

JI announces protest sit-ins  
F.P. Report

LAHORE: Following the announcement of Jamaat-e-Islami (JI) Chief, the party announced protests on major highways across Pakistan as the government failed to implement Rawalpindi Agreement. During meeting, attended by party leadership from central and provincial cities online, JI Chief Hafiz Naeenur Rehman criticized the government for only taking "cosmetic measures" in the past 45 days.



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# PM demand resolution of Gaza, IOJK issues

## Shehbaz urges world action as illegal occupation of Palestine & Kashmir creates a 'fresh hell' daily

UNITED NATIONS (APP): Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif on Friday warned the world community that the illegal occupation of Palestine and Kashmir was creating a "fresh hell" and every day and stressed the efforts for dispute resolution, besides addressing the global challenges of terrorism, climate change and Islamophobia.

"Illegal occupation creates a fresh hell, every day, in the killing fields of Palestine, and in occupied Jammu and Kashmir... Can we turn a blind eye to the mothers, cradling the lifeless bodies of their children? This is not just a conflict; this is systematic slaughter of innocent people; an assault on the very essence of human life and dignity. The blood of Gaza's children stains the hands of not just the oppressors, but also of those who are complicit in prolonging this cruel conflict," the prime minister told the annual 79th Session of the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA).

The prime minister, in his 21-minute address at the 193-member Assembly, touched on multiple regional and international issues, including Palestine and Kashmir disputes, Ukraine war, climate change, rising poverty and debt burden particularly induced by climate change impacts.

Prime Minister Shehbaz called upon the international community's action to demand an immediate end to the bloodshed, as work for a durable peace through a viable, secure, contiguous and sovereign State of Palestine, based on the pre-1967 borders, with Al-Quds Al-Sharif as its

eternal capital. Before the gathering of the global leaders, Prime Minister Shehbaz also highlighted the sufferings of the people of Indian Illegally Occupied Jammu and Kashmir, and said that India had resiled from commitments to implement the UN Security Council resolutions on Jammu and Kashmir which mandated a plebiscite to enable the Kashmiri people to exercise their fundamental right to self-determination.

"Since 5th August 2019, India has initiated unilateral illegal steps to impose what its leaders ominously call a "Final Solution" for Jammu and Kashmir. Nine hundred thousand Indian troops terrorize the people of occupied Jammu and Kashmir, with draconian measures, including prolonged curfews, extra-judicial killings and the abduction of thousands of young Kashmiris." He pointed out the Indian nefarious designs of seizing Kashmiri lands and properties, and settling outsiders into the occupied Jammu and Kashmir, to transform the Muslim-majority into a minority.

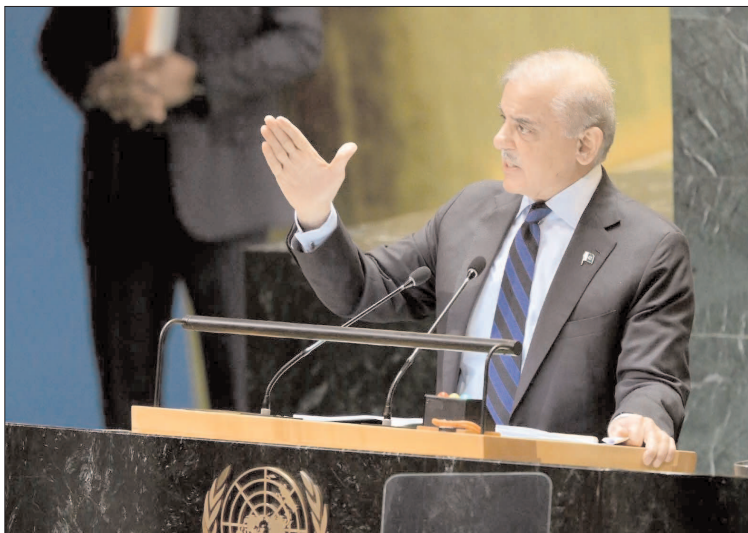
"This hackneyed tactic is employed by all occupying powers, but it has always failed. In Jammu and Kashmir too, it shall fail, InshaAllah," he remarked. Apprising the global leaders of India's massive expansion of its military capabilities, he said its war doctrines, envisaged a surprise attack and a "limited war under the nuclear overhang. Thoughtlessly, India has spurned Pakistan's proposals for a mutual 'Strategic Restraint Regime'. Its lead-

ership has often threatened to cross the Line of Control and 'take-over' Azad Kashmir."

"Let me state in no uncertain terms that Pakistan will respond, most decisively, to any Indian aggression," he warned. Prime Minister Shehbaz called for the reversal of the Indian unilateral and illegal measures of August 5, 2019 to enter into a dialogue for a peaceful resolution of the Jammu and Kashmir dispute.

"As we leave this august hall, we must carry with us a message for our people that the weak are not voiceless, that the oppressed should not lose hope, that poverty is not pre-ordained, and that the Almighty's promise of justice and equality in our only terrestrial home, must be respected," he urged. He said that the daunting challenges of Israel's genocidal war in Gaza; a dangerous conflict in Ukraine; destructive conflicts across Africa and Asia; rising geopolitical tensions; resurging terrorism; rising poverty; a stifling debt, and the mounting impact of climate change acted as a "chill of a new world order" and lauded the adoption of 54 actions by the Summit of the Future called by UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres.

Prime Minister Shehbaz referred to the devastation caused by climate change-induced floods in Pakistan in 2022 causing \$30 billion in damages despite the country's less than 1% carbon emissions. "This is unfair in any calculus of global justice. We must uphold the axiom: the polluter must pay," he remarked and called for



the fulfillment of commitments made by the developed countries in climate financing to support the achievements of the SDGs and climate goals.

Calling the debt burden on nearly 100 countries a "death trap" impacting their ability to meet the SDGs, he emphasised reforming and aligning the world trade and technology regimes to promote development and global equity. The prime minister told the global leaders that his government had taken difficult but necessary decisions that had "rescued our economy from collapse; restored macro-economic stability; controlled fiscal deficits; strengthened our reserves. As a result, inflation has come to a single digit."

He said while prioritizing the geo-economics and regional connectivity, the government had launched the second phase of the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC), and established the Special Investment

Facilitation Council (SIFC) to mobilize investments, in resilient infrastructure, renewable energy, minerals, sustainable agriculture and technology. The prime minister said that Pakistan had sacrificed around 80,000 lives of soldiers and civilians, and suffered economic loss worth \$150 billion in its fight against terrorism. He reiterated the nation's resolve to counter the new wave of "externally financed and sponsored" terrorism, especially by the Fitna al-Khawarij (Tehreek-e-Taliban Pakistan) and its associates.

"Make no mistake, we are determined to eliminate this threat once again, through our comprehensive national effort, "Azm-e-Istehkam" (Resolve to Promote Stability). And, we will work collectively with the international community to combat all forms of terrorism and reform the global counter-terrorism architecture," he reaffirmed. Coming to

Afghanistan, the prime minister said Pakistan desired the earliest possible normalization of the situation in Afghanistan and joined the UN's appeal for \$3 billion in humanitarian assistance for the Afghan people.

He urged the Afghan Interim Government to meet international expectations to respect human rights, including the rights of women and girls, promote political inclusion, and take effective action to neutralize all terrorist groups within Afghanistan, especially those responsible for cross-border terrorism against neighbouring countries. These include ISIL-K (Daesh), the Al-Qaeda-affiliated TTP/Fitna al-Khawarij, Majeed Brigade, BLA and others. Prime Minister Shehbaz said that Islamophobia was manifested by frequent desecration of the Holy Quran, attacks on mosques, negative stereotyping of Muslims, and acts of discrimination and violence against them. The most alarming manifestation of Islamophobia was the Hindu supremacist agenda in India seeking the subjugation of 200 million Muslims and the obliteration of India's Islamic heritage, he added.

Pakistan and the OIC (Organisation of Islamic Cooperation) would work with the UN Secretary-General and his Special Envoy to implement a plan of action to combat the scourge, he assured. The prime minister also sought an immediate end to the tragic conflict in Ukraine, and its peaceful resolution, besides reaffirming Pakistan's resolve to continue to cooperate with Africa to counter terrorism and resolve regional conflicts, including through its role in UN peacekeeping and peacebuilding in the region.

## COAS briefed on operational preparedness

### F.P. Report

RAWALPINDI: General Syed Asim Munir, NI(M), Chief of Army Staff (COAS), visited the Karachi Corps area of responsibility, where he was briefed on operational preparedness and key training initiatives undertaken by the Army.

During his visit, COAS also inaugurated Innovista Indus IT Park, a hub aimed at empowering Pakistan's youth by fostering academia-industry collaboration in the field of Information Technology, particularly Artificial Intelligence. Honourable Chief Minister Sindh, Syed Murad Ali Shah, and notable civil community members attended the inauguration ceremony. Chief Minister Sindh emphasized the importance of IT domain for optimal exploitation of potential of youth and economic growth. COAS highlighted that such projects are aimed at providing the most conducive environment to further promote the growth of IT Industry in the country, which is already accelerating at a respectable pace.

COAS also interacted with the business community of Karachi.



COAS appreciated the contributions of business community and entrepreneurs towards the country's economic growth. Participants expressed confidence and praised SIFC for its role towards achieving the positive economic indicators, which are providing an enabling environment for further economic growth. COAS commended the efforts of Federal and Provincial Governments towards supporting all initiatives and remarked that naysayers who made failed efforts towards creating despair and despondency in the society have been defeated through the collective efforts of all stakeholders. COAS

appreciated the praiseworthy role performed by brotherly and friendly countries especially China, Kingdom of Saudi Arabia and UAE in the economic recovery of Pakistan by helping us in multiple domains.

COAS highlighted that Pakistan has remarkable potential in various domains and all must have unflinching trust and confidence in the bright future of Pakistan. Given the immense resources and potential, Pakistan is destined to achieve its rightful position in the comity of nations, Insha Allah. Earlier on arrival, COAS was received by Corps Commander Karachi.

## LHC grants bail to Ali Wazir

### F.P. Report

LAHORE: The Lahore High Court's (LHC) Rawalpindi Bench has granted bail to Pashtun Tahafuz Movement (PTM) leader and former Member of National Assembly (MNA), Ali Wazir, in a case filed under the Maintenance of Public Order (3MPO) law.

LHC Justice Chaudhry Abdul Aziz heard the case on Friday and approved Wazir's bail against surety bonds of Rs 500,000. The court also declared Wazir's detention under the 3MPO as illegal and ordered his immediate release. Wazir's legal counsel, Sulaiman Zaib, was present in court during the proceedings.

## PTI workers acquitted in riots case

### F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: The Anti-Terrorism Court has acquitted all 18 accused, including PTI workers, in the May 9 riots case due to lack of evidence on Friday.

As per details, the defendants were accused of protesting in Landi Kotal on May 9, blocking the Torkham Road, damaging property, and damaging an Anti-Narcotics Force vehicle. However, the court found no evidence against them and has acquitted all 18 defendants. The verdict was announced by Judge Muhammad Iqbal of the Special Anti-Terrorism Court.

Earlier, the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP) government wrote a letter to the Peshawar High Court (PHC) Chief Justice Ishtiaq Ibrahim, requesting formation of a judicial commission to probe May 9 riots. According to sources, the KP government asked PHC to appoint a judge to head the commission, which will probe the events of May 9 and identify those responsible.

The purpose of the commission is to determine the culprits and bring them to before the nation. The letter stated that the commission should be headed by a sitting or retired judge of the PHC. Violent clashes were broken out across Pakistan after former prime minister Imran Khan was arrested on May 9, 2023.

The protests were held in remote and major cities as the party workers were agitated due to their chairman's arrest, with Balochistan, Punjab, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, and Islamabad summoning the armed forces to ensure law and order.

## Ban on X imposed due to security issues: Tarar

### F.P. Report

NEW YORK (APP): Federal Minister for Information, Broadcasting, National Heritage and Culture Attaullah Tarar Friday said that ban on X, formerly Twitter, was imposed due to national security issues, not to curb freedom of expression.

The minister, in an interview with Voice of America, dispelled the impression that it was an unannounced ban, saying that the caretaker government had banned X before the February elections due to the issues related to compliance. The "separatists and terrorists" were using the platform against Pakistan which could not be allowed, he added.

Tarar said that the terrorists belonging to the so-called Balochistan Liberation Army were

using the platform for promoting their anti-state activities. Even the terrorists showed their terrorist activities live on the X without any check, he added. The minister said the matter of ban on X was sub judice and the Ministry of Interior had already filed its reply in the court in that regard.

"As Pakistanis we can request the management of X to remove anti-state content uploaded by the terrorists," he stressed. Terrorists, he added, were misusing social media platforms which was totally unjustified. "There must be some system to regulate the social media. Web management system was already in place," he said, adding there was no harm in ensuring cyber and data security through it.

He opined that a Digital Rights Protection Authority type institution was needed where the people could file complaints for redressal. A draft for the Digital Rights Protection Authority had been taken up by the Federal Cabinet, but it was deferred, he added. The cabinet, he said, issued directives for taking suggestions from all stakeholders, including media houses, journalists organizations including Pakistan Federal Union of Journalists and political parties so that an effective legislation could be done for future implementation. He said as a political worker, he believed that ban on X should be removed and that could be possible if its management improved compliance issues.

## Five more killed, 15 hurt in KP's Kurram clashes

### F.P. Report

SADDA: Five more people were killed and 15 injured on Friday as fresh clashes which first emerged last week between rival tribes in different areas of Kurram district continued into the eighth day, bringing the total number of casualties to 46 dead and 96 injured, a hospital official said.

Police and hospital sources last week told that the clashes started after Boshehra tribes of upper Kurram started setting up bunkers on the lands of Ahmadzai tribes, with the dispute quickly engulfing other areas as well.

On Wednesday, sources said that at least 10 people were killed were injured in Balishkkel, Sadda, Khar Kallay, Peewar, Maqbal and other areas, adding that the main Parachinar Highway and other roads in the area were closed due to

traffic. Kurram District Headquarters Hospital (DHQ) Medical Superintendent Dr Qaiser Abbas Banghash confirmed the latest death toll to Dawn.com today.

Former federal minister Sajid Toori acknowledged that routine activities was badly affected due to armed clashes, but hoped the situation would normalise soon, calling on people to solve their problems amicably. Separately, Majlis Wahdat Muslimeen (MWM) parliamentary leader Engineer Hameed Hussain staged a protest outside the Parachinar Press Club, citing the failure of the institutions responsible for law and order to establish peace.

Meanwhile, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Chief Minister Ali Amin Khan Gandapur said a day earlier that serious efforts were being made to maintain law

and order in the province, especially in the southern districts. "After the improvement of the law and order situation in southern districts, more checkpoints will be handed over to the police. However, before that happens, there is a need for enhancing the capabilities of police," CM Gandapur said in a statement issued from the chief minister's secretariat on Thursday.

The chief minister said that the current conflict in Kurram tribal district was related to some groups and the provincial government was taking steps to resolve the issue peacefully. He said the provincial government was working to resolve the problem permanently. Gandapur said negotiations were underway to address the conflict in Khyber tribal district as well and it was likely to be resolved by Friday.

## Pakistan receives first tranche of \$1.02b from IMF

### F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: In essential support to stabilise the country's teetering economy, the State Bank of Pakistan (SBP) received approximately \$1.03 billion (SDR 760 million) on Friday under the International Monetary Fund's (IMF) \$7 billion Extended Fund Facility (EFF) programme.

Pakistan had been work-

ing on implementing conditions deemed "strict" to complete the loan programme agreed to in July, which Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif time and again hoped would be Pakistan's last. The IMF Executive Board approved a 37-month loan.

These fresh inflows will be reflected in the central bank's liquid foreign exchange reserves figures, which will be released on

Thursday, October 3, 2024, the SBP said in a statement. Following the long-awaited approval, the IMF said the new programme would require "sound policies and reforms" to strengthen macroeconomic stability and address structural challenges alongside "continued strong financial support from Pakistan's development and bilateral partners".

Cop shot dead in Bajaur  
F.P. Report

KHAR: Unknown armed men on Friday shot dead a police constable in Khar tehsil of Bajaur district. Police said the constable, Tahir Rehman was waiting for a vehicle on the roadside in Delly village of Khar when unknown armed men fired at him, killing him on the spot. Police said two other people also sustained injuries in the incident and were shifted to THQ Khar.





## Gov't has taken notice of load shedding and over-billing: Shah

KARACHI (PPI): Provincial Minister of Energy, Development and Planning Sindh Syed Nasir Hussain Shah has said that cheap and quality solar panels with the purchasing of the poorest people so that common people can also benefit from this system of alternative energy.

He expressed these views on the second day of the ongoing three-day solar expo at Expo Center Karachi today at various stalls and on the occasion of media interaction. Secretary Energy Sindh Mosaddeq Ahmed Khan and Project Director Sindh Solar Energy Mahfooz Ahmed Qazi were also with him.

Minister Nasir Shah, talk-

ing on the occasion of visiting the stalls of various domestic and foreign companies, emphasized that the people of Sindh cannot afford expensive electricity and cannot buy expensive solar systems. There is a need that all the items related to solar panels, including batteries, lithium etc., should be manufactured and marketed at affordable prices locally and internationally.

Nasir Shah said that due to the competition between companies in solar panels, the prices of solar panels have decreased at the domestic and foreign levels, but there is a need for further reduction.

In response to a question, the minister said that the peo-

ple are suffering from severe problems due to expensive electricity and load shedding and over-billing, but the Sindh government has taken notice of this and the people will get good news soon. He said that Sindh is providing the cheapest electricity to the National Grid.

He said that farmers and poor farmers are also worried due to expensive fertilizers, but the government has also found a solution to their problems. Now cheap fertilizer will be produced from Thar coal. Nasir Shah said that more than 200 companies from 10 countries are participating in this exhibition, of which 80% are world-class companies.

He appreciated the

efforts of the organizers of the exhibition and said that the positive image of not only the Sindh government but also Pakistan will go to the whole world by holding the exhibition and participation of foreign and foreign companies in it.

The duration of the exhibition should be extended to several days instead of three days as people gain awareness from the exhibition and also get to know the quality of local and international companies.

Minister said that more than 160,000 solar systems with inverters and battery backup will be provided free of cost to the poor and backward areas of Sindh. Hybrid solar parks are on the way.

## Saif: Centre to provide finances for KP uplift

Syed Waliullah Shah

NEWSHERA: Advisor to Chief Minister Khyber Pakhtunkhwa on Information and Public Relation Barrister Muhammad Ali Saif argued the federal government for provision of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa due rights and financial resources so that the province can use them for development, on Friday.

Barrister Saif expressed these views while addressing a reception hosted by Nowshera Press Club President Mushtaq Praacha. Secretary Information Arshad Khan, DG Information Imran Khan, Deputy

Commissioner Nowshera Irfan Ullah, DPO Azhar Khan, and MPA Ashfaq Khan attended the event. Other notable attendees included Syed Ayaz Badshah, Chief Editor of Mashriq Group of Newspapers and Mashriq TV, Peshawar Press Club President Arshad Aziz Malik, Chairman District Development and Advisory Committee Nowshera Zar Alam Khan, and President Nowshera Chamber of Commerce.

Barrister Muhammad Ali Saif said the federal government should cooperate with the provinces and give them their due rights. He criticized the federal government's treatment of

Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, saying it was like a stepmother. He claimed that if the elected representatives had been allowed to form the government, the country would be in a better state.

He also criticized Maryam Nawaz, saying she should take an oath before the people, not in court, to prove her innocence. He alleged that she was involved in corruption cases and that her politics was limited to TikTok. He assured that the government would focus on the welfare of journalists and provide them with necessary facilities. He said the government valued freedom of the press and welcomed constructive criticism.

## CAP office bearers elected unopposed

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: We are pleased to inform that CAP Election Commission has declared the following candidates have been elected unopposed as CAP Office Bearers for the term 2024-26.

Mr. Afzal-ur-Rahman, Chief Executive, M/s Indusmens Corporation, Karachi as Chairman, CAP, Mr. Ahmad Habib Ch. Director, M/s. Uni Build Associates (Pvt.) Ltd, Lahore as Senior Vice

Chairman, CAP, Mr. Naeem Akhtar Ch. Partner, M/s. Waseem Akhtar & Company, Lahore as Vice Chairman, CAP (Punjab), Mr. Arif Raza Kazmi, Director, M/s. AMCORP Engineering & Construction (Pvt.) Ltd, Karachi as Vice Chairman, CAP (Sindh), Mr. Zarif Shah, Proprietor, M/s. Pir Zarif Shah, Peshawar as Vice Chairman, CAP (KPK), Engr Fazal Karim, Managing Partner, M/s. NPI Construction & Engineering, Quetta as Vice

Chairman, CAP (Balochistan), Engr. Muhammad Azhar-ul-Islam Zafar, Director, M/s AMS Engineers & Contractors, as Vice Chairman, CAP (Islamabad), Engr. Syed Ashfaq Hussain, Chairman, Senior Vice Chairman, Vice Chairmen, Executive Committee Members and officials of CAP secretariat congratulate all the elected Office Bearers and look forward to work with them in the best interest of the Association.

## Section 144 imposed in seven cities

LAHORE (APP): The Punjab government has announced the enforcement of Section 144 in seven cities during the Punjab Public Service Commission examinations. The restriction will take effect on September 28 and September 29.

According to a spokesman for the Home Department, the cities include Lahore, Rawalpindi, Sargodha, Faisalabad, Multan, Bahawalpur, and Dera Ghazi Khan. The restrictions will apply around the examination centers from 8:30am to 4:30pm.

Only candidates and supervising staff will be allowed to enter the examination centers, while the movement of unauthorized individuals would be prohibited within a 100-yard radius of the centers. In total, the Punjab Public Service Commission has established 25 examination centers across the seven cities.

China launched 'She Power' initiative in Baochistan to improve the health and well-being of young girls. This project aims to promote the use of hygiene products and foster health awareness among girls in the Balochistan.

## Romina distributes Hygiene kits among students

F.P. Report

LASBELA: The role of women is equally important in our society, said Mrs. Romina Khurshed Alam, Coordinator to Prime Minister for Climate Change, while distributing health and Hygiene Kits among the students of Government Girls Higher Secondary School at Uthal, Lasbela District in a Health


and Hygiene Training and Distribution of Kits ceremony held on Thursday.

She further said that she felt proud to be among the daughters of Balochistan and would continue visiting them. She underscored the importance of a hygienic life by urging to follow safety and precautionary measures in regular life as they did during the COVID-19 period.

She appealed the daugh-

ters of Balochistan to spread the message of Health and hygiene being the members of the society as special messengers.

The Hygiene kits were provided under the project, 'She Power'. The Embassy of China had launched the 'She Power' initiative in Balochistan, aimed at improving the health and well-being of young girls. The project



**GOVERNMENT OF THE KHYBER PAKHTUNKHWA**  
**HOME AND TRIBAL AFFAIRS DEPARTMENT**

**NOTIFICATION**

**Peshawar, dated the .2024.**

No. \_\_\_\_\_ ---In exercise of the powers conferred by section 4 of the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Explosives Act, 2013 (Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Act No. XXIV of 2013), the Government of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa intends to amend the Explosives Rules, 2010, which, in accordance with section 22 of the said Act, is hereby published, for information of general public and notice is hereby given that the proposed amendment, together with any objection and suggestion with respect thereto, which may be received by Additional Chief Secretary to Government, Home and Tribal Affairs Department, within a period of seven (07) days, from the date of publication of this Notification, shall be taken into consideration for carrying out the following amendment in the rules ibid, after expiry of the said period, the following amendment shall be made, namely:

**AMENDMENT**

In the said rules, after rule 138, the following new rule shall be added, namely:

“139. Power to issue Standing Operating Procedures.---Subject to these rules, the Home and Tribal Affairs Department may issue the Standing Operating Procedures for laying down overall processes, procedures, hierarchies, inspections, monitoring and other cognate matters with regard to possession, use, sale, transportation, storage etc for explosives and other materials with similar usage and potential abilities.”.

**ADDITIONAL CHIEF SECRETARY TO**  
**GOVERNMENT OF THE KHYBER PAKHTUNKHWA**  
**HOME AND TRIBAL AFFAIRS DEPARTMENT.**


**INF(P)2537/24**

## Hazrat Miran Hussain Zanjani Urs begins

LAHORE (APP): The 1016th annual Urs of Hazrat Miran Hussain Zanjani kicked off at Chah Miran here on Friday.

Auqaf Secretary Dr Tahir Raza Bokhari inaugurated the Urs celebrations by laying a traditional chaddar on the grave. Other Auqaf officials and a large number of devotees were present. Special dua was offered for the development, progress and stability of the country.

