

**IHC summon officials**  
**F.P. Report**

ISLAMABAD: Islamabad High Court (IHC) summoned detailed reports from the ministries of interior and defence on a petition seeking recovery of PTI's missing focal person Intizar Panjtoha. Chief Justice Aamir Farooq while hearing the case asked IG Islamabad Police Ali Nasir Rizvi about current position of the investigation. "What was the last location," the court questioned.

**Boy, girl bodies found**  
**F.P. Report**

KARAK: The body of a young girl and boy were found in Sirajkhel area of tehsil Takht Nusrati in Karak on Thursday. Some unknown accused dumped the bodies of the girl and boy after killing them somewhere else. Police said the incident was likely to be the result of honor killing. The bodies of the boy (24) and girl (18) were shifted to THQ hospital for medico legal procedure.



ISLAMABAD: A delegation of Saudi Arabia led by Investment Minister, Khalid Bin Abdul Aziz Al Falih called on Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif.

## KP govt mobilizes for peace Grand Jirga defies PTM’s anti-state agenda

Syed Adnan

PESHAWAR: In a pivotal move for the stability of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, a grand jirga held on Thursday tasked Chief Minister Ali Amin Gandapur with resolving the peace and security issues plaguing the province. This initiative comes in the wake of a controversial three-day gathering organized by the recently banned Pashtun Tahaffuz Movement (PTM), an organization notorious for its anti-state rhetoric.

The PTM, despite being outlawed by the federal government on Sunday due to threats to national security, remained defiant. In direct opposition to the government's orders, diehard PTM activists gathered for their "Pashtoon Qaumi Jirga" in Khyber District on Sunday evening. The federal ban followed the KP government's prohibition, which barred its officials from engaging with the PTM-led event, with Khyber Deputy Commissioner Captain Sanaullah Khan (ret'd) enforcing Section 144 to prevent public gatherings.

The PTM's stance, often riddled with anti-state rhetoric and a disregard for the law, has long been a source of unrest in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. The group's continuous defiance of government orders is not just an act of civil disobedience but a blatant challenge to the nation's peace and security. While the movement masquerades under the guise of Pashtun rights, its actions consistently undermine national sovereignty, often playing into the hands of hostile external forces. The federal government, in banning the PTM, has taken a necessary step to protect the country from further instability incited by this group.

The grand jirga, organized in response to PTM's provocative actions, was held at the Chief Minister's House and attended by notable figures including KP Governor Faisal Karim Kundi, Federal Ministers Mohsin Naqvi and Amir Muqam, and political leaders such as Aimal Wali Khan and Sikandar Sherpao. The assembly entrusted CM Gandapur with leading a peace jirga involving all relevant stakeholders to address the province's security issues.

Addressing the gathering, CM Gandapur emphasized that peace could only be achieved through dialogue and mutual consultation. "Protection of life and property is our utmost responsibility," he stated, reiterating the need for a peaceful resolution rather than conflict. The chief minister's call for unity transcended political affiliations, as he stressed that the stability of the province and the safety of its people were paramount.

Governor Faisal Karim Kundi echoed

these sentiments, underscoring the importance of prioritizing peace and security over political differences. In a province still reeling from violence and instability, especially in areas deemed no-go zones, Kundi urged all stakeholders to come together. "We must work together to bring peace to our province," he remarked, stressing the urgency of addressing security challenges that extend beyond domestic concerns, particularly in the context of the Afghan crisis.

The PTM's defiance in the face of these efforts serves as a stark reminder of the group's destructive agenda. By continually inciting unrest, they not only endanger the lives of innocent citizens but also jeopardize the province's long-term stability. PTM's refusal to engage in constructive dialogue with the government stands in stark contrast to the grand jirga's mission to promote peace through negotiations rooted in Pashtun traditions.

The KP Assembly had earlier condemned the violent clash in Khyber District, which resulted in three deaths, further demonstrating the PTM's disregard for law and order. Yet, the PTI and other political factions recognized the need for a unified front, ensuring that such incidents are not exploited to further destabilize the region.

Despite these tensions, the provincial and federal leadership is resolute in its commitment to peace. CM Gandapur, Governor Kundi, and other political leaders have vowed to work towards a peaceful solution, placing the welfare of the province above all else. As the jirga concludes, the hope is that dialogue, not violence, will prevail in addressing the challenges Khyber Pakhtunkhwa faces.

In stark contrast, the PTM continues to pursue a path that disrupts the peace. Their actions, often cloaked under the banner of ethnic rights, betray their true motives of fostering discord and playing into anti-state narratives. For true peace to be achieved, the rejection of PTM's provocations is crucial, and the jirga stands as a testament to the strength of dialogue over divisiveness.

As the grand jirga presses forward, the hope is that Khyber Pakhtunkhwa will emerge stronger and more united. The collective efforts of political leaders across the spectrum signal a clear message: the province will not allow itself to be divided by the PTM's destructive agenda. With CM Gandapur at the helm, and a commitment to peace through dialogue, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa moves closer to resolving its security challenges and securing a stable future for its people.

## 4 terrorists killed in operations

F.P. Report

RAWALPINDI: Four Khwarij were killed in two separate operations conducted by Security Forces in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa.

On 9 October 24, security forces conducted an intelligence based operation in general area Janikhel, Bannu District on reported presence of khwarij. During the conduct of the operation, after an intense exchange of fire, two khwarij were sent to hell.

In another operation, conducted in general area Hassan Khel, North Waziristan District on 10 October 24, own troops effectively engaged khwarij location and in ensuing fire exchange, two more khwarij were sent to hell.

Weapons and ammunition were also recovered from killed khwarij, who remained actively involved in numerous terrorist activities against the security forces as well as abductions and target killing of innocent civilians. Sanitization of the area is being carried out to eliminate any other kharij found in the area as security forces are determined to wipe out the menace of terrorism from the country.

## Dar: Pakistan eyes G20 membership

F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Muhammad Ishaq Dar Pakistan's economy is on the way to sustainable growth to achieve the dream of joining the G20 club as soon as possible.

The deputy prime minister passed these remarks during his keynote address at the Pakistan-Saudi Business Forum in Islamabad. Ishaq Dar also cited the government's efforts for economic stability and existing huge potential for investment. He recalled that in 2017 the country had achieved the status of top 24th economy with 4 percent inflation, below 2 percent food inflation, 6 percent GDP, and the highest foreign reserves, pursuing its journey to join the G20. He said that the process was derailed due to COVID-19 pandemic and certain internal and external factors.

Ishaq Dar said that Pakistan and Saudi Arabia enjoyed deep-rooted and time-tested relations, marked by shared history, faith, and values. He thanked the Saudi leadership for unwavering support to Pakistan on multiple occasions, particularly during the recent economic challenges, and reiterated that Pakistan was committed to the sovereignty and integrity of the Kingdom and stood shoulder to shoulder with it through thick and thin.

He said that 2.5 million Pakistani diaspora in the Kingdom was contributing to the Saudi development and Pakistan's foreign remittances. Calling it a 'pivotal moment' in the history of bilateral ties, the deputy prime minister said the delegation's visit manifested the shared vision and enduring partnership between the two countries. Ishaq Dar said the difficult and unpopular decisions made by the government are yielding positive results as economic indicators were in the right direction showing reduced inflation, narrowing current account deficit and improved rating making Pakistan more attractive for foreign investment.

# The Frontier Post

Saqib Mushtaq

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan and Saudi Arabia on Thursday signed 27 Memorandum of Understandings (MoUs) valuing US \$2.2 billion in various sectors including industry, agriculture, Information Technology (IT), food, education, mine & minerals, health, petroleum, energy and other areas of mutual cooperation.

Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif accompanied by Saudi Investment Minister Khalid Bin Abdul Aziz Al Falih and Chief of Army Staff Lt. General Syed Asim Munir witnessed the exchange of the signed copies of the MoUs.

Addressing on the occasion, the prime minister said the visit of Saudi business delegation was a true manifestation of great sincerity and affection for people of Pakistan from Saudi Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman. He hoped that today's ceremony would lead to many more such events in times to come.

He expressed the government's resolve to implement these MoUs and to transform them into agreements in future through "hard work and untiring efforts".

"Our Saudi brothers lead by Khalid Bin Abdul Aziz Al Falih have done remarkable job to promote Saudi economy and with his presence here, we will have his full cooperation to promote bilateral investments and business opportunity," he remarked. The prime minister hoped that in future there would be many more such ceremonies both in Saudi Arabia and Pakistan.

He assured the Saudi delegation that the MoUs signed today would be fully materialized and there would be no delay or red tape-ism in the implementation process. Recently, he said that Pakistan had secured the International Monetary Fund (IMF) programme which he hoped would be the last programme. He thanked the Saudi leadership for their support in having the programme as without

their support, the programme could not have materialized.

"Finally this programme is through, but we hope that this will be the last programme as we have already through a wonderful team work, managed to improve our economic indicators, inflation came down from 32% to 6.9% this month, our policy rate has come down from 23% to 17.5%, exports are increasing, foreign remittances are also increasing", he said. Additionally, he said the government was moving towards deep rooted reforms in the country's economy through very stringent measures and there was no compromise on these decisions.

The prime minister also conveyed his warm regards to the Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques, His Majesty King Salman bin Abdulaziz, and His Royal Highness Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman, acknowledging their leadership and support in enhancing bilateral ties.

## Five IPPs contracts terminated, says PM

F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: The government on Thursday announced the termination of the power purchase agreement with five Independent Power Producers (IPPs) which Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif said it would provide Rs60 billion annual relief to the electricity consumers and cumulatively save Rs411 billion to the national exchequer.

The prime minister, in his remarks at the meeting of the federal cabinet he chaired, said the termination of agreements, signed between the Task Force on Power Sector Reforms and IPPs owners, was part of the efforts to reduce the burden of capacity payments being borne by the consumers and that it would also reduce the electricity prices.

"The owners of five IPPs agreed to terminate the contracts preferring the national interest to their own. This is the first raindrop. This will follow the rain to green the whole region," he remarked and thanked his team members including the task force on power sector reforms, President Asif Ali Zardari and Chief of the Army Staff for their efforts and PML-N president

Nawaz Sharif for constant push. He told the cabinet members that the power tariff would be reduced after a gradual review of contracts with other IPPs.

