping the helmet on the tank or hanging it on the arm. The purpose of the challan is to ensure the safety of citizens' lives and property, she added.

PTI founder exposed by Israeli newspaper: Azma

LAHORE (APP): Punjab Information Minister Azma Bukhari said on Sunday that the Israeli newspaper had exposed the reality of Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf founder.

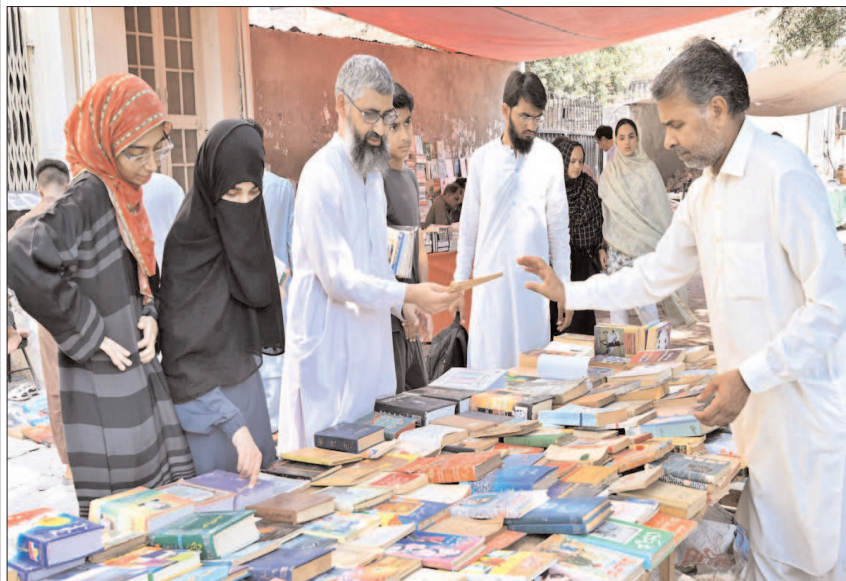
She was addressing a press conference along with Privilege Committee Chairman Samiullah Khan at Shahdara, said a press release issued here. She said that the PTI founder, during his tenure in government, tried to develop good ties with Israel.

To a question, she said that political activities were allowed in the province as per law, adding that nobody would be spared for breaking the law. Azma Bukhari said, "There are many problems in Shahdara and government was well aware of them." She said that hefty amount of Rs 125 billion would change the fate of the area in four months.

Azma Bukhari said that the Punjab government had started various initiatives for welfare of people

of Punjab including free medicines, laptops, Kisan card, Green model bazaar, solar programme, 'Apni Chhat Apna Ghar'.

She said Lahorites clearly demonstrated at the PTI rally on Saturday that those like Ali Amin Gandapur were not acceptable at all. She said after five years, people would see a different Punjab as its Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz was working day and night for betterment of Punjab and its people.



LAHORE: People busy in selecting and purchasing old books from roadside stall at Mall Road. —APP Photo

Punjab govt to introduce cooperative farmin

LAHORE (APP): In a significant move to enhance the cultivation of vegetables, including tomatoes and onions, the Punjab government, under the leadership of Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz Sharif, has decided to introduce cooperative farming.

This initiative aims to support small farmers and ensure a steady supply of produce to combat artificial inflation. Additionally, it seeks to modernize agriculture, bolster local farming, and enhance food security for the province.

During a special meeting chaired by Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz, here on Sunday, it was announced that groups of 5 to 10 vegetable farmers will receive subsidies for seeds, fertilizers, drip irrigation, and solarization. The project will launch a seasonal cultivation initiative across 2,000 acres for onions and tomatoes, allowing for local availability of these crops for six months. This will significantly reduce reliance on imported produce and help stabilize prices.

The plan includes the cultivation of off-season tomatoes in districts such as Khahroo Paka, Rahim Yar Khan, Vehari, and Rajanpur,

and onions in Khushab, Chakwal, Rawalpindi, and Jhelum. By enabling local farmers to grow these vegetables during the off-season, the government aims to prevent price hikes caused by seasonal shortages.

Additionally, the meeting approved the establishment of agricultural machinery rental services throughout Punjab. This service will provide tractors, harvesters, and other modern agricultural equipment to farmers on a no-profit, no-loss basis, facilitating easier access to neces-

sary tools for cultivation. A joint working group has been formed to identify over 67 locations for the machinery selection and rental.

Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz also directed officials to ensure wheat sowing on government land, reinforcing the commitment to bolster agricultural output in the province.

The meeting reviewed recommendations for the "Transforming Punjab Agriculture" initiative, focusing on sustainable and efficient farming practices.

Shuttle ambulance service for patients launched

LAHORE (APP): A shuttle ambulance service was started for convenience of patients in the General Hospital here on Sunday. The administration started the shuttle service under the direction of Principal PGMI Professor Dr. Muhammad Al Farid Zafar.

MS Dr. Farid Hussain said that in the first phase, two ambulances have been allocated, while the shuttle will transport patients from the emergency to the other block. He said this facility will be available round the clock, under the guidance of Prof. Farid Zafar and resources are being used for the convenience of the patients. In this connection, more measures will be taken in the light of the positive suggestions of the citizens.

He said that the instructions of the Chief Minister of Punjab Implementation is being followed, and a monitoring committee has also been formed to solve the problems of the patients. It may be mentioned here that the committee will visit the beds of the patients to find out their problems and ensure the solution.

Polio vaccination drive in three districts from today

PESHAWAR (APP): Polio vaccination campaign in three specific districts of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa including Tank, Lakki Marwat and D.I.Khan would kick off from Monday (September 23), said a press release issued here by the Emergency Operation Center (EOC) KP.

During the campaign, around 672715 children below the age of five will be administered polio drops.

According to the total figure of targeted children, around 94457 are in Tank, 205532 in Lakki Marwat and 372726 in D.I.Khan.

Around 4547 number of

teams of trained polio workers have been constituted for coverage of all the children.

A total of 4896 number of security personnel have been deputed for the security of the polio teams during the vaccination campaign.

In the first phase of polio vaccination started

on September 9, 2024, a target of 6.425 million children was set for inoculation of preventive vaccine in 27 districts of the province.

In the meanwhile, first case of polio infection in KP during the current year has also been reported in a nine month old girl at Mohmand district.

KPFA cracks down on adulteration mafia

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: The Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Food Safety and Halal Food Authority continued its crackdown against the adulteration mafia across the province. Inspection teams conducted raids on food-related businesses in Peshawar and Khyber district, seizing a large quantity of substandard and adulterated items. The spokesperson of the Food Authority provided details of the operations, highlighting significant actions taken by various teams.

The Food Safety Team Town-4 carried out inspection on several businesses, including a cold drinks shop on Phandu Road, where approximately 500 liters of

counterfeit beverages were confiscated, and heavy fines were imposed on the owner. Similarly, Food Safety Teams Town-1, Town-2, and Town-4 conducted a joint operation in the Naguman area, raiding a jaggery-making facility. During the raid, 1,200 kilograms of adulterated jaggery and 1,500 kilograms of sugar were seized. According to the details, the facility was found mixing sugar and other chemicals to produce jaggery, leading to the registration of an FIR against the owners and further action under the Food Safety Act.

In another significant action, the Food Safety Team set up a checkpoint in the Takhta baig area of Khyber district, inspecting vehicles carrying food items.

The mobile food testing lab was used on-site to test samples of water, ice cream, ghee, oil, and milk. According to the spokesperson, 80 kilograms of ice cream and 10 kilograms of local crisps were found to be substandard and were destroyed on the spot, with heavy fines imposed on the owners.

Director General of the Food Authority, Wasif Saeed stated that the KP Food Authority is determined to rid the province of adulteration. Commending the successful operations, Minister for Food Zahir Shah Toru emphasized that strict punitive measures will be taken against those endangering public health, and no leniency will be shown to the offenders.

Governor flays attack on police

PESHAWAR (APP): Governor Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Faisal Karim Kundi, on Sunday expressed condolences over attack on police in Swat.

Governor Faisal Karim Kundi expressed deep sorrow and condemnation. He described the incident as "extremely unfortunate," emphasizing the gravity of the situation.

Governor Kundi criticized the provincial government's commitment to establishing peace, saying that the government has been encouraging to terrorists.

He asserted that the attack on the police was part of a conspiracy by the enemies of Islam and Pakistan.



PESHAWAR: Members of Christian community attending a prayer ceremony to mark the 11th anniversary of blast at All Saints' Church near Kohati Gate. — INP photo

KPT&GC to soon transmit cheap electricity from PEDO projects

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: Secretary Energy and Power Nisar Ahmad Khan on Friday said that the energy sector in the province is of great importance and with the investment of private sector and utilizing natural energy resources it could further stabilize the economy.

The Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Transmission and Grid Company (KPT&GC), which was established for the first time in the history of the province to run the electricity transmission system in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa in a better way, will soon make a new

history by transmitting the cheap electricity generated from the completed projects of PEDO through its system.

He expressed these views while addressing a meeting with the delegation of industrial company AHI Corporation led by Hasan Zahiddin. Special Secretary E&P Department Irfan Ullah Wazir, Additional Secretary Admin Shah Fahad, Additional Secretary Power Abdul Haseeb, Chief Executive KPT&GC Muhammad Ayub, Advisor Power Tala Muhammad, Senior Planning Officer Eng. Luqman Hakeem and

Director PEDO Engr. Abid Khan.

Meanwhile, Advisor Power Tila Muhammad briefed that KP Transmission and Grid Company will start 3 mega projects to improve the electricity transmission system in the province and in this regard, 40 km long transmission line will be laid from Kalam to Madyan this year that will cost 8 billion rupees and will be completed in a period of 18 months.

Similarly, Tila informed that in the second phase, an 80-kilometer-long transmission line will be laid from Madyan to Chakdra, which is estimated

to cost 16 to 18 billion rupees with a completion period of 48 months. He added that in the third phase, including the current 171 MW completed projects and another 100 MW ongoing projects, a modern system of transmission of 3500 megawatts of cheap electricity will be launched through a single loop.

Lastly, Secretary Power Nisar Ahmad Khan welcomed the interest of investment of private capital in the projects of KP Transmission and Grid Company and called it a positive step towards the development and prosperity of this province.

Poor people looks to KP Govt for affordable housing units

PESHAWAR (APP): The rapid rise in population, combined with soaring property prices and inflation, has exacerbated the housing problems for low-income groups in urban areas of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP) where about 2.5 houses are required for homeless and underprivileged.

As Pakistan's population surpasses the 241 million mark this year, the demand for affordable housing reached critical levels in KP, with an estimated 2.5 million additional units needed to fulfill people requirements.

The challenges are particularly acute for those in the salary class and marginalized communities, who find themselves increasingly priced out of the housing market. Rising land costs and limited economic supply have turned the dream of affordable housing into a harsh reality for many, leaving poor families struggling to find safe and secure homes.

Despite recent economic strides made by the newly elected government since February 8, addressing the housing shortfall remains a formidable task. Officials recognize the urgency, yet progress is hindered by factors such as inadequate infrastructure, bureaucratic hurdles, and limited financial resources.

Local residents while sharing their frustrations said, "every month, I see my rent increase while my salary remains the same," says Meena Gul, a school-teacher in Peshawar. "It feels impossible to save for a house of my own." Like Meena Gul, many face the grim reality of living in overcrowded conditions or commuting long distances

to affordable areas in KP. "Affordable housing is the fundamental right of all citizens of Pakistan where rapid population growth, fast migration from rural to urban areas, high construction and land cost factors have largely contributed to houses backlog," said Professor Dr Naeem Khattak, former Chairman, Economics Department, University of Pakistan while talking to APP.

"Globally, many Govts have attempted an alternative approach where they provide affordable housing at urban peripheries, encouraging residents to relocate where land is cheaper. However, this approach has created its own problems as people are cut off from social and infrastructure networks as well as gainful employment opportunities," he said.

He said this has led to negative consequences in low- and middle-income countries, where some cities are growing so quickly that governments cannot build services, roads and infrastructure fast enough to accommodate new arrivals, leading to a proliferation of slums at the peripheries.

The repeated change of governments, political instability and unchecked rise of prices of lands and properties in Pakistan including Khyber Pakhtunkhwa made affordable houses in urban areas for salaried class and under privileged merely a dream and solid policies are required to clear this huge backlog.

Dr Naeem said the rapid urbanization of the agricultural land have turned the fertile land into unplanned towns and societies in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, especially in Peshawar,

Mardan, Abbottabad, Swat, Kohat, DI Khan and Nowshera districts.

He said the current demand for new housing units was growing at the rate of 600,000 houses per year and if we add 0.5 million more houses, then 1.1 million units per year would be required to clear the existing backlog of 10 million houses in the next 14 years.

The housing gap in Punjab is estimated at 2.3 million units in 2017 and was expected to skyrocket to 11.3 million units by 2047, he said, adding half of all urban households are overcrowded or lived in informal settlements with inadequate access to basic infrastructure, civic facilities and services while formal housing are almost out of reach of the poor people.

In Peshawar, he claimed that housing problems would further aggravate where the urban population had reached 1.970 million and estimated to reach up to 2.80 million by 2030, that would eat up more agricultural land. As a result of the shortage of housing units, the price of a five marla house in Peshawar has crossed Rs 20 million and the rent to Rs 40,000 that was beyond the purchasing capacity of a common man and low paid employees.

Ikhtair Wali, spokesman of PML-N told APP that PTI government has made tall claims to construct 5 million houses but failed to complete its promises, adding poor housing policies of PTI rulers increased housing problem and property prices in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa.

Instead to address public problems, he claimed that taxpayers money are being wasted in KP on uncalled

for public gathering at Islamabad and Lahore.

The Provincial Housing Authority (PHA)'s sources told APP that a survey regarding shortfall of houses was conducted under Naya Pakistan Housing Program that revealed that five million houses of five marla were required in Pakistan including 7,50,000 in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. Approximately 2,62,500 kanal land is needed for the construction of these five marla housing units in KP while Peshawar requires 104, 897 houses while Mardan 58,309 houses and Swat 65,749 houses respectively.

About 39,981 housing units are needed in DI Khan, 39,919 in Swabi, 39,712 in Charsadda, 38,244 in Mansehra, 37, 313 in Nowshera and 35, 282 in Lower Dir, he told and added that about 32,751 were needed in Abbottabad, 28,697 in Bannu, 24,646 in Haripur, 24,421 in Kohat, 23,255 in Upper Dir, 20,048 in Buner, 21,529 in Lakki Marwat, 19,281 in Kohistan, 18,620 in Shangla, 17,699 in Malakand, 17,355 in Karak, 17,748 in Hangu, 11,711 in Batagram, 10,992 in Chitral, 9,629 in Tank and 4,211 in Torgbar.

Approximately 6,500 kanal land are available in Peshawar, 560 kanal in Swat, 377 kanal in Charsadda, 300 kanal and 8,300 land in Hangu for the construction of affordable houses. Alaike, 15 housing projects including Hangu Township on 8,400 kanal and Jalozai Phase III at Nowshera launched, adding that 10,500 housing units in Hangu would be constructed with an estimated cost of Rs10 billion in next three to five years.

Maulana Atta elected President, Attaul Haq Darwaish GS for JUI-F KP

PESHAWAR (APP): General. Jamiat Ulema-e-Islam Fazl on Sunday elected new leadership in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa.

In a unanimous decision, Senator Maulana Atta ur Rehman has been elected as the Ameer, while Maulana Attaul Haq Darwaish has been appointed as the Provincial Secretary.

The elections took place during the General Council meeting held in Peshawar, where 1,935 out of 2,165 members participated. The meeting, chaired by Senator Maulana Atta ur Rehman, saw significant attendance, with members from across the province. The election process

was overseen by Assistant Central Election Coordinator Abdul Jalil Jan, along with Provincial Election Coordinator Mufti Nasir Mahmood and Islamabad Election Coordinator Qari Hamdullah. As per the announcement from the media cell, both leaders will serve a five-year term. This election marks a

crucial step for JUIF in the province, following successful elections in Gilgit Baltistan, Islamabad, Punjab, and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. Upcoming elections are scheduled for Balochistan on September 24, Sindh on September 26, and the central elections on September 29, with all preparations in place for these events.

Justice Ijaz inspects courts and sub jail in Nowshera

PESHAWAR (APP): Peshawar High Court Judge, Justice Ejaz Anwar on Sunday accompanied by Registrar Peshawar High Court Peshawar Ikhtyar Khan and District and Sessions Judge Nowshera Muhammad Asif Khan visited Nowshera. During his visit, Justice Ijaz Anwar first visited the District Courts Nowshera where he met the judges and had a detailed discussion with them about the judicial matters. Later, Justice Ejaz Anwar and Registrar Peshawar High Court, Peshawar Ikhtyar Khan along with District and Sessions Judge Nowshera Muhammad Asif Khan and Senior Civil Judge (Admin) Asif Kamal also visited Sub Jail Nowshera and heard the problems of the prisoners there and issued orders on the spot for the solution of some problem faced by the inmates.



PESHAWAR: Students busy in MDCAT test conducted country-wide on Sunday for admissions in medical and dental colleges.

Sardar Ayaz Sadiq: A beacon of hope in polarized political landscape

Muhammad Mohsin Iqbal

PARLIAMENT is a cornerstone of democracy, serving as the principal forum where national and international confusions and conflicts are resolved. It is the crucible for decision-making that shapes the destiny of nations, as representatives argue their principled positions while keeping public aspirations in mind. In this regard, the role of the Speaker of the National Assembly is pivotal. The Speaker act as a bridge between the government and the opposition, ensuring that dialogue and debate are conducted in a manner that upholds democratic values and fosters national unity. Speaker Sardar Ayaz Sadiq, known for his adaptable and amiable demeanor, embodies the essential qualities for this demanding position. His notable ability to maintain working relationships with all

political parties underscores his skill in fostering productive dialogue within a politically charged atmosphere.

Sardar Ayaz Sadiq's term as Speaker has been distinguished by his dedication to inclusivity and dialogue. He has shown an exceptional capacity to connect with members from all political factions, creating a space where a variety of perspectives can be shared and discussed. Such an approach is vital in Pakistan, where political polarization has intensified alarmingly. The prevailing political climate is marred by discord and intolerance, with rival parties frequently engaged in acrimonious disagreements that impede the country's advancement. In this context, the Speaker's function in resolving conflicts and enhancing mutual comprehension is increasingly imperative.

Pakistan finds itself at a pivotal juncture, facing geopolitical tensions and internal challenges that threaten its future.

Its location in a tumultuous region necessitates shrewd and strategic management of surrounding potential threats. Within its borders, the political landscape is deeply divided, intensifying the struggle to tackle urgent matters like economic instability, security issues, and the pursuit of social justice. The decline of tolerance, a cornerstone of democracy, has given way to an environment of conflict and inflexibility. This critical state of affairs calls for prompt and decisive action.

In the current scenario, Sardar Ayaz Sadiq stands out as a beacon of hope and steadiness. His former role as Speaker of the House demonstrated his adeptness in handling the intricacies of parliamentary politics, garnering respect and esteem from peers on all sides. His leadership, marked by forbearance, tact, and a true dedication to democratic values, positions him as an ideal candidate to confront

Pakistan's present challenges. It is crucial for him to assume a more dynamic role in guiding the country amidst these tumultuous periods.