Addressing on the occasion, the Secretary said that it is necessary to publicize Sufis' style of prayers and the formation of a tolerant welfare society is the most important need of the hour, for which the promotion of philanthropy, tolerance, love and brotherhood is important. To intensify the campaign against dengue, pamphlets were distributed among pilgrims to create awareness about the disease and its prevention. Instructions were also issued regarding disposal, cleaning and other issues and ensuring a clean environment for the visitors in accordance with the rules of hygiene.



**PUBLIC NOTICE AUCTION OF GOLD**

Branch: DI Khan Auction Date: 30<sup>th</sup> September-2024 Branch code: 3033 Time: 10:00 AM

Finance facilities were extended by Mobilink Bank against the security of deposit and pledge of gold to the customers mentioned below. The customers who have neglected and failed to repay the finance extended to them by Mobilink Bank along with the markup thereon.

Customer Name	CNIC #	Address	Gold Weight (GM)	Detail of Gold Ornaments
Qismat Khan	12102-2386633-9	Hathala, Tehsil Kulachi, District Dera Ismail Khan	107	1 Tulsi, 1 Katmala, 1 Malah, 4 Choorian, 1 Jhumer
Yasmin Bibi	12101-9280306-6	Mohala Kumharan Wala, Dera Ismail Khan	115	1 Tulsi, 6 Choorian, 1 Katmala, 1 Tikka with Jhumer

Notice is hereby given to the customers in above mentioned that if payment of entire outstanding amount financed along with markup is not made by them to Mobilink Bank within 1 day of the publication of this notice, Mobilink Bank shall auction the gold ornaments and no further Public Notice shall be issued to call upon the customers to make the payments.

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<b>FA</b> (1) English + Islamic Studies + Library Science (2) Urdu Adv. + Islamic Studies + Library Science	<b>Admission Fee : 3880</b>	
<b>BBA (4 Years) 8 Semesters</b>	<b>Admission Fee : 8200</b>	FA / F.S.c / D.Com / Inter-Science with at-least 45% marks
<b>BS. Com (4 Years) 8 Semesters</b>	<b>Admission Fee : 8000</b>	
<b>DIT (1 Year)</b>	<b>Semester Total Fee : 6000</b> <b>Per Month : 1000</b>	

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INF(P)2542/24



**F. No. 4(15)/83-Admn**  
**Government of Pakistan**  
**Ministry of Water Resources**  
**Office of Chief Engineering Adviser/**  
**Chairman, Federal Flood Commission**



## SITUATIONS VACANT

Applications are invited from Male/Female citizens of Pakistan for appointment in **Office of Chief Engineering Adviser/ Chairman, Federal Flood Commission** to fill the following temporary vacancies likely to continue:-

Name of Post & BPS	Qualification	Age Limit		No. of Post(s)	Quota
		Min	Max		
LDC (BPS-11)	• Matric • Minimum speed of 30 w.p.m in typing • Must be computer literate	18	25	01	Punjab – 01
Sub. Engineer (BPS-11)	• 3 years diploma of DAE (Civil Engineering) from Government Polytechnic Institute or any other recognized institution in Civil Engineering.	18	25	01	KPK – 01
Dispatch Rider (BPS-04)	• Primary Pass • Valid Driving License holder and well versed in the traffic rules.	18	25	01	Local Basis – 01
Naib Qasid (BPS- 01)	• Primary Pass	18	25	01	Local Basis – 01
Chowkidar (BPS-01)	• Primary Pass	18	25	01	Local Basis – 01

**Terms and Conditions**

- Appointment to the above posts shall be made on temporary basis.
- Application on the prescribed format shall reach the undersigned within **15 days** from the date of publication of this advertisement but not later than **15-10-2024** before closing hours at “**Administrative Officer, Office of Chief Engineering Adviser/ Chairman, Federal Flood Commission, 6-Attaturk Avenue, G-5/1, Islamabad**” along with attested copy of CNIC, Domicile and Driving License where applicable. Applications, incomplete or received after the expiry date will not be entertained. **Please do not attach any other document (Testimonials) with the application form.**
- The recruitment shall be made in accordance with the Establishment Division Recruitment Policy dated 22.10.2014 and amendments made there under.
- General Age Relaxation of five years is admissible under the rules. Age relaxation will be granted as per Establishment Division's O.M. No. 9/2/91-R-5 dated 28-11-2000 and clarification dated 24-06-2010.
- Candidates already in Government Service should apply through proper channel.
- Applicant shortlisted for an interview shall present his/her original documents.
- Information provided in the application form will be verified by this office. In case of any false or forged information, fake or bogus documents, the department reserves the right to cancel candidature at any stage (even after employment, if so pointed out at later stage ) and will initiate legal action against the applicant.
- Only short listed eligible candidates will be called to appear for test/interview.
- No TA/DA will be paid for appearing in written test/interview.
- This office reserves the right to cancel the recruitment process in part or whole at any stage without assigning any reason.
- The below mentioned application form can also be downloaded from the website **<http://www.ffc.gov.pk>**
- Female, Minority and Disabled are encouraged to apply.

**APPLICATION FORM FOR RECRUITMENT-2024**

Name of the post applied for: \_\_\_\_\_ BPS:- \_\_\_\_\_

Roll Number For Office Use Only

Name (in Capital letters):- \_\_\_\_\_ Father/Husband Name:- \_\_\_\_\_

Date of Birth (dd.mm.yyyy):- \_\_\_\_\_ Gender:- \_\_\_\_\_ Religion:- \_\_\_\_\_ CNIC No. \_\_\_\_\_

Disable (Yes/No):- \_\_\_\_\_ Domicile (Province/District):- \_\_\_\_\_

**Educational Qualification:-**

S. No	Degree / Examination	Year of Passing	University / Board	Grade / Division	Specialization (if any)
i.					
ii.					
iii.					

Postal Address:- \_\_\_\_\_

Contact Residence:- \_\_\_\_\_ Mobile:- \_\_\_\_\_ Email:- \_\_\_\_\_

Experience: Government/Private:- \_\_\_\_\_ Department:- \_\_\_\_\_ Designation:- \_\_\_\_\_ Years:- \_\_\_\_\_

Declaration: I certify that all information, provided by me, in this application form is true and correct to the best of my knowledge and belief.

Date: \_\_\_\_\_ Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

**(Syed Mohsin Raza Shah)**  
**Administrative Officer**  
**051-9244607**

PID (I) 2234/24





PESHAWAR: Team of Peshawar Institute of Cadriology in a group photo during the launch of percutaneous mitral clip procedure.

## For the first time in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa PIC introduces percutaneous Mitral Clip procedure

### F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: The Peshawar Institute of Cardiology-Medical Teaching Institution (PIC-MTI), a leading cardiac healthcare provider in Pakistan, has once again set a milestone in medical innovation by successfully introducing a minimally invasive procedure for the treatment of leaky heart valves.

This marks the first time the Mitral Clip procedure has been performed in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, further establishing PIC as a pioneer in advanced cardiac care in the region.

In collaboration with international experts, PIC's highly skilled team has successfully completed the first-ever Mitral

Clip procedure in the province, without the need for open-heart surgery. This cutting-edge intervention provides an innovative solution for patients with mitral valve regurgitation, a condition where the heart's mitral valve does not close properly, causing blood to flow backward into the heart.

Dr. Ali Raza, Assistant Professor at PIC, described the significance of this procedure: "The Mitral Clip is used to repair leaking mitral valves, significantly improving heart function. During this minimally invasive procedure, a clip is attached to the mitral valve, restoring its ability to function properly without requiring open-heart surgery. This procedure has

been performed only 5 times in Pakistan, it is the first of its kind in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, marking a major milestone for cardiac care in the region."

The procedure was led by PIC's specialized team with the support of Dermot Boyle, a Mitral Clip Therapy expert from Abbott Laboratories, United Kingdom.

Mr. Boyle commended PIC for its groundbreaking work, stating: "I am incredibly impressed with the commitment and expertise of the PIC team in introducing this vital procedure in Pakistan. Mitral Clip therapy represents a less invasive approach to treating mitral valve regurgitation, significantly reducing risks for patients, particularly the elderly or those

with complex conditions. PIC is an outstanding institution, and I am confident their team will continue to excel in this advanced field."

Dr. Ali Raza also highlighted the benefits of this minimally invasive procedure for elderly patients who are at a higher risk of complications from traditional open-heart surgery: "This technique offers a safer, more effective alternative for those who are not suitable candidates for conventional surgery. We are not only proud of this achievement but also committed to sharing our knowledge and training medical teams in other hospitals across Pakistan to expand access to this innovative procedure, improving cardiac care for patients nationwide."

# US Consul General Visits KPBOIT

### F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: The Consul General of U.S. Consulate at Peshawar, Shante Moore on Friday, visited Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Board of Investment and Trade and had a meeting with Special Assistant to Chief Minister on Industries Commerce and Technical Education Abdul Karim Tordher and KPBOIT Team.

Representatives of All Pakistan Bee keepers, Exporters and Honey traders' Association, Industrialists Association Hattar SEZ and Shaheed Benazir Women University Peshawar also attended the meeting.

SACM welcomed the US Consul General while

Director Facilitation Iqbal Sarwar briefed them on the aspects of investment and trade potential of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa.

Director Business Facilitation also highlighted that bilateral trade cooperation and relations between United State of America and Pakistan can further be extended in different sectors of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. In that regards a mechanism may be established for exchange of business delegations. Furthermore, invitation for participation in Islamabad international expo and investment conference 2024 was extended to the honourable council general with a request to engage US business

community as well.

He further explained the importance of regional connectivity and people to people exchange program and providing different scholarships program to the students of KP in education sector.

He also highlighted the huge potential for investment in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa including infrastructure projects in Public Private Partnership and how to enhance Pak-US trade with value additions to meet international standard in general and US standard in particular.

In response, the Consul General applauded the efforts of KP-BOIT and pledged their supports and wider cooperation in various sectors of Khyber

Pakhtunkhwa.

Consul General further explained the importance of regional connectivity and people to people exchange program and pledged to help by connecting Pak - American Diaspora to invest in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and to work on sister state or sister city with Peshawar.

On this occasion the SACM assured the delegation full facilitation in terms of possible investment and facilitation from the provincial government.

He added that we are welcoming the foreign investment in the province and in this regard will extent full support to the US investment here in potential areas

## Former DG Livestock Alamzeb joins Pakistan People's Party

### F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: Under the leadership of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa People's Party President Syed Muhammad Ali Shah Bacha, former Director General of Livestock Alamzeb Khan, along with his family, has joined the Pakistan People's Party (PPP). On this occasion, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Governor Faisal Karim Kundi and other leaders extended their congratulations to Alamzeb Khan for his decision to join the party.



Prominent figures present at the event included Member of Provincial Assembly Arbab Zarak Khan Khalil, Farzand Ali Khan Wazir, Sajid Turi, Fazl Haq, Misbahuddin, Malik Taimash Khan, Ziaullah Afridi, Malik Saeed Khan, Malik Amjad, Mohmand District President Malik Israel Khan, Jahangirz Mohmand, and others.

During the joining ceremony, Governor Faisal Karim Kundi and PPP Khyber Pakhtunkhwa

Syed Muhammad Ali Shah Bacha congratulated Alamzeb Khan, his family, and associates, presenting them with party caps as a symbol of their new affiliation.

Addressing the event, Syed Muhammad Ali Shah Bacha stated that the previous provincial government under Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) was the worst administration in the province's history. He criticized the PTI for using

## World Tourism Day: Tourists explore historical sites of Peshawar



### F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: In celebration of World Tourism Day, a "Tour de Peshawar" was organized through the collaboration of the

Directorate of Archaeology & Museums and the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Culture & Tourism Authority. A total of 75 participants, including students, professors, teachers,

and influencers from various walks of life, took part in the tour, exploring the historical sites of Peshawar. The participants visited several iconic landmarks, including the Peshawar

Museum, Sethi House, Clock Tower, Gor Khatri, Chowk Yadgar, Mahabat Khan Mosque, Kapoor Haveli, Qissa Khwani Bazaar, and Taj Soda.

Chief Coordinator of Tour de Peshawar, Shahid Ali Khan, remarked that the purpose of the tourism tour was to send a global message on World Tourism Day, showcasing that Peshawar and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa are peaceful regions where tourists can explore without fear. He emphasized the collective effort to promote tourism in the area. This year's theme for World Tourism Day was "Tourism and Peace."

## Muzammil flays federal govt for increasing country's debt

### F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: Advisor to the Chief Minister KP for Finance and Inter-provincial Coordination Mr Muzammil Aslam said

that The Prime Minister is congratulating the nation on the IMF package as if the loan has not been taken from anyone but given. Two years ago, the total debt of Pakistan was

43 thousand billion rupees which reached to 70 thousand billion rupees, during the two years of the PDM government. These views have been expressed by the

Advisor to CM Khyber Pakhtunkhwa for Finance and Inter-Provincial Coordination Muzamil Aslam in a video statement released from his office here on Friday.

## CS directs immediate steps to strengthen nursing education

### F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: Chief Secretary Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Nadeem Aslam Chaudhry, has emphasized need to strengthen the processes for producing qualified nurses in the province. Chairing a stock-taking meeting of the Medical Teaching Institution (MTI) Hospitals on Friday, he said that the growing demand for nurses, both nationally and internationally, presents a significant opportunity for the youth of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa.

Chief Secretary assured full support to the Health

Department and MTI Hospitals in addressing this need, stating, "We must seize this opportunity by ensuring the necessary arrangements are in place to produce a highly skilled and qualified nursing workforce. The global healthcare sector has a strong demand for trained professionals, and it is vital that our youth are well-prepared to meet these needs."

In addition to improving nursing education, the Chief Secretary also highlighted the importance of language proficiency, particularly in English, to enable nursing graduates to compete globally. He directed health

authorities to strengthen language training modules to enhance graduates' international employability.

During the meeting, the Chief Secretary took stock of the challenges facing MTI Hospitals, with key discussions revolving around budgetary concerns, recruitment, and procurement processes. He directed the Finance Department to prioritize hospital needs and ensure timely release of funds for smooth operations. "We must ensure optimal utilization of resources to deliver quality healthcare services to the public. Quality healthcare remains a top priority," he stated,

pledging to monitor progress through regular reviews and on-site visits to hospitals and medical colleges.

The meeting was attended by the Secretary Health Adeel Shah, Director General Health Dr. Muhammad Saleem, Special Secretary Budget of the Finance Department Khuda Bakhs, and other relevant officers. MTI hospital authorities participated in the meeting via video link. The hospital representatives provided updates on critical issues and challenges, including healthcare services provided through the Sehat Card.

# Experts hail Prime Minister's UNGA address

PESHAWAR (APP): The landmark address of Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif at the 79th session of the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) on Friday night has been widely commended in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa where experts termed it inclusive, wide-ranging and as per reflection of the entire nation, Kashmiris and Muslims Ummah.

Manzoorul Haq, former ambassador, welcomed the address of Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif for boldly highlighting the issues of regional and global significance including Israel's war crimes at Gaza Palestine and human rights abuses at Indian held Kashmir.

He said the world was facing most daunting challenges to the world order such as Israel's genocidal war in Gaza, a dangerous conflict in Ukraine, destructive conflicts across Africa and Asia, rising geo-political tensions, resurging terrorism, galloping poverty,

stifling debt and a mounting impact of climate change. He said great responsibilities rest on UN to take a lead role in addressing these challenges for world peace and prosperity.

"The UN has not lived up to expectations of oppressed Kashmiris for which it came into existence as the endless sufferings of the oppressed Kashmiris continued in the IIOJK that turned it into the world's largest jail.

The PM Shehbaz Sharif again reminded the world body and its member countries about its commitment and promises in resolution of the long-pending Kashmir dispute that may put the region's peace into jeopardy if not resolved soon, he said.

He said the premier has once again reiterated Pakistan's principled stand on Kashmir, stressing to continue moral, political and diplomatic support to the oppressed Kashmiris till they achieve freedom from the Indian yoke.

"PM Sharif's historic

address has not only reflected the strong aspirations of Kashmiri people but also expressed the desire of lasting peace and stability in the region," he said.

Ambassador Manzoor said that great responsibilities rested on the UN Security Council to grant the right of self-determination to the oppressed people of Indian Illegally Occupied Kashmir and take strong notice of the human rights abuses and systematic state terrorism at the held valley.

He said the India's state terrorism were stand exposed after killing of freedom fighter Burhan Wani in a fake encounter, putting great Kashmiri leader Yasin Malik in jail in a fake case and not allowing the family, relatives and Kashmiris to attend the funeral prayer of the great APHC leader, Syed Ali Shah Gillani.

PM Shehbaz Sharif effectively drew the attention of the world community towards the deteriorating human rights situation in IIOJK and exposed the repres-

sive face of India, which claimed to be the largest democracy of the world.

Since joining of UNO, he said that Pakistan had worked and supported the role of world body in fostering global peace, security, and economic prosperity, adding it was India that backtracked from its commitment and promises by not granted right of self-determination to the oppressed Kashmiris since its illegal invasion of IIOJK in 1947.

Muhammad Hussain Khateeb, Member All Parties Hurriyat Conference (APHC Gillani Group) said that Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif had won the hearts and minds of all Kashmiris for highlighting the Kashmir dispute in its true perspective at the world highest diplomatic forums today.

He said Indian occupational forces' war crimes, state terrorism and human rights abuses had made life a nightmare for over one million oppressed Kashmiris.

APHC leader said India had imposed mili-

tary siege on some 10 million Kashmiris in IIOJK where over 900,000 Indian forces were deployed with no regards for human rights and Geneva Convention.

Since 1989, he said more than 162,000 Kashmiris had been subjected to inhuman torture by Indian forces, adding over 100,000 Kashmiris had been killed by Indian forces while more than 7,200 people murdered in custody of Indian army.

Professor Dr Adnan Sarwar Khan, former Chairman, International Relations Department welcomed the Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif's landmark address at UNGA for highlighting all key issues faced by Pakistan and Muslim Ummah effectively.

He said that Pakistan was a declared nuclear power with strong professional army having all abilities to give befitting response to Indian aggression.

Prime Minister has boldly highlighted the issue of terrorism, its negative impact on economy

and Pakistan's sacrifices in war against terrorism.

He said that premier has rightly called on India to reverse the unilateral and illegal measures, it has taken since 5 August 2019, and enter into a meaningful dialogue "for a peaceful resolution of the Jammu and Kashmir dispute, in accordance with the UN Security Council resolutions, and the wishes of the Kashmiri people".

He expressed the hope that India would reciprocate positively to PM Shahbaz Sharif's offer of dialogue for lasting peace in South Asia.

"Our Premier meeting with world leaders at the sideline of UNGA strongly reflected that Pakistan's view points on regional and international issues were highly valued/heard besides signifying its positive role in world peace."

Adnan Sarwar said Pakistan had suffered huge economical and environmental losses due to climate-change induced weather patterns as evident of the 2010 and 2022 devastated floods.

Despite zero contribution in carbons emissions, Pakistan has been exposed to climate change's vulnerability and great responsibility rest on economic and industrial powers and UNO to help Pakistan in combating this monster challenge.

He said the Premier has rightly underlined the importance of addressing the inequities in international economic relations and reforming the international financial architecture.

He urged the international community to take decisive measures in addressing climate change and countering the rising tide of Islamophobia.

The experts praised 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, prevent conflict, foster peace, and promote global prosperity.

Pakistan Muslim League N KP Information Secretary, Ikhtair Wali

Khan, former environment minister Wajid Ali Khan, Nazim Bahadar Khan, retired civil servant Misal Khan and others highly praised the address of Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif and termed it historic and was as per reflections of aspirations of 141 million people and Kashmiris.

They said PM Sharif had won hearts and minds of Kashmiris brothers and sisters for highlighting India's atrocities at the held Kashmir. They said that situation has changed now and India could not subjugate Kashmiris anymore through force. They said the day was nearer when oppressed Kashmir would soon get freedom from Indian yoke.

Overall, PM Sharif's UNGA address has been characterized as a pivotal moment for Pakistan, articulating the hopes of its people especially of Kashmiris and advocating for global awareness and action on resolution of pressing humanitarian issues and conflicts that put peace of South Asia and Middel East at stake.





## In brief

### Governor visits Swabi F.P. Report

**SWABI:** Governor Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Faisal Karim Kundi, on Friday made a special visit to Swabi where he met with injured police personnel and civilians at the District Headquarters Hospital (DHQ) and Bacha Khan Medical Hospital. During his visit, he expressed his hopes for their speedy recovery. In a brief interaction with the media, Governor Faisal Karim Kundi said that investigations into the incident are ongoing and emphasized the provincial government's responsibility to provide financial assistance to the injured. He also mentioned plans to coordinate with the federal government regarding this support. The Governor was briefed by doctors on the medical facilities being provided to the injured. The Governor assured that all possible resources will be made available for their treatment.

### DEO lauds schools' staff F.P. Report

**TANK:** District education Officer of Tank (male) Sher Muhammad Wazir paid a surprise visit to Government High School No. 3 Tank and other public sector schools on Friday morning to check the attendance of teachers and staff. He was accompanied by ASDEO Muhammad Farooq, Accountant Qudratullah, and other relevant officials. The DEO checked the attendance of teaching, non-teaching staff, and students. He visited various classrooms, observed the teaching methodology, and asked questions from the students. The DEO appreciated the staff for their punctuality and effective teaching. He also expressed satisfaction with the cleanliness of the school premises.

### Man killed in Sargodha

**SARGODHA (INP):** A man was killed due to firing by armed outlaws over resistance during a dacoity bid in the limits of the Jouharabad police station, here on Friday. According to details, Muhammad Khalil(45) t/o Tibba Qaim Deen was riding on a motorcycle when armed outlaws intercepted him near Hamoka Morr. The man put resistance during a dacoity bid on which armed outlaws opened fire and he died on the spot. Upon receiving the information, police concerned rushed to the spot and took notice of the incident. Police have recovered wallet, two cell phones and a motorcycle of the victim from the site.

### Scholar defends M. Phil thesis F.P. Report

**LOWER DIR:** Scholar Husan i Hayat, a resident of Khungi Tamergarh on Thursday completed his M.Phil in Chemistry by successfully defending his research thesis under the supervision of Prof Abdul Khaliq Jan at the Sgaheed Benazir Bhutto University (SBBU) Sheringal Upper Dir. His external examiner was Dr. Khairul Zaman, Abdul Wali Khan University Mardan.

### FC organizes Convention F.P. Report

**WANA:** Frontier Corps Khyber Pakhtunkhwa organized a Youth Convention in Wana area of South Waziristan to discuss the prospects of the bright future of youth in the area. The Convention was attended by a large number of local youth.



**LASBELA:** Coordinator to PM on Climate Change, Romina Khurshid Alam distributing hygiene kits among students.

## Officials directed to daily visit hospitals

F.P. Report

**KOHAT:** Member of the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Assembly Daud Shah Afridi Advocate and Deputy Commissioner Kohat Abdul Akram have taken a notice of public complaints and grievances in the Khuli Katchery held under the Chief Minister Khyber Pakhtunkhwa's Program Awami Agenda in Tehsil Lachi and soon they along with the administration officers rush to the Service Delivery Center Lachi, Type-D Hospital Lachi and NADRA Office Lachi.

They, on this occasion, reviewed the attendance of the staff, cleanliness condition and the facilities and other services being provided to the public. They also met the patients and people to ascertain their problems.

In view of the public complaints, Deputy Commissioner Kohat directed the Assistant Commissioner Lachi to visit the Lachi Hospital, NADRA and WAPDA



Offices on a daily basis for one hour each. The AC Lachi, besides evaluating their performances, will also help the public.

Similarly, the AC Lachi will also submit a daily progress report on public complaints raised in the Khuli Katchery regarding Health, Education, Sanitation and other sectors to the DC Kohat.

The Deputy Commissioner said, after a month, he would again organize a follow-up Katchery in Lachi to inform the people about the out-

come of this Khuli Katchery to restore their confidence in the government's initiatives and prove how productive these Kuli Katcheries are.

The Deputy Commissioner warned the officers and officials of all government departments and institutions, whether Provincial or Federal, that they are not the masters of the people but servants, so be obedient servant and make service to the people as per their duty otherwise opt for themselves outside Kohat.

## Govt utilizes available resources for public welfare

F.P. Report

**HAFIZABAD:** Former Federal Minister Saira Afzal Tarar has said that present government is taking all possible measures to provide different amenities of life to the people at their doorsteps and Chief Minister Punjab Maryam Nawaz Sharif launched special program for revamping of hospitals while under this program Rs.50 million have been released for Rural Health Centers each.

She was talking to citizens and journalist during the visit of Rural Health Centre Sukheki Mandi accompanied by MPA Aoun Intisar Bhatti. Ex-Chairman MC Sukheki Mandi Ch. Nasir Qayyum Bhatti, members Ch. Tajamal Raza, Malik Maqsood Ahmad Awan, president Markazi Anjuman Tajran Sukheki Sheikh Tariq Mehmood, Sarfraz Tarar, Azam Ansar Bhatti and others citizens were present on this occasion.