Under the agreement, the IPPs whose contracts had been terminated including Roush Power, Saba Power, LALPIR, HUBCO and Atlas Power, would be liable to receive their arrears sans mark-up. It was told that the Roush Power unit was established under the Build, Own and Operate (BOP) basis, so its ownership would be transferred to the government for its onward privatisation by the Privatisation Commission. The ownership of the rest four IPPs would remain with their respective owners and after the contract termination, the government would not be liable to pay any charges.

Expressing gratitude to the people who faced the inflation with patience, said the time had come to address their woes and mentioned the reduced inflation from 30% to 6.9% - a target achieved within seven months, far before the commitment for 2025. He said the economy was improving fast and the government had made untiring

## 2 policemen martyred in Tank attack

F.P. Report

TANK: Two policemen were martyred and three injured when unknown gunmen attacked their mobil van at Pathan Kot area here Thursday, police said.

The outlaws ambushed the vehicle of Shaheed Murad Akbar police station during routine patrolling. Police cordoned off the area and started search operation. Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Governor Faisal Karim Kundi condemned the attack and prayed for eternal peace of the police martyres. He expressed concerns over the deteriorating security situation in Tank district.

Chief Minister Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Ali Amin Gandapur on Thursday expressed deep sorrow over the martyrdom of two policemen in an attack on their van in PathanKot area of Tank district.

In a condolence message, the Chief Minister strongly denounced the attack on police personnel and showed solidarity with bereaved families. He also prayed for a high place in Heaven for the departed souls. The Chief Minister prayed for early recovery of the three cops who sustained injuries in the armed attack by miscreants. The Chief Minister said that financial assistance will be provided to the families of martyred policemen from Shuhada Package.

## Detailed verdict in Article 63-A case issued

F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: The Supreme Court (SC) of Pakistan on Thursday issued its 23-page detailed judgment in the Article 63-A interpretation case, ruling the earlier verdict against the clear language and mandate of the Constitution.

A five-member SC bench headed by Chief Justice of Pakistan (CJP) Qazi Faez Isa and comprising Justice Aminud Din Khan, Justice Jamal Khan Mandokhel, Justice Mazhar Alam Miankhalil, and Justice Naeem Afghan through a short order issued on October 2 annulled its 2022 verdict that barred lawmakers from going against party directions when voting in parliament.

In its detailed judgment, the SC ruled that its earlier verdict opened the way to transform the leader of a political party into a 'dictator'. "Nothing can be more undemocratic; the majority's judgment has opened the way to transform the leader of a political party into a dictator, simply because the party's leader can never be challenged," the detailed judgment read. "The majority's judgment (in 2022) interestingly referred to decisions from a number of countries and forums, including from the United States of America, Canada, United Kingdom, India, and the Privy Council.

## SCO summit to promote regional cooperation: Tarar

F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Information, Broadcasting, National Heritage and Culture Attaullah Tarar said on Thursday that the upcoming Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) summit would help promote regional cooperation, trade and financial integrity among member states.

Delivering his speech at the media workshop organized by China Media Group ahead of the SCO summit, the minister said that at a time when good news were coming regarding the national economy and fruits of economic development have started reaching the people, hosting SCO summit will promote Pakistan's image and its future prospects. Terming the SCO as the main forum for regional cooperation, the minister said it was an honor for Pakistan to host this Summit.

He said the counter terrorism measures and regional security issues will also be discussed in the summit. Tarar recalled that over 80,000 Pakistani citizens were martyred in anti-terrorism war which was meant to make the world a safer place. The minister hoped that regional cooperation in counter-terrorism will promote peace in the region.

He said adverse effects of climate change were hampering the sustainable development of the country.

Pakistan's share of toxic gas emissions was less than one percent but it had to bear the brunt of climate change's damage in form of floods and cyclones. He stressed that regional cooperation and collective approach was also important in dealing with climate change. "With the cooperation of regional countries, we can work on climate change agenda," he maintained.

He said Pakistan had always advocated for promotion of peace at the forum of SCO. "In Astana SCO summit also we highlighted the issue of Palestine and it is important to discuss the issue of Palestine in this meeting of SCO", he said adding without long-term peace in the Middle East, there could be no peace in the world.

Tarar said that the world should admit that there was genocide of innocent Palestinians in Palestine and war crimes were being committed. "We raised effective voice on the issue of Palestine at SCO and UN General Assembly forums", he said and added that peace in the region was possible only through collective efforts. Tarar made it clear that without peace in Middle East, peace and stability in the world was not possible and it was responsibility of the civilised world to ensure an early ceasefire. He said economic indicators of Pakistan were improving and hosting SCO summit at this

point will prove beneficial for Pakistan.

During the last quarter, remittances worth \$ 8.8 billion were received in the country and IT exports in last quarter have reached 3.8 billion dollars. He said about 68 per cent of Pakistan's population consisted youth, and a large number of them are freelancers. The minister said digitization of Federal Board of Revenue was being done which had resulted in doubling of a number of tax filers.

The minister said digital economy was very important for the country. Moreover he said that the regional countries could be integrated through digital technologies. He said thanks to the economic measures taken by the government, the interest rate has decreased and investment had increased. For a better and brighter future of the region, he said focus should be on increasing digital economy, trade and investment.

He said that Pakistan, due to its strategic location, could become hub of regional trade including central Asian states. He said there was need of more financial integration and economic cooperation among the member states of the SCO. The minister thanked China, Saudi Arabia and United Arab Emirates for extending financial support which also helped in finalisation of agreement with International Monetary Fund.



# CM, WB delegation review \$ 3.124 bln development projects

KARACHI (APP): Sindh Chief Minister Syed Murad Ali Shah and the World Bank delegation, headed by Country Director Najy Benhassine thoroughly reviewed the \$3.124 billion Sindh portfolio to establish new deadlines for various development projects.

The high-level meeting, which took place at the CM House on Thursday was attended by provincial ministers, the Chief Secretary and other key officials, while the World Bank team included sector heads to assist in the review process.

The active Sindh portfolio includes 13 development projects, of which \$1.36 billion has already been disbursed by the World Bank. The projects span a wide range of sectors, including water management, infrastructure, solar energy, education and health services. Some of the key initiatives under review were the Karachi Mobility Project (KMP), Sindh Flood Emergency Rehabilitation Project (SFERP), Sindh Flood Housing Emergency Reconstruction Project (SFHERP), and Karachi Water and Sewerage Services Improvement Project (KWSSIP).

Sindh Flood Emergency Rehabilitation Project (SFERP) aimed at rebuilding infrastructure and providing livelihood support to areas affected by the 2022 floods and focuses on improving Sindh's capacity to respond to climate-related disasters. The \$500 million project consists of four major components: Infrastructure Rehabilitation, Livelihood Support, Institutional Strengthening and Project Management. It was noted in the meeting that payment backlogs have been significantly reduced and they are expected to be cleared by the end of the month.

Sindh Flood Housing Emergency Reconstruction Project (SFHERP) is work-

ing towards multi-hazard resilient housing reconstruction in flood-hit areas. With a budget of \$500 million, the project has three main components: Housing Reconstruction Grants, Institutional Strengthening, and Project Management. The meeting revealed that landless individuals have been granted land and their titles are being transferred to them as part of the project's broader effort to secure housing for flood victims.

Karachi Mobility Project (KMP) is aimed at improving mobility and safety along key corridors in Karachi, includes the construction of the Yellow Line Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) system. This project has three components: Urban Road Infrastructure, BRT System Development and Capacity Building. Significant progress has been made on the Yellow Line, with contracts signed in August 2024 and mobilization underway. Work has already commenced at Depot 2, and the construction of Depot 1 is scheduled to begin on October 17, 2024. Final designs for the Yellow Line and the Jam Sadiq Bridge have been submitted and piling work has started. A business model for the BRT system has also been presented and is currently under review, with the final report due by October 12, 2024.

Competitive and Liveable City of Karachi Project (CLICK) is designed to enhance urban management, improve service delivery and bolster the business environment in Karachi. The project includes five components, ranging from capacity building for local councils to improving property tax administration and technical assistance for solid waste management.

The meeting disclosed that nine contracts have been signed and work has commenced on all 18 schemes, including 73 ini-

tiatives under the \$22.58 million fund for local councils. A pilot property survey conducted between August 15-22, 2024, in the Gulberg and North Nazimabad areas yielded data from 100 units.

Karachi Water and Sewerage Services Improvement Project (KWSSIP), focused on improving access to safe water in Karachi, was also discussed in the meeting. The project involves major procurements, most of which are now tendered. It was noted that contracts are expected to be signed by October 20, 2024, with a commitment level expected to reach 95%. The appointment of key roles, such as a Chief Financial Officer, will be completed by mid-November this year, and progress remains on track to achieve project milestones.

Sindh Solar Energy Project (SSEP) aims to expand solar power generation and improve access to electricity across Sindh. During the review, it was noted that the first contract for Solar Home Systems (SHS) has been signed and the shipment of solar kits is expected to arrive in November 2024. Procurement for the second call-off will begin by mid-October. Additionally, progress on the development of Solar Power Parks has advanced, with a land lease agreement nearing finalization.

Sindh Early Learning Enhancement through Classroom Transformation (SELECT) project focuses on improving early-grade education in Sindh. The project has successfully secured a \$2.3 million budget allocation and civil works have begun in Mirpurkhas, with Thatta following suit. The first batch of materials for Grade 1-2 students will be delivered by January 2025, while materials for Grades 3-5 are expected to reach classrooms by April 2025.



KARACHI: A view of smoke raise from burning restaurant after fire caught at Karachi Sindh Muslim Society locality. —INP Photo

## Commissioner chairs meeting of anti-corruption committee

KARACHI (APP): Commissioner Karachi Syed Hasan Naqvi on Thursday chaired the meeting of Anti-corruption committee-II in his office here.

Anti-corruption officials and representatives of concerned departments participated in the meeting, said a statement. Various complaints of bribery and corruption in different departments were reviewed in the meeting. The anti-corruption officers briefed the participants about the details of complaints against various departments. It was told that the Anti-Corruption department received complaints against 43 officials.

It was told that the maximum number of complaints i-e 10 were received against registration department officials. The meeting approved an open inquiry into all ten complaints against the registration department officials.