One of the most pressing needs of the hour is the formation of a Parliamentary Reconciliation Committee under the leadership of Speaker Sardar Ayaz Sadiq. This committee should include members of the Assembly who are moderate and flexible, representing all political parties. It would serve as a venue for constructive dialogue and cooperation, allowing the parliament to address the nation's numerous issues effectively. This effort would contribute to the resolution of political disputes and also facilitate a unified approach to economic and international issues.

The proposed Parliamentary Reconciliation Committee would serve multiple purposes. Firstly, it would act as a forum for resolving political disputes, thereby reducing the level of

polarization and fostering a spirit of cooperation among different political parties. This is crucial for creating a stable and conducive environment for governance. Secondly, the committee would facilitate discussions on economic policies, allowing for a more balanced and inclusive approach to economic development. Given the economic challenges facing Pakistan, such as inflation, unemployment, and external debt, a collaborative approach is essential for devising effective and sustainable solutions. Thirdly, the committee would address international issues, ensuring that Pakistan's foreign policy is formulated and implemented with a consensus-driven approach, which is vital for maintaining national security and advancing the country's interests on the global stage.

Sardar Ayaz Sadiq's leadership of the Parliamentary Reconciliation Committee would ensure that the committee's deliberations are conducted

in a fair and impartial manner. His ability to listen to diverse viewpoints and mediate conflicts would be instrumental in building trust and fostering a spirit of cooperation among committee members. This, in turn, would enhance the effectiveness of the committee in achieving its objectives. Furthermore, his experience and insights into parliamentary procedures and practices would provide valuable guidance to the committee's work.

The formation of the Parliamentary Reconciliation Committee under Sardar Ayaz Sadiq's leadership would also send a strong message to the public about the commitment of the political leadership to address the country's problems through democratic means. It would reinforce the importance of dialogue and compromise in resolving conflicts and highlight the role of parliament as the primary institution for addressing national issues. This would help in restoring public

confidence in the democratic process and encourage greater participation and engagement from the citizenry.

In summary, the importance of parliament as a mechanism for conflict resolution and decision-making that shapes the future of nations is immeasurable. The Speaker of the National Assembly holds a pivotal role in mediating between the government and the opposition. Sardar Ayaz Sadiq, with his impressive record and outstanding leadership skills, is aptly equipped to meet this challenge.

Establishing a Parliamentary Reconciliation Committee under his guidance could significantly contribute to tackling the political, economic, and international issues that Pakistan faces. Such a committee would foster a culture of cooperation and dialogue, which is vital for steering the country out of its current troubles towards a stable and thriving future.



In brief

BISP releases tranche

S A R G O D H A (APP): The Benazir Income Support Program Sargodha district has released the quarterly tranche for September-December 2024 for registered beneficiaries. Deputy Director Raazia Asim told APP in-charge Makhdoom Shah Latif in a special interview that 72,335 beneficiaries in Sargodha city and 165,183 in Sargodha district would get BISP payments of Rs10,500 each. She said that the payment process had been started and five camp sites in Sargodha city and 9 camp sites in Sargodha district had been set up. BISP representatives will remain in the field all the time to ensure payment transparency.

Students hold protest

PATTOKI (INP): Students of different educational institutions on Sunday held protest demonstration against Assistant Commissioner Pattoki Rana Amjad Mahmood over poor cleanliness system across the city. The protestors were of the opinion that the AC Pattoki spoiled Punjab Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz Sharif's slogan of clean Punjab. They said that the AC to hide his incompetence misled the authorities through photo sessions and reporting all well. Due to negligence and incompetency of Rana Amjad, there were piles of garbage in the Pattoki city which has exposed him poor performance, they added. The protesting students said that the Sanitary Inspector as deployed several employees at AC's residence but don't care about the cleanliness of the city. They also raised question about cleanliness arrangements within and surrounding of the educational institutions including the Government Elementary School in Old Mandi creating problems for the students. They demanded of the Chief Secretary Punjab Zahid Akhtar Zaman and Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz Sharif to take notice of the situation and taking strict action against AC Pattoki for his negligence.

FESCO issues shutdown plan

FAISALABAD (APP): The Faisalabad Electric Supply Company (FESCO) has issued a shutdown program for Monday due to necessary repair, maintenance and expansion of electricity lines. According to the program issued by the company, power supply from Bahaduray Wala, Meeranwala, Mansooran and Industrial Estate-I feeders linked with 132-KV Industrial Estate grid station, WASA-II and Dholan Wal feeders attached with 132-KV Kamal Pur grid station, Kathoo feeder connected with 132-KV Gojra grid station, Tariq Abad, Cardiology and Shadman feeders originating from 132-KV Tariq Abad grid station will remain suspended from 7 a.m. to 12 noon while DHQ, Aasiyan, Muazzam Shah, Hindoana, Lahore Road, Chenab Nagar, Abdullah Fiber, Faisalabad Road, Beeranwala, Lahore Road, Usman Abad, Muslim Bazaar, Jhumra Road/Raza, City and Badshahi Masjid feeders linked with 132-KV Chiniot grid station, Mad-doana, al-Mehmood and new Satiana feeders attached with 132-KV Satiana grid station will observe shutdown from 7 a.m. to 1 p.m. on Monday (September 23).



JAMSHORO: Students appearing in Medical and Dental College Admission Test (MDCAT) at Liaquat University of Medical and Health Sciences.

Economic Zone crucial to eliminate poverty: DC

Jamal Qamar

BANNU: Deputy Commissioner Bannu, Abdul Hameed Khan, stated that the Bannu Economic Zone is a landmark project, crucial for eliminating poverty in the region and creating new job opportunities. He emphasized that no negligence will be tolerated in the completion of this major project.

The district administration will take all necessary measures to ensure that the economic zone meets the requirements of the modern era.

These views were expressed by Director Malik Kashif Khan during his visit to the economic

zone. Economic Zone Manager Firdous Hayat, Admin M. Atif Khan, Infrastructure Manager Khalid Rahman, Chamber of Commerce President Ghulam Qibaz Khan, General Secretary, Federation President Falk Naz Khan, and other officials were also present at the time.

Director Malik Kashif Khan briefed Deputy Commissioner Abdul Hameed Khan on the progress of the Bannu Economic Zone, mentioning that Phase One, which covers 408 kanals of land, has been completed.

The water supply project has also been finalized, and more than 10 plots of land have been allocated

for industrial purposes. Initial funds have been released for the restoration of the electricity system, a key component of this provincial government initiative.

Deputy Commissioner Abdul Hameed Khan highlighted that the economic zone will not only contribute to the development of the region but will also be a vital project in providing employment opportunities locally.

He reassured that the district administration will resolve all roadblocks hindering the completion of the project, ensuring that it is finished before the deadline, benefiting the business community in the area.

Police releases list of 73 most wanted terrorists

LAKKI MARWAT (INP): Lakki Marwat Police have released a list of 73 most wanted terrorists, including their names, addresses, and details of their accomplices.

As per details, the list also includes individuals who have been involved in extremist activities, extortion, and bomb blasts.

The police have directed their teams to intensify operations against these terrorists and their accomplices.

Earlier, at least 37 terrorists were killed and 14 others wounded in the ongoing intelligence-based operations of Pakistan Army in the Tirah area of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, the military's media wing said.

The Inter-Services Public Relations (ISPR) said in a statement that the security forces have been conducting extensive intelligence-based operations (IBOs) in the Tirah area of Khyber on the reported presence of terrorists since Aug. 20.

On midnight of 28 and 29 August, Pakistan Army troops effectively engaged the khwarij locations where after an intense fire exchange, 12 khwarij of Fitna-Al-Khwarij were killed, as per ISPR.

Zonal Seerat Conference today

BAHAWALPUR (INP): A zonal seerat conference is being organized at Rashida Auditorium, Model Town-A here on September 23, Monday, under the auspices of provincial auqaaf and religious affairs department.

The Auqaaf and Religious Affairs Department has made special arrangements for organizing the Conference in a befitting manner.

Noted religious scholars will deliver their speeches at the conference, says a press release.

Olive oil extraction unit launched in South Waziristan

SOUTH WAZIRISTAN (APP): An olive oil extraction machine has been inaugurated in Lower South Waziristan.

In this regard, a ceremony was held at the district agriculture office Wana where Deputy Commissioner Nasir Khan officially launched the facility in collaboration with the agriculture department.

Tribal elders and agriculture officials attended the ceremony.

Speaking on the occasion, the deputy commissioner said the machine would help enhance production for farmers who played a key role in the country's economic development.

He also mentioned that the machine had been designed as per local



requirements as it could also be run by generators and other power sources in case of electricity shortages or loadshedding.

However, he added that steps were being taken for solarization of the facility in order to reap full benefits of the facility.

Agriculture Officer Habib ur Rehman Wazir

informed that this season, it had been projected the facility would extract 10,000 liters of olive oil.

He assured that farmers associated with olive orchards will receive facilities at their doorstep.

He said the initiative would not only boost the local economy but also improve the lives of farmers.



NEWSHERA: Peshawar High Court Judge, Justice Ejaz Anwar on Sunday visited sub-jail Nowshera.

KP govt utilizes all resources to enroll students

F.P. Report

LOWER DIR: Deputy district education officer male Mahboob Ilahi has said that the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa government is utilizing all resources to increase the literacy rate in the province and bring more out-of-school children to educational institutions.

Talking to local journalists at Chakdara here on Sunday, he said that the provincial government had focused on quality education.

The DDEO said that free education facilities were available to students in government schools, but still 1.1 million children were working in the child labour market outside the schools in the province. The official said that getting them into schools was the first priority of the provincial education minister, secretary education and director of education Samina Altaf.

He said that the 100 percent enrollment cam-

paign in the Lower Dir district was in the final stages. He said that the provincial government had priority over all the provinces in terms of child labour and laws regarding the rights and protection of children.

"Children are being forced to work for meager compensation", he said, adding that the better future of the country was in the hands of useful children. He said that measures for the welfare of children and making them useful citizens were the joint responsibility of the government and all of us. "It is the responsibility of all of us to encourage the parents and civil society around us to enroll their children in school so that in the future these children can handle the affairs of the country and the nation in the best way", he added.

SPECIAL PERSONS: Leaders of the persons with disabilities from the Lower Dir and Bajaur including Khurshid Alam, Muhammad Bilal,

Bakhtawar Khan and Tahsil Khan on Sunday announced to stage a protest rally in front of the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa assembly on Oct. 1 if their demands were not accepted. Speaking at a news conference at the Timergara press club they complained the provincial government was not serious in resolving the issues faced by the PWDs.

They said the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa disability act was not being implemented. They demanded the implementation of the act with immediate effect. They also demanded a separate department for special persons' rights, rehabilitation and development with their top heads being PWDs.

They demanded Rs 10,000 monthly stipend for PWDs and annual grants for all registered and unregistered organizations of special persons. They warned to organize a protest rally in front of the provincial assembly on Oct. 1st if their demands were not accepted.

Research on new seeds imperative to enhance agriculture productivity

FAISALABAD (APP): In a rapidly changing world and mounting population pressure, countries like Pakistan shall have to embark on strategies aiming at generating new seed varieties for enhanced productivity and compatibility to climate change effects.

Although research and development of seeds is a continuous ongoing and tough process, yet it is imperative to enhance agriculture produce to cater to food requirements of burgeoning population and achieve the goals of food security and national progress and prosperity.

Immediately after independence, per acre yield of wheat in the country was only 15 maunds which pressured the government as well as scientists' to research and develop high-yielding and disease-resistant varieties to ensure adequate supply of wheat and make the country self-reliant in this

basic staple food.

MaxiPak was the first seed to revolutionize wheat production and Nuclear Institute for Agriculture & Biology (NIAB) developed cotton variety NIAB-78 that ruled around two decades giving maximum yield of 14 billion bales.

Thereafter, a number of research institutes were established with dedicated task of seed research and development and our scientists developed a large number of seed varieties for different climatic zones.

Very recently, the Cotton Research Institute Sakrand has developed three new cotton varieties including one non-BT (CRIS 644) and two BT varieties (CRIS 674 and CRIS 682).

Similarly, University of Agriculture Faisalabad (UAF) recently developed soybean seed that is suitable for local farming and would help Pakistan to

curtail import of soybean and locally meet soybean needs.

"Only the UAF soybean variety can help country save \$1.5 billion spent on import of edible oil," said Prof Dr Iqbal Ahmad Khan, Vice Chancellor (VC) UAF. "We have produced 50 new high-yielding varieties of different crops, fruits and vegetables during last three years."

Recently, he informed that UAF developed two high-yielding sugarcane varieties including Insect-resistant transgenic sugarcane (CABB-IRS) and Herbicide-tolerant transgenic sugarcane (CABB-HTS).

"These varieties carry superior traits like input-responsiveness, early maturing (suitable for plantation even after wheat in the months of April and May), top borer-resistance, herbicide-tolerance and high number of tillers."

"These varieties are second in the world and first in Pakistan and would help boost up sugarcane productivity manifold," he added.

Ayub Agricultural Research Institute (AARI) scientists have so far developed more than 700 seed varieties of different crops including 103 varieties of wheat and barley, 75 of cotton, 35 of rice, 29 of sugarcane, 48 of maize and millets, 51 of pulses, 57 of oilseeds, 47 of fodder, 83 of vegetables and 159 varieties of fruits.

"Now, AARI scientists are striving hard to surpass the yield barriers and their efforts are to move from green revolution to the gene revolution," stated a spokesman of Ayub Research Institute.

He informed that at the time of independence, the country's wheat production was 2.63 million tons that has now increased by ten times. "AARI scien-

tists are also working to develop new seed varieties by keeping in view the facts of 2050 when we would need 37 million tons of wheat to feed an approximately 334 million population."

Similar situation is with cotton varieties and other crops. Cotton varieties are now catering the need of textile industry with more than 1000 ginning factories, 400 textile mills, 7 million spindles, 27000 looms in the mill sector, more than 25000 looms in non-mill sector, 700 knitwear units, 4000 garment units, nearly 1000 ginners and 5000 oil expellers.

Although AARI varieties are playing a pivotal role in increasing agricultural productivity in the country in general and in Punjab in particular, yet our scientists are trying their optimum best to develop new varieties to meet our needs for the next 50 to 100 years.

Muhammad Akhtar, a progressive farmer has appreciated these efforts stating that our research institutes have developed seeds of more than 1000 high-yielding varieties that are sufficient to meet our domestic needs.

But, he was critical of exploiters and usurers who hinder on way to reaching these benefits to farmers and agriculturists. "The real problem lies with enforcement of law as exploiters in our society who provide substandard, mixed or spurious seeds to farmers just to mint money."

He urged the government to promulgate and implement laws to regulate the business of seeds and allied requirements, award punishment to substandard seed suppliers and save farmers from such cheaters. "The research of our institutes and hardworking scientists would go in vain if a proper mechanism of dis-

bursing certified seeds to farmers is not put in place."

Since, the research and development process takes a decade to develop required-seed varieties, therefore, our scientists must also concentrate on producing pests resistant and climate change efficient seeds and also use latest techniques like genetic mapping and Artificial Intelligence for better results. Economic aspect must also be another area of focus for them to develop seeds with a futuristic vision and for a particular environment to avert attack of specific diseases.

In this scenario, what is direly needed is to ensure a mechanism where quality seed reaches the farmers and the notorious market players are taken to task for an ultimate agricultural and economic growth and meet the most daunting challenge of food security.



Background checks blocked thousands of gun sales to youth, White House says

WASHINGTON (Reuters): Enhanced background checks have blocked thousands of gun sales to people under the age of 21 and those convicted of misdemeanor domestic violence crimes in the past year, the White House said on Sunday, a year after President Joe Biden set up a new office to accelerate work on preventing gun violence.

Homicides have dropped 17% in the period, building on the largest-ever drop in homicides in 2023, the White House said. It said data from the Gun Violence Archive showed that mass shootings were also down 20% to date in 2024 compared to a year earlier and would reach their lowest level this year since 2019.

The FBI has conducted more than 300,000 enhanced background checks of individuals under 21 required under

Biden's Bipartisan Safer Communities Act, signed into law in June 2022. It denied more than 3,500 of those transactions, with the enhanced background checks alone responsible for nearly 900 blocked sales, the White House said. Background checks for those convicted of domestic violence crimes have blocked more than 4,600 sales so far this year.

Stefanie Feldman, who heads the new office, said the progress reflected a wide range of efforts, including dozens of executive actions since Biden took office, increased collaboration among federal agencies, closer work with state and local governments, and increased funding for enforcement of existing laws and mental health programs.

She told Reuters that Biden and Vice President Kamala Harris, the

Democratic nominee in the Nov. 5 presidential election, would announce additional executive action soon.

Feldman declined to provide any details, but said the action involved some "wholly new ideas" and would take hard work to complete before Biden leaves office in January.

Gun safety has been a big focus for Biden and Harris - both of whom are gun owners - since they took office in 2021.

The U.S. surgeon general declared gun violence a public health crisis in June, calling for more research funding, better mental health access and other steps such as secure storage.

Democrats largely favor stricter gun laws as a way to reduce deaths from gun violence, while Republicans generally oppose stricter laws, citing the right to bear arms

established in the U.S. Constitution's Second Amendment.

Despite partisan divisions, Feldman said her office had worked well with Republican state and local elected officials, and 17 states had passed legislation to address gun violence.

The office was also working with non-elected officials, including healthcare providers and executives, law enforcement and community leaders, some of whom might identify as Republican but shared a commitment to reduce gun violence.

"The further away you get from Washington, the less political this issue actually is," she said. "Everyone wants their kid to come home from school safely. Everyone wants their kid to be able to go play in the neighborhood and be safe."



BANGKOK, THAILAND: People take photos on Banthat Thong Road's main intersection on Car Free Day on Sunday in Bangkok, Thailand.

21 wounded after Russia strikes apartment buildings

KYIV, Ukraine (AP): Russia launched new strikes in the Ukrainian city of Kharkiv that hit high-rise apartment buildings, leaving at least 21 wounded in a second consecutive nighttime attack, authorities said.

The bombs fell Saturday night on the district of Shevchenkivsky, north of the center of Kharkiv, which is the second-largest Ukrainian city, local Gov. Oleh Syniehubov said. Residential buildings sustained varying degrees of damage, including 16- and nine-story buildings, he added. Kharkiv's city council said that 18 buildings were damaged.

The wounded included an 8-year-old child, according to Syniehubov and Kharkiv Mayor Ihor Terekhov. Terekhov said that 60 residents were evacuated from one of the buildings, a high-rise that was hit directly.

Kharkiv has been a frequent target of Russian attacks since Moscow launched its all-out invasion of neighboring Ukraine in February 2022.

The attack came after another late Friday that wounded 15 people, including children ages 10 and 12, when Russian airstrikes hit three Kharkiv neighborhoods, Terekhov said.

Ukrainian officials said that KAB-type aerial glide bombs — a retrofitted Soviet weapon that has for months laid waste to eastern Ukraine — were used in both attacks.

President Volodymyr Zelenskyy condemned the strike and urged Kyiv's Western allies to send more weapons to help it "protect lives

and ensure safety."