Replaying to a question, Saira Afzal Tarar said that medicines were available in emergency and outdoors of all hospitals and three doctors were appointed at Rural Health Centre Sukheki Mandi while construction work with the cost of Rs. 50 million was also underway under Chief Minister's Revamping of Hospitals Program.

Responding to another query, she said that hospitals of district Hafizabad were facing shortage of technical staff that is why, performance of labs, X-Ray and daylilies centers were suffering however, this problem will be take up at provincial level to address this issue and further improving services of hospitals.

## TDCP marks world tourism day

F.P. Report

**MULTAN:** The Tourism Development Corporation of Punjab (TDCP), in collaboration with the Institute of Tourism and Hotel Management (ITHM), organized a ceremony to mark World Tourism Day.

The World Tourism Organization announces a specific theme for World Tourism Day every year and this year theme was "Tourism and Peace." The speakers highlighted the crucial relationship between tourism and global harmony. Regional Manager TDCP Misbah Ishaq was the chief guest. In his keynote speech, he emphasized the importance of both inner and outer peace. "Inner peace is reflected in our thoughts, tolerance, speech, actions, and behavior," Mr. Ishaq stated, "Without inner peace, our thoughts become toxic, leading to hatred, extremism, and intolerance." He added that external peace is peace of environment which is essential for communities, nations, and regions. Mr. Ishaq stated that "Countries where peace prevails see tourism flourish, and where tourism flourishes, peace is often a byproduct."

## Muqam stresses for welfare of coalmines workers

F.P. Report

**QUETTA:** Federal Minister for States and Frontier Regions (SAFRON) Amir Muqam on Friday said that all out efforts would be taken to ensure the protection of coalminers and basic facilities as the workers working in the coal mines are the asset of the country.

The workers are working hard and contributing to the country's economy and development, Amir Muqam said while addressing a ceremony organized in the honor of coal mines workers. He said that the people associated with the coal mines would be provided all the facilities and privileges for avoiding tragic incidents in the mining sites. He said on the mines where injustice was done with the workers will be sealed and ban would be also imposed on those mines in the province which lack precautionary measures.

Amir Muqam said that no compromise will be made on the protection and rights of the workers working in the coal mine. The

government was the key priority to provide all possible facilities to the workers, their all legitimate demands would be addressed. He also announced 2 ambulances for the coal mine workers.

Engineer Amir Muqam hailed the approval of 7 billion Dollar IMF deal, which will stabilize the economy of the country. "The political rivals of the PML-N and anti Pakistan elements tried their best to sabotage the financial deal to put the country in the financial crises, however their nefarious designs failed," Amir Muqam remarked.

Federal Minister said that those who destroy peace cannot be Pakistanis. He called upon to the people of Balochistan to not be part of the anti-Pakistan campaign to sabotage the development and peace process of the country. He said everyone has to play their role in maintaining peace, adding that no power can separate Balochistan from Pakistan.

Under the leadership of the Prime Minister of

Pakistan Mian Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif and the leader of the Pakistan Muslim League Mian Nawaz Sharif, has put the country on the path of development and strengthen the economy. Amir Muqam said that the Prime Minister is taking special interest in the development and prosperity of Balochistan.

Amir Muqam said that the development of Balochistan was the top priority of federal government as it has allocated Rs 130 billion development budget in the current PSDP for the uplifting of the province. He said that Gwadar port will be practically operational which would be linked with Karachi through road. Federal Minister Amir Maqam said that the Prime Minister has approved the solarization of 28,000 agricultural tube wells of Balochistan, which will bring a green revolution in the province. He said that by utilizing the mineral resources of the province, Pakistan and Balochistan can be put on the path of development.

## KCCI commits for socio-economic uplift

Sahibzada Afridi

**KOHAT:** Kohat Chamber of Commerce and Industry (KCCI) general body meeting held under the chairmanship of Founder President Malik Asad Khan which beside others was also attended by the Patron of Kohat Chamber Darra Adamkhel former MNA Haji Baz Gul Afridi, Haji Abid Khan, Mirzaman Shenwari, Ahmad Ibrahim Paracha, Malik Iqbal and other important figures participated as guests of honor, on Friday.

Engineer Syed Faiq Shah while announcing the newly elected Cabinet for 2024-26 by Election Commission Members, declared Rashid Ahmad Paracha as the President, Fahimullah (Javed Flour Mills) as Senior Vice President and Mohammad Idris Afridi (Texas Restaurant) as Vice President, while Kamran Tahir from Corporate Sector SBT International, Mudassar Afif Alhaj Zarif & Sons, Mohammad Asif Zaman CNG, Tajmin Ali Classic Nutraceutical Lab, Muhammad Anwar

Chughtai Manzoor Electronics, Ammaruddin, Kohat Enclave, from Associate Class Jasim Bukhari Dewan Travels, Muhammad Waseem AM Asia Builders, Khalid Mahmood Khyber Engineering Shaheen Plaza, Iqbal Mir Sudis Garments Miankhal Bazar, Abdul Mohsen Naem Multi-brand Marketing, Sahar Yahya Shah & Shah Company, While the coordinator Colonel (R) Jawad Paracha and Chairman Standing Committee KUST Rubel Nazir.

The elected cabinet will take charge from October 1, 2024. Earlier, the meeting was started with the recitation of the Holy Quran, after which the newly elected President Rashid Paracha was informed by the General Secretary about the previous calculations. He said, the he plant planted by Asad Khan is flourishing. He demanded steps of the government for the promotion of industry and the public to become taxpayers members of the chamber and establish the industry adding that everyone should serve from the chamber platform of the chamber

with or without a position.

The media and various organizations have an important role in the achievements of the Chamber of Commerce, he said. The incumbent President Arshad Hayat, Senior Vice President Pir Kamran Shah and the Executive Committee members assured to continue serving from the platform of the Chamber. Sher Khan assured all out support from the Bazar Union.

Shaheen Haji, Founder Member Asad Javed, Zakir Khan Israr Shenwari, Azmat Jameel, Imtiaz Pracha, Basit Imtiaz Paracha, Shoaib Khan, M. Junaid, Rashid, Azaz Ahmad, Qari Fateh. Chairmen Fayyaz Bhoolo, Maser Ali Sha, Sakhi Afzal, Muhammad Alam, Bilal Bangash, Muhammad, Shakeel Bangash, Qasim Atiq, Dilawar Awan, Wahab Alam, Adnan Pappu, presidents of various markets and dignitaries of the area also participated. Finally, Pir Shah Nawaz appreciated the efforts of the Chamber of Commerce and prayed for their success.

## Malakand University teachers hold protest

F.P. Report

**LOWER DIR:** The Malakand University Teachers Association (Muta) held a general body meeting regarding the approval of new statutes. The MUTA President Salman Zeb while addressing the protesting faculty criticized the lack of transparency in the preparation of the University of Malakand Statutes, 2024 and said that the administration had tried to implement these laws without consulting key stakeholders.

"Unfortunately, the management has introduced undue hurdles for the faculty members," he added. In particular: he said the imposition of unnecessary test and demonstration for

existing lecturers seeking the post of Assistant Professor, introduction of flawed TTS faculty evaluation proformas linked to annual increments and other hurdles had spread panic and anger among the varsity teachers.

The Malakand University Teachers Association, he said had decided to hold a peaceful protest by wearing black armbands to highlight the seriousness of the situation and to compel immediate corrective action from the Vice-Chancellor.

The teachers' union demanded the faculty members to wear black armbands while performing their duties. Furthermore, a committee was formed for the necessary amendments

to the statutes. At the end of the meeting, it was unanimously decided that if the legitimate demands of the teachers were not accepted, they would refuse to participate in the admission process of this year.

Scholar defends M. Phil thesis in Chemistry: LOWER DIR: Scholar Husan i Hayat, a resident of Khungi Tamergarh on Thursday completed his M.Phil in Chemistry by successfully defending his research thesis under the supervision of Prof Abdul Khaliq Jan at the Sgaheed Benazir Bhutto University (SBBU) Sheringal Upper Dir. His external examiner was Dr. Khairul Zaman, Abdul Wali Khan University Mardan.

## Desilting of drains, sewer lines continues in D I Khan

F.P. Report

**D I KHAN:** Water and Sanitation Services Company D I Khan and Public Health Engineering Department continues the cleanliness work of major drains and sewer lines passing through different areas of the city. WSSC has deputed additional sanitary workers to clean and dredge major drains.

The field operation teams were asked to ensure cleaning and trouble-free flow of waste/sewage water in all

major drains and their final disposal to the designated spots. The WSSC official said that special teams would monitor the campaign in the area, adding special arrangements will be made to remove the garbage after collected from the main drains.

Executive Engineer Public Health Engineering Department Engineer Zeeshan Khan Gandapur with WSSC officials conducted a thorough inspection of the ongoing cleanliness drive. During the visit he

reviewed the construction of manholes and drains, which helps to solve the problems of drainage and urban flooding in the future.

He expressed his satisfaction on the performance of the staff and sanitary workers and said that all the available resources will be utilized to provide best sanitation services to the citizens of DIKhan. On the occasion, WSSC official appealed to the residents not to throw garbage in drains but it should be placed in designated places so that it could be disposed of easily.





## Air strikes in Khartoum as Sudan army attacks paramilitary positions

KHARTOUM (AFP): Air strikes and shelling rocked Khartoum as the army attacked paramilitary positions across the Sudanese capital, witnesses and a military source told AFP. The clashes began at dawn, several residents reported, in what appeared to be the army's first major offensive in months to regain parts of the capital controlled by the rival paramilitary Rapid Support Forces.

It comes the same day Sudan's de facto leader, army chief Abdel Fattah al-Burhan, addressed the UN General Assembly in New York. On the eve of his address, UN chief Antonio Guterres voiced concern to Burhan "about the escalation of the conflict in the Sudan", the United Nations said. Burhan called in his address for the "rebel militia to be designated as a terrorist group" and accused the RSF of obstructing peace efforts.

On the ground, Sudanese army forces were "waging fierce fighting against the rebel militia inside Khartoum", a source in the military told AFP, referring to the RSF. The source, requesting anonymity because they were not authorised to speak to the media, said army forces had crossed three key bridges over the Nile -- which had separated parts of the capital held by the army from those under RSF control. Since April 2023, when war broke out between Burhan's Sudanese Armed Forces and his former deputy, RSF commander Mohamed Hamdan Daglo, the paramilitaries had largely pushed the army out of Khartoum.

In its last major offensive in February, the army regained much of Omdurman, the capital's twin city across the Nile and part of greater Khartoum. The government loyal to the army is based in Port Sudan on the Red Sea coast, where the army has retained control. The RSF meanwhile has taken control of nearly all of the vast western region of Darfur, rampaged through the agricultural



heartland of central Sudan and pushed into the army-controlled southeast. In his address at the UN, Burhan accused "countries in the region" of providing the RSF with "financial support, mercenaries and political cover". The army chief did not name the countries, but his government has repeatedly accused the United Arab Emirates of funnelling arms to the paramilitaries from neighbouring Chad in violation of the arms embargo on Darfur. United Nations experts last year found the accusations "credible", and diplomats say the United States has in private pressed the UAE over its support to the RSF. In Omdurman, a witness said the sound of bombs, which had "jolted them from sleep" at dawn, continued through the day. Several residents of Omdurman reported "intense artillery shelling" falling on residential buildings while military warplanes flew overhead.

"In our neighbourhood alone, three people have been killed today," one Omdurman resident told AFP, requesting anonymity for fear of reprisal. Amid an effective communications blackout and a crippled

healthcare system, it was not possible to verify any casualty toll. Since the war began, much of its worst fighting has been in densely populated areas and both sides have been accused of war crimes, including indiscriminately bombing residential areas. The war has already killed tens of thousands of people, with the World Health Organization saying at least 20,000 people have been killed, but some estimates of up to 150,000. It has also created the world's largest displacement crisis, the UN says.

More than 10 million people -- around a fifth of Sudan's population -- have been forced from their homes, according to UN figures. Famine has been declared in Zamzam refugee camp in Darfur near the city of El-Fasher, where the RSF last weekend launched a large-scale offensive after months of siege. El-Fasher is the only one of five state capitals in Darfur not yet in RSF hands. In his meeting with Burhan, Guterres said the war "risks a regional spillover," the UN said. "People in Sudan have endured 17 months of hell, and the suffering continues to grow," top UN relief official Joyce Msuya said separately.

## Russia in weapon transfer talks with Yemen's Houthis: US envoy

NEW YORK (AFP): The United States has accused Russia of discussing weapon transfers with Yemen's Iran-backed Houthi rebels whose attacks on Red Sea shipping are holding hostage a vital commercial waterway. Speaking to AFP on the sidelines of the UN General Assembly in New York, US Special Envoy for Yemen Tim Lenderking said Moscow was "cutting its own deals" with the Houthis to allow their ships to sail through the Red Sea unharmed.

"We have confirmation that the Russians and the Houthis are in dialogue about ways to cooperate," including on weapon transfers, Lenderking said. "We don't know that weapons are being transferred as we speak, but it's come to the point that we're all sounding the alarm bell to make sure that this does not happen," he added. If the weapon transfers were to

materialize, it "could potentially change the conflict in a significant manner", Lenderking said, warning of "an escalation" that would derail already stalled efforts to end Yemen's decade-long war. "The notion that the Russians would provide the Houthis with lethal weapons is deeply alarming to the countries of the region," he said.

Russia has been stepping up military relationships with Iran and North Korea, both under heavy sanctions, as it seeks to bolster its arsenal in its war in Ukraine. Russia's relationship with the United States has deteriorated sharply since the invasion of Ukraine, with Washington leading the West in slapping sanctions on Moscow and arming Kyiv. Russia, however, has a cordial relationship with oil producer Saudi Arabia, which waged a military campaign against

the Houthis and would be alarmed by any step to boost the insurgents. The Houthis have been firing drones and missiles at ships in the Red Sea and the Gulf of Aden since November, saying they are targeting vessels linked to Israel, the United States and Britain in a show of solidarity with Palestinians over the Israel-Hamas war in Gaza. The Houthi campaign has killed at least four sailors and sunk two ships.

One vessel -- the Galaxy Leader -- was hijacked in November and continues to be held by the Houthis along with its 25 international crew. The United States and Britain have been striking Houthi targets in Yemen since January in an attempt to deter further strikes. Their efforts, however, have failed to slow the attacks that have disrupted maritime traffic in a commercial waterway that normally carries up to 12 per-

cent of global trade. The US envoy noted a flurry of diplomatic efforts on the sidelines of the United Nations General Assembly to curb the Red Sea attacks. US Secretary of State Antony Blinken discussed Yemen with foreign ministers of the Gulf Cooperation Council in New York, Lenderking said.

"My team and I have been meeting with the Saudis, the Emiratis, the Omanis, and the Yemen government this week," he added. "I think we're all looking for what is the right set of pressures and inducements to encourage the Houthis to back away from the Red Sea," he said. "Our preferred outcome is diplomatic." When asked about Iran's role in the Russia-Houthi talks, the US envoy said: "Iran is always looking for ways to protect and amplify the interest of the Houthis."

## Taiwan raises alarm about renewed military threats from China

TAIPEI (Reuters): Taiwan's defence ministry raised the alarm about a renewed surge of Chinese military activity around the island and live fire drills, accusing Beijing of policy instability that presented a serious challenge to its neighbours.

Democratically governed Taiwan, which Beijing views as its own territory, has complained of stepped-up Chinese military activity over the past five years. Taiwan's government rejects China's sovereignty claims. The defence ministry said it had detected a second day of large-scale Chinese military activities nearby, with 29 aircraft engaged in a "joint combat readiness patrol" with Chinese warships.

The day before it warned of 43 Chinese military aircraft operating around the island. Of these 23 flew to the south of Taiwan through the Bashi Channel separating it from the

Philippines and then up along Taiwan's east coast, a ministry map showed, although without entering territorial air space. Pointing to a visit from Sept. 18 to 20 by the chief of China's southern military command to the US military in Hawaii, the ministry said that at the same time China carried out "multiple waves of live-fire attacks" in drills in the Yellow and Bohai seas near the Korean peninsula and Japan. China is doing all it can to build up its military while creating the illusion of dialogue, the ministry added.

The effort "highlights the hegemonic nature of an authoritarian regime that lacks policy stability, posing a serious challenge to neighbouring countries", it added. In Beijing, China's defence ministry defended the drills around Taiwan, with spokesperson Zhang Xiaogang telling reporters they were a "legitimate"

activity. China will continue to strengthen its combat readiness and organise military exercises, he added. A security source familiar with the situation, speaking on condition of anonymity as the matter is a sensitive one, told Reuters flights were part of annual Chinese drills.

The People's Liberation Army was conducting simulated attacks in the Taiwan Strait and the South China Sea, meant to practice access denial to "stop foreign assistance" in the event of conflict in the region, the source added. The Chinese air force also held drills to seize "air dominance" in waters off Taiwan's southwestern coast and practiced air refuelling around the Bashi Channel, the source said. This week China also said it successfully held a rare launch of an intercontinental ballistic missile into the Pacific Ocean. "China has

been carrying out a variety of military exercises in the region recently, which threatens the status quo of peace," Taiwan's presidential office said, urging its neighbour to exercise self-restraint.

Tension around Taiwan has been a persistent source of concern for the United States and its allies, which have been sailing warships through the Taiwan Strait to assert freedom of navigation rights. Vessels from New Zealand and Australia had sailed through the Strait, New Zealand Defence Minister Judith Collins said. China last staged full-fledged war games around Taiwan in late May, shortly after the new president, Lai Ching-te, took office. Beijing detests him, calling him a "separatist". Lai says only Taiwan's people can decide their future and has repeatedly offered talks with Beijing only to be rebuffed.

## Drought reduces Amazon River in Colombia by as much as 90%

COLOMBIA (AFP): The Amazon River has seen its levels in Colombia reduced by as much as 90 percent, a government agency said, as South America faces a severe and widespread drought. The river -- the world's biggest by volume and which also flows through parts of Brazil, Peru, Bolivia, Ecuador, Venezuela, Guyana, French

Guiana and Suriname -- has been hard hit by the drought that has seen wildfires spread across the continent. "The water level has decreased between 80 and 90 percent in the last three months due to drought caused by climate change," Colombia's National Unit for Disaster Risk Management (UNGRD) said in a statement.

The lack of water was particularly impacting Indigenous communities who depend on the river for food and transport, it added. AFP has observed boats stranded around Leticia, capital of the southern Amazonas state, in recent days, with large swathes of land exposed by low water levels. The city, near the borders with Brazil and Peru, is

a critical trading post along the Amazon River.

Its residents say this is the worst drought in at least half a century. Europe's Copernicus Atmosphere Monitoring Service said this week that wildfire activity in South America this year has been "markedly above average" especially in the Amazon region and the Pantanal wetlands.

## Philippines' lower house slashes vice president's funding

MANILA (Reuters): The Philippines' lower house of congress has slashed funding for Vice President Sara Duterte by nearly two-thirds in the proposed 2025 budget, as a deep split between Duterte and President Ferdinand Marcos Jr looms over midterm elections next year.

The lower house, led by House Speaker Martin Romualdez, a cousin of the president, voted 285-3 to approve budget spending of 6.352 trillion pesos (\$113.5 billion) for 2025, a 10% increase over this year. Funding for the vice president was cut by more than 1.3 billion pesos, leaving Duterte's office with 733 million pesos.

"Our job will continue no matter what our budget is," Duterte told reporters. Romualdez said the proposed budget, which has to be reconciled with the Senate's version, would be enough for the vice-president's office to maintain its services. Duterte appeared only once in the lower houses during budget deliberations, and pushed back strongly against scrutiny of her spending by some members of Congress. Her subsequent absences sparked criticism and calls from lawmakers to significantly reduce or cut her budget entirely.

"She was invited three times, but she did not show up," Romualdez said. "As representatives of the people, we expect all public officials to fulfil their duties, especially when it comes to the national budget." The vice president holds a largely ceremonial role with no real power unless the president vacates office or appoints the vice president to a cabinet position. Duterte was the education secretary in Marcos' cabinet, until she resigned in June. Her resignation marked the collapse of what was once considered a formidable political alliance between two of the country's most powerful dynasties that helped Marcos and Duterte secure their 2022 electoral victories.

Political observers said the budget cut may be more than just a response to her absence from hearings, reflecting the broader political feud between the two powerful families. "It would be difficult to support the argument that the budget cut has nothing to do with the breakdown of the 'Unitteam'," said Ederson Tapia, professor of public administration at the University of Makati, referring to the Marcos-Duterte ticket. "The battle lines have been drawn and I expect to see more skirmishes in the run up to the midterm elections and especially moving towards 2028 (presidential election)," Tapia added.

## Many gather to celebrate festival

ADDIS ABABA (AP): Thousands of Ethiopians gathered in the capital to celebrate an annual religious festival distinguished by the lighting of bonfires according to the beliefs of the local Orthodox Christian faithful.

National celebrations of the festival, known as Meskel, traditionally happen in a square by the same name in Addis Ababa. It is one of Ethiopia's most celebrated religious holidays, marked with rituals and merriment across the country. Festivities will continue until Friday, a national holiday during which the faithful attend church services and share intimate moments with their families.

In celebrations of Meskel - a word in the local Amharic language for "cross" - bonfires are burned across the country. In Meskel square, the patriarch of the Ethiopian Orthodox Tewahedo Church lit a large one in the presence of thousands of believers in white costumes. Across Ethiopia, many gather in public squares and by churches to light similar bonfires from piles of logs, dry leaves and grass. Prayers and religious ceremonies are followed by a feast of "kitfo," a lean minced meat somewhat similar to steak tartare that's savored as part of Meskel festivities.

## Ukrainian soldiers recount delicate 'coexistence'

KURSK (AFP): The "several thousand" Russian civilians still living in territory occupied by Ukrainian troops are mostly elderly and largely cut off from the outside world, with no electricity or phone network, according to Ukrainian soldiers.

Ukrainian soldiers deployed as part of Kyiv's shock offensive into Russia's western Kursk region told AFP of a "coexistence" with the locals, despite initial mistrust from residents exposed to Russian state media portrayals of Ukrainians as "monsters". The incursion, two and a half years after Moscow invaded Ukraine, is the first time a foreign army has entered Russia since the end of World War II.

Ukraine says it controls around 100 border settlements over an area of around 1,000 square kilometers (400 square miles) -- a humiliation for President Vladimir Putin. Information from the area is minimal due to a lack of access. Russian authorities have said tens of thousands of civilians fled at the start of the incursion. The number that remained has not been made public. Oleksiy Dmytrashkivsky, spokesman for Ukraine's military administration in the Kursk region, said "several thousand" Russian civilians are still there.

The Ukrainian soldiers said living conditions are difficult and civilians have to rely on their own reserves and vegetable gardens, or else the food, water and medicine the Ukrainian military says it is distributing. They also reported that shops and pharmacies no longer work, electricity and mobile phone networks have been shut down, and Russian forces, which launched a counter-offen-

sive in September, are constantly bombarding the area. Dmytrashkivsky said at least 23 civilians had been killed by the Russian strikes since the end of August. AFP was not able to independently verify claims made by the Ukrainian soldiers or establish how many civilians might have been killed as a result of Ukraine's own shelling.

Ukrainian soldiers said they did not encounter resistance from the local population. "Some of them even greet us in our own language!" said one soldier, Andriy. In this border region, many people speak a mix of Russian and Ukrainian. Andriy said he thought the friendliness might be because of the aid they have received, but acknowledged it could also be "because we are armed and people avoid expressing their true feelings".

According to Dmytrashkivsky, Russian civilians were initially "terrified" and "hid" when they saw Ukrainian soldiers because of Russian state media narratives. Now "local residents are not afraid of the Ukrainian army", said another soldier, Sergiy. "When they see a military vehicle, they come closer, they ask if it is distributing humanitarian aid." But Sergiy chooses to limit his contact, fearing that anything he says could be passed on to the Russian military.

"A polite and discreet coexistence is enough," he said. Contacted by AFP, the Ukrainian army declined to comment on reports of suspected pillaging by some of its soldiers. AFP, which has not visited the area of Russia under Ukrainian occupation and cannot speak to civilians who have remained there due to the lack of phone signal, is

unable to confirm the claims made by the Ukrainian military. Kyiv has invited the United Nations and the International Committee of the Red Cross to visit the area -- an offer the Kremlin denounced as a "pure provocation". Russia has largely sought to downplay the incursion. "The situation in the areas controlled by Ukrainian forces is of course a crisis situation and it will be rectified in good time," Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov said on September 20 in answer to a question from AFP.