## Interior Minister reviews arrangements for SCO Summit

ISLAMABAD (APP): Federal Interior Minister Mohsin Naqvi visited key areas of Islamabad on Thursday to review the city's preparations for the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO) Summit in Islamabad next week.

The minister conducted a comprehensive inspection of critical sites, including D-Chowk, Constitution Avenue, Murree Road, and the Islamabad Expressway, to assess the beautification and cleanliness efforts being undertaken for the high-profile event.

During the visit, Minister Naqvi stressed the importance of completing all construction and beautification tasks ahead of the summit. He issued specific directives to the relevant authorities, urging them to ensure that preparations meet the highest standards. "The entire city of Islamabad, particularly the VIP routes and the Red Zone, must be thoroughly cleaned," he said, underlining the importance of presenting a polished image of the capital during the summit.

In addition to these preparations, the minister ordered the immediate removal of any encroachments along the designated summit routes, ensuring unobstructed and well-maintained pathways for international delegates.

Minister Naqvi highlighted that the natural beauty of Islamabad would be showcased during the event and that every effort should be made to reflect the prestige of the SCO Summit in the city's appearance and arrangements.

Commissioner Islamabad, Muhammad Ali Randhawa, briefed the minister on the progress of construction projects, while Naqvi provided further instructions related to beautification and sanitation efforts.

Key officials, including the Federal Interior Secretary, Chief Commissioner of Islamabad, Chairman of the Capital Development Authority (CDA), Deputy Commissioner, and other relevant authorities were also present during the visit.

## Lahore emerges as Pakistan's most polluted city

LAHORE (APP): Despite Punjab government's tireless efforts to control smog, the air quality index of the Provincial Metropolitan on Thursday reached 177.

In the list of the most polluted cities of Pakistan, Lahore again ranked first, while in the list of the most polluted cities of the world, Lahore came to the fifth place.

The pollution rate in Johar Town was 209, American Consulate 189 and Thokar Niaz Baig air pollution rate 175 was recorded.

On Thursday, the sky was clouded with air pollution, and due to the increasing rate of pollution in the city, the people of Lahore began to suffer from eye, nose, ear and throat diseases.

The current temperature of the city has been recorded at 26 degrees Celsius, according to the Meteorological Department (PMD), there is no chance of rain in the next 24 hours.

A top government official told APP that on the instructions of Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz, the Punjab government took several measures to combat air pollution and smog while focusing on agriculture, transport, environment, industry, energy, edu-

cation and health sectors.

It is worth mentioning here that to reduce the intensity of smog, the government has accelerated its actions.

The Punjab government in this regard has intensified effort and according to the official statistics, 12 thousand 540 industrial units were checked in 6 months from April to September, while issuing notices to 4403 industrial setups, while 117 units were demolished.

Likewise, 594 units recently were sealed and cases were registered against 361, fines of Rs.7 crore were separately imposed.

## Govt to appoint employees in grades one to four, Minister announces

F.P. Report

KARACHI: Provincial Minister for Works and Services and Prisons Haji Ali Hassan Zardari said that employees from one to four grades will be appointed in different departments of Sindh Government very soon.

He said that the youth of Sindh province should not be despair as Chairman Pakistan People's Party Bilwal Bhutto Zardari and President Asif Ali Khan Zardari are working for the prosperity of the people of Pakistan.

He said that Pakistan People's Party always welcomed the healthy criticism and tried its best for the welfare of the people of this homeland. This he said while meeting with public, journalists and civil society activists in his office on Thursday.

Provincial Minister Ali Hassan Zardari said that People's Party believes in good governance and Sindh Government implements the best practices for the good governance.



Talking on works and services department, the minister said that any contractor who could not complete the development work then the license of the concerned firm and company will be cancelled.

He further said that strict action will be taken against the officers of the department who found

involved in negligence during his duties. Talking on the prison department, Provincial Minister Ali Hassan Zardari said that skill training centers and Information Technology Centers are being established in different prisons of the province to engage the prisoners in healthy activities and also to enhance their skills.

He said that prisons are being improved and prisoners are being rehabilitated mentally and physically. He further said that solar panels are also being installed in the prisons of the province. The minister said that prisoners who do not have heirs will be benefited from the Benazir Income Support Program (BISP) through the amount allocated to those who died and their IDs are blocked. On this occasion, PPP MPAs Syed Ayaz Ali Shah Shirazi, Sajid Babhan, Dr. Sohrab Sarki, former MPA Aslam Abro, and journalist delegation from Makli press club met with Provincial Minister Haji Ali Hassan Zardari.

## Governor acknowledges Al-Ghazali University's impact on academic progress

KARACHI (APP): Governor Sindh Kamran Khan Tessori on Thursday praised Al-Ghazali University for its significant contribution to the promotion of higher education.

The Governor of Sindh expressed these views while addressing a simple and dignified ceremony of Jamia Al-Rasheed and Al-Ghazali University held at the Governor House.

He emphasized that the university is not only equipping students with education but also preparing them to face modern challenges.

The event was attended by the university's Patron-in-Chief Mufti Abdul Rahim, Islamic scholar Dr. Zakir Abdul Karim Naik, and other prominent figures.

Governor Sindh Kamran Khan Tessori further stated that Al-Ghazali University has rendered remarkable services in the fields of knowledge and research. The university is striving to enhance educational standards and contribute to societal progress. He commended Chancellor Mufti Abdul Rahim's pivotal role in the

university's development, highlighting that his vision and dedication have elevated the institution to a distinguished position.

Additionally, Governor Tessori lauded the services of Islamic scholar Dr. Zakir Naik, noting that his tireless efforts have guided many individuals around the world towards Islam. He also mentioned Dr. Naik's son, Sheikh Farik Naik, who is following in his father's footsteps by continuing to serve the cause of religion.

**Governor Sindh commends Sindh Police for ensuring foolproof security of Dr. Zakir Naik:** Governor Sindh Kamran Khan Tessori met with Inspector General Sindh Police, Ghulam Nabi Memon at the Governor House and praised IG Sindh, the Additional IG, and other officers and personnel for their efforts in ensuring foolproof security for Dr. Zakir Naik, a distinguished scholar and a state guest. The meeting was also attended by renowned scholar Dr. Zakir Naik, Mufti Abdul Rahim, and Additional IG Javed Alam Odho.

## PTI leader Haleem Adil Sheikh, his brothers acquitted in forgery case

KARACHI (PPI): Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) Sindh President Haleem Adil Sheikh, along with his brothers, was acquitted by a Malir court today in a politically motivated case of forgery and intimidation. The case, filed at Malir's Memon Goth police station, had been under trial for several months. Advocate Khalid Mehmood and other defense lawyers represented Haleem Adil Sheikh in court.

The court, after hearing the arguments, granted the acquittal request, exonerating Haleem Adil Sheikh and his brothers Aleem Adil Sheikh, Muqem Adil Sheikh, and Azeem Adil Sheikh. Following the acquittal, Haleem Adil Sheikh addressed the media, stating, "The false allegations against me and my brothers were politically motivated. Today, truth and justice have prevailed. There is a long list of false cases against us, and we face court appearances daily. Insha Allah, all these cases will also reach their rightful conclusion."

Sheikh further expressed his confidence in PTI Chairman Imran Khan, saying, "Imran Khan is the only leader fighting for the nation's rights, and despite all hardships, he remains steadfast. We are deeply concerned about the restrictions on meeting him and his health condition. Advocate Intizar Panjota was kidnapped after filing a petition for a meeting with Khan, and this fascist system has left the nation disillusioned. The current situation could escalate in a way that may not be beneficial for the country."

Sheikh demanded immediate transparency regarding Imran Khan's health and urged authorities to allow his family and lawyers to meet him. Commenting on the political climate, Haleem Adil Sheikh warned, "The time for change is near, and we will not allow any unconstitutional amendments or actions that harm the integrity of Pakistan's Constitution or the independence of the judiciary. We will begin large-scale protests in Sindh after Islamabad and Punjab."

Senior PTI leader Khurram Sher Zaman also expressed gratitude to the judiciary, stating, "We are thankful to the courts for delivering a just verdict in favor of Haleem Adil Sheikh and his brothers. Insha Allah, all cases against PTI leaders will end similarly."

Advocate Khalid Mehmood, who represented Haleem Adil Sheikh, remarked, "The truth always triumphs. Today, the court dismissed the case after listening arguments, and Haleem Adil Sheikh and his brothers have been honorably acquitted in the false case from Memon Goth, Malir Police station. We will file a defamation suit for the false accusations."

Sheikh, in his remarks, thanked the government and international establishment agents for "creating the resilience" within PTI leaders and supporters. "This nation, with its newfound patience, will also free Muslims from Gaza and Kashmir. He said that boxer Muhammad Ali Kalay had the ability to endure punches, which is why he always won."

## KMC extinguishes fire at an eatery

KARACHI (APP): Karachi Metropolitan Corporation's fire brigade took immediate action on Thursday to fully extinguish a fire that broke out in a three-story building of the Food Inn restaurant located in Sindh Muslim Society.

Afterward, the cooling process was also completed while Deputy Mayor Karachi Salman Abdullah Murad personally monitored the fire extinguishing operation at the restaurant and remained in constant contact with the officials.

Deputy Mayor Salman Abdullah Murad stated that upon receiving the report of the fire at the restaurant, eight fire brigade vehicles and a snorkel arrived at the scene. The restaurant is a ground-plus three-story building, and it also has a rooftop area. According to the information received, repair work was ongoing on the first floor of the building; however, the cause of the fire may have been a short circuit, as the kitchen of the restaurant remained unharmed.

The Deputy Mayor further stated that in a large and densely populated city like Karachi, the effective role of the fire brigade is extremely important. Therefore, arrangements for the immediate availability of the fire brigade have been made in residential and commercial areas, as well as in all industrial zones of Karachi. This strategy has been developed in consultation with and guidance from the relevant business and industrial associations, he said.

The KMC will continue to fulfill its responsibilities in providing basic services to the citizens effectively and will take necessary actions without delay whenever required.