"Ukraine needs full long-range capabilities, and we are working to convince our partners of this," Zelenskyy said on X, as he prepared to kick off a busy week in the United States shoring up support for Kyiv in the war.

And Ukrainian Defense Minister Rustem Umerov said Sunday that Kyiv was in talks with partners in Europe to secure Swedish-made Gripen and European Eurofighter Typhoon jets. Umerov said that commitments were already in place for deliveries of U.S.-made F-16s and French Mirages.

Russia also launched 80 Shahed drones and two missiles at Ukraine overnight into Sunday, the Ukrainian air force said. Ukrainian air defense shot down 71 drones, and another six were lost on location because of electronic warfare countermeasures, the statement said.

Farther south, a 12-year-old girl and a woman died after a Russian drone struck a passenger car in the city of Nikopol, local Gov. Serhii Lysak reported. Two others, including a 4-year-old child, suffered wounds.

A Russian airstrike on Saturday morning also struck private homes in the eastern city of Sloviansk, trapping a woman under rubble and also wounding two of her neighbors, regional prosecutors reported. Sloviansk, in Ukraine's Donetsk region, has been a key target for Russian forces as they continue their grinding push westwards aimed at capturing the entirety of the country's industrial east.

In southern Ukraine, a Russian

drone strike on Sunday morning wounded two civilians in the city of Kherson, regional authorities said. Hours later, local police reported that Russian attacks wounded at least four more people elsewhere in the Kherson province.

Other Russian drone attacks Sunday damaged energy infrastructure in Ukraine's central Poltava region and the northern city of Shostka, local officials reported.

Shostka lies in the Sumy region, across the border from Russia's Kursk province — the target of a startling Ukrainian military incursion launched last month. Weeks into the incursion, Zelenskyy said that the aim is to create a buffer zone to prevent further Russian cross-border strikes that have for months wreaked havoc in Sumy.

Around 10,000 residents have left the nearby town of Hlukhiv because of intensified Russian shelling, around a third of its pre-war population, the local military administration said Sunday in a Facebook update.

According to the post, almost 70% of the town's children have left, following the regional government's calls to evacuate parts of the Sumy region nearest the Russian border. Hlukhiv lies less than 15 kilometers (9 miles) from Russian territory, and about 40 kilometers (25 miles) southeast of Shostka.

Also on Sunday, Ukrainian shelling wounded 10 people in Russia's southern Belgorod region bordering Ukraine, according to its Gov. Vyacheslav Gladkov. Among them were a village head and members of a local self-defense force, Gladkov said.

Marxist lawmaker Anura claims victory in Sri Lanka's presidential election



COLOMBO, Sri Lanka (AP): Marxist lawmaker Anura Kumara Dissanayake on Sunday claimed he had won Sri Lanka's presidential election.

"This victory belongs to all of us," Dissanayake said in an X post.

Official results were yet to be announced, but according to tallies released by the Election Commission, Dissanayake secured 42% of the votes counted, followed by opposition leader Sajith

Premadasa with 32%. Incumbent liberal President Ranil Wickremesinghe, who took over the country two years ago after its economy hit rock bottom, came distant a third and secured 17% of the votes.

The election held Saturday was crucial as the country seeks to recover from the worst economic crisis in its history and the resulting political upheaval. Contested by 38 candidates, it was largely a

three-way race between Dissanayake, Wickremesinghe and Premadasa.

Reuters add: Sri Lanka elected Marxist-leaning Anura Kumara Dissanayake as its new president on Sunday, putting faith in the 55-year-old's pledge to fight corruption and bolster a fragile economic recovery following its worst financial crisis in decades.

Dissanayake, who does not possess political lineage like some of his

rivals in the presidential election, led from start to finish during the counting of ballots, knocking out incumbent President Ranil Wickremesinghe and opposition leader Sajith Premadasa to become Sri Lanka's 10th president.

The election was also a referendum on Wickremesinghe, who led the heavily indebted nation's fragile economic recovery from a meltdown in 2022 but the austerity measures that were key to this recovery hindered his bid to return to office. He finished third with 17% of the vote.

Dissanayake polled 5.6 million or 42.3% of the votes, a massive boost to the 3% he managed in the last presidential election in 2019.

Premadasa was second at 32.8% after the first round of counting of ballots on Sunday. It was the first time in Sri Lanka's history that the presidential race was decided by a second round of counting after the top two candidates failed to win the mandatory 50% of votes to be declared winner.

France's Barnier entrusts budget dilemma to little-known duo

PARIS (Reuters): French Prime Minister Michel Barnier has handed a little known duo the task of plugging a huge hole in the budget, putting loyalty before political clout in the job description for his finance and budget ministers. Ending weeks of suspense, Barnier unveiled his ministerial line-up late on Saturday, tapping 33-year-old junior lawmaker Antoine Armand for the prestigious economy and finance ministry.

Barnier also named Laurent Saint Martin, 39, head of the government office that promotes foreign investment in France, as budget minister, putting him directly under his purview rather than the finance ministry in a break with tradition.

Unknown outside of Parisian political circles, the two face huge pressure to figure out how to rein in France's budget deficit as it spirals towards 6% of GDP due to a tax shortfall and higher than planned

spending.

Although they lack political weight, economists say they run little risk of putting President Emmanuel Macron's legacy of tax cuts and pro-business reforms at risk - if they can get the 2025 budget passed.

"It's a way of keeping policy continuity, they're faithful and will follow Emmanuel Macron's political line," economist Mathieu Plane with the OFCE economics think tank said.

Armand, 33, is a relative political novice, serving as a lawmaker in Macron's party since 2022 while Saint Martin only served one term, failing to win a second term in 2022.

It is still unclear which one will take the lead steering the 2025 budget bill through France's deeply divided parliament, where they can expect a rough ride from opposition parties which could team up and vote through a vote of no confidence, poten-

tially bringing down Barnier's government.

Usually France's finance and economy minister drafts and steers budget legislation through parliament with the budget minister in a junior role to iron out wrinkles.

In any case it will fall on Armand to defend the government's budget choices in Brussels, where France's European Union partners are unlikely to have much sympathy for Paris once again requesting more time to cut its budget deficit.

He will also have to represent France at international forums like the G7 and G20, where he will share the stage with more experienced policymakers like U.S. Treasury Secretary Janet Yellen.

Armand and Saint Martin will have to work around the clock to finalise the 2025 budget bill, which usually takes months of preparation and is due to be handed over to lawmakers by Oct. 1,

although some limited leeway is possible.

While finance ministry officials have already done much of the grunt work, they will have to figure out how to balance tax hikes and spending cuts in a way that does not prompt a political backlash.

Though set against rolling back broader tax cuts under Macron, the outgoing government has left behind proposals for an increase in taxes on energy companies and a tax on big corporate share buybacks.

Broader tax hikes are likely to fall foul of the extreme right National Rally and Barnier's own conservative Republicans party.

That means the brunt of the effort to narrow the budget shortfall will have to come from unpopular spending cuts, which will likely have to be about 20 billion to 30 billion euros (\$22-\$34 billion) depending on how fast the government decides to cut the

Germany's Brandenburg state votes, AfD likely to notch up another win

BERLIN, Sept 22 (Reuters) - Germans in the state of Brandenburg were voting in a regional election on Sunday with the far-right Alternative for Germany (AfD) expected to finish first, building on successes in other eastern states and beating Chancellor Olaf Scholz's Social Democrats in one of their traditional strongholds.

The AfD became the first far-right party to win a state election in Germany since World War Two, in Saxony on the same day.

However, other parties refuse to work with the AfD in coalition governments and given it did not win a majority in Thuringia or Saxony and is unlikely to do so in Brandenburg, the party is not set to be part of a regional government.

The AfD is one of several far-right groups in Europe capitalising on worries over an economic slowdown, immigration and the Ukraine war - concerns that are particularly strong in formerly Communist eastern Germany. It is also seeking to gain from discontent over infighting in Scholz's three-party federal coalition.

Polls close in Brandenburg at 6 p.m. (1600 GMT) and the first exit polls and preliminary projections will be announced as soon as voting ends.

Some 46% of the state's 2.1 million eligible voters turned out to vote by 2 p.m. (1200 GMT), up from 31.3% turnout in the last election in 2019, according to the state interior ministry.

Brandenburg's popular SPD premier, Dietmar Woidke, on Sunday cast his ballot in Forst near the Polish border and said he was optimistic about the outcome. "We were more or less told the situation is hopeless. But I believe that, on the whole, we have shown that we as the Brandenburg SPD have our own strength," Woidke told journalists.

Hans-Christoph Berndt, the AfD candidate for Brandenburg state premier, said he was also optimistic about his party's prospects compared to 2019.

"If we continue to receive the same level of support we've seen in recent weeks and months, things in Germany will start to improve," Berndt said, adding that while the elec-

tion was important, Brandenburg's future wouldn't be decided solely by Sunday's outcome.

An AfD victory in the state election would be a particular embarrassment for the Social Democrats (SPD), which has won elections in Brandenburg and governed the state of 2.5 million people since East and West Germany were reunified in 1990.

It would also raise further questions about the suitability of Scholz, the least popular German chancellor on record, to lead the party into next year's federal election. Woidke, has mostly shunned campaigning with Scholz, who lives in the state's capital, Potsdam, and has also criticised the country's ruling coalition's behaviour and policies.

Instead, he has sought to highlight economic successes during the five years since the last state election such as the opening of a Tesla (TSLA.O), opens new tab factory and Brandenburg airport - which serves Berlin and is now Germany's third most important aviation hub.

NARROW THE GAP

In recent weeks, opinion polls have shown the SPD narrowing the gap with the

AfD.

A poll published by pollster Forschungsgruppe Wahlen on Thursday put the AfD on 28% in Brandenburg with the SPD on 27%, followed by the conservatives on 14% and the new leftist Sahra Wagenknecht Alliance (BSW) on 13%.

"My greatest challenge in this legislative period ... is to not allow right-wing extremists to have anything to say in this country ever again," Woidke said at a campaign event on Tuesday. He has threatened to resign if his party comes in behind the AfD. AfD national party leader Tino Chrupalla said Scholz should do the same.

"It is high time this government suffer the consequences after this state election," Chrupalla said.

Both of Scholz's junior coalition partners, the Free Democrats and the Greens, look set to struggle to win the 5% needed to enter the state parliament, polls show. At a national level, the three parties in Scholz's coalition are now collectively polling less than the opposition conservatives although political analysts say much could change before the federal election due in September 2025.

Labour Party gathers after a rocky start in govt and a scandal over clothes

LONDON (AP): This should be a time of celebration for Britain's Labour Party, which opens its annual conference Sunday less than three months after winning power in a landslide after 14 years in opposition.

But it's no victory lap for Prime Minister Keir Starmer. His government is facing a reckoning with a battered economy and an electorate impatient for change. The mood among Labour members gathering in the north-west England city of Liverpool has been further

dampened by a tempest over Starmer's acceptance of freebies at a time when the millions of people are struggling with the cost of living.

Starmer insists he followed the rules when he took clothes and designer eyeglasses from Waheed Alli, a media entrepreneur and longtime Labour donor. But after days of negative headlines, the party now says Starmer won't accept any more free outfits.

"I get that people are angry," said Deputy Prime Minister Angela Rayner,

who also accepted donations to pay for clothing.

"But donations for gifts and hospitality and monetary donations have been a feature of our politics for a very long time," she told the BBC. "People can look it up and see what people have had donations for, and the transparency is really important."

Starmer won the July 4 election on a promise to "restore politics as a force for good" after scandal-tarnished years under the Conservatives. He vowed to

get the country's sluggish economy growing and restore frayed public services such as the state-funded National Health Service.

Since then, he has struck a gloomy note, saying there is a 22 billion pound (\$29 billion) "black hole" in the public finances left by the Conservative government, and warning that "things will get worse" before they get better. One of the government's first major acts was to strip millions of retirees of a payment intended to help

heat their homes in winter.

Starmer also had to deal with anti-immigrant unrest that erupted after three children were stabbed to death in Southport, near Liverpool in July. Starmer responded firmly, pledging swift justice and tough sentences for rioters. But prison overcrowding, a legacy of the last government, meant hundreds of inmates had to be freed early to make way for the newly convicted rioters.

Then came the clothing scandal, dubbed "frockgate" after dresses gifted to the

prime minister's wife, Victoria Starmer.

Keir Starmer is also facing grumbling among his own employees over the salary of his chief of staff, Sue Gray. The BBC disclosed that she is paid 170,000 pounds (\$225,000) a year — about 3,000 pounds more than the prime minister's salary. The government says it wasn't involved in setting the pay scale for political advisers.

Labour says that the criticism is being whipped up by the Conservatives and their

media supporters. But polls suggest it has hurt. An Ipsos poll released Friday found 25% of respondents thought Starmer was doing a good job — down from 36% in July — while 42% thought he was doing a bad job, up from 14%. The firm interviewed 1,082 adults by telephone and the margin of error is plus or minus three percentage points.

"He promised to be different, but he hasn't been," Conservative lawmaker Chris Philp told the BBC. "He is not running a govern-

ment of service, he is running a government of self-service."

The diet of bad news has alarmed many Labour members, who worry worse is to come in the form of tax increases and spending cuts when the government announces its first budget on Oct. 30.

Labour leaders will try to convey a more positive message when Treasury chief Rachel Reeves makes a televised conference speech on Monday, followed by Starmer on Tuesday.

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Israel caught in self-made vicious cycle

THE resumption of cross-border attacks between Israel and Hezbollah after pager and walkie-talkie explosions that have already killed at least 37 and injured more than 3,000 people in Lebanon may trigger a war between the two sides. This may be what Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu is gambling on in order to prolong his stay in power.

Cross-border fighting between Israel and Hezbollah has resulted in the evacuation of about 6,000 Israeli residents from the northern part of Israel. When they will be able to return to their homes remains a question, although the Israeli government has set their returning to their homes one of the objectives of its military action.

But the pager explosions and the air strikes that followed against Hezbollah have only escalated tensions in the border areas with Lebanon, which has made it even more unlikely the displaced residents will be able to return to their homes anytime soon.

What Israel has done in Gaza and its repeated attacks on Hezbollah targets as well as its military actions in the West Bank have created a vicious cycle. The more actions it takes, the deeper Israel becomes mired in conflict with various military organizations around itself. The irony is the more intent the Netanyahu government is on military action, the more it is undermining the security of Israel.

Israel could have made concessions in talks with Hamas that would have realized a cease-fire and helped promote the negotiated return of the hostages held by Hamas, but it did not. Netanyahu's insistence on continuing Israel's military action has only resulted in the prolonged conflicts both in Gaza and Lebanon.

Israel's military carried out raids and air strikes in multiple parts of the occupied West Bank in late August, which means military conflicts between Israel and Hamas as well as other Palestinian organizations will continue. Netanyahu is trying to prolong his own political life at the expense of not only tens of thousands of innocent lives, but also at the cost of regional peace as well as the future of Israel.

It is not difficult to conclude that an end to the current conflict could easily result in the Israeli prime minister being swept away from office — especially once investigations are concluded into how Israel ignored evidence of the Oct 7 attack by Hamas in 2023 that killed about 1,200 Israelis, and how slowly Israel's defense forces responded.

And while Israel had the sympathy of the international community on its side after Hamas' attack on Oct 7, it has now lost the support of most countries because of its brutal persecution of the Palestinians and its reckless broadening of its war aims.

The Netanyahu government has turned a blind eye to the fact that tens of thousands of civilians have lost their lives in Gaza as a result of the military action it has launched and many more are struggling to survive amid the worsening humanitarian situation in the Palestinian enclave.

The pager explosions in Lebanon last week have reinforced the image of the Netanyahu government being beyond all restraint. Yet in terms of military resources, Israel has been overstretching itself and it is reliant on the support of the United States. The only way to stop the vicious cycle of violence Netanyahu is so single-mindedly fixated on is for the US to unequivocally and unconditionally stop speculating on his monomania by enabling it. The International Court of Justice has made it clear that Israel's actions violate international law. It is therefore not an option but a legal obligation for Israel to cease those actions and for the US to stop being complicit in them.

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A ground invasion of Lebanon would be a terrible mistake for Israel

Dr. Dania Koleilat Khatib

Continual attacks by Hezbollah resulted in such high levels of casualties that the public outcry in Israel eventually forced them to withdraw. In his speech, Nasrallah said that even if Israel had delivered a blow to his group, it would not achieve its strategic goal of making

consideration. The first is that backing Hezbollah into a corner is not a very smart strategy. A cat that is cornered will lash out at anyone it perceives as a threat, even if they are much stronger. The second issue is the ability of the group to adapt. It is a guerrilla oper-

will find other ways to communicate and reorganize its network, rather quickly. Israel's technological supremacy is likely to be countered through the use of more primitive and creative alternatives.

Even if Hezbollah's capabilities are diminished for now, an invasion of Lebanon could still trigger a wider regional war. Israel has been lobbying the US for approval of a limited strike on the country for months. Washington is opposed to such an attack because it is hard to predict how Hezbollah and Iran would respond, and it does not want a regional war to erupt, especially in the run-up to a presidential election.

Now, however, Israel is emboldened. It struck at the very heart of Iran when it assassinated Ismail Haniyeh, the political leader of Hamas, in Tehran in July, and there was no significant response. Now it has delivered a strong blow to Hezbollah, weakening the group significantly.

Nevertheless, Israel should not grow overconfident. Hezbollah and Iran might yet strike back if they feel the choice is that or death.

Most importantly, an invasion of Lebanon would bestow on Hezbollah a renewed sense of legitimacy. Prior to May 24, 2000, the date of the Israeli withdrawal from Lebanon, the group enjoyed unanimous domestic support as it was perceived as the resistance fighting a much-loathed occupier. When the Israelis left and Hezbollah became a full-fledged political party, people started questioning its legitimacy as an armed group.

On May 7, 2008, when Hezbollah attacked Beirut and turned its weapons on fellow Lebanese citizens, people further questioned its legitimacy. In 2012, when its members were deployed to Syria, people once again called into question the legitimacy of an armed group that was now protecting a brutal dictator accused of slaughtering his own people.

In 2019, when Hezbollah repressed popular protests against the government, people questioned the legitimacy of an armed group that was now using its weapons to protect a corrupt political class.

But if Israel invades Lebanon, it would be a blessing in disguise for Hezbollah. It would grant the group a renewed legitimacy, help it attract new recruits, and push the Lebanese people once again to rally behind it.

After all, if Lebanon is invaded, the various factions there will have no option but to stand alongside the resistance. This is why the US, which is supposed to be "the adult in the room" in such situations, must make sure it puts enough pressure on Israel to ensure it refrains from an invasion and engages in efforts to reach a diplomatic solution that ends the war on both the Lebanese and Gaza fronts.

No, the UNGA resolution on Palestine was not a win

Hassan Aslam Shad

On September 18, the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) adopted a resolution calling for Israel to terminate its illegal occupation of Palestinian territory within one year. The vote, which concluded with 124 in favour, 12 against, and 43 abstained, has been interpreted by some as a significant triumph for Palestinian advocacy.

Yet, the fact that 54 countries (excluding Israel) – constituting about 28 per cent of all member states – did not back the resolution cannot be overlooked. It not only signifies a failure of moral courage but also underscores a pervasive hypocrisy that continues to shape global governance. In fact, it reflects continuing efforts to erode the international regime in order to ensure impunity for Israel.