Russian foreign ministry spokeswoman Maria Zakharova has accused Ukraine of setting up "concentration camps" in the area. But Peskov said there was "no information" to back up this claim. Interviewed by AFP, residents who fled the area to other parts of Russia spoke of massive destruction and said they were unable to contact their relatives. "We cannot go there now, nobody can go back," said Elena, who said she had fled the town of Sudzha and declined to give her surname. "Many elderly people stayed and we cannot contact them to know what is happening to our livestock and our homes," she said. Dmytrashkivsky admitted he had wanted to be "rude" with Russian civilians when he arrived because of the suffering inflicted by Moscow's troops on Ukraine. Now, he said, "I just feel sorry for these people" who "have been brainwashed". "They're peaceful people who aren't prone to conflict," said Sergiy. He said the locals "don't provoke any aggression from us," having "found themselves in this ambiguous situation" through no fault of their own.

## NK has enough uranium to build number of bombs

SEOUL (AP): North Korea has likely enriched enough uranium to build a "double-digit" number of bombs and is making progress in its efforts to develop more powerful and accurate missiles targeting rival South Korea, Seoul's spy agency told lawmakers.

The closed-door parliamentary briefing by the National Intelligence Service came after North Korea offered a rare glimpse into a secretive facility to produce weapons-grade uranium earlier this month as leader Kim Jong Un reiterated his goal to "exponentially" increase his stock of nuclear weapons. The South Korean agency assessed that Kim's disclosure of the facility was likely a statement of defiance toward Washington ahead of the US presidential election and meant to domestically showcase his military accomplishments amid deepening economic struggles, according to Lee Seong-kweon, one of the lawmakers who attended the briefing.

When asked about North Korea's bomb fuel capacity, the agency said North Korea likely has about 70 kilograms (154 pounds) of plutonium and an unspecified but considerable amount of weapons-grade uranium that would be enough to build "at least a double-digit number" of weapons, Lee said. While North Korean state media did not disclose the location of the uranium enrichment facility that Kim visited on Sept. 13, the South Korean agency said it was likely to be a site in Kangson, near the North Korean capital of Pyongyang, said Park Sunwon, another lawmaker who attended the briefing.

Along with the North's main nuclear complex in the town of Yongbyon, the Kangson plant is one of two known sites in North Korea that has been linked to uranium enrichment activities. Some analysts say North Korea likely has other hidden sites for enriching uranium. Kim's visit to the uranium enrichment site was followed by a North Korean missile test days later, as the country continues to flaunt its weapons capabilities in the face of deepening confrontations

with Washington and Seoul.

North Korean state media said the test launches on Sept. 18 involved two types of new missiles - one designed to deliver "super-large" conventional warheads and the other a "strategic" cruise missile, a term that implies it was developed for nuclear strikes. North Korean state media reports on the tests suggested that North Korea was improving the capabilities of the weapons, which are designed for delivering precision strikes on South Korean targets, the lawmakers paraphrased the South Korean spy agency as saying. Some analysts speculate that North Korea could attempt to dial up pressure on Washington by conducting a nuclear test ahead of the US presidential election. But the South Korean spy agency assessed that North Korea could wait on a nuclear test until after the election since there are other steps it may want to try first, such as test-firing a long-range missile targeting the US mainland or launching a military reconnaissance satellite, Lee said.

## Philippines says its aircraft shadowed by Chinese helicopter

MANILA (Reuters): The Philippines said its fisheries bureau aircraft was shadowed and approached by a Chinese navy helicopter while on patrol near the disputed Scarborough Shoal, in another face-off between two countries locked in a bitter row over territory.

The Philippine National Security Council (NSC) said the incident took place and its aircraft was still able to complete its mission. It was the latest in the series of air and sea encounters between the two countries that have sparred over contested areas of the South China Sea, including the Scarborough Shoal, one of Asia's most contested features, which has been occupied by China's coast guard for more than a decade.

China's actions violated air safety regulations, the NSC said in a statement. China's embassy in Manila did not immediately respond to a request for comment on

the Philippines' account of the incident. Based on its interpretation of old maps, China claims almost the entire South China Sea, including the Scarborough Shoal, coveted for its bountiful fish stocks and a stunning turquoise lagoon. The shoal, named after a British vessel that got stuck there centuries ago, is located 200 km (124 miles) off the Philippines, inside its exclusive economic zone (EEZ).

A 2016 ruling by the Permanent Court of Arbitration found China's sweeping claims were not supported by international law, a decision Beijing refuses to recognise. The tribunal did not determine sovereignty over the Scarborough Shoal, which it said was a traditional fishing ground for several countries. Separately, the Philippine defence minister told China to withdraw vessels from its EEZ and accused Beijing of trying to meddle in its

defence activities, including its use of a US mid-range missile launcher for training. Reuters reported last week the United States has no immediate plans to pull out the missile system, which can be equipped with cruise missiles capable of striking Chinese targets.

"China is saying that they are alarmed, but that is interference into our internal affairs," Defence Secretary Gilberto Teodoro told reporters. "Why don't they lead by example? Destroy their nuclear arsenal. Remove all their ballistic missile capabilities. Get out of the West Philippine Sea, and get out of Mischief reef," he added, referring to the Philippine EEZ and a manmade, militarised island built there by China. China has expressed concern over the deployment of the Typhon system in the Philippines, accusing Washington of fuelling an arms race.



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## US looks to Japan for help

**U**S naval dominance, unchallenged for decades, is now coming under strain as China's state-backed shipbuilding industry rapidly expands, while the US Navy faces severe maintenance delays. The impact is being felt across the Navy. While some ships and submarines are stuck waiting for repairs at overcrowded US shipyards, others are forced into extended deployments, pushing crews and vessels to their limits.

Analysts say the delays undermine the US ability to project strength and deter conflict, especially in key areas like the Taiwan Strait and South China Sea, where China is upsetting the status quo. To help fix the problem, the US is turning to its allies - particularly Japan, one of the world's largest shipbuilders. Earlier this year, US and Japanese officials began negotiating a plan to expand Japan's role in performing major repairs on US Navy vessels at its shipyards.

Rahm Emanuel, US ambassador to Japan, sees the proposal as crucial for keeping US ships in the region. "The Indo-Pacific is an away game for us...but with allies, it's closer to a home game," Emanuel told VOA. The discussions underscore Japan's broader shift toward a more active regional security role, as it steps away from decades of pacifism. It's also part of a strategy by the US to encourage its Asian allies to take on greater security responsibilities in the face of China's rising influence.

However, the proposal faces major hurdles. In the US, legal changes would be needed to allow foreign shipyards to overhaul Navy vessels. In Japan, there are concerns about becoming a bigger target for China. But for the US Navy, the challenge is severe. According to the Congressional Research Service (CRS), about a third of the US attack submarine fleet is currently out of service, either undergoing maintenance or awaiting repairs.

Fewer than 40% of the Navy's scheduled ship repairs are completed on time, according to recent congressional testimony. By some estimates, the Navy is 20 years behind in maintenance work. A wide range of key shipbuilding projects are also running years behind schedule - an "extraordinary situation" in the post-World War II history of the Navy, according to CRS. Emanuel argues this reflects a broader decline in the US defense industrial base, which has been hollowed out since the 1990s and is "not ready" to meet US security needs.

"Every weapon that we've agreed to here, I've had to renegotiate the contract once it's signed because we can't meet the budget at the timeline," Emanuel said. "It's really bad planning [and] really bad preparation." According to a recent CRS report, the Navy's repair backlog is caused by a shortage of skilled workers and limited capacity at the four US government-run naval shipyards. Meanwhile, China boasts 20 large shipyards, which it is using to quickly build up what is already the world's largest navy in terms of overall vessels.

According to a recent unclassified slide released by US naval intelligence, China's shipbuilding capacity is over 200 times that of the United States, fueled by generous government subsidies. Even though the US still maintains significant naval advantages - such as 11 aircraft carriers compared to China's three and an unrivaled network of global alliances - some observers believe that China's ability to dwarf US shipbuilding represents a fundamental shift in the regional balance of power. "We've let that underlying capacity atrophy to the point where we're behind the eight ball at the moment, and that's a big, thorny problem," said Sam Byers, the senior national security advisor at the Washington D.C.-based Center for Maritime Strategy. In Emanuel's estimation, the US-Japan ship repair proposal could alleviate the US Navy's maintenance backlog, freeing US shipyards to focus on meeting their construction goals. It would also allow US ships to stay for longer in Asia, he said.

But not everyone agrees. Bryan Clark, a senior fellow at the Hudson Institute, argues that the problem isn't a lack of shipyard capacity but rather their inconsistent use, due to fluctuating demand from the Navy. He suggests that repairing more ships overseas could help manage these fluctuations and minimize disruptions for Japan-based crews. "And repair yards in Japan could gain experience working on US ships, which could be beneficial in a conflict," he added.

However, he cautioned that shifting work overseas wouldn't solve the underlying issues of funding and planning that contribute to the Navy's repair delays. "Of course, the Japanese ship repair yards may do a better job or be more efficient than their American counterparts. If that is the argument, then US officials should make that clear," Clark said. Others in the shipbuilding industry have argued against what they see as outsourcing US Navy shipbuilding and repairs, a step they characterize as "kicking American shipyard workers to the curb." There are also barriers in Japan, where public opinion doesn't always align with the government's more assertive security stance.

While certain segments of the Japanese public appear more supportive of increased military involvement after Russia's invasion of Ukraine, it's unclear how deep or lasting this shift is, warned Misato Matsuoka, an associate professor at Teikyo University. "There is this gap of understanding when it comes to what is going on in the security area," Matsuoka said. "I don't see a lot of Japanese who are even aware of these changes." Matsuoka also warned that the US-Japan ship repair proposal could eventually be seen as one of many factors escalating US-China tensions, potentially impacting Japan negatively.

"All the things Japan is doing makes it more important within the US alliance but that also increases the risk of something happening to Japanese territory," said Robert Ward, Japan Chair at the International Institute for Strategic Studies. While Japan deepens ties with the US, it is careful not to provoke China, Ward noted. Nonetheless, Japan, like many countries, remains wary of what it sees as China's destabilizing behavior in the region. "This isn't happening in a vacuum," Ward said, referring to Japan's changing security posture. "There are very good reasons why all this is happening." When it comes to the US-Japan ship repair deal, the choices are also complex for the United States, Emanuel acknowledged. However, he argued, sometimes "you've got to choose between what's bad and what's worse."

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## Does Russia-Iran rift in Caucasus create an opportunity for West?

Rövn Mammadli

**W**HILE Ukraine's Western allies warn of the deepening cooperation between Russia and Iran, tensions between these two Eurasian powers are being tested in the South Caucasus. Moscow's push for Baku's Zangezur Corridor project - an unimpeded transit route connecting mainland Azerbaijan to its Nakhchivan exclave and then to Turkey through Armenia's Syunik province - has rekindled anxiety in Tehran.

Following recent comments by Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov and Foreign Ministry spokesperson Maria Zakharova regarding the reopening of regional transportation routes based on the Nov. 10, 2020, agreement between Moscow, Baku, and Yerevan, Iran's political leadership has begun to criticize Russia openly. Lavrov notably rebuked Armenia, accusing Yerevan of backtracking on the 2020 agreement, which stipulates that the corridor would be under the control of the Russian Federal Security Service. "It is the Armenian leadership that is sabotaging an agreement signed by Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan. It is difficult to understand the meaning of such a position," Lavrov stated.

In response, Pashinyan announced that Russia could no longer mediate between Armenia and Azerbaijan. Meanwhile, Iran's ambassador to Moscow lodged a formal protest, warning that creating the Zangezur Corridor would spark new tensions near Iran's northern border with Armenia. Additionally, Iran summoned the Russian ambassador to express its extreme dissatisfaction with Moscow's stance. On Sept. 5, Iranian Foreign Minister Seyed Abbas Araghchi, referencing Russia's support for the corridor, wrote that any threat to the territorial integrity of Iran's neighbors or altering their borders is "completely unacceptable" for Tehran.

The next day, Iran's ambassador to Yerevan echoed this view, saying, "The dreams and aspirations of some [countries] regarding Armenia, including the corridor, will not become a reality. The territorial integrity of our neighbors is our red line," underscoring Tehran's perception of security threats from the situation. Tehran's reaction stems from the strategically important location of the proposed corridor. As Syunik borders Iran, Tehran fears the corridor could cut off its direct access to Yerevan and diminish its regional influence. Since the end of the Second Karabakh War in 2020, Baku, with Russia's tacit backing, has consistently pushed for the establishment of the corridor without Armenian checkpoints or customs controls. In

of Nagorno-Karabakh in 2023. Moscow has long regarded the South Caucasus as its backyard, seeking to maintain a monopoly over regional affairs. In the context of its ongoing invasion of Ukraine, Russia now sees the proposed Zangezur Corridor as a way to reclaim its fading influence in Armenia and reestablish its key role as a crucial transit hub vis-à-vis the West. In contrast, Yerevan, having effectively distanced itself from the

***This more assertive Iranian stance, combined with the deployment of the EU mission along the Azerbaijan-Armenia border, significantly bolstered Yerevan in resisting Baku's ambitions. The idea of the corridor further lost traction after Azerbaijan took full control of Nagorno-Karabakh in 2023. Moscow has long regarded the South Caucasus as its backyard, seeking to maintain a monopoly over regional affairs. In the context of its ongoing invasion of Ukraine, Russia now sees the proposed Zangezur Corridor as a way to reclaim its fading influence in Armenia and reestablish its key role as a crucial transit hub vis-à-vis the West.***

response to Baku's increasingly aggressive rhetoric, Iran conducted war games near Azerbaijan's border in 2021 and 2022, leading to a nearly three-year diplomatic crisis between the two countries. The strength of Iran's reaction also signaled its willingness to escalate tensions with Baku to ensure the security of southern Armenia.

While Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov initially opposed Iran's military drills near the Azerbaijan border in 2021, Moscow remained in 2022. This is likely because of Russia's dependence on Tehran for equipment to fight the war in Ukraine. This more assertive Iranian stance, combined with the deployment of the EU mission along the Azerbaijan-Armenia border, significantly bolstered Yerevan in resisting Baku's ambitions. The idea of the corridor further lost traction after Azerbaijan took full control

CSTO and strengthened its ties with the EU and the US, views the corridor as a threat to its sovereignty and strongly opposes any Russian control over it. Armenia's Foreign Ministry recently confirmed that discussions about the possibility of a private company managing the route are underway. Although Baku has officially dropped its demand for the Zangezur Corridor from the peace talks with Armenia, the Kremlin is now trying to bring the issue back to the forefront.

Historically, Moscow has not shied away from provoking Tehran, such as keeping Syrian airspace open for Israeli airstrikes on Iranian positions and siding with the UAE over the three islands in the Persian Gulf. Additionally, Russia is delaying signing a 20-year comprehensive cooperation agreement with Iran, despite Tehran's support in the Ukraine con-

flict. Now, with new sanctions on Iran following reports of its supply of ballistic missiles to Russia, Moscow's disregard for Tehran's concerns in the South Caucasus has started to frustrate the Islamic Republic. These events, which have largely escaped broader attention, highlight the significant divergences between Russia and Iran's interests, despite their growing cooperation. This rift also presents an opportunity for increased Western engagement in the region. Of course, if Moscow were to control such a key transportation corridor, which could greatly improve connectivity between Central Asia and Europe, it would pose a direct challenge to Western interests. Given their shared concerns about Russian ambitions in the South Caucasus, this situation could foster a level of cooperation between Western countries and Tehran, potentially opening new diplomatic channels that could be beneficial in other matters as well. Notably, Iranian and French ambassadors to Armenia have already held several meetings to discuss the security situation in southeastern Armenia in light of a possible Azerbaijan offensive.

It is worth adding that Iran's new reformist president, Masud Pezeshkiyan, has openly criticized Tehran's eastward-looking strategy and advocates for improving relations with Europe while also seeking to reduce tensions with the US. Heshmatollah Falahatpisheh, the former chairman of the Iranian Parliament's National Security and Foreign Policy Committee, has argued that Vladimir Putin's push for the establishment of the Zangezur Corridor is a "preemptive move" designed to pressure Tehran, aiming to prevent Pezeshkian's administration from opening "communication channels" with Washington. It is clear that Moscow and Tehran are reliant on each other, economically and politically. However, recognizing such deep-rooted differences in their interests - differences that are unlikely to be resolved - would create more space for the much-needed Western engagement in the South Caucasus.

The Moscow Times

## Harris now knows what strong women before her knew

Sonia Purnell

**O**H no, here we go again. The Donald Trump admirer Laura Loomer makes claims that Kamala Harris used sex to advance her career and reach striking distance of the White House, and it all feels horribly inevitable. A vile sexual joke comparing Harris and Hillary Clinton appears on social media. Trump quickly reposts it.

Now 59 and happily married to a lawyer, Harris's relationship with the former San Francisco mayor and California power-player Willie Brown was in the mid-90s when she was barely 30. But then, the sex life of a woman in public life is always fair game to her detractors, even decades later. This playbook of attack on an accomplished, ambitious and attractive woman goes back a long way. And it always seeks to reduce female success against the odds to an insinuation; notable achievements to a nod and a wink.

It is hard enough for women to break through in politics, but when they do, misogyny is never far away. We like to think that after countless female leaders, not to mention three female prime ministers in the UK, the sting would have been drawn, but it has never gone away. It is low politics, but it works. Harris is the target now, but in another age, the prey was Pamela Harriman, a notable Democrat of the 1980s and 90s who never ran for elected office but scored numerous political triumphs. A famously sexy woman who had entertained multiple rich and powerful lovers in her youth, Harriman went on in her 60s to reinvent herself and her party after the near fatal blow of the 1980 Ronald Reagan landslide. She helped dozens of politicians to win office through novel ways of fundraising and campaigning, earning her the gratitude of such names as George Mitchell, the US senator who helped broker peace in Northern Ireland.

Even Bill Clinton put down his improbable rise to the presidency "in no small measure" to Harriman, who spotted him early, promoted and projected him around Washington and, by his own account, encouraged him to believe in himself. The one-time daughter-in-law of Winston Churchill, she also counselled him on international statecraft so that he felt "ready to stand as president before America and the world". Her reward was to be his US ambassador to France, where Clinton and the former French president Jacques Chirac hailed her for helping to shape the efforts to stop the genocide in Bosnia.

On her death, Chirac described her as a "peerless diplomat" in the league of Benjamin Franklin and Thomas Jefferson, and a grateful Clinton gave the eulogy at her funeral, describing her as "wise counsel, friend, a leader". Even eight years later, Le Monde was writing that her work in defusing tensions between Washington and Paris had made the world a "safer place". And yet there were - and sadly, still are - plenty of voices who dismiss her as a "red-headed tart", a conniving gold-digger who "saw the world laying on her back". And still it goes on. One commentator in a prominent newspaper recently reduced her to a "frightful ratbag" and a

"mercenary sex obsessive". Go back further. Consider Virginia Hall, a second world war spy whose exploits in Nazi-occupied France - despite having a wooden leg called Cuthbert - had earned the attention of the Gestapo, who declared her to be the "most dangerous of all allied spies". Klaus Barbie became obsessed with killing her, yelling that he would give anything to get his hands on "that ... bitch".

Yet during three long years under cover behind enemy lines, the Baltimore socialite (who had lost her leg in an accident) escaped capture to rescue fellow agents through daring jail breaks, blew up bridges and railway lines to rid an entire department of Nazis, and sent back vital intelligence that helped the US liberate Paris. And what happened next? Her application to become a diplomat was rejected by the Department of State in the US before the war because of her disability and gender. After peace broke out, Hall was sidelined by her envious male superiors at the CIA who had themselves not seen action - one even claiming in personnel files that she could not cope under pressure. Hall died in obscurity largely unrecognised and unthanked. Her role was subsequently reduced to a line or two in many accounts - though not in the official papers, many of them until recently still classified, where her deriding-do is detailed with "stupefaction".

No less misunderstood was Clementine Churchill, Harriman's first mother-in-law and wife to Winston. Until recently, this formidable woman had had virtually no public presence in popular history. Her husband is one of the most biographed figures in history, but she has often been cast aside as shrill and irrelevant. One 800-page biography of Winston, for instance, does not feature her once in the index. Another tome claimed that Clementine was a "nuisance" who merely added to rather than curtailed the pressures on her husband. And yet Churchill himself recalled that his life's work had been possible only because of her. Those working at the couple's side during Britain's struggle for survival noticed how she was vital not just to her husband, but to the entire war effort - not least through restraining her husband's most trenchant instincts. His chief of staff, Gen "Pug" Ismay, believed that without Clementine, the "history" of Winston Churchill and of the world would have been a very different story". The then US ambassador Gil Winant, a thoughtful and observant figure, wrote that "if the future breeds historians of u n d e r s t a n d i n g", Clementine's service to Britain would be "given the full measure it deserves".

There is surely a duty on all of us to try to be a "historian of understanding" by researching and reading before reacting and judging. As a writer, I have made it my mission to put the story straight on all three women, with a trilogy of biographies pushing back on their vilification. I think it is vital work, but even today, it is hard work: as evidenced by the modern attack lines on Harris. The effort to correct tomorrow's history must start now.

The Guardian

## Starmer needs a way to head off claims of sleaze

Martin Kettle

**N**O iron law of politics says a government cannot recover from a bad early stumble. So don't write Keir Starmer off too quickly because of the long game he insists on playing or the freebies he took. But don't kid yourself that his government is not wounded either. Because, after only three months in power, it has already felt a brush with mortality.

The Labour conference in Liverpool has made little difference to this. Party conferences can seem absorbing when you are present. But their wider importance is overstated. The same goes for leaders' speeches. Most people living outside the bubble barely notice them, and they didn't care that much in the first place anyway.

In Tuesday's speech, Starmer showed he could see this, but also that he doesn't possess the tools to change it. He acknowl-

edged the indisputable, that the public mood towards politics and government has changed in modern times: "brittle and fragile" were his chosen words. When ministers ask for "patience in pursuit of national renewal", people wonder what there will be to show for it. "I understand that," said Starmer. What followed showed the limits of his understanding. The speech relied on a reiteration of familiar assertions that ought, in theory, to inspire but do not, and have triggered Starmer's recent lurching poll ratings. That politics can make a difference. That Labour's is a long-term project, requiring patience. That the project is not easy. That, in the words of the speech, "It all comes back to that question: can politics be a force for good in people's lives?"

That is indeed a big question, one of the biggest. But the decline in public confidence towards

politics has gone further and faster than the politicians' responses. Three months in, Starmer's homilies, worthy and well-intentioned, do not supply an adequate answer. Recent polls underline this. They confirm instead that no response is worth anything if it fails to grasp how much of the public no longer has confidence in politicians and government. To underestimate this is to doom oneself to failure and disappointment. Confronting this problem is Starmer's central challenge - and perhaps also our country's. But Labour's answer is too tepid.

After the Conservatives imploded in autumn 2022, it was always obvious Labour would win the next election. Preparation for government was intense. Shadow ministers were briefed for months. Few incoming governments could have

been more ready for the task than Starmer's.

So how come they didn't see this month's freebie row coming until it hit them in the face? It wasn't as if the scandal was about anything new. Quite the opposite. MPs' dubious expense claims and ministerial sleaze have tainted British politics for decades. Surely there was someone in Downing Street or in Starmer's office who saw in advance that ministers accepting cash from donors for clothes, rentals, holidays and tickets was an awful look, especially post-Boris Johnson? Why did no one say "Just say no"? Was there no one who grasped that saying yes to freebies is a prime example of exactly what leads so many to conclude that all politicians are the same - and that all politicians are in it for themselves?

For starters, Starmer

needs to appoint someone to his inner circle whom he trusts to tell him when he is digging a hole for himself. Experience suggests this is not Sue Gray. If he had had such a person already, he would not have got into the freebie hole and then tried to defend himself in the feeble manner he still adopted on the Today programme this week over the central London accommodation supplied to him by Lord Alli. But he also needs to send a clear and more insistent message about Labour's project. A stronger No 10 team and a more aggressive communications operation are parts of this. But only parts. A much more significant part is to be personally proactive on the issue itself: to cap donations and gifts to ministers and to put them all into an independently operated body such as a blind trust to which genuinely needy ministers can apply if appropriate, up to a modest

ceiling.

But the bigger key is to do what I warned on these pages on the eve of the election needed to be done. Starmer needs to ensure that he, his staff and his ministers all absorb the Nolan principles of public life into their every waking act. This has not happened, with the consequences we have seen. It is a disgrace that there is not yet an updated ministerial code in place. When that is rectified, Starmer must make the code tough, transparent and independently enforced. This government's wider political credibility rests, to a degree it may not appreciate, on a collective ability to maintain and enforce a regime of demonstrable modesty and frugality. Without such an approach, Labour is one sleaze scandal away from a slide into a disrepute with a doubting public that would make even the most virtuous project unachievable.



# Russia’s violent 1990s re-erupted with wildberries shootout

Jason Corcoran

**T**HE bullets flying at Moscow's Wildberries HQ last week are a chilling sign that Russia's wild 1990s are back with a vengeance. In a deadly shootout straight out of a mobster's playbook, the violent chaos that once ruled the streets has returned to the Moscow boardroom, leaving two dead and the nation wondering whether Russia's ruthless past ever really went away.