## Senior minister meets WB carbon consultant

LAHORE (APP): Senior Provincial Minister Marriyum Aurangzeb met with World Bank Carbon Consultant Mr. Morton, on Thursday. On this occasion, bilateral discussions were held regarding important measures regarding green carbon credit, industrial emission control system, development domestic carbon credit and anti-smog program.

Senior Provincial Minister Marriyum Aurangzeb said that Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz has been taking steps for six months to protect her people from the negative effects of smog. Punjab is currently going through a transition phase. CM Maryam Nawaz Sharif wants to invest in the development of energy, transport and forests, she added. She said that with the support of Australian firm, discussions are also going on about bio-refinery I for environmentally friendly destruction of crop residues. The senior minister said Punjab Climate Policy and Framework after the formation of the Punjab government has entered the implementation phase and is always trying to eliminate pollution. Smog is a challenge for the people of Punjab in every way, they are benefiting from the successful experiences of other developed countries, she added. Marriyum Aurangzeb thanked the representative of the World Bank for his support and assurance.

## FIA arrests human trafficker

LAHORE (APP): In a significant operation against human trafficking and visa fraud, the Anti-Human Trafficking Circle of Federal Investigation Agency on Thursday apprehended an individual involved in these illicit activities. Acting on the directives of Federal Interior Minister Mohsin Raza Naqvi, authorities took action.

The suspect, identified as Muhammad Azeem, was arrested during a raid conducted in Shama Colony, Lahore. During the operation, officials seized six Pakistani passports from the suspect. Azeem had been allegedly extorting money from citizens under the pretext of sending them abroad.

ضروری تصحیح

مقامی روزناموں میں شائع شدہ اشتہار نمبر (P)2305/24 ایف پی میں ضروری تصحیح کی جاتی ہے۔ شرائط میں اضافے کے تحت خواہشمند گھنٹہ کار کثیرہ بخونواریو پبلیکیشنز کے رجسٹرڈ ہونا ضروری ہے جبکہ دیگر شرائط شائع شدہ اخبار کے مطابق ہوں گی۔ علاوہ ازیں مزید رج کرنے کی تاریخ کو 17 اکتوبر 2024 کے بجائے 28 نومبر 2024 لکھا اور پڑھا جائے۔

اسٹیٹ آفیسر، محکمہ انتظامیہ، سول سیکرٹریٹ، پشاور،

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# Govt to launch training program for nurses through KMU

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: Government of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa is going to launch specialized training program for five hundred three (503) in-service nurses through Khyber Medical University (KMU) in collaboration with Chester University UK and Rs. 270 million will be spent on this international nursing training, said Muzammil Aslam on Thursday.

Khyber Pakhtunkhwa government is thinking of adding life insurance in Health card plus under which financial support will be given to the bereaved family on the death of the house bread earner: Muzammil Aslam

The Advisor to Chief Minister Khyber Pakhtunkhwa for Finance Muzammil Aslam has said that Government of

Khyber Pakhtunkhwa is going to launch specialized training program for five hundred three 503 in-service nurses through Khyber Medical University (KMU) in collaboration with Chester University UK and Rs. 270 million will be spent on this international nursing training. These views were expressed by Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Advisor to CM for Finance Muzammil Aslam while addressing the opening ceremony of International Nursing Training at Khyber Medical University here on Thursday.

Mr. Muzammil Aslam said that the current program will train 503 nurses in seven different batches while each batch will have a five week training provided by the faculty of Chester University UK. The event was attended by Vice Chancellor Khyber

Medical University Zia-ul-Haq, Secretary Higher Education Department Kamran Ahmad Afridi, Director General Health Services and a large number of nurses, students and MDCAT test toppers across Khyber Pakhtunkhwa.

Mr. Muzammil Aslam said that 323 billion rupees have been allocated for the health sector in the budget of the current fiscal year, which is 16 percent of the entire budget. Mr. Muzammil Aslam said that satellite centers of Peshawar Institute of Cardiology are being established across the province through which facilities will be provided to patients from remote areas at their doorsteps. Adviser on Finance said that Khyber Pakhtunkhwa government is thinking of adding life insurance in Health card plus under which financial

support will be given to the bereaved family on the death of the house bread earner.

Muzammil Aslam said that the health card will be operated under biometric mechanism very soon and the biometric functionality will make the health card more efficient. He said that the health card is taken as a case study at the world level and doctors and health experts can use the card data for health research. Muzammil Aslam said that he congratulates Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Government and Khyber Medical University for successfully conducting MDCAT test and said that students of government institutions, have secured 10 positions among the top 20, which is a testament to the excellent performance of government colleges.



PESHAWAR: Doctors examining a journalist during free eye camp organized by Peshawar Press Club for journalists' families.

## Kundi expresses grief over demise of Soomro

PESHAWAR (APP): Governor Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Faisal Karim Kundi, on Thursday expressed deep sorrow and condolences over the death of former National Assembly Speaker Elahi Bakhsh Soomro.

In his statement, Kundi paid tribute to Soomro as a sincere and talented politician who played a significant role in serving the nation and its people.

He emphasized that the country has lost a wise statesman and dedicated public servant with Soomro's passing.

The Governor extended heartfelt condolences to the bereaved family and prayed for their strength during this difficult time.

He also prayed for the forgiveness of the late Soomro's soul, highlighting his contributions to the country and the void his absence will create in the political landscape.

## Free food to students of primary schools provided

PESHAWAR (APP): A non-governmental organization (NGO) welfare organization has offered the provision of free food to the students of all public sector primary schools in Peshawar and provision of health facilities to them as well.

The NGO 'Allah Waley Trust' made this offer during a meeting of its delegation with Commissioner Peshawar Division, Riaz Khan Mehsud here on Thursday.

The delegation called on the commissioner under the leadership of its Country Head Rana Hassan Afzal. Senior Manager Al-Khidmat Foundation (AKF), Dr Iqidar was also present on the occasion.

The delegation briefing the Commissioner Peshawar told that the welfare organization is working for provision of quality free food and health facilities to the public sector primary schools' students and so far, it has provided free food and health facilities to 91000 students of 232 schools of Punjab, Gilgit-Baltistan and Islamabad.

For this purpose, the welfare organization with the support of the district administration of the concerned cities has established a modern and large kitchen.

Similarly, it also carries out the medical checkup of the children through senior doctors on a daily basis and beside other health facilities it also provides free spectacles to students with weak eye-sight.

These steps of the organization, the Commissioner was told, has not only brought improvement in the health of the children rather their interest in education had increased.

They said that the 10,000 students of the primary schools in Peshawar will also get free food and medical facilities on a daily basis on the same pattern and offered their services in this regard.

# PPC arranges free eye camp for journalists

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: The Health Committee of Peshawar Press Club, in collaboration with Khyber Eye Foundation, organized a one-day free medical camp for eye care and related treatments for members and their families.

Over 200 members and their families were examined after eye tests, and free glasses and medications were provided. Following the check-ups, some members were advised to visit the hospital for further treatment.

Camp In-charge Javed Mahmood Khan and Dr. Shabbaz stated that many journalists suffer from eye issues due to excessive screen time, highlighting the need for preventive measures.

They further noted that the demanding nature of journalism contributes to health issues within the community. By adopting precautions, eye ailments can be prevented, especially since dust and prolonged screen exposure are common causes of eye problems.

At the conclusion of the

medical camp, Peshawar Press Club President Arshad Aziz Malik expressed gratitude to Khyber Eye Foundation for organizing the camp and presented shields to the medical team and hospital administration.

The Khyber Eye Foundation management announced plans to continue hosting similar camps in the future.

Chairman of the Health Committee, Irshad Ali, along with committee members, pledged to regularly organize medical camps for various ailments.

# PHC issues arrest warrant of alleged murderer

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: A two-member bench comprising of Chief Justice Peshawar High Court (PHC) Justice Ishtiaq Ibrahim and Justice Waqar Ahmed issued arrest warrants of alleged murderer named Rooh ul Amin and admitted an appeal against his acquittal in a murder case, on Thursday.

The counsel Syed Mubashir Shah advocate informed the court that the petitioner Hakim Khan (now deceased), was the brother of the victim,

Subia. In 2012, Subia's husband, Rooh ul Amin, murdered his wife due to domestic disputes and remained at large for eight years, the lawyer added.

During the trial, the complainant, Hakim Khan, passed away without recording his statement.

However, the victim's sister, an eyewitness to the incident, did record her statement, the counsel argued.

The counsel argued that despite this, Additional Sessions Judge Chota Lahore acquitted Rohul

Amin, citing benefit of doubt. The acquittal was unjustified, as evidence established a clear motive (domestic disputes) and eyewitness testimony.

The murder occurred within the household, and the accused was the husband of the deceased. The trial court erred in disregarding key facts and acquitting the accused on minor technical grounds, the lawyer stated.

PHC admitted the appeal against alleged killer named Rooh ul Amin's acquittal and issued arrest warrants.

# Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Sports Festival begins



F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: Under the auspices of District Sports Office Charsadda, the Sports Festival has started in Abdul Wali Khan Sports Complex Charsadda, which includes All Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Table Tennis Championship, Full Contact Karate and Archery male and female competitions.

The festival was formally inaugurated by Assistant Commissioner Charsadda

Riaz Ahmad along with District Sports Officer Mashal Malik, Senior Vice President of Provincial Table Tennis Association Kifayatullah, Chairman of Full Contact Karate Association Sahibzada Al Hadi, Assistant Director Sports Irshad Khan, Ex. DSO Tahseenullah and other important personalities were present.

All Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Full Contact Karate Championship, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Table

Tennis Championship and District Charsadda Archery Championship have started in Abdul wali Khan Sports Complex Charsadda under the auspices of District Administration and District Sports Office Charsadda.

In the table tennis team event competitions, DI Khan defeated Mardan by 3-1, while Peshawar qualified for the next round by defeating Abbottabad by the same score. The festival will continue for three days.



PESHAWAR: The Advisor to Chief Minister Khyber Pakhtunkhwa for Finance Muzammil Aslam addressing nursing training program at KMU.

## UoP pays tribute to teachers



F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: The Youth Empowerment Club (YEC) of the University of Peshawar, in collaboration with the Business Incubation Centre (BIC), organized a grand Teacher Tribute Ceremony to recognize the invaluable contributions of the teaching faculty across various departments of Peshawar University. The event aimed to celebrate the pivotal role of educators in shaping the future of students and to express gratitude for their unwavering dedication.