The resolution in question demanded that Israel "brings to an end without delay its unlawful presence in the Occupied Palestinian Territory". It reiterated the findings of the International Court of Justice (ICJ), which ruled in July that Israel's occupation was illegal, that its settlements on occupied Palestinian land are also illegal and must be dismantled, and that it needs to pay reparations for damages incurred by the Palestinians.

International law is quite clear on the question of occupation: it is a criminal act. A consensus among international scholars underscores that an occupier cannot invoke the right of self-defence against the people it occupies – an argument Israel has employed to justify its nefarious genocidal actions.

In the context of this ruling by the World Court, voting against and abstaining from voting on the UNGA resolution cannot be dismissed as mere political neutrality. By choosing not to support a resolution that re-affirms the illegality of the Israeli occupation, these nations implicitly endorse Israel's actions and contribute to the perpetuation of a status quo marked by brutal oppression and suffering. They also openly disregard and thus attack the provisions of international law.

It is important to remember that this vote came amid a continuing Israeli aggression against Gaza and the West Bank, in which nearly 42,000 Palestinians – the majority of them women and children – have been killed and more than 100,000 injured. In January, the ICJ issued a preliminary ruling that Israel is "plausibly" violating the Genocide Convention with its actions in Gaza. This genocidal violence is a direct consequence of the decades-long illegal Israeli occupation of Palestinian land.

The October 7 attack last year by Hamas cannot be viewed in isolation. It is rooted in decades of brutal occupation that has left Palestinians trapped in what many describe as the world's largest open-air prison, where systemic oppression, displacement, and violence have defined millions of Palestinian lives. Understanding this context is essential to addressing the underlying issues and moving toward a just and lasting resolution that honours the dignity and humanity of all affected.

One of the 12 countries that voted against the resolution – the United States – has been a long-time supporter of the Israeli occupation, sending billions worth of weapons to its military before and after October. For its role in arming Israel, the US has been repeatedly accused of complicity in Israeli war crimes and crimes against humanity.

Strangely, the US representative to the UN entered a "no" vote despite the fact that Judge Sarah Cleveland, who represents the US at the ICJ, voted in favour of all the court's opinions in the July ruling.

What makes the US position even more problematic is that it has had the exact opposite stance on occupations elsewhere. In 2022, when Russia launched a full-scale invasion of Ukraine and occupied parts of its territory, Washington was at the forefront of global condemnation, sending billions in military and financial aid to the Ukrainian army. This has set a troubling double standard that other countries allied with the US have also fol-

lowed.

The United Kingdom, for example, expressed "considerable concerns" about the January ICJ ruling and rejected genocide allegations against Israel. On September 18, it chose to abstain. Despite its own legal advisers warning that British weapons could be used for human rights violations in Gaza, the British government has continued its arms shipments to the Israeli army, suspending just 30 out of 350 arms export licences.

Like Washington, London has also extended significant military support for Ukraine in its fight against Russian occupation and wholeheartedly backed investigations into war crimes committed by Russian forces.

Germany, which also abstained on September 18, is another example of a country with a troubling position. As a key supplier of arms to Israel, Germany faces serious allegations of facilitating the commission of genocide, complicating its moral standing and raising questions about its commitment to human rights. Its government has announced plans to intervene in the main hearing of the genocide case against Israel at the ICJ, categorically rejecting the accusations of genocide without substantial justification.

While trying to block legal proceedings against Israel, Germany has accelerated investigations launched by its own justice system into war crimes committed in Ukraine.

Various other countries in Europe, Latin America, Asia and the Pacific – mostly US and NATO allies – have also either voted against the UNGA resolution or abstained, putting geopolitical considerations above international law and ethics.

The hypocrisy inherent in these geopolitical alliances raises critical questions about the integrity of the global legal framework. Why is it that violations committed by Israel, an ally of powerful Western nations, are met with silence or insufficient condemnation and others are not? This inconsistency not only deepens the divisions between the West and the Global South, but also damages the legitimacy of international law and its ability to prevent atrocities.

The more Israel is shielded by these countries, the more it flouts international law without fear of consequences and the more brutal and deadly its abuses become. And its violations do not only affect the Palestinian population. This pattern of impunity undermines the foundational principles of justice and accountability and encourages others to engage in such crimes.

The abstention of 43 countries and the opposition from 11 others regarding the UNGA resolution send a clear message to the world: there are "no rules". This alarming trend suggests that nations with powerful militaries can act unilaterally, disregarding international law without consequence. If we fail to halt this erosion of the legal regime, we risk descending into a world governed by the "law of the jungle".

Such a breakdown of international law would have catastrophic implications for human civilisation. It would foster a climate where the powerful can trample on the rights of the weak, perpetuating cycles of violence and oppression. The hypocrisy evident in the global response to the Palestinian plight exemplifies this dangerous disregard for justice and accountability. As these 54 countries continue to turn a blind eye to grave violations, the foundations of global order are threatened.

To restore faith in international law, countries must prioritise human rights over strategic interests. This requires a unified front from the international community. Nations must hold each other accountable for their actions and speak out against violations, regardless of political affiliations or alliances. A true commitment to justice necessitates that the principles of international law be applied consistently and without bias.

Only through decisive action can the ideals of international law be upheld and the world saved from a dark, lawless future.

The international order is under threat — can we save it?

When the secret service chiefs of two of the most powerful countries in the world, who also happen to be allies, together write an article warning that the international order is “under threat” in ways we have not seen since the end of the Cold War, the international community should pay close attention.

Unless one has taken a long leave of absence from following news reports, one can hardly argue with their observation. However, to highlight the perilous times in which we live, as important as that is, is not necessarily the same as presenting us with the root causes of this state of affairs or the remedies for it.

Bill Burns and Richard Moore, the heads of America’s CIA and Britain’s MI6 respectively, wrote in a joint op-ed published by UK newspaper The Financial Times that their countries will continue to stand shoulder-to-shoulder in efforts to fend off global dangers, as they have done for many decades.

This was a rare occasion on which the heads of major intelligence agencies opted to speak out together in public, an unusual decision for people more used to operating in the shadows.

Why they did this is not entirely clear. Perhaps they hope simply to raise public awareness at a time when many people feel fatigued by years of political discord at home, by a global pandemic that took a heavy toll, by fears of a climate cataclysm and, perhaps most importantly, by the effects of wars and other conflicts that appear to have no end and require massive resources to prolong them at the expense of the needs of their communities.

It might also be the case that Burns and Moore felt impelled to publicly warn their political masters of the need to remain steadfast in face of this fatigue, despite the political pressure to concentrate on domestic requirements.

They assert that more than two-and-a-half years into the war in Ukraine,

most of the West, justifiably, still stands together in “resisting an assertive Russia and Putin’s war of aggression.”

Moreover, they provide a chilling confirmation that there was a moment in the fall of 2022 when there was a genuine risk of “the use of tactical nuclear weapons,” suggesting the nuclear option is never too far away, especially considering the constant shifts in momentum during this war.

What was surprising, disappointing even, about what these two top security officials had to say, however, was their over-emphasis on the mechanics of mod-

Yossi Mekelberg

apply to other sources of instability — including the actions of non-state actors such as Daesh or Hezbollah, or the ongoing war in Gaza and the Israeli-Palestinian conflict more generally — that threaten to destabilize the region and beyond.

It might be the case that those who lead intelligence communities perceive themselves to be in charge at the operational level, rather than the policy-strategy level, and so they emphasize the use of new technologies, such as drones, cybersecurity,

are forced into a reactive stance.

Time and again, the emphasis on technology or the use of force ignores the human side of conflicts, including the paradoxes, unpredictability, and all-too common examples of illogical and irrational behavior that cause leaderships to act against their own best national interests.

It is this failure to understand the human factor that can cause intelligence communities to fail to identify dangers and threats until it is too late. Examples of such failures range from Pearl Harbor in 1941 to the Russian invasion of

calculations is a failure of analysis, not of information gathering.

It is not only Israelis who are keen to understand how the misperceptions of Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and his advisers led them to believe they might pacify Hamas in Gaza by allowing huge amounts of money to be funneled to the group.

Or to understand how one of the most sophisticated and expensive border barriers in the world, between Israel and Gaza, collapsed in less than an hour, while nearly a year later the war continues to rage with no end in sight.

There is a widely shared sense that we live in volatile times in which rather than seeking cooperation, increasingly aggressive international competition and friction are creating fragility, and not only between the major global powers.

It is in the efforts to address the challenge of defusing this situation — and more importantly resolving it without resorting to military means — that governments and international institutions are failing to provide adequate answers.

For such solutions to be found there is a need to establish effective deterrents but these must be accompanied by an understanding of the factors and motivations that lie behind belligerence and the support given to belligerent leaders: Too many people live in conditions that offer them no hope of a better future; there are structural failures within the global collective security system; the global economic system encourages aggressive competition instead of cooperation and collaboration. Meanwhile, extreme nationalism is on the rise again as a tool for unscrupulous politicians to claw their way to power.

If intelligence communities are to best serve their governments and advance the cause of peace, these are the most important issues they must address. Otherwise they will forever be forced to deal with the inevitable fallout from their failures to confront them.

Africa’s oil exporters struggle as cost of climate change soars

Hafed Al-Ghwel

domestic product. The reduced fiscal space from ballooning repayments curtails governments’ ability to invest in alternative energy sources and sustainable development initiatives, thereby risking their long-term economic stability. The plummeting oil demand globally and production deficits intrinsically tie these countries’ fates to an increasingly uncertain oil market, raising vital questions about their future economic strategies and resilience in a transitioning energy economy.

Thus, what can African petrostates and, similarly, the continent’s less affluent, oil-importing neighbors do to manage this impending crisis?

Equatorial Guinea presents a compelling case study of a petrostate grappling with the dual pressures of declining oil output and the urgent need for economic diversification. The country’s economic boom, heralded by the discovery of oil in the mid-1990s, has seen a marked shift from agriculture-led growth to an

respects, face perplexing challenges in transitioning to low-emission economies without undermining the financial backbone provided by crude exports. It is several magnitudes worse for poorer oil-importing countries on the continent, struggling with socioeconomic challenges, complicated further by frequent climate change-induced extreme weather events — increasing pressure on oil exporters to accelerate their ambitious plans to lower their own emissions footprint. Thus, while Africa’s wealthier petrostates, replete with resources, face fewer financial hurdles in funding transitions — declining outputs, revenues, and shrinking global demand are placing more pressure on less affluent countries.

Yet, the need for substantial investment persists. Equatorial Guinea, for instance, has embraced an “open door” policy to draw smaller players into the sector, mitigating risks of failed bidding rounds. However, this strategy, though pragmatic, highlights the desperate meas-

In Equatorial Guinea’s case, oil production has dwindled, ranking among the lowest in OPEC, primarily due to declining output from mature fields, such as Aseng and Alba. The country’s production peaked just over a decade ago, but the absence of new discoveries has rendered the sector extremely volatile to the combined impact of declining output and decreasing global consumption.

economy heavily dependent on hydrocarbons. This transformation was bolstered by substantial foreign direct investment, thanks to favorable fiscal terms and promising prospects. Infrastructure projects flourished, accompanied by substantial investments in social and civil amenities. Yet, the precipitous drop in oil production in recent years paints a troubling picture of Equatorial Guinea — and by extension, other oil-dependent African nations.

The multifaceted issues bedeviling African petrostates go beyond aging infrastructure or dwindling investments. A lack of new discoveries, and high exploration costs are also complicating prospects of even finding stop-gap solutions to this complex and enduring challenge.

In Equatorial Guinea’s case, oil production has dwindled, ranking among the lowest in OPEC, primarily due to declining output from mature fields, such as Aseng and Alba. The country’s production peaked just over a decade ago, but the absence of new discoveries has rendered the sector extremely volatile to the combined impact of declining output and decreasing global consumption. Meanwhile, increased domestic demand for natural gas, contrasted with decreasing export capacity, showcases the inherent contradictions within the hydrocarbon sector. As governments scramble to attract new investments through tax incentives and policy revisions, the long-term sustainability of these initiatives remains uncertain.

African petrostates, albeit wealthier in some

ures required to maintain economic equilibrium, which may require stalling climate related interventions.

In turn, the burden of climate change weighs even more heavily on poorer African nations which contend with the worst impacts of a warming planet without the buffer of oil wealth. Excessive rainfall, unprecedented floods, prolonged heat waves, and escalating droughts exacerbate water insecurity and food scarcity. These challenges force these countries to divert increasingly scarce resources toward immediate relief and recovery, leaving little room for building resilient, low-emission infrastructure. The stark juxtaposition between cash-strapped states and oil-rich equivalents emphasizes the disproportionate impact and uneven opportunities across the continent, which demands serious attention not just at a continent level, but globally as well.

The next opportunity to deal with this perplexing challenge is most likely the 29th UN Climate Change conference in Baku, Azerbaijan. Here, Africa’s declining oil output and its collision course with climate imperatives must be tackled head-on.

Otherwise, efforts by countries such as Nigeria to diversify their economies away from oil are doomed. In sum, the paradox faced by Africa’s petrostates is as complex as it is urgent. Without intervention, countries risk falling into a financial and environmental trap, caught between the dwindling wells of today and the uncertain, greener horizons of tomorrow.

Israel has shown ideology is no match for technology

Abdulrahman Al-Rashed

When the late Egyptian President Gamal Abdel Nasser was asked why he was defeated in the 1967 war, he said it was due to Israel’s air superiority. “That is why it fought us (Egypt, Syria, and Jordan) simultaneously.”

A journalist responded: “But Egypt also has a large fleet of fighter jets?” At the time, Egypt had 420 fighter aircraft, including the superior MiG-21.

Nasser answered: “They have more pilots than Egypt, three Israeli pilots for each fighter jet, meaning they can fly the same plane several times a day.”

His justification was correct, but Israeli superiority was not based on acquiring advanced aircraft; it stemmed from developing the entire Israeli military institution and its support networks based on highly advanced programs.

More than 4,000 people were killed or injured in recent days in two sophisticated technical operations carried out by Israel against

Hezbollah, using pagers and walkie talkies. We are in the age of technological wars, not wars of bravery, and the concept of conflict is “civilizational,” not historical.

Phones, as well as other communication devices, computers, televisions, electric cars, and drones are all potential weapons. A car such as a Tesla, equipped with eight cameras, could be hacked by someone who can monitor everyone inside and outside the vehicle and even hack it from a distant country, turning it into a weapon.

Using wireless phones and pagers as tools for killing widens the gap and makes it impossible to win conflicts through military means. Nasser complained about Israeli superiority half a century ago, and today the gap has doubled, making the idea of change through armed force almost impossible, if not naive.

Throughout history, technology has played a

decisive role in wars and in one empire’s superiority over another. The Mongols designed composite bows that allowed their horsemen to shoot arrows accurately and continuously while on horseback, enabling them to conquer half the world at unprecedented speed.

The Arabs crossed continents after developing chemical incendiary weapons made from tar.

Similarly, the Ottomans excelled by inventing massive cannons that allowed them to demolish formidable fortresses like Constantinople.

Britain, a small, distant island, conquered the world by utilizing the technology of cannons mounted on ships that could destroy fortresses from the sea, building armored ships, and extending railways that accelerated the transportation of supplies and soldiers.

We cannot forget the nuclear bomb, the pinnacle of human intellect in destruction, which deci-

sively ended the Second World War in favor of the US and its allies — its effects still resonate today.

Scientific superiority is the key to human victories, and the development of war machinery is a direct result of the advancement of institutions and society.

What makes Israel superior is its focus on intellect in the field of technology, which has granted it continuous victories to this day in both peace and war, and distinguished it economically despite the small size of its markets.

Israel advances in the fields of cybersecurity, military manufacturing, artificial intelligence, autonomous vehicles, medical technology, and irrigation and agricultural technology.

As for Hezbollah, like Iran, its strength lies in its willingness to sacrifice its fighters, as well as recruiting cheap fighters from Lebanon, Iraq, Afghanistan, and Yemen, and adapting cloned weapons

from Russia and China, naming them “Martyr,” “Conqueror,” “Al-Qassam,” and “Al-Zalzalah.”

Like Al-Qaeda, the party relies on bravery and ideological preparation for sacrifice. Yet even this strategy is ineffective in modern wars, as one analyst remarked on the shock and heavy casualties within Hezbollah ranks due to the detonation of booby-trapped pagers by Israeli intelligence: “You cannot fight technology with ideology.”

All the dead from both sides, Hezbollah and Israel, believe they are going to heaven, but the most important thing in wars is who wins.

These wars will continue without a decisive result because one side is diligently working to develop its capabilities, and using its war with its adversaries as a field for experimentation, while the other side is entrenched in metaphysical beliefs and places no value on the loss of human life.

After the landslide win, Labour seeks to set political agenda

Andrew Hammond

The annual party conference season in the UK is always a major part of the political year. However, this year’s conferences, which are akin to national political conventions in the US, are more important than most.

Labour’s landslide general election victory in July has resulted in massive levels of interest, particularly in business and political circles, in the party’s annual gathering, which begins in Liverpool on Sunday and continues until Wednesday.

Given that some predict Labour might be in power for at least a decade, senior executives of big UK and international companies will be in attendance at the conference in greater numbers than has been the case in recent years. Private-sector sponsorship of the event is expected to be at the highest level ever, too.

Unsurprisingly, Labour

activists will be in a jubilant mood at the conference, the first since 2010 to take place when the party is in power. Behind that joy, however, the political challenges are multiplying, just two-and-a-half months into the new government’s first term.

Ahead of what is expected to be a tough annual budget statement by Chancellor Rachel Reeves on Oct. 30, which will be the first fiscal activity by a Labour government in a decade-and-a-half, several surveys this month suggested the honeymoon period the party enjoyed in July and August might now be well and truly over.

A More in Common opinion poll last week, for example, found that Labour’s lead has fallen to just 4 percentage points, with the party at 29 percent compared with the Conservatives at 25 per-

cent. The new, insurgent, right-wing party Reform UK ranked third at 18 percent, followed by the Liberal Democrats at 14 percent.

With the House of Commons in recess, the party conference season therefore comes at a potentially highly opportune time for Prime Minister Keir Starmer. His set-piece leadership speech to his party’s event on Tuesday, preceded by a speech by Reeves on Monday, offers an opportunity for the government to reframe the political narrative as criticism of previous Conservative governments ahead of the series of potentially very challenging moments it faces in the coming months.

Top of this list is the budget statement at the end of October, which will almost certainly include significant tax rises and spending cuts. It follows a politi-

cal audit carried out by the government when it took office in July, which reportedly found a black hole in the finances of more than £20 billion (\$27 billion) for this fiscal year alone.

As well as having to make major decisions about taxation and spending, Reeves might also amend debt targets she previously pledged to stick to. Known as fiscal rules, these are self-imposed limits set by the government to manage its borrowing within a five-year time frame; changing this framework would offer a bit more flexibility.

While the exact contents of the upcoming budget are not yet known, Starmer and Reeves have clearly decided to front-load the “political pain” of difficult fiscal decisions during Labour’s first year in office. The calculus here is that this will

hopefully result in better economic times during the second half of the decade, ahead of the next UK election which is likely to take place in late 2028 or early 2029.