Tatiana Kim, Russia's wealthiest woman and the founder of the e-commerce giant Wildberries, released an emotional video on Sept. 19, tearfully accusing her estranged husband Vladislav Bakalchuk of organizing an armed attack to try to seize the company by force. "Vladislav, what are you doing?" she sobbed. "How will you look into the eyes of your parents and our children? How could you bring the situation to such absurdity?" It was the worst example of corporate violence since the wild days of the 1990s. Two security guards were killed in a bloodbath, while seven others were injured as security staff faced off with the men in a dramatic showdown.

State television conveniently ignored the Wildberries shooting and the involvement of Ramzan Kadyrov, who recently met with Vladislav and pledged his support - a move widely seen as the Chechen leader's bid to expand his influence. Tatiana, the founder and 99% owner of the e-commerce giant Wildberries, now finds herself in a power struggle with her estranged husband, despite his minimal 1% stake in the company known as "Russia's Amazon." Wildberries was thrown into chaos after Tatiana announced plans in July to merge with the much smaller Rus outdoor advertising company.

Analysts dismissed the deal as senseless. The independent media

outlet The Bell suggested the merger may be part of Russia's wartime redistribution of assets that has rewarded Kremlin-linked business figures. For example, the confiscated assets of French yogurt maker Danone are already being sold to a relative of Kadyrov at a knockdown price. Similarly, Carlsberg's Russian subsidiary is now being run by associates of President Vladimir Putin's billionaire childhood friends Yuri Kovalchuk and Arkady Rotenberg. The shooting incident occurred at Romanov Dvor, a premium business quarter located about 500 meters from the Kremlin. I worked in that building for seven years in Bloomberg News, which occupied the top floor. Other blue-chip tenants included Credit Suisse, Apple Inc., the law firm White & Case, the Swedish investor East Capital and the British auction house Sotheby's. It was a refined and elegant oasis to do business in. The building, which is owned by the Russian-Armenian billionaire Ruben Vardanyan boasted a Raiffeisen bank branch, a VIP cinema, restaurants and cafes, a French-style bakery and World Class fitness club in the basement which attracted the mistresses of many oligarchs who were chauffeured to the door.

All the European and American tenants have since departed after the invasion wiped out three decades of economic integration. Some of them have been replaced by well-known Russian companies like Wildberries and corporations from China. The shootout brings to mind one of the most infamous events of the 1990s - the assassination of Paul Tatum, an American businessman who fell victim to the brutality of the time. Tatum, who had co-founded a joint venture to develop and run the Radisson Slavyanskaya Hotel in

Moscow, became embroiled in a bitter corporate feud with his Russian partners. His refusal to give up his share of the business led to a series of threats, and in 1996, he was gunned down near a metro station, in broad daylight. Tatum's murder was not an isolated event. It was emblematic of a broader problem - organized crime had embedded itself within the very fabric of the burgeoning capitalist system.

Today's Russia's economy, strained by sanctions and the ongoing war, is creating an atmosphere where business elites are increasingly willing to resort to drastic measures for survival. In the 1990s, oligarchs, criminal gangs and corrupt officials thrived in an environment where the legal system was powerless. As the Soviet Union collapsed in 1991, Russia descended into a chaotic "wild east" where the rigid structures of communist central planning gave way to a lawless form of free-market capitalism. In the chaotic 1990s and early 2000s, private militia roamed Moscow's malls, hotels and casinos armed with submachine guns, a stark symbol of the lawlessness that gripped Russia during its post-Soviet transition. Business disputes were settled not through negotiation, but with car bombs, contract killings, and daylight assassinations. Violence was the currency of power in a country where fortunes were built - and destroyed - by brute force, as the collapse of communism gave way to a brutal form of capitalism ruled by oligarchs and criminal syndicates.

Powerful figures hired private security forces or enlisted the protection of corrupt officials, known as krysha ("roof"), to shield their interests. Reports in Russian media suggest authorities and business groups are considering arming guards at

Moscow's 500 shopping malls, especially after 140 people were killed at the Crocus City Hall venue in March. The capital has also recently been ravaged by arson amid fears that Moscow is returning to banditry. Chechens, who were prevalent among the armed gangs of the 1990s, are again showing their muscle amid reports that Vladislav Bakalchuk was accompanied by armed men from the republic. As the state's grip weakens and resources dwindle, Russia is inevitably slipping back into the violent, lawless power struggles that defined its post-Soviet years. The Wildberries shootout is more than just an isolated incident. It is a signal that the chaos of the 1990s is not in the past, but part of Russia's recurring destiny.

The veneer of stability has cracked, exposing the same violent, lawless undercurrent that defined post-Soviet Russia. Putin is seemingly powerless to control the competing forces. According to RBC, the Wildberries merger was signed off by Putin's cabinet and overseen by deputy chief of staff Maxim Oreshkin. Forbes uncovered a letter in which Putin personally instructed Oreshkin to back the deal. In reality, the wild 1990s in Russia never went away - they just went underground. The rule of law has always been shamelessly ineffectual. For the past decade, corporate shakedowns, harassment, squeeze-outs and the unlawful arrest of executives were par de course. The difference now is that the conflicts once hidden behind closed doors have come out into the open. What has changed is the rats are no longer fighting under the Kremlin's rug. Since the invasion of Ukraine, the power struggles have become more blatant and the rodents have emerged above the surface to fight for scraps from the table and the spoils of a shrinking economy.

# Tech bro style in American politics

Paul Krugman

**I**T seems hard to believe now, but in 2021, Time named Elon Musk its Person of the Year. True, that designation doesn't necessarily equate to a stamp of approval. But the magazine's coverage of Musk at the time was very favorable, almost fawning, highlighting his assertion that "my career is Mars and cars."

A lot of people would disagree with that declaration now. Of course, Tesla and SpaceX remain big businesses. But Musk himself is largely defined in many minds by the way he changed X, the site formerly known as Twitter - making more room for right-wing extremists, including a substantial number of pro-Nazi accounts, and his own embrace of antisemitic and racist conspiracy theories.

Musk's right-wing turn isn't universal or even typical: Reporting suggests that even with the rightward turn of several boldface names, Silicon Valley remains heavily Democratic. Political contributions from the internet industry, in particular, remain strongly tilted toward Democrats. But right-wing tech bros are exerting a significant and, I'd argue, malign influence on the political landscape. Consider the case of JD Vance, the junior senator from Ohio and Donald Trump's running mate.

How did Vance get to where he is? He's a remarkable campaigner - remarkable, that is, in the sense that he seems incredibly bad at it. I won't rehash the "cat ladies" contretemps except to say that it contributed to what will probably go down as one of the worst running-mate roll-outs of all time. So who picked this guy? The answer, it appears to me, is a handful of tech moguls led by the billionaire Peter Thiel, who in effect bought Vance a Senate seat by overwhelming his rivals with a flood of cash.

And in so doing they set someone who has, in my view, morphed into an ugly extremist on a path that could quite possibly put him a heartbeat away from the presidency: Bear in mind that Vance took the lead in spreading claims about Haitian migrants in Springfield, Ohio, stealing and eating neighbors' pets, and has gladly continued to perpetuate these claims even though they appear to be completely unfounded. Then there's cryptocurrency, which isn't quite like other parts of the technology sector. Whatever you think of Musk, Tesla produces a real product with real uses; so, in a different way, does PayPal, the initial source of Thiel's vast

wealth. Crypto, by contrast, remains a solution in search of a problem. But a couple of months ago, there was Bernie Moreno, the pro-crypto Republican candidate for Ohio's other Senate seat, at a bitcoin convention asking, "Are you sick of these politicians who say bitcoin is for drug dealing and money laundering?" Actually, no: I'm sick of the fact that crypto's most obvious and ready use is indeed for drug dealing and money laundering, having tried

**Then there's cryptocurrency, which isn't quite like other parts of the technology sector. Whatever you think of Musk, Tesla produces a real product with real uses; so, in a different way, does PayPal, the initial source of Thiel's vast wealth. Crypto, by contrast, remains a solution in search of a problem. But a couple of months ago, there was Bernie Moreno, the pro-crypto Republican candidate for Ohio's other Senate seat, at a bitcoin convention asking, "Are you sick of these politicians who say bitcoin is for drug dealing and money laundering?" Actually, no: I'm sick of the fact that crypto's most obvious and ready use is indeed for drug dealing and money laundering, having tried and failed to find significant legal uses.**

crypto assets consists of stablecoins, issued by institutions that peg their value in terms of traditional currencies, like US dollars. We have a name, though, for institutions that issue liabilities that they promise to exchange for hard currency on demand: banks. And centuries of experience tell us that banks need to be regulated to ensure financial stability. Even Adam Smith, in "The Wealth of Nations," called for bank regulation. But stablecoins aren't regulated like banks, and it's not clear whether they could

and failed to find significant legal uses.

Yet crypto is marketed as a revolutionary technology, and some of its biggest boosters are among the tech bros who've been lurching to the right, so it makes sense to put crypto's political role in the same basket. And crypto is playing a big role in the 2024 election. Axios writes that according to an August report from Public Citizen, "The crypto industry accounts for almost half the money contributed by corporations to political action committees so far in 2024." The Washington Post just reported that in Ohio, the industry has spent over \$38 million supporting Moreno against the incumbent Democrat, Sherrod Brown.

Why is crypto spending so big? Pretty clearly, the industry fears regulation: Gary Gensler, the chair of the Securities and Exchange Commission, has argued that crypto assets should be viewed as and regulated like securities - which could damage or even wipe out their value by undermining some of the hype. Beyond that, a growing share of

# Academic freedom declines under HK’s national security regime, report finds

William Yang

**A** report released on Wednesday finds that Hong Kong's national security law, enacted in July 2020, has eroded academic freedom in the former British colony. The report, co-authored by Human Rights Watch, and the Washington-based advocacy organization Hong Kong Democracy Council, said university authorities have imposed greater control and limitations on student activities and that students and faculty members are increasingly exercising self-censorship to avoid getting into trouble.

"Students, academics, and administrators, especially those from Hong Kong studying contemporary socio-political issues, feel as if they are living under a microscope," the report says. Some analysts say the opaque definition of what constitutes a violation of the security law has created a chilling effect among students and faculty members at Hong Kong universities. "When the red line isn't clear, there will be a pervasive sense of fear, and students and faculty members will try to make adjustments to ensure they don't get into trouble," Maya Wang, the associate China director at Human Rights Watch, told VOA by phone.

The report said Hong Kong's eight public universities have been managed by people who hold views favored by Beijing following the imposition of the law in 2020. Since then, university officials have increased crackdowns on student unions and banned symbols or events viewed as promoting pro-democracy values. "University officials have punished students for holding peaceful protests and gather-

ings, and have broadly censored student publications, communications, and events," the report reads. Wang at Human Rights Watch said since many college students and academics were involved in 2019 protests over an extradition bill, one of the Chinese government's priorities following the implementation of the law is to "impose ideological control" over universities.

"The decline of academic freedom in Hong Kong's universities is part of Beijing's attempt to impose ideological control over the entire city," she told VOA. Most of the 33 students and academics interviewed for the report said self-censorship is a common practice at universities in Hong Kong, especially on socio-political topics related to China and Hong Kong. "They do this when expressing themselves in classrooms, when writing and researching academic articles, and when inviting speakers for academic conferences," the report says, adding that academics teaching Hong Kong and China current affairs feel "especially vulnerable." In some cases, university officials have asked academics in the social science field to stop offering courses on topics that Beijing considers sensitive.

"Hong Kong was always an important space that gives the international community some insight into what's happening in Hong Kong and the broader China, but that space is now rapidly disappearing," Lokman Tsui, a research fellow at the University of Toronto's Citizen Lab and a former journalism professor at the Chinese University of

Hong Kong, told VOA by phone. The law's negative impact on academic freedom in Hong Kong seems to differ between academics in different fields. "Some said [the NSL] affected everything they do; others said it has very little impact," the report says.

Since university management is stacked with supporters of the Chinese government's position, the report says university administrators have worked with Chinese and Hong Kong authorities to harass, intimidate or even remove academics voicing different opinions. "The government does that by defaming and intimidating those academics perceived to hold liberal or pro-democracy views in the state-owned media and denying or not issuing visas to foreign academics expressing such opinions," the report says, adding that universities would then fire, let go or deny tenure to these academics. Human Rights Watch and Hong Kong Democracy Council said the Chinese government's efforts to "cleanse" universities in Hong Kong have led to a "harmonization" of opinion in academia in Hong Kong. They also help amplify Chinese and Hong Kong authorities' claim that pro-democracy voices are now "in the minority."

"The Chinese government's overall intention has been to 'cleanse' the universities [and] the result is a sanitized version of higher education compliant with the Party's views, which so far continues to deliver a high-caliber education," the report says. Tsui at Citizen Lab said since Hong Kong passed a separate nation-

al security law called Article 23 in March, Hong Kong authorities will likely continue the crackdown on academic freedom.

"In addition to the criminalization of speech, the authorities are also targeting foreign funding of academic research, so they haven't emptied the glass yet," he told VOA. VOA contacted the Hong Kong government for comment but did not receive a reply by the deadline. However, in October 2023, Hong Kong Chief Executive John Lee said in a social media post that Hong Kong's excellent education infrastructure, world-renowned universities, and talented researchers were all key to turning the city into "an international hub for post-secondary education."

In the social media post, Lee vowed to study how to utilize the "unique status and advantages of the One Country, Two Systems" to attract the best talents from all over the world to Hong Kong. Since some universities in Hong Kong have a large number of joint research projects and exchange programs with universities abroad, Human Rights Watch's Wang said foreign universities should be aware of the repression that is taking place at universities in Hong Kong, while trying to provide support for Hong Kong students and academics being targeted by the Chinese and Hong Kong authorities. "Foreign universities should avoid elevating the repressive actors and provide scholarships or fellowships to endangered Hong Kong students and academics to ensure they could continue to do their research outside of Hong Kong without fear," she said.

# Britain has one last chance to steer off this potholed road to perma-decline

David Frost

**I**bumped into a former leader of a friendly country the other day. This regular visitor to Britain had just spent a few days outside London for the first time for some years. Their message was simple: "Do you realise how run down your country looks nowadays?"

It's hard to disagree. Let's be honest, a lot of Britain looks a bit of a mess. The public spaces and buildings are badly maintained. The roads are potholed. There's litter and graffiti everywhere. The streets don't feel safe. Large parts of London outside the south-west Waitrose belt from Battersea to Kingston remind me of the London of my youth in the late 1970s and early 1980s: decaying, poorly maintained, shabby, declining. Our public services often look the same: our hospitals took tired and our council HQs have nothing of the grandeur and assertiveness of a French hôtel de ville.

This is no coincidence. What we are seeing is what happens when a country has had nearly 20 years of low productivity and low growth. Money gets short for everything and every year it gets harder to maintain things. Repairs and maintenance take a back seat. But the decline is gradual. Very often it takes an outsider to tell us the truth. Once this problem sets in, politicians have two basic choices. One is to be honest with people: tell them that until we fix our growth problem the situation is not going to get any better and neither salaries nor funding for public services are going to go up much. Instead there will have to be painful reforms, especially in the public sector, which

is such a drag on growth, and a serious attempt to hold the size of government down so that the private sector can fill the gap.

That's one route. The other is to hide the reality. Tell voters that we can carry on as before, adding new tasks to government, pushing up taxes, benefits and the minimum wage, regulating the economy further, and trying to shield people from every shock and every unexpected event. The strain is then taken by higher taxes, higher borrowing, and cheeseparing in important but unfashionable public services like courts and prisons. All of this makes the underlying problems even worse. There is still never enough money, because there's only so far you can push up taxes or borrow. But growth is crushed still further.

Unfortunately that is the approach that has been taken over the past decade. There are two problems with it. The first, the obvious one, is that in the end the future becomes the present. Eventually we all look around and think "this country looks a bit of a mess". We can't hide the problem from ourselves. Talented people start to leave. We begin to feel the decline day to day. The second, less obvious, difficulty is that in the end it doesn't work politically either. You give your opponents an easy attack. That's what happened to the Tories. Because we were reluctant to tell hard truths ourselves, it was easy for Labour to say to voters "The reason you aren't getting those good things you want is that those evil and incompetent Tories refuse to give you them."

Labour told voters that Britain was in a mess because the Tories were bad people who governed in their interest not the country's. We paid the price for this at the election. But now the problem swings around. Labour has created a problem for itself too. That is our opportunity.

If Labour now try to say "actually things are really bad after all" then they look dishonest and disappoint their supporters - as it has with its decision to scrap the universal winter fuel allowance. Its constant refrain that the Tories bequeathed a dire set of financial circumstances has fallen flat. Alternatively, if it says "we can do everything you want" then it is back in the same old trap: it has to push up taxes, borrow more, and postpone dealing with the country's actual problems. Labour hates having to make serious choices like this. It much prefers childish student gesture politics like Rachel Reeves's removal of historic paintings from state offices. So instead it does what we have seen in recent weeks: vacillate between the two options. One day it's doom and gloom, the next it's splash the cash.

And on the third day it's both. As this sinks in with voters, it will become ever clearer that Labour doesn't know what to do. As so often with socialists, its philosophy and actual reality come into conflict. And when that happens under a socialist government, so much the worse for reality. Maybe at some level Labour knows that only market dynamics, the power of incentives, the force of entrepreneurialism can actually help

us. Indeed Starmer felt he had to acknowledge the power of competition in his conference speech. But it can't actually allow itself to act on that conclusion - for then why do you need a Labour Party? So instead Starmer immediately went on to complain that "markets don't give you control", and to promise a lot more of that control over the unfortunate British people.

This is not change. It is more of the same and it will have the same result. Starmer thinks that with more control he can solve the country's problems. He will find that he has just made them worse still. This is the opportunity for the Right in this country. When voters realise things are getting no better - which we must expect will take a bit of time - then we on the Right must be ready with the alternative. Getting this alternative worked up, and properly explained and sold, is now the crucial task under the new Conservative leader, and I believe Robert Jenrick is best placed to do it.

This new package needs to include growth-boosting reforms; tax and spending cuts; immigration reductions; government reform; ECHR withdrawal; and much more. And above all it needs to revive the spirit of freedom, which used to be so strong in the Conservative Party, and in Britain; the readiness to tell the man from Whitehall to go away and to get on with our own lives. This is the only way to turn things around and get the country looking good again. It will take time. But Labour can't do it at all. The Conservatives can one day - if we prepare properly now.

# In which Hillary Clinton canoes with an ex-white supremacist

Drew Goins

**T**HE excerpt is an exploration of empathy. Clinton speaks openly about how amazed she is by the way former white supremacist Shannon Foley sees the good in current adherents to the ideology and tries to help deprogram them; Clinton writes also about how frequently she falls short of that pretty superhuman standard. She revisits her infamous "deplorable" comment from the 2016 campaign, and how she called some supporters of Donald Trump "irredeemable."

Yea, these many years on, Clinton writes that she would "like to believe there's goodness in everyone and a chance at redemption, no matter how remote." Unsurprisingly, empathy is in short supply in communities all over America as the election creeps closer. Another joint dispatch from the five writers Post Opinions lined up across the country drives the point home, most notably John Grogan's entry; he, a progressive, writes up his attempt to talk to his pro-Trump neighbors.

"I have heard enough." His voice was loud, aggressive, brimming with rage. "Out of our house! No communist rags. Get out!" His mother was on her feet, pleading. "No, no," she said. "We were just -" "You have 30 seconds to get out of this house!" he shouted, and I knew to take him at his word. I had heard this voice before. Empathy schmempathy. Except in Florida, I suppose, where Dave Barry reports in his entry that everyone appears

worried to death for each other over the fate of a lost tortoise named Conch.

May we all find our Conch this autumn. Back when, too many people assumed that Hillary Clinton was going to become president. Now, too many people are assuming that JD Vance won't. Matt Bai writes that "we should not get to Election Day without pausing to consider that Trump is ... far more likely to die in office than the vast majority of our presidents were," even if "the restorative powers of rage and narcissism seem to have kept him relatively hale." That means we must evaluate a possible President Vance.

Hard to do, Matt writes, when "aspects of Vance's worldview have come and gone depending on what's expedient." That protean politicking makes his one constant really stand out. In Matt's words: "Vance is bizarrely obsessed with setting down rules for women in society, almost as if this were something America's women were pleading with him to clarify."

Oh, but won't it be so much nicer to be a woman in the world Trump and Vance will usher in? Alexandra Petri loses herself in the idyll: "It was so tough in the before times, when you had to act as though you were a person. It was exhausting, like a dog standing on its hind legs all day. Of course, you weren't a person, not really, and it is so much nicer to get to stop pretending. Much more restful this way." Chaser: Still other

Republicans are coming up with yet fresher ways to insult women, Karen Tumulty writes. She unpacks Ohio Senate candidate Bernie Moreno's statement that it's "a little crazy" for older women to care about reproductive rights.

Bonus chaser: Vance's health-care ideas might be bad politics, Ramesh Ponnuru writes, but they're pretty reasonable policy. Jennifer Finney Boylan, an author and the president of PEN America, has seen enough trans road-trip movies to come up with a drinking game for all their tropes: drink after wistful mirror footage, right-wing ideology included for "balance" and, of course, anytime the word "journey" comes up. (Some tropes, she admits, even appeared in the trans road-trip documentaries she appeared in.) But the new documentary "Will & Harper," Boylan writes, "is different. In its playfulness, and its decency, and, above all, its testimony to the transcendent power of friendship, it's a film that is bound to open some hearts and - who knows? - maybe some minds as well."

The film follows newly out trans woman Harper Steele and comic actor Will Ferrell, a longtime friend, crisscrossing the country. Refreshingly, it focuses just as much on "Ferrell steadfastly working his way from one understanding of his friend to another," Boylan writes, as it does on Steele's (yes) journey. It's funny, too, Boylan says - and the best sort: "the kind that is just one step away from sadness."

The Washington Post





## Monal, IMARAT Sign agreement for biggest rooftop Restaurant



### F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: Monal, a renowned name in the fine dining industry and IMARAT, Pakistan's leading real estate group, have officially signed an agreement to establish Monal's largest restaurant at the rooftop of the prestigious Mall of IMARAT in IMARAT Downtown. The agreement was signed by Shafiq Akbar, Chairman of IMARAT Group, and Luqman Ali Afzal, CEO of Monal, in a ceremony held earlier today.

Situated on the rooftop of the Mall of IMARAT, this new Monal branch

will provide a panoramic dining experience with breathtaking views and world-class cuisine. IMARAT Downtown, poised to be the next major hub of the twin cities, will offer a prime location for the new restaurant. Connected directly to the Islamabad Expressway, IMARAT Downtown offers excellent accessibility, making it a destination of choice for residents and visitors alike.

Shafiq Akbar, Chairman of IMARAT, expressed his excitement at the collaboration, he said that we are glad to partner with Monal, a name synony-

mous with excellence in the culinary world. Our vision for IMARAT Downtown is to create a dynamic urban center that brings together the best of lifestyle, dining, and entertainment. With Monal at the helm of our dining experience, we are confident that the Downtown will become a hub of culinary innovation and delight."

Monal's CEO, Luqman Ali Afzal, said that this partnership marks a new chapter for Monal. The rooftop setting at the Mall of IMARAT is a perfect match for the experience we aim to provide our

guests—an ambience of sophistication combined with our signature dishes. We are thrilled to bring this offering to the residents of Islamabad, DHA, Bahria Towns, and the other surrounding communities. We look forward to making Monal's largest restaurant a key part of the Downtown experience."

With the largest Monal restaurant in the region, this branch will cater to the growing communities around Islamabad Downtown, DHA, Bahria Towns, and other major residential areas. Residents from these neighborhoods will enjoy easy access to one of the finest dining experiences in the city, bringing the flavors Monal is known for to their doorstep.

This exciting venture strengthens IMARAT Downtown's standing as a focal point of the twin cities' commercial, residential, and entertainment future.

The Monal rooftop restaurant will be a key highlight in the growing ecosystem of this dynamic urban space, blending luxury, comfort, and convenience.



NEW YORK: Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif meets with a delegation of prominent Pakistani-American Bankers on the sidelines of 79th session of the United Nations General Assembly.

## PSX loses 365 more points

ISLAMABAD (APP): The 100-Index of the Pakistan Stock Exchange (PSX) continued with bearish trend on Friday, losing 365.83 points, a negative change of 0.45 percent, closing at 81,292.13 points against 81,657.97 points on the last working day.

A total of 339,323,128 shares were traded during the day as compared to 423,942,319 shares the previous trading day, whereas the price of shares stood at Rs 12.893 billion against Rs.17.671 billion on the last trading day.

As many as 439 companies transacted their shares in the stock market, 129 of them recorded gains and 234 sustained losses, whereas the share price of 76 companies remained unchanged.

The three top trading companies were K-Electric Limited with 50,666,137 shares at Rs 3.67 per share, WorldCall Telecom with 32,405,823 shares at Rs 1.20 per share and Hub Power Company XD with 16,264,755 shares at Rs 123.77 per share.