The ceremony was graced by the esteemed

Vice Chancellor of the University of Peshawar, Prof. Dr. Naeem Qazi, who attended as the Chief Guest. Over 15 teaching faculty members, including Directors, Chairpersons, and Lecturers from diverse academic disciplines, were present as Guests of Honor, adding prestige to the event.

Dr. Shakeel Khan, Head of the Business Incubation Centre, welcomed the distinguished guests on behalf of BIC, while Ashraf Ali, General Secretary of YEC, extended a warm welcome and heartfelt thanks to the attendees on behalf of the Youth Empowerment

Club. The event also featured key addresses by Amin Ullah, Regional Coordinator of Helping Hand for Relief and Development (HHRD), and Dr. Shakeel Ahmed, Director of the Community Services Program. Both speakers emphasized the significant impact of teachers in the holistic development of students and the community.

In a special segment dedicated to the teaching faculty, Shamim, a core cabinet member of YEC, recited a heartfelt poem to pay tribute to the contributions of the teachers, while Maryam Shahab delivered an inspiring speech on

"The Role of Teachers in My Life," which deeply resonated with the audience and showcased the profound influence of educators on student growth and character building.

During his address, the Chief Guest, Prof. Dr. Naeem Qazi, lauded the efforts of YEC and BIC for organizing the ceremony, which served as a platform to honor and appreciate the contributions of the university's teaching community. He highlighted the importance of acknowledging the hard work and dedication of teachers who are instrumental in shaping future generations.

The ceremony concluded on a high note with the presentation of special gifts to all the invited faculty members as a token of appreciation and gratitude. The gesture was aimed at celebrating their relentless commitment to imparting knowledge and fostering a culture of learning.

The event was a resounding success, with attendees expressing their appreciation for the initiative taken by YEC and BIC. It not only strengthened the bond between students and faculty but also set a benchmark for recognizing the role of educators in academic and community development.

# Seminar on prevention of drug abuse organized by KPCVE

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: The Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Centre of Excellence on Countering Violent Extremism (KPCVE) organized a one-day seminar at Government College Peshawar on the issue of drug abuse and the social problems arising from it. The aim of the seminar was to develop strategies to prevent drug addiction and raise awareness among students and the broader community about its dangers and consequences.

Prominent experts from various fields, including Deputy Director HED Zakaria Khan, Professor Dr. Nadia Khan Betani, KPCVE Principal Research Officer Muhammad Uzair, Chairman of the Islamic Studies Department at Government College

Peshawar, and Deputy Director of the Student Society, along with leading professionals from education, healthcare, and drug prevention & rehabilitation sectors, addressed the seminar. Professor Dr. Usman Shah, Chairman of the Character-Building Committee at Government College Peshawar, in his detailed presentation, highlighted the alarming rise in drug abuse among youth in Pakistan, particularly in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. He emphasized the socio-economic and psychological factors contributing to drug addiction and called for immediate attention and joint efforts.

Psychology expert Professor Dr. Behroz Khan participated in a panel discussion along with medical experts specializing in drug treatment and social

workers actively involved in rehabilitation efforts. The panel stressed the importance of early and timely intervention, the role of families in supporting affected individuals, and the need to strengthen laws to curb drug trafficking. The seminar's interactive session focused on empowering students to advocate for a drug-free life. Students actively engaged in the session, asking questions related to the topic. Real-life success stories were also shared of individuals who had successfully overcome drug addiction and became productive members of society.

KPCVE Principal Research Officer Aimal Riaz Khan, speaking at the seminar, mentioned that the Centre of Excellence, under the directives of Secretary of Higher

Education Captain (r) Kamran Ahmad Afridi and leadership of KPCVE Chief Coordination Officer Dr. Ayaz Khan, and Director General Dr. Qasim Khan, is fully committed to eliminating drug use among the youth. He stated that this series of seminars would continue in collaboration with educational institutions of national repute across Khyber Pakhtunkhwa to raise awareness among all segments of society, particularly the youth. He further stated that drug abuse is a serious issue that leads to crimes, extremism, violence and radicalism in our society. Aimal Riaz Khan emphasized that it is our responsibility to provide the youth with the necessary knowledge and information to make informed decisions about their health and future.







## In brief

### Italian woman embraces Islam F.P. Report

**HARIPUR:** An Italian woman on Thursday embraced Islam at the hands of Mufti Azhar Mahmood Hazarvi in Haripur. The Italian woman, Claudia, came to Pakistan after being motivated by the online sermons and teachings of Mufti Azhar. From the Airport, Claudia went to Haripur and met with Maulana Azhar Mahmood Hazarvi. She told the Maulana that she was much impressed by the debates and teachings of the Maulana Azhar. She confessed that Islam was the righteous religion and the only way to success in life and hereafter. In the presence of witnesses, Maulana Azhar recited 'Kalma e Shahadat' to Claudia and later she was given her Islamic name, Kulsoom BiBi.

### 17 Rescue 1122 officials arrested F.P. Report

**RUSTAM:** The Punjab police have taken into custody 7-vehicles of rescue-1122 Mardan along with 17-personnel during the action against the protesting workers of Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf in D-Chowk Islamabad. The relevant officials told that the Director General rescue-1122 Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, on the directives of chief minister Ali Ameen Gandapur had sent rescue-vehicles and personnel belonging to Mardan and other districts along with the PTI protesting Caravan to capital Islamabad few days back. They told that the Punjab police had taken into custody 17-recuse officials along with 7-vehicles which belonged to Rustam tehsil station of the rescue office. Some people of relevant area had also complaint about their difficulties and miseries being faced by them owing to non-availability of vehicles in the concerned rescue station. They alleged that the PTI Khyber Pakhtunkhwa leadership had used government resources including rescue-1122 vehicles and officials during the party D-Chowk protest sit-in held few days back in capital Islamabad. Talking to this scribe, the civil society members deplored that the KPK provincial rulers were using government resources for their activities of self-interest which was sheer injustice with people of the province.

### Residents hold protest F.P. Report

**CHAKDARA:** The residents protested against hike in robberies and theft incidents while chanted slogans against police failure to control crimes in the premises. According to details, the protestors' shows dissatisfaction with the police investigation and claimed that people catch the thieves and hand them over to the police but due to alleged facilitation in public offices, they obtain bail on the second day. Last days in Chakdara Gadar, local people caught a thief red-handed and handed him over to the police. The President of Anjuman Tajran Adinzai Khawaja Faiz, Jamaat-e-Islami leader Manzoor Khan, Councillor Samiullah and many others addressed the protestors in their address to the protestors. Suppressing criminals and arresting them is also the job of the police, but unfortunately the police are neglectful of their duties and the people are catching the thieves and handing them over to the police. Besides finding and arresting them, the accused gets another guarantee which is unbearable for the people of the area.



**HYDERABAD:** Provincial President Pakistan Peoples Party Nisar Ahmed Khoro addressing a press conference.

## Climate change roundtable moot held

Saqib Mushtaq

**BAHAWALPUR:** In collaboration with the European Union and Concern Worldwide under the BRIDGE CSO Project, the Lodhran Pilot Project (LPP) and Local Support Organization (LSO) organized a roundtable conference in Bahawalpur to discuss the impacts of climate change and the challenges it poses for Pakistan. The event brought together key stakeholders from various sectors to engage in an important dialogue about climate resilience.

Notable attendees included Additional Deputy Commissioner of Bahawalpur, Ms. Sumaira Rabbani; Chief Executive Officer of Lodhran Pilot Project, Dr. Muhammad Abdul Saboor; District Disaster Management Coordinator Bahawalpur, Ms. Marukh; Chairman of the Social Work Department at Islamia University Bahawalpur, Dr. Asif Naveed Ranjha; Deputy Director of Local Government, Mr. Khurshid Ahmed; Assistant Professor of Environmental Science, Dr. Muhammad Ali; and representatives from the Agriculture Department, Local Support Organization, and other civil society actors.

During the conference, Additional Deputy Commissioner Ms. Sumaira Rabbani emphasized the proactive measures being taken by the Bahawalpur district administration to address the growing risks of climate change. She stressed the importance of collective responsibility in



combating these challenges to secure a safer future for Pakistan.

Dr. Abdul Saboor, CEO of LPP, urged the adoption of best practices to mitigate the dangers posed by climate change. He expressed a strong desire to collaborate with Islamia University Bahawalpur, proposing to reward the top five student research projects on climate change with prizes totaling PKR 1 million, to encourage further investigation in this field.

Dr. Asif Naveed Ranjha highlighted the role of universities in tackling climate challenges, stating that numerous students at Islamia University are conducting research on climate change, and these findings are openly available worldwide. He welcomed deeper cooperation with LPP to strengthen the fight against climate change.

Ms. Marukh, District Disaster Management Coordinator, provided insight into the ongoing efforts to raise public awareness about the impact of climate change. She emphasized the importance of educating communities on the severity of the issue. Mr. Sheikh Dilshad

Qureshi, former Chairman of the District Council, discussed the effects of recent climate changes on agriculture, particularly the sharp decline in cotton production, and called for urgent action to address this issue.

Dr. Muhammad Ali delivered a presentation on climate change strategies, emphasizing the need for research and practical measures to confront these challenges. Mr. Kumail Hassan, Program Coordinator at LPP, shared the findings of focus group discussions with local farmers, stressing the importance of incorporating their experiences into future policies.

Mehreen Arif, Project Manager at LPP, explained that the BRIDGE CSO Project is working to strengthen local civil society organizations to better serve their communities. She noted that this climate change conference is a vital step toward achieving that goal. At the conclusion of the conference, the Local Support Organization distributed symbolic kitchen gardening tools to various farmers, and honorary shields were presented to the distinguished guests.

## Elimination strategy for polio virus stressed F.P. Report

**ABBOTTABAD:** Emergency Operations Centre (EOC) Khyber Pakhtunkhwa organized a two-day orientation session for leading pediatricians and healthcare providers of Bannu and DI Khan divisions in collaboration with provincial chapter of Pakistan Pediatric Association (PPA) and with the support of United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF).