Reeves has said: “The prize, if we can bring stability back to our economy, if we can bring investment back to Britain, is economic growth, good jobs, paying decent wages in all parts of our country, to realize the huge potential that we have.”

What she was pointing to here was the prospect of multiyear growth following the 2023 recession in the UK, which itself foreshadowed years of anemic economic growth.

While Starmer might hope to ensure his political destiny remains in his own hands, it will in fact rest on the actions of others too,

namely the other two main parties, the Conservatives and Liberal Democrats, and possibly Reform UK, which in July won five seats, its first in the House of Commons.

The Conservatives, the main opposition party, will choose a new leader in early November, shortly before the US presidential election. The party’s choice between the four remaining candidates will have a big bearing on how fast it might return to power.

The early front-runners are two right-wing former Cabinet ministers: Robert Jenrick, who was secretary of state for communities and local government, and Kemi Badenoch, who was secretary of state for international trade. The other contenders are former Foreign and Home Secretary James Cleverly, the only one of the four to have held any of the great

offices of state, and former Immigration Minister Tom Tugendhat.

When the Conservatives were last in opposition, between 1997 and 2010, the party chose successive leaders of mixed effectiveness. Michael Howard (2003-2005) and David Cameron (2005-2016) helped move the party toward a return to power, but William Hague (1997-2001) and Iain Duncan Smith (2001-2003) proved less effective.

Should the Conservatives choose a leader in November who proves ineffective, Reform UK and its populist policies could become a major political influence in coming years. Its leader, Nigel Farage, has proven himself to be one of the most effective, if highly controversial, UK politicians of recent decades, not least through his prominent role in the “Leave” cam-

paign during the 2016 Brexit referendum, which ultimately resulted in the UK leaving the EU.

Meanwhile, the centrist Liberal Democrats have reemerged as a significant political force, winning 72 seats in July, many of which were formerly held by the Conservatives. One of the key post-election questions facing LibDem leader Ed Davey is his stance on the Labour government, with its huge majority. He has so far been a critical friend, but this might change if Labour grows more unpopular.

This year’s party conference season therefore comes at a pivotal moment in the UK political cycle and the events will frame the coming month, ahead of what is potentially the most important fiscal event for years: the new Labour government’s first budget on Oct. 30.



Shaanxi fair:

Pak companies explore investment opportunities

ISLAMABAD (APP): Xi'an, the capital of Shaanxi Province in north-western China, is witnessing an unprecedented surge in cooperation between Pakistan and China.

The China (Shaanxi)-Pakistan Economic and Trade Cooperation Fair, recently held in conjunction with the Silk Road International Exposition, highlighted the vibrant relationship between the two nations.

The occasion brought together around 40 Pakistani companies, including both public and private oil and gas enterprises, keen to explore growing investment opportunities with their Chinese counterparts.

In an interview with China Economic Net, Pakistan's Ambassador to China, Khalil Hashmi emphasized the significance of the fair. He said, "This is the first time, per-

haps in recent memory, that such a large delegation and sector-specific conference is being convened in Shaanxi Province." He noted, underscoring the momentum generated in recent months, particularly after the Pakistani Prime Minister's visit to the province in June.

"Since CPEC entered its second phase last year, a new chapter in our economic relationship—focused on B2B cooperation—is unfolding. We have identified 13 priority sectors, including energy, mines and minerals, iron and steel, chemicals, fertilizers, textiles, leather, IT, and services. Through events like this, we aim to attract Chinese investment to these sectors in Pakistan," Ambassador Hashmi said.

Shaanxi Province has seen a remarkable boost in its trade with Pakistan this year, with the trade volume

nearly doubling between January and August. The province's prowess in photovoltaic (PV) technology is particularly notable, with a local solar energy company commanding up to 40% of Pakistan's market share at its peak.

Pakistan, as the guest country of honor for the first time at the Silk Road International Exposition, hosted one of the largest national pavilions, showcasing a wide range of Pakistani culture, products, and investment opportunities, especially in the energy sector, providing a platform for business networking, joint ventures, and trade promotion.

Ambassador Hashmi also praised China's technological advancements and expertise. "China has vast experience in manufacturing, industrialization, and special economic zones—areas where we are

working closely together."

He said, "We are incredibly proud to have developed our partnership and friendship with China for 73 out of its 75 years." He pointed to the achievements made through the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC), which have played a transformative role in Pakistan's economy. Over the past decade, CPEC projects have added more than 8,000 megawatts of electricity, built over 800 kilometers of highways and fiber optic cables, and attracted nearly \$26 billion in investments, he maintained.

Looking ahead, Ambassador Hashmi expressed optimism about future collaboration. "The prospects are bright, and we look forward to deepening our cooperation in both cutting-edge technologies and traditional manufacturing sectors," he concluded.



ISLAMABAD: A couple purchasing vegetables from vendor at Sunday Bazaar.

Gas theft crackdown:

61 connections disconnected in Punjab, KP & Islamabad

F.P. Report

LAHORE: In an ongoing effort to combat gas theft, Sui Northern Gas Pipelines Limited (SNGPL) has conducted further raids across Punjab, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, and Islamabad, resulting in the disconnection of 61 connections and the imposition of Rs 2.7 million in fines.

In Lahore, 11 connec-

tions were disconnected for illegal gas usage, with an additional 14 for the use of gas compressors. The team also imposed fines totaling Rs 0.99 million in gas theft cases. In Faisalabad, one connection was cut off for illegal gas use, with fines amounting to Rs 0.02 million. In Sheikhupura, a fine of Rs 0.79 million was imposed on offenders.

In Multan, 7 connections

were terminated for illegal gas usage, while another 5 were disconnected for the use of compressors. In Sahiwal, 1 illegal connection was cut. The Rawalpindi team disconnected 2 connections for illegal usage and another 4 for compressor use.

In KP, the teams in Peshawar and Karak disconnected 4 illegal connections and imposed fines

amounting to Rs 0.276 million. The Mardan team disconnected 4 illegal connections, imposing Rs 0.4 million in fines.

In Gujranwala, 2 connections were terminated for illegal gas usage, with another for compressor use, alongside fines of Rs 0.27 million. The Bahawalpur team disconnected 1 illegal connection and 4 for compressor use.

EDF Board approves 20 proposals of worth Rs8.5b

ISLAMABAD (APP): In a significant move to bolster Pakistan's export sector, the Export Development Fund (EDF) has approved 20 proposals of worth Rs 8.5 billion for initiatives targeting textiles, agriculture, gems and jewelry, defense, and global branding.

This was approved during the 85th meeting of the Export Development Fund (EDF) Board under the chairmanship of Minister for Commerce Jam Kamal Khan, said a news release here on Sunday.

The Board approved 20 out of the 29 financial proposals by participating in Expo 2025 in Osaka Japan.

The minister highlighted the potential available in the reformed EDF for boosting the Pakistan exports by channelizing the money into various activities as per needs of the exporters and creating facilitative mode at the national level for value addition, research & development, increasing compliance as per global requirement, upgradation of the export infrastructure and marketing/branding of the country's potential in the international arena.

The Board was apprised that EDF has made drastic reforms during the recent times which include notification of EDF as autonomous body, amendment in the EDF Act for direct transfer of Export Development Surcharge to EDF Public Account, digitalization of revenue collection system with the help of State Bank of Pakistan (SBP) and Pakistan Single Window (PSW).

The board was informed that a detailed activity has been initiated with the help of FCDO Remit Project for development of Vision, Mission and Future Strategy of EDF while a Chartered Accountancy Firm has also been hired to restructure EDF as an organization for efficient, effective and transparent utilization of the fund and its impact assessment.

Chairman EDF Board directed to form various committees from amongst the EDF Board members to overlook research & development, training, technology enhancement, interna-

tional outreach for assisting the Board to adopt forward-looking proactive approach.

The EDF Board also directed to share details of proposed EDF-PSW MoU in the next meeting for proper analysis of the Board.

The intent of the MoU is to create two-way direct communication between EDF and exporters using PSW platform for need analysis, impact assessment, market intelligence and sectoral/regional/ geographic tagging of exporters for targeted information sharing.

The projects included various marketing interventions such as holding of international level exhibitions inside Pakistan such as Texpo 2025 by TDAP, IDEAS by DEPO, Gems & Jewelry Show by FPCCI, OIC-Conference and WEXNET targeting Women empowerment by Trade Development Authority of Pakistan (TDAP).

These exhibitions will not only support Pakistani exporters to exhibit their products but will be used as branding activities for Pakistan across the globe.

The project funding includes facilitation to international buyers through provision of best hospitality and arrangement of B2B meetings for best match-making.

The Board also approved projects linked to research & development and technology acquisition which included opening of UNIDO assisted International Technology Promotion Offices at TUS-DEC, Disease Diagnostic Research Centre for Mango at Sindh Agriculture University, Tando Jam, Design Centre at Pakistan Institute of Fashion Design, Lahore as well as establishment of Solar Tunnel Dryer for Exportable Dried Chillies at Umer Kot, Mirpur Khas and Badin.

The Board also approved funding for completion of first Expo Centre in Peshawar to provide a platform for hosting international level exhibitions for entrepreneurs of Khyber Pakhtun Khwa.

This was the first meet-

ing after the notification of the new Board which was recently constituted last month comprising of ex-officio members of commerce ministry, finance ministry, industries ministry, SBP and TDAP with representation of 15 members from Private Sector.

The new Board provides diverse regional and sectoral representation to the private sector and includes Presidents of Chambers of Federation of Pakistan, Karachi, Lahore, Sarhad, Quetta, Sialkot and Chairman of Associations from value-added textiles, agriculture, livestock, chemical and engineering sector.

The Board also includes sector leaders such as Bilal Tata from Tata Best Foods, Aamir AllahWala from Tecno Group, and Ms. Mehreen Obaid from Towellers Limited representing women led export enterprises.

Chairman EDF Board informed the members of the EDF Board that next meeting of the EDF Board will be re-convened as soon as possible to consider the remaining proposals.

Ikram elected as president of SCCI

SIALKOT (APP): Ikram-ul-Haq, Waseem Shahbaz Lodhi and Umer Khalid have been elected as President, Senior Vice President and Vice President of Sialkot Chamber of Commerce & Industry (SCCI), respectively for 2024-2026.

This was declared in a meeting held at SCCI Auditorium on Sunday which was also attended by leader of Ittehad Founder Group Riaz-ud-Din Sheikh, SCCI President Abdul Ghafoor Malik, Senior Vice President Wahub Jahangir and Vice President Aamer Majeed Sheikh and a large number of industrialists.

Newly-elect SCCI President Ikram-ul-Haq expressed his gratitude to all members of the chamber and said that he would work day and night for the development and prosperity of business community.

The newly elect office bearers also expressed their gratitude to the members for reposing trust and support.

They vowed to work with dedication and determination to promote and protect the best interests of local business community.

Pakistan's earns \$286m from IT services' export

ISLAMABAD (APP): Pakistan earned US \$286.395 million by exporting different Information Technology (IT) services in various countries during the first month of the current fiscal year 2024-25. This shows a growth of 33.84 per cent as compared with the US \$ 213.980 million earned through the provision of services during the corresponding period of the last fiscal year 2023-24, the Pakistan Bureau of Statistics (PBS) reported. During the month under review, the computer services grew by 44.14 per cent as it surged from US \$172.680 million last year to US \$248.899 million during July 2024.

Among the computer services, the exports of software consultancy services witnessed an increase of 47.38 per cent, from US \$58.425 million to US \$86.103 million this year while the export of hardware consultancy services, however, decreased by 30.68 per cent, from US \$0.440 million to US \$0.350 million. The export of repair and maintenance services surged by 1302.14 per cent from US \$0.035 million to US \$0.490.75 million whereas the export and imports of computer software services also increased by 1.08 per cent, from \$50.327 million to \$50.868 million. In addition, the exports of other computer services also witnessed a growth of 75.14 per cent from US \$63.453 million to US \$111.131 million.

Meanwhile, the export of information services during the month under review also increased by 47.50 per cent growing from US \$0.300 million to US \$0.442 million.

Among the information services, the exports of information-related services up by 12.34 per cent, from US \$0.114 million to US \$0.128 million whereas the exports of other information services rose by 69.05 per cent, from US \$0.186 million to US \$0.314 million.

F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: The Federation of Pakistan Chambers of Commerce & Industry's Businessmen Panel (BMP) has stressed the government to engage with the trade and industry stakeholders to formulate successful economic strategies to achieve high economic growth.

Addressing a delegation of various trade and industrial associations, FPCCI former president and BMP Chairman Mian Anjum Nisar pointed out that this collaboration is especially crucial in this economic unstable condition. It is imperative that the government involves the business community in shaping economic policies, he asserted.

He argued that aligning the interests of the government and businesses is essential

for creating an economic framework that is not only robust but also sustainable in the long run.

At the core of national progress lies a well-defined economic agenda, he stated, underscoring the importance of a cohesive plan to put the economy on a track of sustained growth. He stressed that economic stability is paramount for addressing various societal challenges and fostering an environment conducive to prosperity. Media reports called for a fully-fledged and sound plan with a highly competent team to handle local challenges forthwith, but unfortunately, they have no solid plans or directions.

Mian Anjum Nisar foresees this year full of challenges for businesses and industries in Pakistan due to political uncertainty on global and local fronts. The

government should come up with drastic measures to give confidence to local industrialists-cum-entrepreneurs and foreign investors through industry-friendly and investment-friendly policies.

A cornerstone of the proposed economic initiatives is the advocacy for a comprehensive 5-year export policy. He emphasised that such a policy would provide a roadmap for enhancing the country's global competitiveness. He outlined that a strategic export policy is vital for diversifying the economy, creating job opportunities, and ensuring a steady influx of foreign exchange. He said that BMP serves as a rallying cry for a united effort towards economic progress. The call for transparent economic strategies, international engagement, and a collaborative

approach between the government and the business community underscores the urgency of prioritising economic development for the collective well-being of the nation. The FPCCI former president said all political parties should provide their economic stability plans to avert further losses and delays, warning that numerous global issues are impacting world economies. He said the upcoming government should prioritise resolving the energy crisis by providing sufficient and affordable electricity and gas to industries. The import bill should be reduced by imposing bans on luxury products. He highlighted controlling inflation to ensure affordable living costs for the masses and containing the cost of production for businesses at a local level.

A call for global action to support innocent lives, achieving peace



Atal Khan Yousafzai

Terrorism highlights the basic human rights that everyone cares about. The desire for freedom, dignity and fairness isn't limited to just one religion or group but it's a universal need. When innocent lives face violence and persecutions, it reminds us of the common struggles for human rights faced by the people worldwide.

Terrorism is a very

strong word that not even grown adults can fully comprehend.

Nowadays, the first thing that comes to a person's mind upon hearing terrorism are Muslims. This issue is so severe that just in August, 2024, there was a large crowd of anti-Muslim protests all around the UK. Muslims are the most blamed community in the world when it comes to terrorism.

The ongoing violence and unjust oppression faced by the Palestinians profoundly impacts the Muslims worldwide and poses a barrier to global peace. The Israeli Palestinian conflict remains one of the most pressing issues of our time. The conflict has caused an immeasurable loss to Palestinians. Despite enduring decades

of conflict and hardship, Palestinians have demonstrated remarkable resilience and a commitment to peace. Their experience and mindset truly demonstrates how this community views peace and humanity. The hardships of the Palestinians have an effect on not just the Muslim community but people all around the world because of our shared humanity.

Let's also take the 9/11 attacks as an example. The 9/11 attacks led to the implementation of strong security protocols worldwide. While these measures aimed to prevent further attacks, they have also raised concerns about privacy and civil liberties. This attack led to the invasion of Afghanistan and Iraq. Al-Qaeda's alleged

role in the attacks led to a broad, often unfounded, association of Islam with terrorism. Muslims worldwide faced increased suspicion and discrimination. Media coverage frequently highlighted the extremist aspects of Islam without providing context or distinguishing between the actions of extremists and the beliefs of the broader Muslim population.

On March 11, 2004, a series of coordinated bomb attacks on Madrid's trains killed 191 people and injured around 2,000. The attacks were attributed to Islamist extremists linked to al-Qaeda. The attacks prompted a tightening of security across Europe and a rise in anti-Muslim sentiment. Muslims in Spain and across Europe faced increased inspection and

suspicion.

Terrorism first took shape in Pakistan when the group of Tehreek-e-Taliban emerged which was due to an influence of a mix of historical and political factors. The Tehreek-e-Taliban led many military operations in the tribal areas of Pakistan. The first major attack on a person that was brought to the limelight was in Pakistan that of Malala Yousafzai. Malala Yousafzai is an educational activist who speaks out publicly on behalf of the women of Pakistan. This potentially made her a target of the TTP. In October 2012, Malala was on her school bus when a masked gunman came up and shot her in the head. She woke up after 10 days in the hospital of Birmingham. Even after such a traumatizing

incident, Malala decided not to give up and spread awareness throughout her life. Only a couple of years later, the most horrifying event of terrorism took place in an educational institute of Pakistan.

The Pakistan Army Public School attack on December 16, 2014, was a horrific act of terrorism carried out by the Tehreek-e-Taliban Pakistan that resulted in the deaths of 149 people, including 132 children. The attack was especially shocking because it targeted a school, a place meant for learning and safety. This brutal act of violence highlighted the severe threat posed by extremist groups that aim to terrorize and control by harming innocent civilians, particularly children. The global reaction to the attack was one of

widespread outrage and sorrow. Countries around the world condemned the violence and called for stronger actions against terrorism. In response, there was a significant push to improve security at educational institutions and enhance international cooperation to combat extremism. The tragedy served as a stark reminder of the urgent need for countries to work together to protect vulnerable communities and prevent similar attacks. By fostering global solidarity and strengthening counterterrorism measures, the international community aimed to uphold peace and safeguard innocent lives from the threat of terrorism.

Preventing terrorism involves several key steps. First, improving security measures, like better airport

screenings and increased surveillance, helps detect and stop potential threats. Second, addressing the root causes of extremism, such as poverty, lack of education, and political grievances, can reduce the appeal of terrorist groups. Third, promoting community engagement and building strong relationships between different groups helps prevent radicalization. Finally, international cooperation and sharing information between countries are crucial for tracking and disrupting terrorist activities before they can happen. By combining these efforts, societies can work towards reducing the risk of terrorism and keeping people safe.

(The author is student of Brightside School Peshawar)



In brief

Pakistan to face Bhutan

ISLAMABAD (APP): Pakistan's national team intensified their training sessions ahead of their crucial match against hosts Bhutan in the SAFF U-17 Championship 2024. According to details, the high-stakes encounter is scheduled for Monday, with kick-off at 5pm at Thimphu, Bhutan. Pakistan is looking to build on their momentum after defeating Nepal 1-0 in their opening match. The SAFF U-17 Championship 2024 brings together top young talent from South Asia, with Pakistan aiming to make a strong impression in the competition.