Hallmark Company Limited witnessed a maximum increase of Rs 102.70 per share price, closing at Rs 1,129.99, whereas the runner-up was RafhanMaize Products Company Limited with Rs 92.46 rise in its per share price to Rs 7,346.75.

## Bilal accepts defeat in SCCI elections

### F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: President of the Peshawar Traders Chamber, Ghulam Bilal Javid, stated that he accepts the defeat of the Sarhad Business Alliance in the Sarhad Chamber of Commerce and Industry elections with an open heart.

The way these elections were conducted was observed not only by Peshawar but by the entire Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. My primary goal was to ensure that the voters are respected, and that office bearers are elected through a transparent elec-

tion process, rather than decisions being made behind closed doors. Through this process, we aimed to send a clear message to voters and supporters that their dignity is paramount. Alhamdulillah, I succeeded in achieving this goal.

He further added that he is immensely pleased that the voters were given the respect they deserve. Those opponents who previously made decisions from the comfort of air-conditioned rooms were compelled to go to the voters and seek their support.

For me, this is a significant victory, as the deci-

sions were made on the field through voting, not in private rooms. The candidates who won and hold positions today did so because of the power of the voters. I extend my heartfelt congratulations to all of them, as they are also our brothers. I secured the top position among my Associate candidates, and even though we lost the election, I believe I have won my objective. I extend my gratitude to my voters and the voters of the opponents for participating in this electoral process. I also appreciate the opponents for finally recognizing the importance of the voters.

## Federal Ombudsman Team visits Islamabad Airport

### F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: The Federal Ombudsman team, led by Senior Advisor Mr. Syed Asif Shah and Grievances Commissioner Dr. Inam Ul Haq Javeid, visited Islamabad

International Airport (IIAP) to assess the facilities and services available to passengers, particularly overseas Pakistanis.

The team visited key areas, including the international and domestic departure and

arrival zones, and interacted with immigration personnel.

They evaluated the Customs information desk, screens, signage, ASF baggage hold, joint search area, and One Window Facilitation Desk (OWFD) operations.

## China launches late stimulus push to meet 2024 growth target

BEIJING (Reuters): China's central bank on Friday lowered interest rates and injected liquidity into the banking system as Beijing assembled a last-ditch stimulus assault to pull economic growth back towards this year's roughly 5% target. More fiscal measures are expected to be announced before China's week-long holidays starting on Oct. 1, after a meeting of the Communist Party's top leaders showed an increased sense of urgency about mounting economic headwinds. Reuters reported on Friday, citing sources, that megacities Shanghai and Shenzhen are planning to lift key home purchase restrictions in coming weeks, joining a long list of smaller cities that have done so to ease a years-long property crisis. On the heels of the Politburo huddle, China plans to issue special sovereign bonds worth about 2 trillion yuan (\$284.43 billion) this year as part of fresh fiscal stimulus, two sources with knowledge of the matter have told Reuters.

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## Engro Fertilizers strengthens partnership with dealers, farmers

### F.P. Report

KARACHI: Pakistan's renowned fertilizer company, Engro Fertilizers, organized a session in Depalpur aimed at addressing key challenges in the agricultural sector and finding modern solutions for growth. The session was focused on strengthening the partnership between dealers and farmers.

A highlight of the event was a live demonstration of Engro's Mobile Lab, which provides on-site soil and water testing services. This initiative empowers farmers with data-driven recommendations for optimal fertilizer use, ensuring balanced soil nutrition and increased crop yields.

During the event, Engro Fertilizers' Chief Executive Officer, Ali Rathore, addressed the participants, recognizing their crucial role in the



agricultural value chain. He reaffirmed the company's strong support for its dealer network and the farmers of Pakistan. Rathore also highlighted Engro's efforts to empower farmers with

tools and resources, enabling them to make informed decisions that lead to better planning, reduced costs, and higher productivity.

The session was attended by prominent farmers,

including Chaudhry Tahir Irshad, Ahmed Raza Khan, Rao Fayaz Aslam Khan, Rao Imran, Rana Saeed Khan, Syed Sajid Shah, Syed Noor Hassan Shah, Rao Abdul Karim, and Haji Shoban.

## KCCI demands extension in tax filing deadline

KARACHI (INP): Karachi Chamber of Commerce and Industry (KCCI) has demanded Federal Board of Revenue (FBR) to extend the deadline for filing tax returns.

KCCI President Itfikhah Ahmed Shaikh in his statement said the FBR's portal for submitting online tax returns is not 'working' and the traders are finding it difficult to submit their returns as the deadline is also nearing.

Saikh urged the FBR to extend the deadline for filing income tax returns for a month as the traders will be unable to submit their returns due to a 'glitch' in FBR's system by September 30.

### PUBLIC NOTICE

It is published through this notice that I Muhammad Asad Bangash Son of Muhammad Khalid R/o House no. 1897/149, Mohalla Haji Purdil Khan Jungle Khel District Kohat is the owner of Plot no. 127 Sector C-4 Size 10 Marla Phase(II) KDA Kohat has appointed has is Mr. Muhammad Masood Afridi Son of Ajoon Khan R/o House no. 68, Sector VIII Street no.2 KDA District Kohat Through (Special) Deed no. 06 Bahi no. 04 Volume no.290 Dated 03/01/2024 which is Registered in The office Kohat of Tehsildar/Sub Registrar The Attorney Holder now wants to Transfer The Above Said Plot if any Bank/Institution/Firm/Pers on has any objection About The Transfer He Should Contact

The Housing officer UADA Within 15 Days in Writing with Proofs otherwise Plot will be Transfer and no objection will Be Accepted (Project Director Urban Area KDA Kohat)

## Wall Street edges higher after inflation report; small caps outperform

NEW YORK (Reuters): U.S. main stock indexes inched up on Friday and small-cap stocks outperformed after a benign inflation report cleared the way for the Federal Reserve to focus on shoring up the labor market while continuing its interest rate easing.

A Commerce Department's report showed that consumer spending increased moderately in August, suggesting the economy retained some of its solid momentum in the third quarter, while inflation pressures continued to abate.

"It's a relief to have (inflation) move in the right direction and hopefully it continues going in that direction," said Joe Saluzzi, co-head of equity trading at Themis Trading.

"It really doesn't matter whether it's 50 bps or 25

bps. What matters is, will they continue cutting rates over the next year?"

Odds that the central bank will cut rates by 50 basis points at its November meeting stood at about 52.1%, compared with 50% seen before the data. Those for a 25 bps reduction stand at about 47.9%, as per the CME Group's FedWatch Tool.

Inflation moderating towards the central bank's 2% target gave the Fed enough room to commence its policy easing cycle with a 50 basis point rate cut last week. Focus will now shift to a slew of labor market reports due next week.

At 9:55 a.m. ET, the Dow Jones Industrial Average (DJIA), opens new tab rose 141.53 points, or 0.34%, to 42,316.64, the S&P 500 (SPX), opens new tab gained 4.87

points, or 0.08%, to 5,750.24 and the Nasdaq Composite (IXIC), opens new tab gained 12.22 points, or 0.07%, to 18,202.51.

The Russell 2000 index (.RUT), opens new tab, which tracks small caps, outperformed with a 0.7% rise. Nine out of the 11 S&P 500 sectors were higher, led by a 1.1% rise in energy stocks (.SPNY), opens new tab.

Tech stocks such as Nvidia (NVDA.O), opens new tab and Amazon.com (AMZN.O), opens new tab lost 0.9% and 0.4%, respectively, and weighed on the Nasdaq.

The University of Michigan's final September estimate on consumer sentiment stood at 70.1, compared with estimates of 69.3, as per economists polled by Reuters.

Remarks from Fed Governor Michelle Bowman later in the day will remain in focus.

Late on Thursday, Fed Governor Lisa Cook said the central bank's rare move earlier this month could address increased "downside risks" to employment.

Wall Street's main indexes ended higher in the previous session, with the S&P 500 (.SPX), opens new tab closing at its highest level on record. The three major indexes are on track for their third straight week of gains. Among other stocks, Bristol-Myers Squibb (BMY.N), opens new tab surged 2.3% after the U.S. FDA approved its schizophrenia drug. Costco Wholesale (COST.O), opens new tab dropped 2.8% after posting downbeat fourth-quarter revenue.





## In brief

## Bravo retires from cricket

JAMAICA (Agencies): Former West Indies all-rounder Dwayne Bravo has retired from all forms of cricket after a groin injury curtailed the final season of his career. The 40-year-old, the leading T20 wicket-taker in history, had planned to retire at the end of the current Caribbean Premier League campaign. However, after sustaining a groin injury, the Trinbago Knight Riders player has decided to finish immediately. "My mind wants to keep going, but my body can no longer endure the pain, the breakdowns, and the strain" Bravo said in a post on Instagram. "I can't put myself in a position where I might let down my teammates, my fans, or the teams I represent. "So, with a heavy heart, I officially announce my retirement from the sport. Today, the champion bids farewell." Bravo became the first male cricketer to take more than 600 wickets in all T20 matches and ended up with 631 wickets at an average of 24.40 runs and economy of 8.26 per over. He won three Indian Premier League titles with the Chennai Super Kings - and is currently third on the list of most wickets taken with 183 - as well as the T20 World Cup on two occasions with the West Indies. Bravo, who played 40 tests and 164 one-day internationals for the West Indies before retiring from international cricket in 2021, will take up a mentor role with IPL champions Kolkata Knight Riders.

## Sri Lanka declare on 602-5

GALLE (Agencies): Middle-order marvel Kamindu Mendis became the joint third-fastest Test batsman to 1,000 runs on Friday as Sri Lanka declared on 602-5 against New Zealand on day two in Galle. Kamindu reached the milestone in 13 innings played since his debut at the same ground two years ago, equalling the record of Australian great Don Bradman. Only two others - England's Herbert Sutcliffe and Everton Weekes of the West Indies - have surpassed him, both reaching the landmark in 12 innings. Kamindu, 25, made an unbeaten 182 before the declaration alongside Kusal Mendis on 106. Kamindu's five centuries from 13 innings also made him third-fastest to that record, tied with Donald Bradman and George Headley of the West Indies. The left-hander has been in excellent form this year and was also Sri Lanka's highest run-scorer in their last two series against Bangladesh and England. Kamindu's overnight partner Angelo Mathews departed for 88 when Glen Phillips got him caught at square leg by rookie quick Will O'Rourke. Phillips then sent back Dhananjaya de Silva for 44 when the skipper swept a delivery into the gloves of wicket-keeper Tom Blundell. It was Phillips's third wicket for the innings after he bowled Dinesh Chandimal for 116 in the last session of the opening day. O'Rourke had impressed in the first Test with his second five-wicket haul in three matches, but toiled without result in the Sri Lanka's innings, conceding 81 runs without reward. Sri Lanka won the opening match of the two-Test series by 63 runs and are eyeing their first Test series win against the Kiwis since 2009. Friday was the first time Sri Lanka surpassed 500 against New Zealand from 40 matches. New Zealand have not won any of their five previous Tests at Galle.

## Aleem Dar to retire at end of domestic season 2025

PESHAWAR (APP): Aleem Dar, widely regarded as one of the world's most respected and admired cricket umpires, will retire at the end of the Pakistan Cricket Board's 2024-25 season, concluding a career that has spanned nearly a quarter of a century.

A true gentleman both on and off the field, Aleem is also a three-time winner of the prestigious David Shepherd Trophy for ICC Umpire of the Year (2009-2011).

The 56-year-old Aleem also enjoyed a playing career of 17 first-class and 18 List-A matches between 1986 and 1998, before he made his first-class umpiring debut during the 1998-99 Quaid-e-Azam Trophy.

From 2003 to 2023, he served on the ICC Elite Panel of Umpires, where he earned a reputation for his player management skills, understanding of the playing conditions, calm demeanor and outstanding decision-making.

He is currently part of

the PCB's Elite Panel and remains one of four Pakistani umpires on the ICC's International Panel, making him eligible to officiate in ODIs and T20Is.

To date, Aleem has officiated in a record-breaking 145 Tests, 231 ODIs, 72 T20Is, 5 WT20Is, 181 first-class matches, and 282 List-A matches.

His contributions to the sport extend far beyond these numbers, with his professionalism and respectful manner making him a beloved figure worldwide. Reflecting on his decision to retire, Aleem Dar said:

"Umpiring has been my life for nearly 25 years and I have cherished the privilege of officiating some of the most iconic matches involving the greatest players of this generation. Throughout my career, I've strived to uphold the highest standards of sportsmanship, and it has been an honour to work alongside some of the finest match officials in the world.

"However, all great journeys must eventually come to an end, and the time has come for me to focus fully on my social and charity work. My hospital project and other initiatives are very close to my heart and require my full devotion and attention.

"Having achieved almost everything that I had aspired to in umpiring with the unwavering support of my peers and colleagues, I also feel it's the right moment to step aside and allow emerging umpires to shine. It is my hope that they too will have the same opportunities to make their mark on the great game of cricket and represent Pakistan with pride.

"While I will continue to officiate throughout this season, it will be my last. That said, I remain committed to mentoring and supporting the next generation of match officials and I will always be available to offer guidance to those pursuing a career in this noble profession."

## Rodri to miss rest of season with ACL injury

LONDON (AFP/APP): Manchester City midfielder Rodri will miss the rest of the season due to an anterior cruciate ligament injury, manager Pep Guardiola said on Friday.

"He had surgery this morning, ACL and some meniscus" said Guardiola. "So, next season he will be here. This season is over."

The Spain international suffered the injury during the first half of last Sunday's 2-2 draw with Arsenal in the Premier League. Rodri's loss is a

huge blow to City's hopes of winning a fifth consecutive Premier League title, as well as their ambitions of reclaiming the Champions League crown. Guardiola, speaking on the eve of his team's Premier League match against Newcastle, underlined the importance of the defensive midfielder.

"It's a lot of months without an important player for us, everybody knows it," he said, though he added that he remained upbeat. "There's not one

day in the last years that I was not confident.

"Of course we are stronger with him, we are stronger with Nathan Ake... we are stronger with Oscar Bobb and all the injuries with Kevin (De Bruyne) and we know that, but it is what it is," Guardiola said.

Rodri, 28, played a key role as City held off Arsenal to win a fourth straight Premier League title last season and was named player of the tournament at Euro 2024 as Spain emerged triumphant.

## Bangladeshi fan 'thrashed' by Indian team's supporters



KANPUR (Web Desk): A Bangladeshi fan attending the India-Bangladesh Test match in Kanpur on Friday was rushed to the hospital after allegedly being heckled and assaulted inside the stadium, reported India's PTI news agency.

The fan, known as "Tiger Roby," was dressed in a tiger costume - the emblem of the Bangladesh cricket team - and was standing in the C Block balcony of Green Park Stadium, where the incident took place.

A clip on PTI Videos showed the fan being car-

ried out of the stadium by medical officials and security personnel. He was later seated on a chair and given water.

In another account, PTI, quoting police, reported that the fan was not assaulted but suffered from dehydration. A follow-up report by PTI claimed that Roby was hospitalised after falling ill.

"He was gasping for breath when he met a constable. He became unconscious before we could speak to him, but now he is fine," Additional Commissioner of Police (Law and Order) Harish

Chander was quoted as saying in the PTI report.

However, a journalist covering the game told Geo News that the fan was manhandled, though not beaten or assaulted.

"Tiger Roby was manhandled after he angered Indian fans by insulting some of their players. They tried to snatch the Bangladesh flag from him, and he was slightly hit. He wasn't beaten, nor was it a case of dehydration. He did get hit slightly, but then he overdramatised the incident," the journalist told this correspondent.



GALLE: Kusal Mendis celebrates his century.

## Kabaddi: Charsadda, Peshawar reach final

PESHAWAR (APP): The teams of Charsadda and Peshawar have qualified for the finals in the Inter-District Kabaddi Championship being played at Abdul Wali Khan Sports Complex, Charsadda under the aegis of District Sports Officer.

Charsadda defeated Mardan by 35-30 points while Peshawar defeated Nowshera by 30-27 points in a thrill-packed semi-finals.

Deputy Commissioner Charsadda Qaiser Khan and DG Sports Abdul Nasir witnessed the matches wherein a total of five districts teams are taking part in the championship.

The Kabaddi Championship is being played in collaboration with Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Kabaddi Association, on the directive of the Adviser to the Chief Minister Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Syed Fakhr Jahan Khan.

## National fastest men &amp; women competition on Oct 8

ISLAMABAD (APP): The 1st Superior national fastest men and women competition will be held on October 8, at Punjab Stadium, Lahore.

According to President, Athletics Federation of Pakistan, Brig. Wajhat Hussain (R) all men and women players from all over the country will take part in the mega event.

The invitation letter has already been issued to the affiliated units, including departments, Provincial and regional associations.

He said that the cash prizes will be awarded to winner men and women athletes including 1st prize Rs 100,000, 2nd prize Rs 50,000, 3rd prize Rs 25,000 and 4 to 8 position holders Rs 10,000 each.

All interested players who can take part in the competition, and can register their name by October 5.

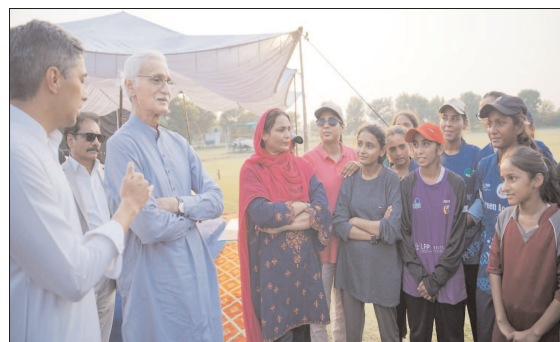
All athletes will report at Punjab Stadium, on October 8 at 9am to Rafique Ahmad, President, National Coaching Association and Ch. Asghar Ali Gill, Head Coach, Athletics Federation of Pakistan, for registration and scrutiny of documents.

## Women in cricket break status quo: Tareen

Saqib Mushtaq

LODHRAN: During his visit to the Tareen Cricket Academy, Jahangir Khan Tareen highlighted the transformative power of sports in empowering young women from underprivileged areas. He stated, "Cricket not only builds careers and confidence but also breaks the status quo when women are involved. We must continue to encourage more participation of women in sports, as it leads to healthier communities and a brighter future for the next generation."

Ali Khan Tareen, owner of the Multan Sultans, discussed the academy's grassroots initiatives, emphasizing its commitment to providing top-notch facilities and coaching for female cricketers. Several players, includ-



ing Sher Bano, Nasreen Ashraf, Sawera Zafer, and Rameen Roshan, have already made their mark by representing the region in national PCB tournaments.

Ali Tareen further stated, "Our focus is now on women empowerment, as the progress of women will drive the overall development of our region. With our full potential, we will continue to complete welfare

projects in education, health, sports, and women empowerment. We will provide every possible facility to women interested in sports."

To support and encourage the players, Ali Tareen also distributed international-standard cricket bats from England to the girls, demonstrating the academy's commitment to their development.

## UMT Markhors qualify for final after Eliminator 2 washed out

LAHORE (APP): UMT Markhors have qualified for the final of the Bahria Town Champions One-Day Cup after their Eliminator clash against the Nurbur Lions was washed out due to rain at the Iqbal Stadium, Faisalabad on Friday.

According to the tournament qualifying conditions, in case of a washout in the play-offs, the team which has a higher stand-

ing at the completion of the league matches will qualify for the next stage.

The Markhors finished the league stage on top of the points table with three wins, one loss and 38 points while the Lions were placed fourth on the table with one win, three losses and 12 points. Markhors will now face the Lake City Panthers in the final on 29 September.

Ifthikhar Ahmed is likely to lead the UMT Markhors in the absence of regular captain Mohammad Rizwan while Shadab Khan will be captain of the Lake City Panthers in the final.

The final of the Bahria Town Champions One Day Cup will be played at Iqbal Stadium, Faisalabad on September 29 (Sunday) at 3pm (local time).

## 100s Cricket League-2024 begins in District Khyber

PESHAWAR (APP): The Hundred League Cricket Tournament has been launched in Khyber district, which has been organized with the support of the Sports Department of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and the district administration.

In the opening ceremony held at Munsif Ali Khan Cricket Ground Burkamber Khel, Provincial Advisor for Sports and Youth Affairs Syed Fakhr Jahan, MPA DDAC Khyber Chairman Khyber Abdul Ghani Afridi, Assistant Commissioner Bara Shahabuddin, Director Sports Tribal Districts Raziullah Khan Betni,

District Sports Officer Khyber Raheed Gul Malaguri, League Brand Ambassador Kabir Afridi, Tehsildar Bara Daud Afridi, Chairman Abdul Mutin Afridi, Kamar Khel National Council Chairman Muhibullah Afridi. Besides, local elders, elders, sportsmen, and youth participated in large numbers.

During the ceremony, Provincial Adviser for Sports and Youth Affairs Syed Fakhr Jahan said that there is a lot of talent in the area but there is a dire need for more sports facilities.

He said that every district level is supporting

sports players. He said that party chairman Imran himself is a player, and his vision is to promote sports in society. He said that efforts are being made to provide sports facilities in every district in the province. He said that the winner team of Khyber Hundred League will be given 2 lakh rupees and the runner-up team will be given 1 lakh rupees while the man of the series and man of the match will be given 50,000 rupees by the sports department of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. At the end of the ceremony, the cake cutting was also held.

## Alcaraz, Medvedev win Beijing openers as Zhang scores upset

BEIJING (AFP): Carlos Alcaraz and Daniil Medvedev both won in straight sets to launch their China Open title bids Friday while 595th-ranked Zhang Shuai pulled off a big shock in the women's draw.

Four-time major champion Alcaraz defeated fellow 21-year-old Giovanni Mpetshi Perricard 6-4, 6-4 and faces Tallon Griekspoor of the Netherlands in round two in Beijing. Alcaraz, who went out in the second round of the US Open last month, made a blistering start against the 51st-ranked Frenchman by breaking serve in the first game.

The Spanish second seed then faced three break points as he served for the first set, but he saved them all on the way to wrapping

up the set in style.

"Saving three break points and be able to close the first set, it was really important for me," he said.

Alcaraz started the second set in exactly the same way, breaking his opponent, and sealed a comfortable victory on his first match point. The only sour point for the Spaniard was when he was given a second time violation as he served for the first set.

"I was a little bit mad about it," he said. Russian third seed Medvedev, who lost last year's final to current number one Jannik Sinner, eased past veteran Gael Monfils. The 2021 US Open champion defeated the 38-year-old 6-3, 6-4 and faces another Frenchman in Adrian Mannarino in round two on Saturday. The Italian

Sinner, fresh from winning the US Open, plays 69th-ranked Russian Roman Safiullin on the same day.

Zhang Shuai stunned Chinese wildcard entry Zhang, who on Wednesday won her first singles match in more than 600 days, stunned US Open semi-finalist Emma Navarro 6-4, 6-2. The 35-year-old Zhang is into round three despite being the lowest-ranked player to ever compete in the main draw of the WTA 1000 event.

Zhang, who has won two Grand Slam doubles titles, made it successive victories by dismantling the American sixth seed Navarro in front of her joyous home crowd. Zhang, a former top 25 player who has been plagued by injury, faces Belgium's Greet Minnen next. "Another great

win for my career because everybody knows I have gone a long time not winning a singles match," said Zhang. She seemed as stunned as anybody that she had beaten Navarro, who was a hot favourite having reached the last four in New York just a few weeks ago.

"I like to give everybody a surprise," Zhang said with a smile. Also into the third round is US Open finalist Jessica Pegula after the world number three from the United States beat Diane Parry of France 6-1, 7-6 (7/4). Naomi Osaka joined her as the four-time Grand Slam champion and former number one fought back to defeat 21st seed Yulia Putintseva 3-6, 6-4, 6-2.

"I wanted to show myself or tell myself that I can fight



and win a match without playing as perfect as I wanted to," said Osaka, now ranked 73 and yet to win a tournament since returning to tennis in January follow-

ing the birth of her daughter Shai. The 26-year-old Japanese is playing her first tournament under Serena Williams' renowned former coach Patrick Mouratoglou.

"He's very confident in my abilities and that in turn makes me very confident," she said, adding: "He's surprisingly very strict, and it works for me."





## In brief

## PWD store caught in massive fire

ISLAMABAD (APP): A massive fire erupted in the upper portion of the Pakistan Works Department (PWD) grocery store in Rawalpindi on Friday, sending panic and chaos through the area. According to initial reports, Rescue Officials 1122 said the blaze started around 11 o'clock and quickly spread, trapping an unspecified number of people inside the building, a private news channel reported. Eyewitnesses describe scenes of desperation as people try to escape the inferno, with flames and thick smoke billowing out of the upper floors. Rescue teams are racing against time to safely evacuate those trapped inside the Pakistan Works Department (PWD) grocery store. Rescue teams have successfully utilized the building's lift to evacuate people trapped inside the store, eye-witnessed added. Rescue 1122 Spokesperson said that our teams are working tirelessly and hopeful of completing evacuation soon, adding, that firefighters and rescue personnel have gained access to the upper floors using the lift.