The orientation session was aimed at chalking out a strategy for overcoming the existing challenges in eradication of polio virus in the endemic zone of Southern Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. The session was chaired jointly by Deputy Coordinator EOC Muhammad Zeeshan Khan and President PPA KP Prof. Dr. Muhammad Hussain and attended by Dr. Mushtaq Tanoli, District Health Officer, Abbottabad, Dr. Tayeba WHO, cabinet members of PPA KP, EOC officials and 30 leading healthcare providers each of Bannu and D.I Khan divisions.

Addressing the session, Deputy Coordinator EOC Muhammad Zeshan Khan said that polio eradication, being a national emergency, is among the top priorities of the government and the entire administrative machinery, law enforcement agencies and health department officials are actively participating in the whole process to oversee and manage ground challenges and ensure administration of polio drops to all eligible children.

Muhammad Zeshan Khan explained that in order to tackle the challenge of polio eradication and bridge the gaps in the program, the program has put in place various innovative strategies such as ring strategy, bikers' strategy, Integrated Service Delivery (ISD) as well as the establishment of health camps which are bearing fruits and enabling the program to get access to unreachable pockets specially in Bannu and D.I Khan divisions and ensure the vaccination of maximum children. However, he pointed out, the growing trends of boycotts and misconceptions about polio vaccines especially in southern KP are proving to be a major stumbling block in ensuring the vaccination of all eligible children in vaccination drives.

# JI demands fulfillment of promises

F.P. Report

**LOWER DIR:** The Jamaat-i-Islami Bajaur former chief Sardar Khan has asked the federal government to fulfill its promise made during the merger of former tribal districts in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. Speaking at a news conference at the Timergara press club here on Thursday the JI leader said the government had agreed to provide the merged districts with 3 percent in the National Finance Commission award, appoint 30 thousand youths in police, provide Rs 100 billion annually to the merged district for their development and establish a university and a medical college in each district.

He said the government totally ignored the merged districts and none of the promises was materialized so far. The JI leader said that people in merged districts had lost trust in the government. He demanded the government to fulfill its promises and end the widespread disparity among the

tribesmen.

**JI to resist establishment of toll plazas on Dir-Chitral road:** Rejecting the establishment of toll plaza at Chakdara and Lowari, the Jamaat-i-Islami on Wednesday announced to strongly resist the establishment of toll plazas at Chakdara and Lowari. Speaking at a news conference at the Timergara press club, the JI leader and former MNA Sahibzada Tariqullah demanded the government and the highways authorities to stop setting up the toll plazas.

The JI merged district chief Sardar Khan, district general secretary Hafiz Yaqub ur Rehman, secretary information Shuiab Ahmad and others were also present on the occasion.

The former MNA Sahibzada Tariqullah said the concerned contractor had brought relevant items to set up toll plazas at Chakdara and Lowari. He asked all political parties and its leadership to get united irrespective of their

political stand against the government plan to set up toll plazas on Chakdara Chitral road.

The JI leader said the residents of Lower Dir, Upper Dir, Bajaur and Chitral would never accept the establishment of toll plazas in the region. He said the government had agreed to maintain the tax-free status of Malakand division before presenting the last budget.

The former parliamentary leader said the people of Malakand division were already suffering from militancy, earthquakes and flash floods. He said the Chakdara Chitral road presented a dirty look as there had been no repair or extension work on it for years. He said the government should first build the Chakdara Chitral express way or the Dir Motorway then impose road tax on transporters. He threatened to bring all the people onto the roads if the plan was implemented without taking local residents into confidence.

## Child Protection Unit inaugurated in Swat

F.P. Report

**MINGORA:** The Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Child Protection and Welfare Commission (KPCPWC), in collaboration with UNICEF, marked a pivotal milestone today with the inauguration of a Child Protection Unit in District Swat. This significant event brought together key stakeholders, government officials, civil society representatives, and children from the district to celebrate the establishment of a vital office dedicated to safeguarding children's rights, protection and promoting their well-being.

The ceremony commenced with an opening address by Mr. Shehzad Mehboob, Deputy Commissioner of Swat, who warmly welcomed the attendees and emphasized the critical role of the Child Protection Unit in ensuring the safety and protection of children in the region. He further pledged full cooperation

and coordination from the district administration to support the unit in its ongoing efforts to protect children, both in his capacity as district administrator and chairman District Child Protection Committee.

During the event, Mr. Ijaz Muhammad Khan, Deputy Chief Protection Officer of the KPCPWC, delivered a presentation on the evolution of the Child Protection System in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, with in the legal framework of the province. He highlighted that the provincial government has successfully established fully operational Child Protection Units in 21 districts, with more units already in the pipeline to be established in the rest of the districts in the province. He further shared that KPCPWC has provided different services to 32,564 children at risk of protection and violence in the province so far.

Mr. Sohail Ahmad, Child Protection Specialist from

UNICEF, underscored the vision of the Child Protection System and a comprehensive approach to supporting KPCPWC for leading on this process in KP and aiming for the safety and welfare of children across the province. He expressed that as we inaugurate this Child Protection Unit today, it marks the beginning of a journey where we, as a community, work relentlessly to create a safe and nurturing environment for our children and also emphasized on the need for children and community engagement in this regards.

The program also featured Mr. Irfanullah, Regional Police Officer Malakand Division who addressed the audience highlighting the role of police in child protection system. He further emphasized that protection is the primary responsibility of police and protection of vulnerable children is even more significant.

## DHO commits for success of de-worming campaign

F.P. Report

**MARDAN:** District Health Officer (DHO) Mardan Dr. Javed Iqbal said that the education department, health department and the public should jointly play a role in making the de-worming campaign successful. He expressed these views while addressing the training workshop of Master Trainers regarding elimination of stomach worms in Government Girls Higher Secondary School Labor Colony and GHSS No.4 Mardan, on Thursday.

Deputy MS Mardan Dr. Taj, Divisional Regional Manager Muhammad Yasir, District Education Officer Female Samina Ghani, Deputy Education Officer male Imtiaz Khan, District

Coordinator of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa De-worming Program Muhammad Amjad Khan, Lead Trainers Fauzia and Najma also participated in the workshop. Muhammad Amjad Khan told the participants that the elimination week of Stomach Worms in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa will be celebrated from November 4 to 8, for which the Education Department and the Health Department at the district level will jointly play a role in making the campaign successful.

Stomach worm medicine is approved by the Drug Regulatory Authority of Pakistan and this free and safe medicine will be provided by the Ministry of National Health World Health Organization. Therefore, in this campaign, all children

between 5 to 14 years of age will be eradicated from stomach worms. Secure the future DHO Dr. Javed Iqbal issued instructions to all the departments to ensure their full cooperation to make this program successful. He appealed to the public to make their children a part of this campaign to get rid of stomach worms through free and safe medicine so that their future is bright and safe.

Meanwhile, assistant commissioner Katlang Sahar Anwar has said that providing financial support to the poor and deserving people under the Benazir Income Support Program is a very positive and welfare step, which plays an important role in improving the lives of the downtrodden sections of the society.

## World Mental Health Day observed

Shafi Ullah

**MINGORA:** Dr. Nizam Ali, Provincial President of the Psychiatrists Association, addressed a pressing concern at Swat Press Club on World Mental Health Day. The alarming rise of mental illnesses, Dr. Haider Ali, Dr. Hussain Ali other notable figures were also present on the occasion.

Dr. Nizam Ali stressed that mental health awareness should be a year-round priority, not limited to October 10. The current situation demands immediate attention, as mental diseases

are increasing exponentially due to delayed treatment. Shockingly, every third person struggles with mental illness, often hesitating to seek help due to shame.

He said that mental illnesses affect individuals of all ages, backgrounds, and socioeconomic statuses. Children, men, and women alike suffer from these conditions, underscoring the need for timely intervention. He said that excessive mobile phone use plays a significant role in the spread of mental diseases. Neglect and intolerance from parents and society can lead to

delusions and other mental health issues in children and Unhealthy lifestyles exacerbate mental health problems he added.

Dr. Ali emphasized the importance of addressing mental diseases rather than ignoring them. He urged families to prioritize time with their children and encouraged scholars to contribute to timely treatment and prevention. By acknowledging the interconnectedness of physical and mental wellbeing, we can work towards creating a more holistic approach to health.

## Overseas Pakistanis send more money than IMF package

Umer Farooq

**I**n the last three months, overseas Pakistanis have remitted more funds to Pakistan than the \$7 billion bailout package from the International Monetary Fund (IMF). However, these vital contributors to Pakistan's economy are still being denied their basic democratic right-the right to vote.

According to the latest data from the State Bank of Pakistan, remittances surged by 39% in the first quarter of the current fiscal year (July to September). The remittances increased from \$6.30 billion in the previous year to \$8.80 billion, providing critical support to the struggling economy. The bulk of these funds came from Pakistani workers in Saudi Arabia (\$681.3 million), the United Arab Emirates (\$560 million), the United Kingdom (\$423.6 million), and the United States

(\$279 million).

This significant financial boost has become a lifeline for Pakistan's economy, which continues to grapple with challenges exacerbated by inflation, devaluation, and international loan obligations. But despite playing such a crucial role in the nation's economic survival, millions of overseas Pakistanis remain sidelined when it comes to having a voice in the country's political future.

The core issue lies in the absence of a voting mechanism for the estimated 9 million Pakistanis residing abroad. These expatriates have long been demanding the right to participate in national elections. However, multiple efforts by previous governments to facilitate their voting-through online or postal systems-have either stalled or been deemed technically and logistically challenging.

In 2018, the Election

Commission of Pakistan (ECP) experimented with an online voting system for overseas Pakistanis. The pilot program, though innovative, faced several security and transparency concerns. Many votes cast during the trial were reportedly not included in the final election count, raising questions about the system's effectiveness.

Despite these issues, successive Pakistani governments have continued to promise the right to vote to overseas Pakistanis without any concrete progress. While there have been repeated assurances from political leaders, including Prime Ministers, that overseas Pakistanis will soon have a say in elections, the lack of practical action has left many frustrated.

A senior official at the ECP, speaking on condition of anonymity, admitted that while technical solutions exist, the political will and bureaucratic hurdles have been significant

barriers. "There are many parties involved-security, IT experts, and legal advisors-who must agree on a method that ensures integrity, but progress has been slow," the official stated.