Man City draw with Arsenal

LONDON (Agencies): Vivianne Miedema scored and made another goal on her return to Emirates Stadium as Manchester City drew with former club Arsenal in their Women's Super League opener. A brilliant long-range effort from England international Jess Park looked to have given City the victory before Arsenal substitute Beth Mead volleyed in a late equaliser. Netherlands international Miedema, who was allowed to leave Arsenal when her contract expired this summer, was fortunate her strike took a heavy deflection off defender Laia Codina and she did not celebrate her goal. Frida Maanum had earlier struck powerfully past City's new goalkeeper Ayaka Yamashita from inside the box as Arsenal got off to the perfect start in London. Jonas Eidevall's side dominated large spells and created the better chances - they should have been 2-0 up when striker Stina Blackstenius raced through one-on-one with debutant Yamashita, but the City goalkeeper did well to block her effort. Further chances came and went for Arsenal and they were almost punished by City before Mead reacted quickly when Rosa Kafaji's effort struck the post. City top-scorer Khadija Shaw, who missed their 5-0 thrashing of Paris FC this week due to a visa issue, returned and forced goalkeeper Manuela Zinsberger into a smart save in the second half, while Miedema also had efforts parried away late on. In the end, they had to settle for a draw after a pulsating encounter between two sides who hope to have their hands on the WSL trophy at the end of the season.

Haddad Maia roars back

SEOUL (AFP): Brazil's Beatriz Haddad Maia won the fourth title of her career with a furious fightback to beat Russian top seed Maria Kasatkina 1-6, 6-4, 6-1 in Sunday's Korea Open final. Number three seed Haddad Maia lost the opening set in just 26 minutes but turned the tide in the second, before going on to close out the match in a gutsy performance in Seoul. It was the world number 17's first title since June 2022. "I know that tennis changes everything very fast," said Haddad Maia. "I was competing better at the end of the second set and then my tennis appeared. I finished in the way that I wanted and I think I deserved this win." Kasatkina, ranked 13, has now lost four of her five finals this year. She said "losing in the final can feel worse than losing in the first round". "It's tough, especially being up in the final, but she definitely raised the level after the first set," said Kasatkina.

Ashwin shines as India thrash Bangladesh

CHENNAI (AFP): Ravichandran Ashwin claimed six wickets after a first-innings century with the bat to inspire India to a 280-run thrashing of Bangladesh in the first Test on Sunday. The visitors arrived in Chennai in confident mood following a historic victory in Pakistan but they were no match for an Indian team for whom Rishabh Pant celebrated a triumphant return from a serious car crash. Bangladesh have still never beaten India in Tests in 14 attempts, losing 12 and drawing two. Bangladesh were bowled out for 234 in the first session of an overcast day four while chasing a victory target of 515. Skipper Najmul Hossain Shanto top-scored with 82 after he and overnight partner Shakib Al Hasan resisted in a 48-run partnership, Bangladesh having resumed the day on 158-4. The hosts took an emphatic 1-0 lead in the two-match series as they look to extend their advantage at the top of the World Test Championship rankings. "It was a great result looking at what lies ahead," skipper Rohit Sharma said after India made an ominous start to a fresh Test season of 10 matches. Hometown hero Ashwin struck first to end a stubborn overnight stand by

getting Shakib caught at short-leg for 25. The spinner, who took three wickets on day three, then dismissed Mehidy Hasan Miraz for eight to bag his 37th five-wicket haul, equalling the late Shane Warne. Muttiah Muralitharan remains well out in front with 67. The feat added to Ashwin's heroics after his 113 guided the hosts to 376 in the first innings. "He's always there for us over the years," Rohit said of the 38-year-old warhorse, who was named man of the match. "I don't know if I speak here (that) it'll be enough to cover what he does for the team. He looks like he's never out of the game." Left-arm spinner Ravindra Jadeja removed Litton Das for one after the wicketkeeper-batsman edged the ball to Rohit at first slip. Jadeja also ended Najmul's valiant stand and took three wickets for the innings. 'Little bit emotional' Spin twins Ashwin and Jadeja had played a key batting role in the first innings when their 199-run seventh-wicket stand lifted India from a precarious 144-6 to a challenging total on the first day. India declared their second innings at 287-4 on day three after centuries from Shubman Gill, who hit an unbeaten 119, and the

returning Pant, who made 109, flattened the opposition. Gill and the left-handed Pant, who was playing his first Test since a serious car crash in December 2022, put on 167 runs for the fourth wicket. "I just enjoyed batting and got a little bit emotional," Pant said of his celebration after his sixth Test ton. "But at the end of the day, being in the field gives me more pleasure than anything else." The Test was Virat Kohli's first since the birth of his second child made him miss India's 4-1 victory over England at home this year. Kohli scored just six and 17. The home bowlers led by Jasprit Bumrah handed India an early advantage after they bundled out Bangladesh for 149 in their first innings. Bangladesh have to work on their first innings batting ahead of the second Test, said skipper Najmul. "Top of the order we have to be careful and put some runs, that is one learning from this match. Going forward all the batters think that they can come back." Bangladesh pace bowler Hasan Mahmud claimed five wickets in the first innings and reduced India to 34-3 in the first hour of play. The two teams now head to the northern Indian city of Kanpur for the second Test starting on Friday.



CHENNAI: India gather to celebrate victory in the first Test.

Dubois demolishes Joshua to retain IBF belt

LONDON (Reuters) : Britain's Daniel Dubois destroyed Anthony Joshua's dream of becoming a three times heavyweight world champion with a fifth-round knockout to retain his IBF belt at a packed Wembley Stadium on Saturday. Dubois dropped his compatriot to the canvas in the opening round with a stinging right, the referee delivering a standing eight count, and the 27-year-old proceeded to tear up the pre-flight predictions as swiftly as he ripped into his opponent. Joshua, 34, took another hammering in round two but managed to ride out the storm before round three came crashing down around him again. With Dubois landing more fizzing right-handers, Joshua was literally on the ropes before being saved by the bell. He could barely stand at the end of the fourth, after going down again with two minutes remaining, and then it was all over in the fifth with the painstaking rebuilding of his career suddenly in ruins. After landing a few promising blows, any signs of a fightback faded with a right to the chin that sent Joshua down, the former

IBF, WBA and IBO champion this time unable to get back on his feet. "I've only got a few words to say: Are you not entertained?," declared Dubois after the biggest win, and first at Wembley, of a 24-fight career with two defeats. "I'm a gladiator, I'm a warrior to the bitter end. I want to get to the top level of this game and reach my full potential. "I've been on a roller-coaster ride. This is my time, this is my redemption story, and I'm not going to stop until I reach my full potential." RECORD CROWD Organisers said a British post-World War Two record of 96,000 spectators attended the Saudi-funded fight at London's Wembley Stadium. Among them were Oasis frontman Liam Gallagher, singing three songs on his 52nd birthday ahead of a reunion next year, and Ukraine's WBC, WBA and WBO champion Oleksandr Usyk. Usyk has beaten both Joshua and Dubois already and will fight Britain's Tyson Fury, also present, in a rematch in Saudi Arabia in December. Joshua might have hoped to have a crack at the winner of that fight

but instead faces an uncertain future with Dubois sending a seismic ripple through the familiar heavyweight landscape. Dubois said he hoped for another shot at Usyk, who beat him in nine rounds in Wroclaw, Poland, last year. Usyk previously held the IBF belt but vacated it for the Fury rematch, with Dubois the interim holder and upgraded to world champion in June. "Credit to him and his team. We rolled the dice of success, but we came up short," said Joshua after his 13th world heavyweight title fight left him with a record of four defeats from 32 bouts. He had first won the IBF belt in 2016 from Charles Martin at London's O2 Arena. Joshua then lost it to Andy Ruiz in 2019 but won it back later that year. Usyk then took it from him in 2021. "We keep rolling the dice. I had a sharp opponent, a fast opponent and a lot of mistakes from my end, but that's the game." Joshua's promoter Eddie Hearn said he expected to exercise a rematch clause. "It's a dangerous fight because he's growing in confidence all the time but he'll believe he can beat him," he said.



Daniel Dubois celebrated with the belt after winning his first world-title fight.

Asjad, Awais qualified for knockout round of World 6 Red Snooker

ISLAMABAD (APP): Pakistan's Asjad Iqbal has qualified for pre quarters while Awais Muneer has moved in the last 20 Round off the IBSF World 6 Red Snooker Championship 2024 at Ulaanbaatar, Mongolia. According to details, on Day 2nd matches, Asjad beat Pandurangaiah E (India) 4-1 (41-32, 35-36, 75-08, 50(50)-09, 35-22) while Awais outplayed Jia Jun Ong (Singapore) 4-1 (63-0, 65-0, 0-56, 36-02, 35-26). Asjad beat Aljilali Ali (Iraq) 4-3 (39-23, 30-34, 66-0, 0-41, 1-54, 39-29, 63(58)-0) while Shachar Ruberg (Israel) beat Awais 4-3 (16-43(43), 53-12, 43(43)-13, 8-64(64), 33-21, 12-40, 40-10).

Shahzaib Rind receives heroic welcome



ISLAMABAD (APP): Shahzaib Rind, the newly crowned World Karate Combat Light Heavyweight Champion was accorded a hero's welcome upon his return to Pakistan from Singapore on late Saturday. Secretary Ministry of Inter-Provincial Coordination Nadeem Irshad Kayani, Additional Secretary Zahoor Ahmed, Deputy Director General Pakistan Sports Board (PSB) Shahid Islam, officials of Prime Minister's Youth Programme, former Deputy Mayor Islamabad Zeeshan Ali Naqvi and a large crowd of enthusiastic fans greeted him at Islamabad International Airport with warm applause and cheers. Shahzaib won Karate Combat KC-49 Championship, overpowering Brazilian fighter Luiz Victor Rocha in Singapore in an intense bout on Wednesday. He remained unbeaten throughout the tournament, making history as the first Pakistani to win a major world championship in the martial arts. Shahzaib has previously won the Combat League in the United States. He is also a six-time national champion. His victory has sparked national pride, with fans waving flags and chanting slogans in celebration of his remarkable achievement. The Ministry of IPC and PSB officials lauded Shahzaib's hard work, discipline and dedication, crediting him for bringing pride to the nation. Speaking to the media, Shahzaib expressed his gratitude to his supporters, the PSB and his training team for helping him achieve this milestone. "This victory is not just mine but belongs to the whole nation," he said, visibly moved by the outpouring of support. He said right from the outset he was sure to emerge victorious. "This is just a beginning. I'm determined to continue winning the titles and bring laurels for my country," he added.



FAISALABAD: Umar Amin scored a steady fifty before speeding up, Dolphins vs Lions, Champions One-Day Cup.

Norris takes dominant Singapore win from Verstappen

SINGAPORE (Agencies): McLaren's Lando Norris dominated the Singapore Grand Prix to take a further chunk out of Max Verstappen's advantage in the championship. Verstappen, who finished a distant second in his Red Bull, is now 52 points ahead of the Briton with a maximum of 180 available over the remaining six races. But Norris was deprived of an extra point by Daniel Ricciardo, after Red Bull's junior team RB fitted soft tyres with a lap to go so the Australian could take the fastest lap from the Briton on the final tour. Despite Norris' imperious win, the average points gain by which he needs to eat into Verstappen's lead still went up slightly to 8.7 a race. Norris' McLaren teammate Oscar Piastri finished third from fifth on the grid, passing both Mercedes drivers on track after a later pit stop. Ferrari's Charles Leclerc looked like he might do the same as he fought back from his ninth place on the grid, but after passing Lewis Hamilton, George Russell held off the Ferrari when it caught him in the closing laps to take fourth, from Leclerc and Hamilton. Ferrari's Carlos Sainz was seventh, while Aston Martin's Fernando Alonso managed to pass Haas driver Nico Hulkenberg during the pit-stop period to lead 'Division Two', from the German and Red Bull's Sergio Perez. Norris in total control Norris produced the most commanding victory of the season. He converted pole position into a lead at the end of the first lap for the first time in five attempts this season, and after measuring his pace in the first laps to ensure he did not overwork his tyres, reeled off a string of fastest laps to bolt into the distance. He was told by his engineer Will Joseph that McLaren ideally wanted him to have at least a five-second lead over Red



Verstappen to protect him during a pit-stop period. Norris made that gap easily and then continued to pull away, building a lead of 25 seconds before Verstappen made his first pit stop on lap 29, the McLaren following him in a lap later. Despite a couple of scary moments when he brushed the wall first at Turn 14 and then at Turn Eight, he was in total control as he completed his third career victory. Verstappen's race was equally lonely, not able to do anything about Norris, but well clear of everyone else. The Dutchman edged away from the pursuing Mercedes of Lewis Hamilton and George Russell in the opening laps and consolidated his second place. Fightbacks from Piastri and Leclerc The action was all behind the two leaders, as Piastri from fifth on the grid and Leclerc from ninth sought to make up ground. Both did so by running long to their pit stops. Piastri, who was fifth behind Hamilton and Russell in the opening laps, stopped after them on lap 38 and came back to pass both around the outside of Turn Seven. Hamilton on lap 40 and Russell five laps later. His podium finish extended McLaren's lead over Red

Bull in the constructors' championship to 42 points. Hamilton then suffered the same fate at the hands of Leclerc, who stopped on lap 36 and passed him on lap 49. Hamilton had started on the soft tyre, hoping he might be able to jump Verstappen at the start. But the Dutchman held him off as Hamilton attacked at the first corner, and the Red Bull soon began to pull away. Hamilton made an early stop to change his soft tyres for hards on lap 17, and feared he might not make it to the end of the race. He did, but his aged tyres meant he could do nothing to hold back Piastri and Leclerc. Russell, starting on the medium tyres like all the other drivers in the top 10 bar Hamilton, ran to lap 27 before stopping. His tyres were nine laps older than Leclerc's when the Ferrari caught him, but the better traction of the Mercedes saved him, and Leclerc could not get close enough to pass. Ricciardo's fastest lap not only helped out Verstappen in the championship, but may have been a last hurrah for the popular eight-time winner. There is speculation that Ricciardo might be dropped in favour of Red Bull reserve driver Liam Lawson before the next race in Austin, Texas, on 18-20 October.

Pakistan has a bright future in Special Olympics: Rebecca

ISLAMABAD (APP): Senior Director of Early Childhood and Preventive Health of Special Olympics International Rebecca Ralston has lauded the Special Olympics Pakistan (SOP) saying Pakistan has a bright future in games. Special Olympics Pakistan is laudable and we appreciate the steps taken by them to train and nurture the abilities of special athletes, she expressed these views at a reception held by the Chairperson of Special Olympics Pakistan Ronak Lakhani to honour Ms Rebecca, Special Olympics Asia Pacific Region Senior Manager Health Pearl Ang and Special Olympics Asia Pacific Region Manager Youth Pam Rolink, said a press release. SOP Board Member Asma Hasan, Advisor Yasmin Haider, Media Advisor of Pakistan Olympic Association Asif Azeem, Vice President of Softball Federation of

Pakistan Tehmina Asif, National Director of SOP Taha Tahir, National Sports Director Farkhunda Jabeen and Consultant Communication Saif Azhar, special children and their parents were also present on the occasion. Rebecca Ralston said we visited various stadiums, hospitals and schools in Lahore and Karachi and carefully reviewed the facilities provided to the special children. We are happy to see that special children are showing keen interest in various sports. I see a bright future for special games in Pakistan. Special Olympics Pakistan under the leadership of Ronak Lakhani is playing its full role in giving special children their rightful place in society, she said. I felt very happy to come to Pakistan and I will visit here again very soon. Special Olympic Asia Pacific Region Senior Manager Health Pearl said during our visit, we

tried to share our experience with the National Youth Leaders and Coaches of Pakistan whom we met and found with full of talent and also enjoyed the traditional cuisine of Lahore and Karachi. We had the opportunity to visit the shopping centres here and do some shopping too. I would consider it an honour to come back to Pakistan. Special Olympics Asia Pacific Region Manager Youth Initiatives Pam Rolink said the Pakistani nation is very hospitable and I will never forget the love received here. Special Olympics Pakistan Chairperson Ronak Lakhani thanked the officials of the World and Asian Organization of Special Olympics for coming to Pakistan for the first time and said it is an honour for us to host them. The experience they have passed on to our youth leaders and coaches will prove to be a valuable asset for our athletes in the future, she said.



In brief

CTO urges to use helmet

RAWALPINDI (APP): Chief Traffic Officer (CTO) Fatima Beenish urged motorcyclists to use helmet for their own safety. The motorcyclists must wear helmet to avoid road fatal accidents, said a news release issued here. CTO said that traffic wardens had been directed to take strict action in accordance with the law against the violators. She said wearing a helmet could save a driver's life in case of any accident. "Sometimes it's the only difference between life and death," she added. The CTO said all traffic issues could be resolved by observing traffic rules which are for the safety and protection of the road users. On the other hand, the City Traffic Police have issued hundreds of challan tickets and also imposed fine to the motorcyclists not wearing helmet. The CTP also impounded a number of motorbikes in different police stations due to violation.

196,600 cusecs water released

ISLAMABAD (APP): Indus River System Authority (IRSA) on Sunday released 196,600 cusecs water from various rim stations with inflow of 138,300 cusecs. According to the data released by IRSA, water level in River Indus at Tarbela Dam was 1538.86 feet and was 140.86 feet higher than its dead level of 1,398 feet. Water inflow and outflow in the dam was recorded as 81,400 cusecs and 110,000 cusecs respectively. The water level in River Jhelum at Mangla Dam was 1222.85 feet, which was 174.85 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 91,100, 110,100, 89,000 and 37,800 cusecs respectively. Similarly, from River Kabul, a total of 17,900 cusecs of water released at Nowshera and 4,200 cusecs released from River Chenab at Marala.

Five gamblers apprehended

RAWALPINDI (APP): Police have arrested five gamblers and seized Rs 28,150, a motorcycle, 04 mobile phones from their possession during crackdown here on Sunday, informed police spokesman. Airport police during course of action held those gamblers were identified as Ijaz, Raheel, Ali, Asif and Faiz. Police have registered separate cases against all of them and further investigation was in progress. SP Potohar, Nasir Nawaz, praised the efforts of Airport police for their swift action. He emphasized that gambling is the root of other social crimes, and those involved will not escape the law.

Man killed real brother brutally

RAWALPINDI (APP): Police have arrested accused who had killed his brother two days ago. According to police spokesman, Nadir Khan attacked his brother namely Javed and killed him brutally with sickle. After committing crime, the accused fled away from scene. The case was registered on the complaint of his brother. After an intensive manhunt, which included the use of human intelligence, the police successfully apprehended the suspect. SP Potohar, Nasir Nawaz, confirmed that the arrest was made based on solid evidence. He also assured that the suspect will

Ansari appointed new CEO of IRNA

ISLAMABAD (APP): Seasoned diplomat Hossein Jaber Ansari has been appointed as the new CEO of the Islamic Republic News Agency (IRNA).

According to IRNA, Jaber Ansari has worked in various roles in the Iranian Ministry of Foreign Affairs in the past three decades, including as Deputy Minister for Arab and African Affairs.

He has authored and translated several books on foreign affairs issues, including the latest publication entitled "Spark on One's Chest" which is a translation of the Palestinian writer Munir Shafiq's Arabic book "From a Spark to Another Spark". The new IRNA CEO



said during a speech at his inauguration ceremony on Sunday that he would closely follow the national unity lines set by the administration of President Masoud Pezeshkian.