## Admin action against alms-seeking

ISLAMABAD (APP): The district administration of Islamabad, led by Assistant Commissioner Rural, have ramped up efforts to curb unlawful activities and arrested 37 professional alms-seekers from different areas of the Federal Capital. According to the spokesman of ICT administration, these alms-seekers were arrested in the jurisdictions of Koral, Sihala, Lohibher, and Humak police stations. The District Commissioner (DC) commended the swift action and called for similar operations to be conducted citywide in future. The arrested beggars were taken to the police station. Meanwhile, minors found begging were sent to the Edhi Center for care and rehabilitation. DC Islamabad Irfan Nawaz Memon stressed the need for a continued crackdown, urging the formation of special teams to monitor suspicious activities at key points, including traffic signals. The operation was seen as a step toward ensuring the safety and well-being of the city's residents, with authorities promising to continue their efforts in maintaining public order. He highlighted the importance of discouraging such unlawful behavior, emphasizing the district administration's commitment to protecting the public from illegal practices.

## IRSA releases 190,200 cusecs water

ISLAMABAD (APP): Indus River System Authority (IRSA) on Friday released 190,200 cusecs water from various rim stations with inflow of 166,600 cusecs. According to the data released by IRSA, water level in River Indus at Tarbela Dam was 1536.15 feet and was 138.15 feet higher than its dead level of 1,398 feet. Water inflow and outflow in the dam was recorded as 103,000 cusecs and 95,000 cusecs respectively. The water level in River Jhelum at Mangla Dam was 1218.70 feet, which was 170.70 feet higher than its dead level of 1,050 feet. The inflow and outflow of water was recorded 13,400 cusecs and 45,000 cusecs respectively. The release of water at Galabagh, Taunsa, Gudub and Sukkur was recorded as 81,100, 102,100, 87,400 and 34,900 cusecs respectively. Similarly, from River Kabul, a total of 18,600 cusecs of water released at Nowshera and 4,300 cusecs released from River Chenab at Marala.

# Law minister holds meeting with Azerbaijan envoy

ISLAMABAD (APP): Federal Minister for Law & Justice Azam Nazeer Tarar had a meeting with the Ambassador of Azerbaijan H.E. Khazar Farhadov. During the meeting, the Ambassador congratulated Pakistan on the recently signed Memorandum of Cooperation (MOC) between the two nations, expressing optimism about its practical implementation and exploring areas of mutual interest.

He also emphasized Azerbaijan's interest in expanding collaboration, particularly in the legal domain. Federal Minister

highlighted the close ties between the two countries and proposed extending an invitation to the Azerbaijani Minister of Justice for an official visit to Pakistan.

He further reiterated Pakistan's commitment to fostering stronger cooperation in legal assistance and welcomed discussions on legislative developments in Pakistan that provide new incentives for foreign investment.

Ambassador also requested support for Azerbaijani businesses operating in Pakistan, with a focus on feasibility studies and navigating the reg-

ulatory environment. Both sides discussed collaboration in legal education, training, and capacity building for key stakeholders within their respective justice systems.

To facilitate this cooperation, it was agreed to establish a small working group to finalize modalities and open a communication channel between the two countries.

The meeting concluded with both parties expressing their appreciation and reaffirming their commitment to enhancing cooperation and working together to further mutual interests.



ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Law Azam Nazeer Tarar had a meeting with Ambassador of Azerbaijan H.E. Khazar Farhadov.

# Romina advocates for ecotourism to secure Pakistan's green future

ISLAMABAD (APP): Coordinator to the Prime Minister on Climate Change, Romina Khurshid Alam stressed the importance of promoting ecotourism to enhance environmental conservation and provide socio-economic advantages to local communities.

In her message on World Tourism Day, she highlighted Pakistan's growing global recognition as an attractive destination for eco-friendly travel thanks to its diverse landscapes, rich biodiversity, and commitment to promotion of sustainable tourism practices.

World Tourism Day is celebrated worldwide every year on September 27 to honour tourism's significance and the global social, cultural and economic effects it yields. The theme for World Tourism Day this year is "Tourism and Peace".

The PM's climate aide Romina Khurshid Alam said, "Above all, tourism brings people together and people-to-people contact grow it leads to more peaceful, coherence and connectivity amongst people."

She remarked that sustainable and environmentally friendly tourism help transform communities by creating green jobs, fostering inclusion and strengthening local economies socially and economically.

She highlighted as a part of promoting environmentally-sustainable tourism in the country, the government's initiatives to plant trees all over the country including one million trees' plantation on the Margalla Hills and setting up camping villages in various northern areas aimed at achieving sustainable tourism development goals.

Romina Khurshid explained that with its diverse landscapes, Pakistan is increasingly recognised as a top preferred destination for local and international tourists, who visit different parts of the country to experience unique natural beauty, resource-rich biodiversity, snow-capped mountains and serene valleys, spanning landscapes, desert lands, fairy meadows and meandering rivers.

The Country's stunning areas such as the Northern Areas with peaks like Nanga Parbat, lush valleys like Hunza, and coastal regions along the Arabian Sea, offering unique eco-adventures, the PM's coordinator added. Ms Alam said eco-tourism in Pakistan emphasises local community engagement, ensuring that tourism benefits rural populations economically and socially.



ISLAMABAD: Mechanics busy repairing faulty CCTV cameras at Faizabad.

# OPF set up 24 educational institutions in country, more than 17000 students studying

ISLAMABAD (APP): Overseas Pakistanis Foundation (OPF) has established a high quality education system comprising of 24 educational institutions throughout the country including Azad Jammu & Kashmir.

These include two state-of-the-art colleges, OPF Girls College, F-8/2 Islamabad, and OPF Boys College, H-8/4, Islamabad and 22 secondary and higher secondary level educational institutions.

An official source told APP here on Friday, at present more than 17,000 students are studying at OPF institutions out of which more than 2500 students are children of overseas Pakistanis. 1282 teaching and non-teaching staff are employed in these institutions. He said that OPF working

under the Ministry of Overseas Pakistanis and Human Resource Development (OP&HRD) and had been established under the Emigration Rules made under Emigration Ordinance 1979, Articles of Association, and Memorandum of Overseas Pakistanis Foundation, OPF Education Division is vested with the following responsibilities including giving of scholarships, stipends or grants to the children of the emigrants for studies in the field of science, technology, art and management in Pakistan and abroad.

The education system provides quality education for the children of Overseas Pakistanis from Pre-Nursery to Graduation Level. Educational institutions in Islamabad also provide education in O & A Level streams.

OPF provides the structures, human resources, budget and administrative & management support to ensure that the quality of service delivery is maintained at a high level, he added.

OPF was constantly drawing up strategies, policies and plans for educational reforms and development at OPF Educational institutions. Education Division drafts relevant rules and regulations for schools in OPF Education System and supervises their implementation.

The source revealed that, OPF Girls College was established, in 1985, in the heart of Capital city, Sector F-8/2 Islamabad, on an area of 100 kanals. College is providing quality education from Pre-nursery to Graduation level to the children of Overseas Pakistanis

and general public for the last 29 years. Presently 4,800 students are enrolled in the college out of which 702 are children of Overseas Pakistanis. The institution has hostel facility for the children of OP's. It can provide boarding/lodging facility to more than 100 students from Primary to Graduation Level.

Transport facility for pick & drop of students is also available at the College. 450 highly qualified teaching/non-teaching staff put their hearts and heads for excellence of the institution. Due to their untiring efforts and dedication, OPF Girls College has now become a symbol of prestige and its academic and financial performance over the years has remained outstanding.

OPF Boys College was estab-

lished in 2001 at H-8/4 Islamabad on an area of 56 kanal. College is providing quality education from Middle to Intermediate level. Presently more than 1400 students are studying in the College out of which 256 are children of Overseas Pakistanis. 122 teaching and non-teaching staff are making their full efforts to win the confidence of parents and students.

A hostel is being constructed for the provision of boarding/lodging for students coming to study at OPF Boys College, Islamabad, from other parts of the country particularly for the children of overseas Pakistanis. College also provides transport facility for the pick & drop of students.

OPF has established 22 other educational institutions in different cities of the country includ-

ing Azad Jammu & Kashmir.

These educational institutions provide quality education from Pre-Nursery level to Secondary/Higher Secondary Level. 10,879 students are enrolled in these 22 educational institutions out of which 1,550 are children of Overseas Pakistanis.

These institutions are affiliated with boards of intermediate & secondary education of their respective regions.

The educational institutions established in Azad Jammu & Kashmir are affiliated with Federal Board of Intermediate and Secondary Education, Islamabad. 100% assurance for admission to the children of overseas Pakistanis at OPF educational institutions. 50% concession in tuition fee at all OPF institutions.

# ANF seizes 61 kg drugs in six operations

RAWALPINDI (APP): Anti-Narcotics Force (ANF) while conducting six operations across the country managed to recover 61 drugs worth Rs 40 million and arrested three accused including two women, said an ANF Headquarters spokesman here on Friday.

He informed that in an operation, 3.8 kg hashish was recovered from the luggage of two Dubai-bound women at Islamabad International Airport. 30 grams weed was recovered from a parcel sent from UK at a courier office in Chaklala Rawalpindi and 29 grams weed oil was recovered from a parcel sent from Scotland at a courier office in Rawalpindi.

4 kg ice was recovered from the possession of an accused during an operation conducted at Badami Bagh Lory Adda Lahore. 1.3 kg hashish was recovered from a parcel sent from Peshawar at a private cargo office at Allama Iqbal Airport Lahore. 52 kg morphine hidden in an uninhabited area of Gali Malik Wali in Chaman area was recovered. Cases under Anti-Narcotics Act have been registered against the arrested accused and further investigations are under process.

# One mln smartphones will be provided to youth: Rana

ISLAMABAD (APP): Chairman of the Prime Minister's Youth Programme (PMYP) Rana Mashhood Ahmad Khan has said that one mln smartphones would be given to youth on easy instalments to equip them with the latest tools of technology.

Addressing a news conference here on Friday, he said that in addition to the provision of one lac laptops annually, the government would give 1.5 lacs laptops to students under the "Laptop for All" scheme during the year.

Rana added that interviews for 100 members of the National Youth Council (NYC) had been completed, adding seven to nine thousand young applicants had applied for the government's National Youth Council. He informed that that Prime Minister Shehbaz would soon announce the establishment of NYC which will offer non-partisan advice to the Prime Minister and would advocate for youth development and engagement in governance.

He said the government will also launch a National Youth Policy and National Youth employment policy with consultation of youth within a month. Rana added that last year around one lac youngsters had participated in the Prime Minister Youth Talent Hunt Program and it was expected that as many as 1 to 2 million youth would attend the talent hunt event in the next year.

The Chairman PMYP said that the positive indicators show the remarkable achievements of the present government in every sector and the country is moving in the right direction. He said that Pakistan's position at the global level had been strengthened and agreement with the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the trust of international financial institutions and big powers reflected the best economic policies of the govt that the country was advancing towards the path of development.



ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Interior Mohsin Naqvi in a meeting with the delegation of US Bureau of INL. —APP Photo

# Naqvi calls on INL delegation

ISLAMABAD (APP): Federal Minister for Interior and Narcotics Control, Mohsin Naqvi, met with the delegation of US Bureau of International Narcotics and Law Enforcement Affairs (INL) at the Ministry of Interior on Friday.

The delegation included US Deputy Ambassador Natalie Baker, Country Director INL Lynn Nelson, Police Advisor Ed Preston, and Police Program Specialist Faisal Gill.

Federal Interior Minister appreciated INL's exceptional cooperation in enhancing the capacity of Pakistan's police and paramilitary forces, citing several notable projects as praiseworthy. He emphasized for

further strengthening this cooperation and making it more sustainable. He underscored the need for prioritizing high-impact projects through a master plan.

Interior Minister said that FIA is one of the most important investigative agencies of Pakistan. He expressed the desire to make the Federal Investigation Agency (FIA) a dynamic organization, akin to the FBI, with INL's cooperation. He said that this project will be of pivotal importance in combating organized crimes in Pakistan.

He also stressed the need of restructuring the National Police Academy so that it can be made an international standard institution. He emphasized

that it is also need of the hour to modernize the Frontier Constabulary which serves as a reserve police force across the country. Regarding Anti-narcotics efforts, Naqvi said that all possible measures are being taken.

The US delegation extended their condolences over the loss of precious lives in recent terrorists incidents. US Deputy Ambassador Natalie Baker said that INL has been working in close cooperation with the Government of Pakistan for more than 42 years and expressed the desire to make this cooperation stronger and sustainable. She emphasized that Pakistan's security is integral to US security.



ISLAMABAD: WAPDA workers busy fixing the faulty cables on a pole at Tarlai.

# Govt tireless efforts lead to reduction of inflation

ISLAMABAD (APP): Deputy Chairman Senate Syedaal Khan Nasar on Friday said that the incumbent government was working tirelessly in line with the aspirations of the public.

As the results, these efforts were evident in the reduction of inflation, he added. He said this during a meeting with members of the Balochistan cabinet, including Minister for Revenue Mir Asim Kurd Gello, Minister for Education Raheela Hameed Durrani, and Parliamentary Secretary for S&GAD Mir Liaqat Lehri.

Syedaal Khan assured the cabinet members of his full cooperation and support in addressing the issues faced by the

Balochistan province, said a press release issued here. Deputy Chairman thanked the ministers for their visit and appreciated their ongoing efforts for the development and prosperity of the province.

Raheela Durrani appreciated the efforts of the Deputy Chairman, highlighting, "His doors are always open for everyone."

"This has strengthened harmony between the province and the federal government," she emphasized. The minister also briefed the Deputy Chairman Senate on the challenges faced by the province and expressed the hope that these issues would be raised at the high-

est forums. Mir Asim Kurd said, "The federal government is making every possible measure for the development and prosperity of Balochistan."

He acknowledged that the presence of the Deputy Chairman had helped resolve many issues.

Liaqat Lehri also commended the role of the Deputy Chairman, saying, "Having a leader who has risen from the ranks of a common worker to such a prestigious position has made a noticeable difference." He expressed the optimism that the Upper House would continue to highlight and address the issues of the province.



**Jawed Kohistani arrested by Taliban**  
KABUL (Amu TV): Jawed Kohistani, a well-known political analyst, has been arrested by Taliban intelligence forces in Kabul, according to sources. Sources confirmed that Kohistani was detained on Thursday in the Sarai Shamali area north of the capital. The reason for his arrest remains unclear, and the Taliban have not yet commented on the matter. Kohistani had left Afghanistan following the Taliban's return to power in August 2021.

**Three killed, dozens injured in Nangarhar floods**  
NANGARHAR (Amu TV): Floods in the eastern province of Nangarhar have claimed the lives of at least three people and injured 20 others, according to local reports. The floods, which struck several villages in the Kuz Kunar district, have caused widespread destruction, leaving hundreds without shelter. The Taliban-run Bakhtar News Agency reported that at least 150 homes were partially or completely destroyed in the flooding.

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

## White House: 'Taliban' must live up to commitments



KABUL (TOLONews): Karine Jean-Pierre, the White House Press Secretary, said in a press conference that if the Islamic Emirate seeks the lifting of sanctions and international legitimacy, it must fulfill its commitments.

The White House spokesperson also informed reporters that Washington continues its engagement with the interim government to respect human rights issues, particularly women's rights, and to secure the release of American citizens detained by the Islamic Emirate.

Jean-Pierre added that women in Afghanistan need to participate in

various sectors of society.

Karine Jean-Pierre told reporters: "The Taliban want international legitimacy, to be removed from sanction list and foreign financing to restart the Afghan economy. These aspirations require the Taliban to live up to their commitments at minimum.

Afghanistan cannot strengthen its economy unless women are able to participate in all aspects of society without limitations. So we will continue to engage with the Taliban on matters of our interest for example on respect for the rights of women and girls and the return of wrongfully detained US citizens and that's how

we're going to move forward with."

Earlier, the US State Department also said that the detention of American citizens in Afghanistan hinders positive engagement with the interim government of Afghanistan. The Islamic Emirate has not commented on this matter yet, but it has repeatedly stressed that it has fulfilled its commitments to the international community.

The spokesperson of the Islamic Emirate previously confirmed to TOLONews that two American citizens and some other foreign nationals are in detention due to legal violations.

Hewad Zazai, a political analyst, discussed the importance of balance in the Islamic Emirate's policies, saying: "When it comes to BRICS, they raise issues of human rights and prisoners. It is better for the Islamic Emirate to maintain a balance in its interactions between the East and West and pursue a balanced policy."

"They want to create distance between the Islamic Emirate, the region, and BRICS member countries, who now want to give the Islamic Emirate a role in this meeting," said Sayed Akbar Sial Wardak, another political analyst.

The Islamic Emirate recently said that a delegation from the interim government is interested in participating in the BRICS summit, which will be held in less than a month in Kazan, Russia.

## Tori Dam in Zabul has been inaugurated

ZABUL (TOLONews): The Tori Dam in Qalat, the capital of Zabul province, which was built at a cost of 127 million Afghanis, was inaugurated on Thursday in a ceremony by Mullah Abdul Ghani Baradar, the Deputy Prime Minister for Economic Affairs.

In this ceremony, which was attended by several other officials of the Islamic Emirate, Mullah Abdul Ghani Baradar called on the people to support the caretaker government in the implementation of large national projects.

According to the Deputy Prime Minister for Economic Affairs, the Islamic Emirate continues to work on several developmental projects in various parts of the country, which have created job opportunities for many citizens.

Mullah Abdul Ghani Baradar said in the ceremony: "We seek your support for the Islamic Emirate in every area where you have the ability and can support the Islamic Emirate, so do support us." The Tori Dam has the capacity to store 2.9 million cubic meters of water, which will irrigate 560 hectares of agricultural land and also generate 61 kilowatts of electricity.

Abdul Latif Mansour, acting Minister of Energy and Water, said at the ceremony that the construction of this dam was completed with a cost of 127 million Afghanis from the national budget. Mansour added: "God granted us success, and we were honest, and in both provinces, Zabul and Paktika, we handed over this dam for utilization, and we inaugurated it a month ago."

Mohammad Younus Akhundzada, the acting Minister of Rural Rehabilitation and Development, said: "Our effort is to serve Zabul a lot, meaning that every ministry should serve within its framework." The residents of Zabul consider the construction of this dam to be impactful in the growth and economic development of their province. Abdul Salam, a resident, said: "By the blessing of this dam, God is merciful, and the problems of the people will be solved."

Abdul Latif, another resident of Zabul, said: "We were facing drought, the lands dried up, and those who were farmers, if they could earn 1 million before, now they can not even earn 100,000." The acting Minister of Energy and Water also mentioned at the inauguration ceremony of the Tori Dam that to raise the level of underground water in this province, they will soon begin the survey work for the Khurni Dam as well.

## Afghanistan, BD likely to play ODI series in Nov

KABUL (Amu TV): Afghanistan's national cricket team is expected to face Bangladesh in a three-match One Day International (ODI) series in November, as both teams prepare for the 2025 ICC Champions Trophy, according to officials from both cricket boards. Bangladeshi media reported that the national team is scheduled to tour the West Indies for a full series in November and December, which will include two Tests, three ODIs, and three T20 Internationals. Ahead of that tour, Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB) officials are exploring the possibility of staging the ODI series against Afghanistan at a neutral venue. "We are trying to play three ODIs on our way to the West Indies," BCB chairman Faruque Ahmed was quoted as saying, adding that discussions had taken place with officials from the Afghanistan Cricket Board (ACB) during a meeting in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia. ACB Chief Executive Naseeb Khan confirmed to Cricbuzz that the series is being considered, but they are awaiting final confirmation from Bangladesh. "We are in touch with them (BCB) but have to wait for a final answer," Khan said. He added that if confirmed, the series would likely take place in the United Arab Emirates in November.

## IEA asked to cease violations of women, girls' rights

KABUL (Pajhwok): Some European countries call on the Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan (IEA) to immediately cease its violations of the human rights of women and girls and answer to the request for dialogue to address the concerns of the International community on this matter, according to a statement on Friday.

"Afghanistan is responsible under international law for its ongoing gross and systematic violation of numerous obligations under the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW), to which Afghanistan is a State Party," a statement from the Foreign Ministry of Germany said.

"We support the initiative taken by Australia, Canada, Germany, and the Kingdom of the Netherlands, under Article 29 of CEDAW, who have formally taken steps to call on Afghanistan to cease its violations of CEDAW."

"The supporters of this

initiative will continue to also consider other possible options to be followed individually or collectively under CEDAW and other relevant human rights frameworks, while remaining attached to a focused dialogue with a view to strengthening the rights of women and girls."

"This action is without prejudice to our firm position that we do not politically recognize the Taliban de facto authorities as the legitimate representation of the Afghan population. Afghanistan's failure to fulfill its human rights treaty obligations is a key obstacle to normalization of relations. However, we stress that the Taliban de facto authorities remain responsible to uphold and fulfill the international legal obligations of Afghanistan, including on the elimination of discrimination of women and girls under CEDAW."

IEA Spokesperson Mullah Hamdullah Fitrat on his X handle wrote that accus-

ing the IEA of human rights violations and gender discrimination by some countries and organisations is absurd, human rights were protected in Afghanistan and no one is discriminated.

He wrote: "Regrettably, there is an orchestrated effort to disseminate misinformation about Afghanistan, using the testimonies of a few individuals, particularly escaped women, to portray a false narrative."

Earlier, Mawlawi Abdul Karbir, deputy prime minister for political affairs, told a media outlet in an exclusive interview: "85,000 women are currently officially employed in the IEA, 85,000 women are working in medical and nursing sector, women are working in the education sector, airport, passport and statistics departments, there are some hospitals in Kabul which are run by our sisters, the situation is totally different here compared to the what is propagated outside."

## Hajj Ministry attempts to raise religious awareness



KABUL (TOLONews): The Deputy Minister of Hajj and Religious Affairs told TOLONews that considering the current circumstances, specific topics are selected by the ministry each week and sent to mosques so that citizens become aware of them.

Arifullah Arif, the Deputy Minister of Finance and Administration of this ministry, added that religious scholars play an influential role in informing citizens about the truths and history of Islam.

The Deputy Minister of Finance and Administration of the Ministry of Hajj and Religious Affairs said: "For every significant occasion, such as the days of Ramadan and Hajj, we

provide relevant topics according to the day. It is beneficial for Muslims to be mindful of these days and act accordingly."

Arifullah Arif emphasized that the ministry does not face a shortage of religious scholars and is striving to enhance the academic capacity of religious scholars.

At the same time, some religious scholars also consider the role of pulpits and mosques as important for raising the level of religious and social awareness among the citizens of the country.

"This very pulpit and mosque were, during the time of the Prophet (PBUH), the place of the Ministry of Interior, Foreign Affairs, and the leadership of nations toward religion and the

world. Therefore, it is clear that the pulpits of mosques and scholars have a prominent role in enlightening and reforming society," Abdul Salam Mutawakil, a religious scholar, told TOLONews.

The country's citizens also consider the presence of religious scholars in society to be important.

"The role of scholars is important because they show the people the path of religion, as many people have not attended school and are illiterate," Mahmood Shah, a resident of Kabul, told TOLONews.

The Ministry of Hajj and Religious Affairs has also stated that religious scholars should clearly convey the selected topics to the citizens so that they can apply them in their daily activities.

## Over 350 families return from Iran and Pakistan in 24 hours

KABUL (Khaama Press): The Ministry of Refugees and Repatriation reported on Thursday that 358 Afghan families entered Afghanistan from Iran and Pakistan within 24 hours.

According to the report, 53 families returned from Pakistan through Torkham and Spin Boldak, and other families returned from Iran via the Pul-e-Abrishim and Islam Qala.

Recently, the Islamic Republic of Iran and Pakistan have intensified pressure and expulsions

of Afghan migrants.

According to Taliban statistics, hundreds of people return to Afghanistan from Iran and Pakistan daily.

These migrants are mostly forcibly expelled in the majority of cases.

The ongoing forced expulsions of Afghan migrants from Iran and Pakistan are placing immense pressure on Afghanistan's already strained resources and social services.

The large number of returning families daily



indicates the severity of the situation, which could exacerbate existing humanitarian challenges.

Addressing the underlying causes of migration

and providing support for returning families is crucial to stabilizing the situation and ensuring their reintegration into Afghan society.

## Foreign companies considering investments totaling \$5 billion

KABUL (TOLONews): The Economic Affairs Office of the Prime Minister has announced that dozens of domestic and foreign companies are interested in investing over \$5 billion in Afghanistan.

According to the statement from the Economic Affairs Office, domestic and foreign investors aim to invest in sectors such as agriculture, infrastructure, industry, energy, mining, telecommunications, healthcare, and transportation in the country.