For many overseas Pakistanis, the situation has become a source of anger and disappointment. Muhammad Ahmed, a 40-year-old expatriate working in Saudi Arabia, expressed his frustration: "We send back millions of dollars every month to keep Pakistan's economy afloat, but when it comes to elections, we are treated as outsiders. It's completely unfair."

Similarly, Zainab Khan, 33, who lives in the UK, emphasized the injustice: "This is a violation of our fundamental rights as citizens. Just because we live abroad doesn't mean we stop caring about Pakistan. We contribute to its progress in every possible way, yet we are denied the right to vote."

Many experts argue that overseas Pakistanis' exclusion from voting contradicts the fundamental democratic principles on which Pakistan was founded. Despite being one of the largest diaspora communities contributing billions in remittances, they have little say in who governs the country.

The stakes are high. With Pakistan's economy heavily dependent on remittances far exceeding the funds provided by international financial institutions-the exclusion of this powerful voting bloc is increasingly seen as a political oversight. Experts warn that ignoring overseas Pakistanis' demand for voting rights could weaken their connection to the country over time, potentially affecting future remittances as well. Economist Dr. Farhan Khan stated, "These remittances are not just a lifeline for the economy, they are also an indicator of trust in the country's political and economic system.

Denying them a say in the democratic process could erode that trust." The next general election in Pakistan is due in the coming years, and the pressure is mounting on the government to find a workable solution. If the right to vote is not granted, Pakistan risks alienating a key financial supporter of its economy. However, if a robust and secure system can be established, overseas Pakistanis could potentially swing the outcome of future elections, given their numbers and influence.

With no clear timeline yet for implementing overseas voting rights, the question remains: Will overseas Pakistanis finally be allowed to participate in the next election? Or will they continue to be overlooked by the very country they help support? For now, millions of Pakistani expatriates are left wondering when their voices will finally be heard where it matters most-in the ballot box.





# Taiwan celebrates National Day holiday

TAIPEI (AP): Taiwan celebrated its National Day holiday Thursday against the background of threats from China, which claims the self-governing island republic as its own territory.

The celebration marks the establishment of the Republic of China, which overthrew the Qing Dynasty in 1911 and fled to Taiwan as Mao Zedong's Communists swept to power on the mainland during a civil war in 1949. Taiwan was run under martial law until transitioning to full democracy in the 1980s and 1990s but maintains the original constitution brought from China and the ROC flag.

President Lai Ching-te took office in May, continuing the eight-year rule of the Democratic Progressive Party that rejects China's demand that it recognize Taiwan is a part of China. The Nationalists adhere to a unification stance that recognizes both sides of the Taiwan Strait as a single nation. Thursday's commemorations were to include speeches by Lai and others, performances in front of the Presidential Office Building in Taipei, including an honor guard, military marching band and over-flight by military aircraft, but no display of heavy military equipment as seen in years past. Maintaining its military pressure on Taiwan, China's People's Liberation Army sent 15 planes across the median line in the Taiwan Strait, prompting Taiwan to scramble jets, dispatch ships and activate missile systems.

Meanwhile, President William Lai has pledged to uphold Taiwan's self-governing status in his most high-profile public address since taking office earlier this year. In a thinly-veiled reference to China's claim over the island, Lai said he would "uphold the commitment to resist annexation or encroachment upon our sovereignty." Lai was speaking to a crowd in Taipei to commemorate Taiwan's National Day, only nine days after Communist China celebrated its 75th anniversary.

At the same time, Lai promised to maintain "the status quo of peace and stability across the Taiwan Strait" and pledged to cooperate with Beijing on issues such as climate change, combating infectious diseases and maintaining regional security. "The Republic of China and the People's



Republic of China are not subordinates to each other," he said, in a reference to the governments of Taipei and Beijing respectively.

Lai previously told visitors there would be "no surprises" in his national day address, in a bid to reassure them that he would not do anything further to agitate Beijing. The disclaimer followed several speeches by President Lai over the past few months that some viewed as being provocative. Last week, Lai said it was "absolutely impossible" for China to be the "motherland" of Taiwan because the island's government was founded in 1911, decades before the current Communist regime of mainland China was founded in 1949. "On the contrary, the Republic of China may actually be the motherland of citizens of the People's Republic of China who are over 75 years old," Lai said at a concert to mark Taiwan's National Day on Saturday.

Taiwan maintains the constitution of the Republic of China, which was founded on the Chinese mainland. When it lost a long civil war with the Communists in 1949, the Republic of China government fled to Taiwan and has been based there ever since. Last month, Lai also questioned China's assertion that its claim over the self-ruled island was based on territorial integrity.

If that were the case, he suggested, Beijing would also be pushing to reclaim other so-called historic lands that once belonged to the Chinese empire. "If China wants to annex Taiwan... it's not for the sake of territorial integrity," he said.

Lai referenced the 1858 Treaty of Aigun, which saw China concede large swathes of Manchuria to Russia. The concession occurred during what China refers to as the "century of humiliation," when Western powers and Japan exploited the weakened Qing Dynasty. China's government responded by saying President Lai was escalating tensions with "sinister intentions".

"Lai Ching-te's Taiwan independence fallacy is just old wine in a new bottle, and again exposes his obstinate stance on Taiwan independence and his sinister intentions of escalating hostility and confrontation," said the statement from China's Taiwan Affairs Office. After his election in January, Lai succeeded Taiwan's previous president Tsai Ing-wen, who also came from the Democratic Progressive Party (DPP). Lai's public comments to date are regarded by many political observers as going further than anything said by his predecessor, who was much more cautious in her public speeches. In spite of his administration's more strident and confrontational tone, however, Lai has stressed his position of maintaining the "status quo" between Taiwan and China. He insists Taiwan has no need to declare independence because it is already an independent sovereign nation that has never been controlled by the People's Republic of China.

## China to hold survey on population changes

HONG KONG (Reuters): China's National Bureau of Statistics said it will conduct a nationwide sample survey from Thursday to "accurately" monitor population changes and better plan economic and social policies, as authorities struggle to boost a fall in births. The survey, which will run until Nov. 30, comes after the bureau conducted a similar poll in 2023.

Beijing is urgently trying a variety of measures to incentivise young couples to have children after China posted a second consecutive year of population decline in 2023. Rapid aging has become a growing concern for policymakers, with China's cohort of those aged 60 and older expected to rise at least 40% to more than 400 million by 2035, equal to the populations of Britain and the United States combined. The survey will focus on urban and rural areas to "accurately and timely monitor and reflect the development and changes in population" and help formulate "national economic and social development plans," the bureau said in a statement. Local governments and personnel will be held accountable for any "illegal acts" during survey work, and all sectors of society must "actively support and cooperate" with the survey, it said.

Population development has often been linked to the strength and "rejuvenation" of China in state media, amid the declining birth rate and widespread concerns by citizens on the difficulties of raising children. Chinese health officials said in September that they would focus more efforts on advocating marriage and childbirth at appropriate ages and called for shared parenting responsibilities to guide young people towards "positive perspectives on marriage, childbirth and family". Many young Chinese are opting to remain childless due to high childcare costs, an unwillingness to marry, or put their careers on hold in a traditional society where women are still seen as the main care-givers and where gender discrimination remains rife. The number of marriages in the first half of this year fell to its lowest level since 2013, official data showed.

## Yoon, Ishiba to meet

SEOUL (Reuters): South Korean President Yoon Suk Yeol and Japanese Prime Minister Shigeru Ishiba were scheduled to hold their first summit on Thursday in Laos, Yoon's office said, as the neighbours seek to deepen security and economic ties.

The meeting, their first since Ishiba took office on Oct. 1, will take place on the sidelines of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) conference in the capital of Laos Vientiane, Yoon's office said in a statement, without elaborating. It comes as Seoul looks to continue improving relations under Tokyo's new leadership, building on the progress engineered by Yoon and Ishiba's predecessor, Fumio Kishida. Yoon and Ishiba, in their first phone call last week, agreed to forge a united response together with the United States to counter North Korea's threats.

# Top UN envoy in Lebanon calls for truce

UNITED NATIONS (Reuters): A call by the UN and France for a 21-day truce between Israel and Hezbollah "is still on the table," said the top UN official in Lebanon as she pushed for a way to enforce a UN Security Council resolution violated for years by both sides.

A UN peacekeeping mission is mandated by Security Council resolution 1701, adopted in 2006, to help the Lebanese army keep its southern border area with Israel free of weapons or armed personnel other than those of the Lebanese state. That has sparked friction with Iran-backed Hezbollah, which effectively controls southern Lebanon. All parties are banned from crossing the Blue Line - a UN-mapped line separating Lebanon from Israel and the Israeli-occupied Golan Heights.

"We need a realistic roadmap for the implementation, by both sides, of resolution 1701. And this must include clear implementation and enforcement mechanisms," said UN

Special Coordinator for Lebanon Jeanine Hennis-Plasschaert. "At the end of the day, it is the lack or non-implementation of resolution 1701 over the past 18 years that led to today's harsh reality," she told reporters. Any changes would have to be made by the 15-member Security Council and agreed by both sides. UN peacekeepers have remained in place in southern Lebanon, despite Israel asking them to move as its troops crossed the border to target Hezbollah militants. Hezbollah said it had pushed back advancing Israeli forces. UN peacekeepers have remained in place in southern Lebanon, despite Israel asking them to move as its troops crossed the border to target Hezbollah militants. Hezbollah said it had pushed back advancing Israeli forces. Israel's UN Ambassador Danny Danon said that Israel believed in the language of resolution 1701, but that "we should think about how to enforce it."

"We have no desire to stay in Lebanon, and I think the only troops that can do that will be the Lebanese military and UNIFIL, but they need to have the strength, the power and the ability to ensure that Hezbollah is not coming back to the same places," Danon told reporters, referring to the peacekeeping mission - the UN Interim Force in Lebanon. France and the United States last month proposed a 21-day ceasefire. But those talks quickly appeared to stall as Israel heavily bombed Beirut's southern suburbs, killing longtime Hezbollah chief Hassan Nasrallah. "The joint call for a 21-day ceasefire, as launched by the US or led by the US and France, I think is still on the table and very relevant, so we should not dismiss it. I don't think that new initiatives will add to it," Hennis-Plasschaert said. "The many appeals and calls for ceasefire are crystal clear. We need a window for diplomatic efforts to succeed," she said.