Jaber also hailed IRNA's 90-year history as a main source of news in Iran and the region. Managing Director Associated Press

of Pakistan (APP) Muhammad Asim Kichi has felicitated Hossein Jaber Ansari on his appointment as new CEO of IRNA.

In his felicitation message, MD APP said that both APP and IRNA had mutual news exchange agreement and exchanging important news on daily basis for benefits of the people and governments of the two brotherly countries.

MD APP called for further cooperation between IRNA and APP, adding that the top management of the two news organizations must visit each other's organization to upgrade the bilateral news exchange program on modern lines.

NUST, PEF sign MoU to support needy students

ISLAMABAD (APP): National University of Science and Technology (NUST) and the Professional Education Foundation (PEF) have signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) to support financially challenged students enrolled at the university.

The MoU was signed in a ceremony attended the officials of NUST and PEF to collaborate for this joint initiative. Speaking on the occasion, Rector NUST,

Engr Javed Mehmood Bukhari commended the collaborative efforts and emphasized, "The support of philanthropists is crucial for NUST's mission to become a need-blind institution, ensuring that no student is forced to leave their education due to financial constraints."

Chairman of PEF, Hafiz Ul Haq announced an expansion of support, including an increase in the number of scholarships, streamlined

processes, and broader eligibility criteria to benefit a larger number of students.

The agreement was formally signed by Chairman PEF, Hafiz Ul Haq and Pro-Rector for Research, Innovation, and Commercialization, Dr Rizwan Riaz. Director of Advancement and Head of Global Engagements, Arooba Gillani and Resource Mobilization Officer, Saadia Sadat were also present at the ceremony.

3 police officers dismissed for harassing woman

ISLAMABAD (APP): Superintendent of Police (SP) Dolphin and Patrolling of Islamabad Capital Territory (ICT) Police, Kazim Naqvi, has dismissed three officers from Bhara Kahu police station after they were found guilty of harassing a woman from Chitral and demanding a bribe.

According to police reports, the three officers—Constables Asfand Ayaz, Nayyab, and Samiullah stopped a couple traveling by car on Shahdara Road.

These police officers asked the couple to show a marriage certificate. When the couple was unable to produce their marriage certificate, the officers allegedly demanded a bribe from them. One

officer later took the woman into the police vehicle, separating her from her husband. Inside the van, a police officer was accused of touching her inappropriately and forcibly taking her mobile phone number.

Afterwards, he continued to contact her, insisting on a meeting and kept threatening of serious consequences. The incident occurred on September 17, 2024. The female victim, "M," reported the incident to Islamabad's Deputy Inspector General (DIG) Operations Syed Ali Raza, through a written complaint. She informed how one officer threatened her with dire consequences should she pursue legal action.

The officers allegedly

continued harassment through phone calls and threatened her with physical harm. In response to the complaint, senior police officials initiated an inquiry, during which the three officers were implicated in the harassment and bribery.

The victim provided evidence, including call recordings, corroborating her claims. The investigation confirmed that the officers violated both legal and ethical standards.

Meanwhile, DIG Ali Raza assured that the Islamabad police are committed to upholding justice and will not tolerate any misconduct within the force.

He stated that strict legal action would be taken against those found guilty.

Railways introduces affordable AC travel

ISLAMABAD (APP): Pakistan Railways' CEO Aamir Ali Baloch Sunday announced exciting plans to enhance the travel experience for passengers where the government is taking significant steps to make Pakistan Railways a more attractive option for travelers by decreasing fares and introducing state-of-the-art air-conditioned trains for affordability to commuters.

Talking to PTV news channel, the CEO has unveiled an ambitious plan to transform Pakistan Railways into a world-class transportation system, reviving Pakistan's rail network. He said Pakistan Railways has announced a

10% reduction in fares for all passenger trains, including air-conditioned and economy classes.

The fare cut will be effective from 23 September and applies to both express and mail trains, he mentioned.

Pakistan Railways is undergoing significant changes to streamline operations, boost efficiency, and optimize resource management, he said, adding that this transformation is part of a larger strategy to modernize the railway system, making it more reliable and comfortable for passengers.

"Pakistan Railways under the vision of Prime

Minister Shahbaz Sharif is committed to embracing cutting-edge technology to provide seamless travel experiences", he mentioned.

Our modernization efforts will make rail travel faster, safer, and more enjoyable for passengers, he assured. CEO Aamir Ali Baloch emphasized that reducing fares is a historic step for the government in making rail travel more inclusive and accessible to the general public.

"By lowering fares, we aim to provide relief to commuters, especially those from lower-income backgrounds and encourage more people to choose rail travel," he stated.



ISLAMABAD: CDA staffer cutting the tree branch at roadside in Federal Capital.

MDCAT test being held amid strict security

ISLAMABAD (APP): Islamabad Capital Territory (ICT) Police, under the special direction of Inspector General (IG) Police Syed Ali Nasir Rizvi, have implemented tight security arrangements at Medical and Dental College Admission Test (MDCAT) centers across the district.

According to a police spokesperson, the MDCAT is currently being held across Pakistan under the supervision of the Pakistan Medical and Dental Council (PMDC). Students are prohibited from carrying mobile phones, wallets, or any electronic devices during the exam, as per a notification issued by the department. He said mobile phone signals will also be blocked, with jammers installed at the test centers to ensure security.

Additionally, mobile and internet services within a 500-meter radius of the exam centers have been suspended from 9:30 AM to 1:30 PM to facilitate the smooth conduct of the examination, he added.

He said robust security measures are in place at examination centers throughout the ICT Police District. "The police urge the public to refrain from participating in any illegal activities during this period," he added.

100 ICT rural schools being solarized

ISLAMABAD (APP): Ministry of Federal Education and Professional Training has commenced work on solarizing 100 rural ICT schools, providing a reliable and sustainable power backup for quality education.

According to the Education Ministry, this initiative ensures uninterrupted learning experiences and supports modern education ecosystems.

Sharing the key highlights, the ministry said that 100 rural ICT schools to be solar-powered. Reliable renewable energy for schools and labs will be provided. It is stated that project cost recovery is expected within 20 months.

The ministry is committed to enhancing educational outcomes through technology integration, it added. This sustainable energy solution reduces carbon footprint, minimizes power outages, fosters digital literacy, and supports Pakistan's vision for a technologically advanced education system.

"By harnessing solar energy, we're empowering future generations with access to quality education, bridging the digital divide, and contributing to a greener tomorrow" it added.

Pullain vows to end Balochistan backwardness

ISLAMABAD (APP): Chairman of the National Assembly Standing Committee on Information and Broadcasting Pullain Baloch Sunday reiterated the government's resolve to uplift women and propel development in Balochistan, narrowing the developmental divide with other provinces.

In an exclusive talk with PTV news channel, Chairman has made a commitment to tackle Balochistan's longstanding development challenges and promote women's empowerment in the region, adding, it will not be neglected under any circumstances. He expressed deep regret over the historical

neglect of Balochistan, emphasizing the urgent need to prioritize development programs and improve the province's condition.

Chairman has also emphasized the importance of empowering women in Balochistan to utilize their capabilities for the development of the province and the country.

Baloch has reaffirmed the importance of gender equality in Balochistan, emphasizing that women in the province are not lagging and are equally capable as their male counterparts.

He highlighted the significant progress made in women's education, underscoring that women are actively pursuing educa-

tional opportunities and excelling in various fields.

Responding to a query about standing committee scheduled meetings and progress, Chairman Pullain Baloch has announced plans to hold meetings in all four provinces to prioritize and resolve issues faced by employees in the information and broadcasting sector.

Pullain Baloch has committed to enhance transparency and accountability within the information and broadcasting sector, adding, this move aims to promote good governance and empower organizations such as APP, Radio Pakistan and PTV with cutting-edge technologies to enhance their services.

Uzma Kardar terms PTI's rally a failure

ISLAMABAD (APP): A member of the Provincial Assembly of Punjab and a leader of the Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) Uzma Kardar Sunday slammed Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf's (PTI) recent Lahore rally, calling it a "dismal failure" that reflects the party's dwindling popularity.

Talking to a private news channel, she criticized Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) for its "failing politics" after the party's recent Lahore rally, adding, the empty chairs and lackluster attendance

spoke volumes about PTI's waning influence. She emphasized that PTI's failure to present a clear agenda or concrete plans for Lahore's development has eroded public trust. "The people of Lahore deserve better than empty promises and divisive rhetoric," she added.

Uzma Kardar stated that PTI leadership consistently misusing youth potential, fostering anarchy and chaos in the country through these public gatherings, however, she believes that people are now aware of their intentions.

She praised Chief Minister Punjab Maryam Nawaz for her unwavering dedication to the city's welfare and development.

According to Kardar, Maryam Nawaz has demonstrated remarkable leadership, working tirelessly to improve the lives of Punjab's citizens.

She also criticized Ali Amin Gandapur for the low turnout at a gathering in Lahore. Kardar pointed out that the poor attendance was a clear indication of the public's growing disillusionment with Gandapur's politics.

Women and children facing exploitation

ISLAMABAD (APP): At least 20 thousand workers work at brickkilns and most of them are women and children facing exploitation which stirs the need for proper implementation of existing laws towards the most neglected sector, said Human Rights activist Ayub Malik here on Sunday.

Talking to APP, In the world's poorest countries, slightly more than 1 in 5 children are engaged in child labour and 87,000 children of brickkilns workers had been enrolled in different government-sponsored schools for free education, while these workers were largely deprived of their legal rights and entitlements and forced to work in unhealthy and unsafe environments.

The working condi-

tions, he added their are no better than the workers' own living conditions. A majority of the workers at the brick kilns were working due to poverty while most of them have been sent by their families, he added.

He said that there should be a regulatory body to resolve the issues of these workers whereas a limited number of these workers had written contracts and the rest had a verbal understanding of their work, he added.

Remuneration is fixed based on the number of bricks made or carried. On average, workers have to work for 11-13 hours so that they file petitions on the rights of brick kiln workers in this regard," he lamented. He said that due to improper taxing nature, the financial advances and loans

taken by the workers bind them to work which should be ended, he demanded.

The primary analysis focuses on identifying the prevailing child labour issue at the district level. The above graph shows the number of children below the age of fourteen working at brick kilns for each district, along with their educational standing. According to this, we can see that the 'Faisalabad' district has the highest number of children employed below the age of 14. Vehari and Multan also have similar high child labour rates.

Lastly, Narowal's district has the lowest number of children employed in this age bracket, which constitutes only 0.41% of the total children employed, he added.

Parliamentary Secretary briefed on promotional activities at PAC

RAWALPINDI (APP): Provincial Parliamentary Secretary for Information and Culture, Shazia Rizwan on Sunday received a briefing on the ongoing cultural activities in the Punjab Council of the Arts, Rawalpindi, and has directed to further increase organizing events and make PAC more active.

Shazia said that the promotion of culture plays an important role in establishing an atmosphere of love and brotherhood in the country, which is the duty of the government as well as the influential sections of the society. According to the details, the parliamentary secretary chaired a meeting at PAC in which she was briefed on the ongoing promotional

activities, cultural events and the overall progress of the arts council.

Shazia Rizwan, while expressing her satisfaction over the performance shown by the council in highlighting the importance of cultural activities, underlined the need to encourage and introduce local talent by making maximum use of the Arts Council platform. She informed that on the instructions of CM Maryam Nawaz, she visited the arts councils across Punjab and submitted a report so that the inadequate facilities in the arts councils could be redressed.

She directed the officers of PAC to approach local cultural departments, colleges and universities for drawing

facilities and organize programs regularly with their collaboration.

She visited the various parts of the Arts Council and directed that the 500-person auditorium be air-conditioned so that cultural activities can continue throughout the year. Earlier, Director PAC, Sajjad Hussain briefed the chair that cultural, literary, performing art and fine arts activities were organized in the number of sectors in the Arts Council every year. "Punjab float of Joint Services Parade, annual folk fair, Drama festival, folk festival, Gandhara festival, Jashn-e-Azadi float and book launch activities are among the important events which were regularly being organized at PAC", he added.

Coal price decreased

KABUL (BNA): Officials from the Northern Coal Governmental Company have announced a substantial reduction in coal prices. Mullah Izzatullah Hamas, the factory's Manager, revealed that the price per ton of coal from the Karkar, Doodkash, Shorabak, and Ahindara mines has been decreased from 4,000 Afghanis to 3,500 Afghanis. This initiative is designed to alleviate the financial burden on households struggling with economic hardships.

The Frontier Post

Rabi ul Awal 18 1446 — Monday, September 23, 2024

Netherlands help Afghanistan

KABUL (Khaama Press): The UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs announced the Netherlands' 16.1 million Contribution to the Afghanistan Humanitarian Fund. OCHA expressed gratitude via social media platform X for the new contributions from the Netherlands to the Afghanistan Humanitarian Fund. "OCHA thanks the Netherlands for a new contribution of EUR 15 million to the Afghanistan Humanitarian Fund for 2024," the statement said.

Herat University opens first teaching hospital

HERAT (TOLOnews): The Ministry of Higher Education said that for the first time, the teaching hospital of the Herat University Medical Faculty has been activated.

This 50-bed hospital is equipped with new medical facilities, and medical students will receive practical training here.

Mohammad Hamed Hasib, the Deputy Minister of Finance and Administration of the Ministry of Higher Education, said about this hospital: "One aspect is practical work, and the other is theoretical lessons. Lessons at the university are good, but there is a dire need for practical work, especially in the field of medicine."

Local officials in Herat have stated that various

healthcare services will be provided to the public in this hospital.

According to officials, nearly 40 specialist doctors are expected to be recruited at this hospital.

Noor Ahmad Islamjar, the governor of Herat, told TOLOnews: "Science, technology, and knowledge are sacred and blessed things that all nations, schools, and interpretations agree on their purity, honor, and sanctity."

Shafiq Ahmad Joya, the head of the Medical Faculty of Herat University, said: "About fifty to seventy percent of our lessons are practical, so the absence of a teaching hospital over the past 33 years since the establishment of the medical faculty was felt as a deficiency. A lot of effort

was made to have a teaching hospital, and today we have one, which can improve the educational quality of the students."

Earlier, medical students were introduced to private hospitals for practical training, but now with the activation of the teaching hospital, medical students have all the necessary facilities to learn specialized medical fields.

"We are very happy that we now have a hospital at our disposal. This was a long-standing wish of the students of the Herat University Medical Faculty," said Mohammad Reza Zahin, a student.

According to officials from Herat University, the Medical Faculty has more than 1,300 students, including 550 females.

Governor reports progress in projects

KABUL (BNA): Mawlawi Ghulam Mohammad Mohammadi, Deputy Governor of Badghis, delivered an in-depth report on the province's progress and key initiatives during the Government Accountability to the Nation press conference.

Mullah Ahmad Jan Hanzala, the spokesman for Badghis, informed Bakhtar News Agency that the Deputy Governor highlighted significant achievements in social services, revealing that over the past three years, the Provincial Directorate of Labor and Social Affairs has rescued nearly 3,000 street children engaged in hazardous labor. These children were enrolled in free vocational training programs aimed at equipping them with skills for better economic prospects.

Additionally, the Deputy Governor emphasized substantial improvements in healthcare, stating that the province has established several new health clinics, with 80 facilities, including medical shelters, currently operational in both the provincial center and its districts. These facilities are actively providing essential healthcare services to the people of Badghis.

On the infrastructure front, the Municipality of Qala-e-Naw has outlined 16 public welfare projects for the current year. To date, seven projects have been completed, six are in progress, and three new projects are expected to commence shortly.

The Deputy Governor also reaffirmed the commitment to advancing the major Laman-Qaisar Ring Road project, stating that efforts will continue until its completion. In conclusion, he provided an update on the significant Qaderabad Dam project in Qadis district, noting that 36% of the construction work has been completed, with the remaining work being carried out with urgency to ensure timely completion.

Afghan envoy meets with UN's representative



KABUL (Ariana News): The Afghan Embassy in Turkmenistan says its Chargé d'Affaires Fazl Mohammad Saber met with the UN Political Affairs Officer for Central Asia, Andriy Larin, for talks on Afghanistan.

Larin stated in the meeting that the main goals of the UN Regional Center, which is headquartered in Ashgabat, Turkmenistan, is to help and support the countries in the region, including Afghanistan.

The embassy said Larin

praised the Islamic Emirate for its all-round development, the implementation of major and infrastructure projects, Afghanistan's cooperation with neighboring countries and the region, the prevention of drug cultivation and administrative

corruption, and the creation of jobs for the people.

Saber also provided information about the IEA's achievements over the past three years, and reiterated the Islamic Emirate's focus on an economy-oriented policy.

UN General Assembly: Shaheen blasts UN for not inviting Afghanistan



KABUL (Ariana News): Suhail Shaheen has criticized the United Nations for not having invited the Islamic Emirate to attend the 79th UN General Assembly.

In a post on X, Shaheen said: "The Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan (IEA) has both support of the people of Afghanistan and writ all over the country but still no representative or delegation from IEA is invited to participate in the current

UNGA meeting."

Shaheen is the Islamic Emirate's designated representative to the UN but has not been allowed to claim Afghanistan's seat.

In his post, Shaheen said: "Such posture doesn't solve any issue but rather deepens the gap and is against the policy of engagement with IEA which the UN claims to be following."

Shaheen's post comes as world leaders have started gathering in New York for

the start of this week's annual meeting.

However, this year's summit is expected to how to better tackle the swirl of conflicts and crises across a fragmented world as well as plan on how to tackle the future.

UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres issued the challenge a year ago after sounding a global alarm about the survival of humanity and the planet: Come to a "Summit of the Future" and make a new commitment to multilateralism – the foundation of the United Nations and many other global bodies – and start fixing the aging global architecture to meet the rapidly changing world.

The UN chief told reporters last week that the summit "was born out of a cold, hard fact: international challenges are moving faster than our ability to solve them."

Wakhan National Park building inaugurated

B A D A K H S H A N (TOLOnews): The construction of the gate and administrative building of Wakhan National Park, completed at a cost of two million Afghanis, was inaugurated by local officials.

The Badakhshan Directorate of Agriculture, Irrigation, and Livestock stated that this building was constructed to provide facilities for tourists, preserve wildlife, and promote tourism attractions.

Amanullah Hasan, the head of the Badakhshan Directorate of Agriculture, Irrigation, and Livestock, said, "The gate and administrative building of Wakhan National Park were built with the developmental budget of the Ministry of Agriculture at a cost of two million Afghanis, and today we are witnessing its inauguration."

Faiz Rahman Ebrahimi, the head of Badakhshan Environmental Protection, said, "No hunting permits will be issued. We request the district chief, the commander, and the local residents to identify those who engage in hunting."

Zabihullah Amiri, the head of Badakhshan's Information and Culture Directorate, stated, "Wakhan is the crown jewel of Badakhshan Province, and this is a great asset for all the people of Afghanistan; it must be preserved."

However, the residents of Badakhshan are urging the interim government officials to pay more attention to attracting domestic and foreign tourists to this national park.

Saifullah, a resident of Badakhshan, said, "Our request from the Islamic Emirate is to facilitate opportunities for domestic and foreign tourists to visit this park." Sadruddin, another resident of Badakhshan, said, "Every tourist who comes to Badakhshan contributes to the growth of the economy."