Hamidullah Fitrat, the deputy spokesperson of the Islamic Emirate, said: "Domestic and foreign companies have shown interest in investing approximately 5.348 billion dollars in agriculture, infrastructure, industry, energy, mining, telecommunications, healthcare, and transport sectors."

Meanwhile, the Minister of State

for International Cooperation of Qatar discussed the situation in Afghanistan and development projects in the country during a meeting with the Deputy Administrator of the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID).

Mohammad Nabi Afghan, an economic expert, commented on the activities of the US Agency for International Development (USAID), saying, "USAID was very active and greatly supported the private sector, particularly in assisting farmers with fruit exports and in infrastructure projects."

Sayed Masood, another economic expert, highlighted the importance of USAID's activities, saying, "I believe if USAID resumes its operations in Afghanistan after three years, it will create a sense of regional trust."

The Ministry of Economy has emphasized the significance of USAID resuming its activities for the country's economic growth and stressed the need for USAID and other organizations to restart their operations in Afghanistan.

Abdul Latif Nazari, Deputy Minister of Economy, told TOLONews: "USAID can help Afghanistan in economic development, including the growth of agriculture, trade, and small and medium-sized industries, as well as managing natural resources like the environment and infrastructure issues such as water supply, electricity, and road construction."

USAID supported major projects in Afghanistan, including CASA-1000, but halted its operations after the Islamic Emirate's return to power.

## Afghan footballer Esmatullah aims to reach FIFA World Cup



BALKH (TOLONews): Esmatullah Hadafmand, an under-20 national football player from Balkh province, Afghanistan, has been pursuing football for nearly ten years.

During this time, Hadafmand has managed to achieve significant accomplishments both domestically and internationally.

This national team player has also experience playing for the club team Mawj Sal-e-Balkh. Esmatullah Hadafmand told TOLONews: "My request of the

government and the private sector is to support athletes, especially Afghan football players."

Hadafmand's only dream is to reach the FIFA World Cup as part of the national team.

For the past two years, he has been invited to the under-20 national football team by the coaches of the Football Federation.

During this time, the Afghan football player has played four times with the under-20 national team against teams from Tajikistan,

Saudi Arabia, Macau, and Australia. Esmatullah Hadafmand said: "My only wish is to qualify for the World Cup with the Afghan national football team and achieve good results for the country."

One of the most significant achievements of this under-20 Afghan national player is his lone goal in the AFC Asian Cup against Macau.

Afghanistan Football Federation coaches have praised this player's performance within the national team and emphasized their support for him.

Rasool Ahmadi, the assistant coach of the under-20 national football team, said: "Esmatullah is one of the good players who was also named the phenomenon of the tournament in the third season of the Afghanistan Champions League, and we can say that he will be one of Afghanistan's future football stars."

"Esmatullah was selected from Balkh province, and I ask the national traders and traders of Balkh to support this player so that his financial issues are resolved, and he can continue his football in the best way possible," said Nasrullah Yousufi, a veteran Afghan football player.

Esmatullah Hadafmand continues to pursue his goal of reaching the FIFA World Cup with relentless training.

## Ministry: Making aid conditional against intl rights, ethics



KABUL (TOLONews): Abdul Latif Nazari, the Deputy Minister of Economy, told TOLONews that the suspension and reduction of humanitarian aid to Afghanistan is against international rights and ethics. The Deputy Minister of Economy added that humanitarian aid should not be used as a political tool to achieve specific goals.

Nazari stressed that humanitarian aid should not be linked to political issues, stating, "Conditioning humanitarian aid is against international rights and ethics. Countries should not tie

humanitarian aid to political issues and should not use it as a political tool to advance political objectives." These remarks come as Dan Meuser, a member of the US House of Representatives, introduced a new bill to Congress that makes continued US financial aid to Afghanistan conditional on the release of American citizens in Afghanistan.

This US Representative said that the bill was drafted to ensure the freedom of Ryan Corbett and George Glezman. Dan Meuser said in this regard: "The United States is the largest human-

itarian donor to Afghanistan, and my legislation would ensure that not one penny more will be sent until every American hostage is released."

"If US aid is indeed allocated to the people of Afghanistan and reaches the people who are struggling with economic challenges, then in that case, it should not be made conditional on political issues," said Mir Shakeeb Mir, an economic analyst.

Meanwhile, some Kabul residents are calling for the continuation of humanitarian aid and say that if this aid to Afghanistan is halted, many families will face economic challenges.

"Today in Kabul, there are many disabled and handicapped individuals who are in need of assistance; attention should be paid to these individuals," said Sayed Jora, a resident of Kabul. This comes as, since the return of the Islamic Emirate to power in Afghanistan, the United States has provided nearly \$3 billion in aid to Afghanistan.





KARACHI: President Asif Ali Zardari offering condolences to the family members of Deputy Commissioner Zakir Baloch Shaheed.

## Pakistan, Iraq agree to enhance mutually beneficial cooperation

NEW YORK (APP): Pakistan and Iraq on Friday agreed to further deepen and broaden the scope of existing bilateral ties and exploit the potential of enhancing mutually beneficial cooperation between both countries. The bilateral ties were discussed in a meeting between Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif and his Iraqi counterpart Mohammad Shia' Al Sudani on the sidelines of 79th Session of the United Nations General Assembly here.

The prime minister lauded the cordial ties between the two brotherly countries, reinforced by strong historical, cultural and religious affinities. He also commended the excellent arrangements made by the Government of Iraq for the Pakistani pilgrims.

The two leaders also exchanged views on regional and international issues of mutual interest. They noted with grave concern the ongoing Israeli carnage on Gaza and the ensuing humanitarian catastrophe. Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif reiterated Pakistan's call for an immediate ceasefire in Gaza and holding Israel accountable for the Gaza genocide.

Underscoring the commonality of views on international issues, both the leaders resolved to reinforce the international efforts both at the UN and OIC platforms for immediate ceasefire in Gaza, unimpeded supply of humanitarian assistance to Palestinian brethren.

### PM meets Nepalese counterpart:

Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif held a meeting with his Nepalese counterpart K.P. Sharma Oli and expressed Pakistan's desire to further strengthen the multifaceted bilateral cooperation, especially in commercial, economic, trade, and tourism sectors.

In the meeting, held on the sidelines of the 79th Session of the United Nations General Assembly here, the two leaders reiterated their commitment to continue exploring avenues for enhancing bilateral and regional cooperation. Prime Minister Shehbaz congratulated K.P. Sharma Oli on assuming the office of the prime minister.

Expressing satisfaction at the excellent bilateral ties between Pakistan and Nepal, he conveyed warm sentiments and wishes for the people and the Government of Nepal on behalf of the people of Pakistan. Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif also extended an invitation to the Nepalese prime minister to visit Pakistan.

**Shehbaz invites American banks for investment in key sectors:** Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif invited American banks to invest in Pakistan's key sectors of infrastructure, energy, technology, agriculture, and assured of the government's commitment to maintain a stable macroeconomic environment to facilitate foreign investors.

The prime minister said this while

talking to a delegation of prominent Pakistani American bankers on the sidelines of the 79th UN General Assembly. The delegation comprised high-ranking representatives from prestigious banks including JP Morgan, Natixis Corps & Investments, Sumitomo Mitsui Banking Corp, Goldman Sachs, Citizens Bank, Lazard, Audax Group.

He informed the delegation about the key initiatives taken by the government to stabilize the economy and attract foreign investment to Pakistan, including broadening the tax base, enhancing the ease of doing business, and ongoing reforms in the state-owned enterprises. These steps have resulted in improved economic indicators and upgradation of Pakistan's credit rating by international rating agencies, including Fitch and Moody's. He also briefed the delegation on the establishment of a Sustainable Finance Framework, which will allow the Government to carry out a green/sustainability bond issuance in the international capital markets.

Thanking the prime minister for the opportunity to interact with him, the delegation lauded the government's policies that have been instrumental in achieving the macroeconomic stability in Pakistan. The delegation also expressed a deep interest in cooperating with the government for the development of manufacturing sector, especially SMEs to help bolster the exports.

## PM, delegations walk out of UNGA in snub to Netanyahu

UNITED NATIONS (APP): The Pakistan delegation to the 79th Session of the UN General Assembly, led by Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif, walked out on Friday as Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu took the stage to address the 193-member Assembly.

The walk out, which was joined by Arab and Islamic delegations, served as a strong gesture of protest to the presence of Netanyahu, whom the UN organs and human rights bodies have accused of being responsible for carrying out a massacre of the Palestinian people in its deadly war in Gaza.

The Pakistani delegation included Defence Minister Khawaja Asif, Information Minister Attaullah Tarar, Science and Technology Minister Khalid Maqbool Siddiqui, Pakistan's Permanent Representative to the United Nations Munir Akram, and Ambassador to the United States Rizwan Saeed Sheikh. Meanwhile, criticism has arisen over allowing the UN address by Netanyahu, for whom International Criminal Court (ICC) Prosecutor Karim Khan is seeking an arrest warrant for "war crimes".

Israel's military offensive in the

Gaza Strip has killed at least 41,534 Palestinians, mostly women and children, and wounded 96,092 since October 7, the Palestinian enclave's health ministry said in a statement. The toll included 39 deaths in the previous 24 hours, the statement added.

The Netanyahu-led government has further expanded the war by launching strikes in Lebanon which Israel claims that such attacks were aimed at Hezbollah fighters. Tens and thousands of Lebanese have fled the Israeli bombardment. In his address to the UN General Assembly, PM Shehbaz Sharif demanded an "immediate" end to the Israeli military offensive in the Gaza Strip and described it as a "systematic slaughter" and "bloodshed".

"This is not just a conflict, this is a systematic slaughter of innocent Palestinians. An assault on the very essence of human life and dignity, the blood of Gazan children stains not just the hands of the oppressors but also those complicit in prolonging this cruel conflict." PM Shehbaz said humanity was "diminished" when the "endless suffering" of Palestinians was ignored.

"It is not enough to condemn ...

we must act now and demand an immediate end to this bloodshed. We must remember that the blood and sacrifice of innocent Palestinians will never go to waste. We must worry about their plight and difficulties, and stand by them." The prime minister called for a durable peace for Palestine through a two-state solution and demanded that Palestine be "immediately" admitted as a full UN member.

At the UNGA, Palestine President Mahmud Abbas took his seat alongside the Palestinian delegation in alphabetical order for the first time after the delegation received upgraded privileges in the Assembly in May. Prime Minister Shehbaz said he was expressing "the searing pain and anguish of Pakistanis at the plight of Gazans.

Our heart bleeds as we witness the tragedy unfolding in the holy land. A tragedy that shakes the very consciousness of humanity and the foundation of this institution." Pakistan has condemned Israeli attacks and called upon the international community to step up efforts of a ceasefire and ensure the safety of women and children.

## ‘Stop this war now,’ Slovenian PM tells Israel’s Netanyahu

LONDON: Slovenian Prime Minister Robert Golob on Friday called for an immediate ceasefire in Gaza, telling his Israeli counterpart Benjamin Netanyahu to "stop this war now." Golob was addressing the UN General Assembly in New York, with Slovenia having assumed the presidency of the UN Security Council on Sept. 1.

During the speech, he left no room for doubt, thumping the lectern as he said: "I want to say this out loud and clear to the Israeli government: Stop the bloodshed, stop the suffering, bring the hostages home and end the occupation." He told the UNGA that the UNSC is finding itself unable to respond "in an effective way to major conflicts such as Gaza, Ukraine or Sudan," adding that the council needs reform.

"In Gaza, almost four months since the council's resolution on (a) ceasefire and hostage release, the deal is nowhere close," Golob said. "As the (UN) secretary-general (Antonio Guterres) said yesterday ... people in Gaza are existing, not living, existing among lakes of sewage, piles of rub-

bish and mountains of rubble. The only certainty they have is that tomorrow is going to be worse. "In the West Bank and East Jerusalem, violence and dehumanization of Palestinians is increasing and has reached a boiling point.

"All this is taking us further away from the two-state solution with Israelis and Palestinians living side-by-side in peace and security. "(The) escalation of (the) Gaza crisis into the region is now a reality. The region is (on) the brink of an abyss. De-escalation is urgently needed, starting with the ceasefires in Gaza and Lebanon." Golob also highlighted the civil war in Sudan, saying: "We're witnessing a man-made humanitarian catastrophe, with millions displaced and in desperate need of humanitarian aid. At the same time, we're seeing (an) atrocity happening again in Darfur."

He blamed the five permanent members of the UNSC for "misusing veto power and putting national interest first," adding: "We urgently need a council that's a true representation of the international community, a council that's fit for the world of today.

"We need to ensure that the distribution of the seats is fair. The council needs stronger voices of the regions that have been underrepresented, such as (the) African continent."

Golob added that the "erosion of respect for international humanitarian law" is making it harder for humanitarian work to be carried out. "In Gaza, humanitarians aren't just occasional collateral victims — they seem to have become a deliberate military target," he said. "There's no other explanation for the highest number of humanitarian workers being killed last year, of whom the vast majority (were) in Gaza.

"The sense of impunity for crimes in Gaza is putting humanitarian organizations under stress elsewhere. This is undermining the very essence of the UN." Golob also addressed climate change and the measures being taken to halt its effects across the world, especially threats to water supplies, including the use of supercomputers and artificial intelligence. "Unfortunately, people suffering from armed conflicts don't have the luxury of high-tech solutions. — Arab News

## President visits family of martyred DC Zakir

F.P. Report

KARACHI: President Asif Ali Zardari on Friday visited the family of martyred Deputy Commissioner Zakir Baloch and condoled with the bereaved family.

DC Zakir Baloch was martyred in an attack in Mastung, Balochistan. President Zardari expressed his profound condolences and prayed for elevation of ranks of martyred DC Zakir Baloch.

He said that Zakir Baloch was martyred while fulfilling his responsibilities. He said that entire nation salutes the sacrifices of the martyrs and their families for the nation. The president also appreciated the spirit of patriotism of the martyr and prayed for the heirs to bear this irreparable loss.

## Another victim of Swabi blast dies

F.P. Report

SWABI: The death toll in the city police station blast on Friday mounted to two as another victim died at Bacha Khan Medical Complex (BKMC).

District Police Officer (DPO) Swabi Haroon Rasheed told reporters that the blast occurred in the police station's warehouse room on the first floor, where explosive material recovered from the outlaws from time to time was stored. The DPO said the explosion was apparently triggered by short circuit, which caused multiple detonations.

Rescue and firefighting teams immediately rushed to the scene and shifted the wounded cops to hospitals where emergency declared. The powerful blast damaged the building which also caught fire, however, it was doused following an immediate response from firefighting teams. DPO said that 33 wounded persons were shifted to different hospitals.

KP Chief Minister Ali Amin Gandapur took notice of the incident and ordered the inspector general and chief secretary to immediately reach the Swabi police station. He also ordered them to present a report after ascertaining the genre of the explosion. The CM asked authorities to ensure timely medical assistance to the injured as well.

Dr Asif, medical superintendent of the District Headquarters Hospital, confirmed that 26 injured have been brought to the DHQ hospital. Subsequently, Bacha Khan Hospital spokesperson Raham Khan said that eight injured persons were receiving medical treatment at the health facility. IGP Akhtar Hayat Gandapur visited the blast site and reviewed the situation. He directed best medical facilities to the injured.

## SC dismisses Ali Gohar petition

F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: The Supreme Court has dismissed PML-N leader Ali Gohar Baloch's review petition seeking a vote recount in NA-97. A two-member bench, led by Justice Amin-ud-Din Khan, heard the case regarding the recount request from Baloch, who had contested the 2018 elections in the constituency.

During the proceedings, Baloch's lawyer argued that the request for a recount had been submitted before the results were finalized, and that the application was already on record. However, Justice Naeem Akhtar Afghan remarked that new evidence cannot be presented in a review petition after the case has been decided. He further noted that the Returning Officer's decision could have been influenced by external factors. The court questioned why Baloch's legal team was only bringing this matter up after the case had already been settled. Justice Naeem Akhtar Afghan added that no request for an adjournment was made during the last hearing, raising doubts about the timing of the appeal. After a brief recess, Baloch's lawyer confirmed that his client wished to proceed with the case on merit.

## Economy stays positive as indicators show improvement

ISLAMABAD (APP): The country's economy has indicated positive developments during the first two months of the current fiscal year (2025) as most of the economic indicators have shown improvement, finance ministry said in a report released on Friday.

According to monthly Economic Update and Outlook for September 2024, industrial output has increased and large exporting sectors have also witnessed growth, reflecting an optimistic outlook for exports. The current account deficit contracted while the fiscal sector remained resilient, mainly attributed to prudent measures taken by the government. "This trajectory is expected to continue in the coming months," it adds.

According to the report, agriculture sector is adapting modernization and innovation in farming practices so an elevation in yield is expected. During FY2025 (July-August), imports of agricultural machinery & implements increased by 105.6 percent to \$17.6 million compared to the same period last year. This growing commitment to mechanization and innovation in farming practices is expected to enhance yield in coming months.

The Large Scale Manufacturing (LSM) output increased by 2.4 percent in July 2024, rebounding from a contraction of 5.4 percent in reflecting improved market conditions and market support. During the period, 14 out of 22 sectors witnessed positive growth. Additionally, production and sales of all vehicles witnessed an increase of 19.5 percent and 16.3 percent respectively during Jul-Aug FY2025.

The Consumer Price Index (CPI) based Inflation receded to single, lowest in 34 months in August 2024, recorded at 9.6 percent on year-on-year basis compared to 27.4 percent in the same month last year. In July FY2025, the net federal revenues grew by 7.2 percent to Rs 408.4 billion from Rs 380.9 billion last year. The growth in revenues has been realized on the back of 22.6 percent increase in tax collection and 20.5 percent rise in non-tax collection.

Meanwhile, total expenditures grew by 19.2 percent to Rs 768.6 billion in July FY2025 against Rs 644.9 billion last year. Consequently, the fiscal deficit was recorded at 0.3 percent of GDP as against 0.2 percent of GDP in the same month of last year. Primary balance managed to post a surplus of 0.1 percent of GDP compared to 0.3 percent of GDP last year.

During Jul-Aug FY2025, the FBR net tax collection grew by 20.6 percent to Rs

1,456 billion as compared to Rs 1,207.5 billion same period last year. In August 2024, FBR collected 19.0 percent more taxes to reach Rs 796 billion from Rs 669 billion last year. The external account position has strengthened due to improved exports and remittances nevertheless imports also increased. During Jul-Aug FY2025, the current account registered a deficit of \$0.2 billion compared to \$ 0.9 billion last year. However, it recorded a surplus of \$ 75 million in August 2024. During Jul-Aug FY2025, goods exports increased by 7.2 percent, reaching \$ 4.9 billion, while imports stood at \$ 9.5 billion, compared to \$ 8.4 billion last year leading to trade deficit of \$ 4.7 billion.

Meanwhile, amid diminishing inflationary pressures, improved inflation expectations and business confidence, the Monetary Policy Committee (MPC) cut the policy rate by 200 basis points to 17.5 percent in its decision held on September 12, 2024. During 1st July - 30th August FY2025, money supply (M2) shows negative growth of 2.6 percent (Rs. -962.3 billion) compared to negative growth of 1.4 percent (Rs. -449.5 billion) last year.

On social safety sector, BISP has raised the quarterly installment of Kafalat Programme from 10,500 rupees to 13,500 rupees starting in January 2025 and the number of families benefiting will reach 10 million (1 crore) by the end of this year. According to the report, following a phase of decline, LSM is now regaining its footing and major exporting sectors show readiness to scale up production.

This recovery is expected to be bolstered by a favorable external environment, a stable exchange rate, and declining inflationary pressures. Moreover, an accommodative monetary policy stance, improved investors' confidence and the global market recovery, will provide additional support to foster the sustainable industrial growth. Government's commitment to fiscal consolidation will contribute to improved fiscal accounts. For agriculture, the outlook of Kharif 2024 production, weather being critical factor will pave the way for productivity. Inflation is expected to remain within the range of 8.0% to 9.0% in September and October 2024. On external front, it is expected that exports and imports will observe an increase in momentum. In September 2024, the exports are likely to remain within range of \$ 2.5-3.0 billion, imports \$4.5-5.0 billion and workers' remittances \$ 2.7-3.2 billion.

## Israel hits Beirut suburbs with heavy airstrikes

BEIRUT (AP): The Israeli military said Friday it struck the central headquarters of Hezbollah in Beirut, where a series of massive explosions leveled multiple buildings, sending clouds of orange and black smoke billowing in the skies.

The strikes in the suburbs south of Lebanon's capital came shortly after Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu addressed the UN, vowing that Israel's campaign against Hezbollah would continue. His comments further dimmed hopes for an internationally backed ceasefire aimed at preventing a spiral into all-out war.

Three major Israeli TV channels said Hezbollah leader Hassan Nasrallah was the target of the strikes. But the unsorted reports could not immediately be confirmed by The Associated Press, and the army declined comment. But given the size and timing of the blast, there were strong indications that a high-value target may have been inside the buildings struck. To a degree unseen in past conflicts, Israel this past week has aimed to eliminate Hezbollah's senior leadership.

Friday's bombings were the most powerful yet seen in the Lebanese capital the past year. The Israeli army spokesman, Rear Adm. Daniel Hagari, said it targeted the main Hezbollah headquarters, located

beneath residential buildings. Four buildings in the Haret Hreik neighborhood of Dahiyeh were reduced to rubble, Hezbollah's Al-Manar TV reported. The blast rattled windows and shook houses some 30 kilometers (18 miles) north of Beirut. Ambulances were seen headed to the scene, sirens wailing.

Officials at a nearby hospital said they received at least 10 wounded, three critically including a Syrian child. Israel dramatically intensified its airstrikes in Lebanon this week, saying it is determined to put an end to more than 11 months of Hezbollah's war into its territory. The scope of Israel's operation remains unclear, but officials have said a ground invasion to push the militant group away from the border is a possibility. Israel has moved thousands of troops toward the border in preparation.

At least 25 people were killed in Israeli strikes early Friday, Health Minister Firas Abiad said, bringing the death toll in Lebanon this week to more than 720. He said the dead included dozens of women and children. A pre-dawn strike Friday in the mainly Sunni border town of Chebaa hit a home, killing nine members of the same family, the state news agency said. A resident identified the dead as Hussein Zahra, his wife Ratiba, their five children

and two of their grandchildren.

At the UN, Netanyahu vowed to "continue degrading Hezbollah" until Israel achieves its goals. Netanyahu's comments have damped hopes for a US-backed call for a 21-day truce between Israel and Hezbollah to allow time for a diplomatic solution. Hezbollah has not responded to the proposal.

An Iranian-backed Hezbollah, the strongest armed force in Lebanon, began firing rockets into Israel almost immediately after Hamas' Oct. 7 attack, saying it was a show of support for the Palestinians. Since then, it and the Israeli military have traded fire almost daily, forcing tens of thousands of people to flee their homes on both sides of the border. An Israeli security official said he expects a possible war against Hezbollah would not last for as long as the current war in Gaza, because the Israeli military's goals are much narrower.

In Gaza, Israel has vowed to dismantle Hamas' military and political regime, but the goal in Lebanon is just to push Hezbollah away from the border with Israel — "not a high bar like Gaza" in terms of operational objectives, said the official, who spoke on the condition of anonymity due to military briefing guidelines.

## Iranian operatives charged in US

WASHINGTON (AP): The Justice Department unsealed criminal charges Friday against three Iranian operatives suspected of hacking Donald Trump's presidential campaign and disseminating stolen information to media organizations.

The three accused hackers were employed by Iran's paramilitary Revolutionary Guard and their operation also targeted a broad swath of targets, including government officials, members of the media and non-governmental organizations, the Justice Department said. The Trump campaign disclosed on Aug. 10 that it had been hacked and said Iranian actors had stolen and distributed sensitive internal documents.

Multiple major news organizations that said they were leaked confidential information from inside the Trump campaign, including Politico, The New York Times and The Washington Post, declined to publish it.

US intelligence officials subsequently linked Iran to a hack of the Trump campaign and to an attempted breach of the Joe Biden-Kamala Harris campaign. They said the hack-and-dump operation was meant to sow discord, exploit divisions within American society and potentially influence the outcome of elections that Iran perceives to be "particularly consequential in terms of the impact they could have on its national security interests." Last week, officials also revealed that the

Iranians in late June and early July sent unsolicited emails containing excerpts of the hacked information to people associated with the Biden campaign. None of the recipients replied. The Harris campaign said the emails resembled spam or a phishing attempt and condemned the outreach to the Iranians as "unwelcome and unacceptable malicious activity."

The indictment comes at a time of heightened tensions between Washington and Tehran as Iran-backed Hezbollah and Israel escalate attacks against each other, raising concerns about the prospect of an all-out war, and as US officials say they continue to track physical threats by Iran against a number of officials including Trump.