UNAMA stresses long-term support for Afghan citizens

KABUL (TOLOnews): The United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA) has emphasized long-term support for Afghan citizens.

Indrika Ratwatte, the UNAMA deputy special representative for Afghanistan, during a visit to UN projects in Khost and Paktia provinces, stated that various challenges, including the return of Afghan refugees from Pakistan and Iran, negative climate impacts, and widespread poverty, have made Afghanistan more vulnerable.

Ratwatte mentioned that not only should humanitarian needs be addressed for Afghan citizens, but sustainable solutions must also

be developed. According to Ratwatte, sustainable solutions in remote areas empower communities to reflect their needs.

Indrika Ratwatte, the deputy head of UNAMA, stated: "We have allocated 40 million dollars, particularly to remote and underserved areas, through the UN special fund. The importance of sustainable solutions in these areas is that they empower communities and reflect their needs. This approach engages with communities to identify their needs, determine solutions to address those needs, and, if necessary, involve communities and authorities in the implementation of these

projects."

Meanwhile, some experts believe that short-term international support is not effective in reducing poverty in Afghanistan. They argue that for assistance to be impactful in the long term, it needs to be invested in infrastructure.

Abdul Nasir Reshtia, an economic expert, told TOLOnews: "If the international community supports Afghanistan in terms of economic aid, it will have a significant economic impact because the government has its strategic economic plans, and with the world's cooperation, the government can push forward long-term development projects to create sta-

ble income for the people of Afghanistan."

Abdul Ghafar Nazami, another economic expert, said: "If we examine the impact of global aid on the economy of Afghan families, we can sense that there has been very little progress in improving their lives."

Earlier, the head of UNAMA, in a special Security Council meeting on Afghanistan, expressed concern over the economic crisis in Afghanistan and stated that the United Nations has requested three billion dollars in aid for Afghan citizens in 2024. However, so far, only 30 percent of this budget, amounting to \$900 million, has been received.



Seven people killed in Afghanistan last week

KABUL (Pajhwok): Special Representative of UN Secretary-General Roza Otunbayeva last recalled the third Doha meeting provided an opportunity for member states to engage directly with the caretaker Afghan government on a range of concerns.

And in response, the Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan said the UNSC council should consider facts and compare the country's current situation with the past.

Casualties
The last week saw seven people losing their lives in violent incidents in various parts of the country.

A driver was killed in firing from across the Durand Line in southeastern Khost province, two children were killed in an explosion caused by a leftover mortar shell in central Maidan Wardak province.

One person was stabbed to death in a dispute in Badakhshan. According to reports, unknown people shot and killed a person in Kandahar, a widowed woman shot her brother in Urugzan, and a 39-year-old man was found dead in Bamyan.

In the previous week, 18 people were killed and 10 others were injured in various incidents nationwide.

Before the regime change, hundreds of people, including civilians, security forces and insurgents, would get killed and maimed every week.

UN Security Council meeting

The UN Security Council convened a meeting on Wednesday to discuss the current situation in Afghanistan.

Kazakhstan representative told the meeting that his country supported the UN's position regarding the formal recognition of the interim government in Kabul.

The Japanese representative said his country's embassy in Kabul was monitoring the situation and held talks in various areas. He said despite the difficult situation, Japan continued its interaction with Afghanistan.

However, the US representative insisted on appointing a special representative for Afghanistan and tied any relationship with Kabul to the provision of human rights.

The American represen-

tative said their country was committed to meeting the humanitarian needs of the Afghans and would continue to support the policy of common interests with the Afghans, including the 'Taliban'.

"To be honest, the humanitarian situation is deteriorating, the interaction with the Taliban raises questions from different angles."

UN Secretary General's representative for Afghanistan, Roza Otunbayeva, told the meeting that the Doha meeting was an opportunity for member countries to directly interact with the Islamic Emirate regarding their concerns.

The third UN-led meeting was held on June 31 and July 1 in Doha, the capital of Qatar. The huddle was attended by an IEA delegation, headed by its chief spokesman Zabihullah Mujahid, and representatives from more than 30 countries.

Otunbayeva said international sanctions crippled governance in Afghanistan and the country remained separated from the international community. In the last three years, she said, security and stability had

been uniquely ensured in Afghanistan.

But she said they hoped the Doha huddle would be a good start to a new chapter for a more meaningful dialogue based independent evaluation.

However, shortly after the Doha meeting, the Afghanistan Ministry of Vice and Virtue's new law undermined the process.

"What does this law require? This law consists of such parts for the Afghan society, which the international community has already condemned."

Islamic Emirate chief spokesman Zabihullah Mujahid said in a statement that the concerns of some parties, including UNAMA, about the law were unfounded.

"No one should be concerned about this law which is practiced gently in its implementation. Such objections tantamount to insult."

In response, Acting Minister of Foreign Affairs of Afghanistan Ameer Khan Muttaqi said information related to Afghanistan should not be received from the opponents.

He asked the UN Security Council and the United Nations to consider

the facts of Afghanistan from human rights to security and economic development and then compare the current situation with the past four decades.

Revenue growth in Afghanistan

The United Nations says Afghanistan's revenue reached one billion dollars in the last four months of the current fiscal year and the country received 24.9 percent of the 2.9 billion dollars needed for humanitarian assistance in Afghanistan in 2024.

Last week, UN Secretary General Antonio Guterres in his quarterly report on Afghanistan said that the country's revenue surpassed one billion dollars, showing 11 percent increase compared to last year's returns.

However, the report said Afghanistan's customs revenue decreased by two percent compared to last year's.

Recently, the Ministry of Finance said they paid 2.7 billion afghanis in loans to a number of international institutions inherited from the previous government.

Turkmenistan: Afghanistan be turned into economic partner

Last week, Turkmen-

istan president Gurbanguly Berdimuhamedow asked the world community to turn Afghanistan into a peaceful country and a valuable economic partner.

He told the 'Central Asia-Germany' summit in Astana, that now the Afghans had emerged from a long difficult phase and had the opportunity to rebuild the economic and government institutions of their country and emphasize on strengthening peace, harmony and unity.

Afghan refugees in Iran

Last week, Iranian President Masoud Pezeshkian said that Afghan refugees lacking legal documents to in Iran would be respectfully sent back to their homeland.

He told a press conference about the situation of Afghan refugees: "Some of them have passports, relatives here, they have relatives, so it is natural to be with them...but some others have come back illegally and should finally obey the law."

Iran has expedited deporting Afghan refugees and reports of increasing incidents of violence against Afghan refugees in Iran.

The Ministry of Foreign

Affairs of Afghanistan requested good treatment of Afghan refugees from neighboring countries.

Acting Minister Maulvi Amir Khan Muttaqi said in a meeting with ambassadors of some countries and representatives of international organizations in Kabul that a stable Afghanistan was in the interest of all: "So that Afghanistan recovers from the effects of 45 years of war and we urge all countries to exercise restraint in deporting refugees, treat them well and provide them good hospitality."

According to reports, last week, caretaker government officials said that in the last eight months, more than 500,000 Afghan refugees returned from Iran to Afghanistan through Islam Qala port in Herat alone.

International relations

Last week, Muttaqi said the Islamic Emirate was ready for relations with the entire world and had determination and high capacity in this regard.

He said: "Our relations with the Arab world are improving and developing day by day, and we prefer relations with the countries of the Arab world."

Thar Mining Project - A solution to energy crisis

Shahid Afridi:

KARACHI: The Thar Mining Project capable of generating over 2,600 MW of electricity is being hailed as a significant milestone in Pakistan's development. Tharparkar district in Sindh holds coal reserves that are 2,000 times larger than the country's other coal deposits. According to estimates even if 100,000 MW of electricity are produced from this mine it could continue for up to 200 years.

Through the Thar Foundation local residents have been provided with free healthcare, education, and clean water services. These details were shared with a delegation from the Peshawar Press Club during their visit to Thar Coal Mining Project Block II in Tharparkar.

The delegation, led by Vice President Tayyab Usman and General Secretary Irfan Musa Zai visited Thar Mine Block II and the power plant where they were briefed by Dr. Mushtaq and Junaid Ansari



They stated that Thar Coal Mining Project Block I and II are collectively producing 2,640 MW of electricity which could help address the electricity shortage in Pakistan. Expansion plans for the project are underway.

They further explained that a survey shows Pakistan has 186 billion tons of coal reserves of which 175 billion tons are in Tharparkar surpassing the oil reserves of Saudi Arabia and Iran by 50 billion tons.

Thar Coal Mine Block II is a unique mining project where 25 local women drive loaded dump trucks and many women work in various other roles. Of the 3,500 employees in the project 80% are local residents which is a commendable effort to benefit the local population. According to the spokesperson for the Thar Coal Project the Thar Foundation provides free healthcare, education, and clean water facilities to the local population greatly

improving their quality of life.

The spokesperson further informed the delegation that the Sindh Engro Coal Mining Company began extracting coal from Thar Coal Block II on July 10, 2019. In the first phase of the project 3.8 million tons of coal were extracted annually with plans to increase this to 7.6 million tons in the second phase and 11.2 million tons in the third phase which will further boost electricity production.



Thar Coal an extraordinary project is playing a crucial role in alleviating the underdevelopment in Tharparkar district and providing basic amenities to the local population at their doorstep. According to the Sindh government unlike other major projects this one provides local residents with benefits in the form of royalties. Around 600 households have been relocated from the project site and provided with new homes equipped with solar energy facilities. Over

5,000 children are receiving free education in 28 educational institutions across Tharparkar and 70 local engineers have been sent to China on scholarships.

Moreover five health centers have been established for the residents providing treatment to over 250,000 patients annually. To ensure equal opportunities for local residents 60 women have been trained as drivers with 25 of them operating loaded dump trucks and 13

female students have been given internships at the coal mine Block II. Additionally 156 women have been trained and employed as teachers in foundation schools empowering them to work alongside men and become self-sufficient.

As part of an eco-friendly policy one million trees have been planted with plans to expand this initiative next year. During their visit the delegation from the Peshawar Press Club toured various sites within

Thar Coal Mining Block II and the Engro Power Plant. They expressed their satisfaction with the project's contribution to the country's economy and the welfare and prosperity of the local population.

The journalists from Peshawar praised the Sindh government's efforts stating that the Thar Coal Project would play a vital role in the economic development and prosperity of Pakistan particularly Sindh. The abundant coal reserves will ensure energy supply and help address the electricity shortage for decades. They also remarked that the project is a gift from the provincial government to the people of Sindh providing them with employment opportunities and a better quality of life.

The delegation added that just as the Tharparkar region has transformed into a green landscape unlike other deserts the project will have a significant positive impact on the country's economy and development in the near future.

At least 51 dead in Iran coal mine blast

TEHRAN (Reuters): A gas explosion in a coal mine in Iran's South Khorasan Province killed at least 51 people and injured 20, Iran's state media said on Sunday.

The accident was caused by a methane gas explosion in two blocks, B and C, of the mine run by the Madanjoo company, state media said.

"76 percent of the coun-

try's coal is provided from this region and around 8 to 10 big companies are working in the region including Madanjoo company," the governor of South Khorasan Province Ali Akbar Rahimi told state TV on Sunday.

The rescue operation in block B has been completed. Of the 47 workers who were in the block 30 died and 17 were injured,

Rahimi said earlier.

Rescue operations in block C have started. Methane density in the block is high and the operation will take around 3-4 hours, he added.

There were 69 workers in the blocks at the time of the explosion, state TV reported.

"Seventeen injured people were transported to the hospital and 24 people are

still missing," it said earlier on Sunday citing the head of Iran's Red Crescent.

The explosion occurred at 9 p.m. (1730 GMT) on Saturday, state media said.

President Masoud Pezeshkian expressed condolences to the victims' families. "I spoke with ministers and we will do our best to follow up," Pezeshkian said in televised comments.



XIAN, CHINA: Minister for Petroleum Dr Musadik Malik holding meeting with Shaanxi Coal and Chemical Industry Group to expand partnership in coal sector.

JI to protest if agreement not fulfilled

KANDHKOT (INP): Jamaat-e-Islami (JI) Ameer Hafiz Naeemur Rehman said that the deadline for implementing the agreement to lower electricity prices is expiring on September 23 and his party plans to announce its next course of action on the very next day.

He stated while addressing a sit-in protest in Kandhkot, Naeemur Rehman said that the JI has already launched a movement for the people's rights under the "Haq Do Awam Ko" (Give the People Their Rights) slogan, pledging that the JI will compel the government to provide relief to the masses.

He cited the recent sit-in held in Rawalpindi, which resulted in an electricity price agreement with the government, and noted that the deadline for implementing this agreement expires on September 23. The JI plans to announce its next course of action on September 24.

He called on the government to reduce electricity prices under the agreement, impose taxes on feudal lords, and eliminate the luxury and extravagance enjoyed at the state's expense. He appealed to the public to join the JI and actively participate in the struggle against the corrupt ruling elite.

Jamaat-e-Islami (JI) Ameer Hafiz Naeemur Rehman criticised the PPP for its 16-year rule over Sindh, saying that it has failed to provide any relief to the masses.

"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," he stated while addressing a sit-in protest in Kandhkot on Saturday against the deteriorating security situation and the prevalence of lawlessness. A large number of people

participated in the sit-in, demanding improved security and a better law-and-order situation.

The JI Ameer 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 responsibility 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 emphasised 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.

NAB KP rescues...

Continued from Front Page

Moreover, the contractors had also filed a claim of 31.8 billion rupees (to the extent of Reach-I) before the International Court of Arbitration on account of increase in project cost, change in scope of work and interest on delayed payments.

Apart from this, further claims in respect of the remaining 05x packages was also prepared to be filed with the ICA, thus the total claim of the contractor for all the 6 packages would come to Rs168.5 billion. Moreover, an estimated cost of Rs 2.9 billion was expected to be spent by PDA on these cases in the International Court of Arbitration.

During the investigation, this Bureau made effective efforts by placing all the concerned persons on the Exit Control List and also issued a Red Warrant of owner of one of these firms to bring him back to Pakistan through Interpol.

The tireless efforts and best strategy of investigation team of this Bureau resulted into increase in pressure on contractors, hence they approached the PDA and requested for an out of court settlement of the matter.

NAB KP not only supported the negotiations between the contractors and PDA but also supervised and facilitated the entire process of negotiation which resulted into a settlement agreement between them. According to this agreement, the contractors withdrew all their claims including the case filed before the ICA, while PDA paid only Rs2.6 billion rupees to the contractors.

After the settlement agreement, in the first week of September, their representatives recorded statements before the Accountability Court Peshawar and submitted the said agreement. Soon thereafter, the contractor requested to withdraw its claim by e-mailing a copy of this agreement to the International Court of Arbitration, upon which the ICA confirmed disposing of the contractor's claim through e-mail dated September 16, 2024.

Similarly, in the third week of September, all the parties submitted this agreement in the Peshawar High Court, where after, the Peshawar High Court disposed of all the related petitions. The best efforts and ideal strategy of NAB Khyber Pakhtunkhwa resulted into saving of the provincial treasury from a loss of Rs168.5 billion which can now be spent on other public welfare projects.

Prime Minister to address UN General Assembly on Sep 27

ISLAMABAD (APP): Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif is set to address the 79th Session of the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) in New York on September 27 to reaffirm Pakistan's steadfast commitment to multilateralism and support for the role of the United Nations in fostering global peace, security, and prosperity.

The prime minister, who departed here for New York on Saturday, wrote on his X timeline that he looked forward to a busy week full of engagements to take up global issues, promoting peace, development and climate action, besides representing Pakistan's perspective to the world, advocating country's

interests and strengthening international partnerships.

According to the curtain raiser issued by the Foreign Office on Sunday, the prime minister, in his address to the 193-member UNGA, would emphasize the importance of addressing long-standing issues on the agenda of the UN Security Council, including the question of Palestine and the Jammu & Kashmir dispute.

He will underline the importance of addressing the inequities in international economic relations and reforming the international financial architecture, besides urging the international community to take decisive measures in addressing climate

change and countering the rising tide of Islamophobia.

"The UN General Assembly's High-Level segment offers a crucial platform for Pakistan to highlight its perspectives on important issues of regional and international importance. He will highlight Pakistan's priority to place people at the heart of the domestic and global development agenda."

He will also express Pakistan's commitment, as an incoming member of the UN Security Council for the year 2025-26, to work with all UN Member States to uphold the UN Charter, preventing conflict, fostering peace, and promoting global prosperity," according to the Foreign

Office statement.

Prime Minister Shehbaz will attend several high-level meetings on the sidelines of the UNGA session including the "High-Level Meeting on Existential Threat posed by Sea-level Rise," and the UN Security Council's Open Debate on "Leadership for Peace".

He will also engage with a group of world leaders to discuss measures needed at the global level to advance the sustainable development agenda.

The bilateral meetings with several world leaders, including the UN Secretary-General and the President of the General Assembly are also on the agenda of the prime minister's hectic visit.

Foreign leaders vying to meet Trump and Harris at UNGA

WASHINGTON (CNN): Foreign dignitaries descending on this week's United Nations General Assembly are looking to take advantage of a choice opportunity to sound out the next leader of the free world, seeking early clues where US foreign policy is heading next.

The most sought-after meeting this week may be an audience with one or both of the candidates running for the White House.

Even as President Joe Biden is busy himself with an intensive stretch of diplomatic engagements — including meetings at his home in Delaware, on the margins of the UN talks and an upcoming foreign trip — attention on the world stage is also turning to Vice President Kamala Harris and former President Donald Trump.

Each candidate is looking to cultivate their own diplomatic relationships in the final stretch of the campaign, seizing on this week's UN meetings as an opportunity for talks that illustrate their divergent worldviews.

So far, only one leader appears set to meet both Harris and Trump next week: Ukraine's Volodymyr



Zelensky, who is making an urgent appeal to both candidates, along with Biden, for sustained help in combating Russia's invasion.

Official and unofficial representatives for Harris and Trump have fielded requests from dozens of countries reaching out in hopes of setting up a meeting, multiple US officials said. Some countries have even offered to accommodate or change their schedules to lock in a meeting.

Harris at 50% to Trump's 47% in CNN Poll of Polls

Vice President Kamala Harris holds 50% support to former President Donald Trump's 47% in the race for

president, according to the latest CNN Poll of Polls, a difference just inside the typical margin of sampling error for a national poll.

Although there is no clear leader in the current average, the results suggest a slight shift in Harris' favor compared with the previous Poll of Polls from before the ABC News debate. In that average, the race stood at 49% Harris to 48% Trump.

The new average incorporates five polls conducted entirely after the ABC News debate held on September 10.

It includes three polls that found Harris ahead outside of the poll's margin of

sampling error and two that found the race within that error margin.

One poll added to the average today, from NBC News, found Harris at 49% support to Trump's 44%, the lowest level of support for the former president in any poll that meets CNN's standards since Harris entered the race in late July.

Trump says he met with Qatari leaders in Florida

Reuters add: Republican presidential candidate Donald Trump on Sunday said he had met with Qatar's Prime Minister Sheikh Mohammed bin Abdulrahman Al Thani at his Florida resort.