# One dead as storm Kirk tears through Spain

MADRID (AFP): The remnants of Hurricane Kirk swept into western Europe, tearing up trees in Portugal and Spain before dumping heavy rains on France that left at least one dead.

A storm swell in the Mediterranean off the port city of Sete in southern France overturned three boats, killing one amateur sailor and putting another in the hospital in critical condition, said Heraldt department authorities.

Some 64,000 people in the south of France were also left without power, network supplier Enedis told AFP, while several departments reported roads cut off by floodwaters.

Following a crisis response meeting in Paris, Energy and Ecological Transition Minister Agnes Pannier-Runacher told journalists the government was mobilising "all state services" and urged citizens to be careful. "These episodes will have a tendency to recur. We're living at a time when climate change is making itself felt in concrete ways in our daily lives," she said.

Authorities put the Seine-et-Marne department near Paris on red alert for flooding as the rain swelled the Grand Morin river, a tributary of the Seine, which runs through the French capital.

Another 29 of the country's departments were placed on orange alert, with heavy rains and high winds expected. There were 35,000 households that lost electricity in the worst-hit department of Pyrenees-Atlantiques, with a clutch of other departments in the southwest and central east of the country also affected, Enedis said. Weather forecasters had predicted the storm would dump a month's worth of rain on a swathe of the country, including Paris. Portugal's civil protection authority

reported more than 1,300 incidents, three-quarters of which involved fallen trees in the north of the country. Porto, the main northern city, was hit hardest, with 400 trees uprooted. Cars were also damaged and rail services interrupted near Barcelos, also in the north. The storm also cut power to more than 300,000 households, said the country's electricity supplier.

Weather and civil protection officials, having predicted winds of up to 120 kilometres per hour (75 mph) and heavy rain, put the coast on a yellow alert, as waves reached up to seven metres (23 feet) high. Spanish weather officials issued an orange alert for the north and northwest of the country, warning of winds of up to 140 kilometres per hour in the Asturias region. Galicia, in the northwest, reported some roads blocked by mud slides and fallen trees in urban areas.

## EU approve \$38b loan for Ukraine

BRUSSELS: European Union envoys have agreed to provide Ukraine up to 35 billion euros (\$38bn) as part of the bloc's share in a larger planned loan from the Group of Seven (G7) nations, backed by frozen Russian Central Bank assets, a statement from the Council of the EU says.

Kyiv is desperate for funds as it seeks to prop up its economy, equip its military and keep its electricity grid functioning this winter after ferocious bombardments by Moscow's forces. The EU's loan - which was signed off by a majority of ambassadors at a meeting in Brussels - is part of a bigger \$50bn initiative agreed by G7 powers in June. The EU is the first of the G7 powers to announce how much it is putting forward as its share of the plan and is still waiting for others, including the United States and Britain, to do their part.

The European Parliament is expected to approve the loan at a sitting later in October, enabling it to be paid out next year. In June, the G7 and EU announced they would provide a \$50bn loan to help Ukraine, serviced by profits generated by Russian assets immobilised in the West. These assets were frozen shortly after Russia launched a full-scale invasion of Ukraine in February 2022. — Aljazeera

# EU officials blast Orban

BRUSSELS: Top European Union officials have slammed Hungarian Prime Minister Viktor Orban over democratic backsliding at home and his Russia-friendly stance that has blocked military and financial aid to Ukraine.

Orban, whose country currently holds the EU's six-month rotating presidency, came under fire after warning officials gathered in Strasbourg, France, about the "migration crisis" and the war in Ukraine as he addressed the European Parliament. Leading the charge against Orban, European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen took aim at Budapest's stalling of EU support for Kyiv and refusal to join Western efforts to arm Ukraine to fight off Moscow.

"The world has witnessed the atrocities of Russia's war. And yet, there are still some who blame this war not on the invader but the invaded," said von der Leyen. "There are still some who blame this war not on [Russian President Vladimir] Putin's lust for power but on Ukraine's thirst for freedom." In July, Orban stoked controversy when he travelled on what the Hungarian government described as a "peace mission" to Moscow and Beijing without coordinating with EU partners. Manfred Weber, the leader of the conservative European People's Party,

said he was shocked that Orban devoted not a "single sentence" to the plight of Ukraine in his speech, slamming his rogue diplomacy as a "big propaganda show for the autocrats".

Lawmakers lined up to take aim at Orban, who has repeatedly clashed with Brussels over his curbing of civil rights at home since entering office in 2010, with Green co-leader Terry Reintke declaring: "You are not welcome here, this is the house of European democracy." Von der Leyen also skewered Orban's stance on migration, accusing his government of "throwing problems over your neighbour's fence" with the early release of convicted people traffickers. She took aim at a Hungarian visa scheme for Russian nationals, saying the lack of security checks posed "a ... risk not only for Hungary but for all member states". The EU chief also criticised an agreement between Budapest and Beijing allowing Chinese police officers to patrol in Hungary together with their Hungarian counterparts. "How can it be that the Hungarian government would allow Chinese police to operate within its territory? This is not defending Europe's sovereignty, this is a backdoor for foreign interference," she said.

Mainstream members of the European Parliament (MEPs) had promised to

hold Orban to account with the Hungarian opposition leader-turned-MEP Peter Magyar among the speakers lined up to challenge him. "No cash for corrupt," read one banner held up by left-wing lawmakers, in a reference to the billions of euros in EU funds for Hungary currently frozen over rule-of-law concerns. After Orban's speech, lawmakers opposed to his hard-right positions had broken out in a rendition of the antifascist anthem, Bella Ciao, prompting Roberta Metsola, president of the European Parliament, to call for order, saying, "This is not Eurovision". — Aljazeera

## Ukrainian troops being trained in France

PARIS (AP): French President Emmanuel Macron is inspecting the training of Ukrainian troops at a military camp in eastern France, a show of support for Ukraine as its Western allies mull a victory plan championed by Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy.

The Ukrainian brigade that Macron is visiting is being battle-ready and armed by France for front-line deployment against the Russian invasion.

# Spain looks to immigrants to drive economy

MADRID (BBC): A group of Sub-Saharan African men are playing bingo in a conference room of a hotel near the northern Spanish city of León. They laugh and celebrate when their numbers are called out, but many of these asylum seekers have harrowing stories.

Among them is Michael, who fled Ghana to escape a violent feud that saw his sister and father killed. After travelling by land to Morocco, he paid a trafficker who put him on an inflatable boat crammed with people which took him to the Canary Islands. "I was so happy, because I knew all my troubles, and the people trying to kill me, were behind me," he says. "Because once you are in Spain you are safe." In Ghana he worked as a petrol pump attendant and a storekeeper. He also started studying human resource management, which he hopes to be able to continue in Spain once he has settled.

"Spain is one of the most respected countries in the world," he says. "Being here is an opportunity for

me." Around 170 asylum seekers are staying in this hotel, in the town of Villaquilambre, which has been converted into a migrant centre. They are among the many thousands of people who take the maritime route between the African coast and Spain each year. So far this year, more than 42,000 undocumented migrants have arrived in Spain, an increase of 59% on 2023, the vast majority having undertaken the perilous crossing to the Canary Islands. The archipelago's difficulties in managing these large numbers have contributed to a fierce political debate about immigration, mirroring that in many other European countries. In Spain the controversy is driven in great part by the far-right Vox party, which frequently describes the trend as an "invasion". However, the arrivals have also underlined a major potential source of manpower for an economy which faces stiff demographic challenges.

Javier Díaz-Giménez, a professor of economics at the IESE business school and an expert in pensions, says

that a baby boom which lasted from the mid-50 to the late-70s has created a generation of Spaniards who are heading for pension age, and the "baby crash" that followed means there are not enough workers to replace them. "The next 20 years are going to be critical, because more and more people are going to retire," he says. "According to the most recent demographic scenario, 14.1 million people will retire during that time." One way of tackling the workforce deficit, he says, is to ape the kind of economic model implemented by Japan, which has a similarly low birth rate, by investing heavily in algorithms and machines. The obvious alternative to that is immigration. "If you want to grow GDP, if you want to pay pensions for all the retiring baby boomers, you need to grow GDP in a different way to how we're growing it now, because there will not be as many people, unless we bring them in through immigration," adds Prof Díaz-Giménez. Spain's central bank has put a figure on the projected

labour shortfall. In a report published in April, it said that the country will need around 25 million immigrants over the next 30 years. The left-wing Spanish government has also made the economic case for immigrants, with Prime Minister Pedro Sánchez describing them as representing "wealth, development and prosperity" for his country, while on a recent tour of Mauritania, Gambia and Senegal.

"The contribution of migrant workers to our economy is fundamental, as is the sustainability of our social security system and pensions," he said. Mr Sánchez's coalition is hoping that a proposal to legalise the status of up to 500,000 undocumented migrants, mainly from Latin America, will get through parliament. Spain has seen nine such mass regularisations in its democratic era, most recently in 2005 under a previous government led by the Spanish Socialist Workers' Party. However, the country's economic needs contrast with ordinary Spaniards' perception of immigration. A new poll shows that 41% of people

are "very worried" by the phenomenon, making it their fifth-biggest concern after inflation, housing, inequality and unemployment. While only 9% of Spaniards associate immigrants with economic progress, 30% link them to insecurity, and 57% believe that there are too many of them.

Villaquilambre, meanwhile, is an example of how undocumented new arrivals can integrate into the workforce. The asylum seekers here are allowed to work six months after their arrival in Spain. "Before they receive the authorisation to start working we place great emphasis on them learning Spanish, as well as offering them training courses and classes on risk avoidance," says Dolores Queiro, of the San Juan de Dios Foundation, the non-governmental organisation that manages the migrant centre in Villaquilambre. "When the date for them being able to start working approaches we get in touch with different companies - and they contact us as well - and we start looking for jobs for them." Companies get in

touch, she says, "because they know that we have people here who want to work." Makan, from Mali, has just started working for a local business, GraMaLeon, which makes walls, bathrooms and kitchen counters out of marble and granite. He commutes the short distance from the hotel to the factory each day on an electric scooter. "I'm happy to be working," he says, in halting Spanish, after completing a shift hauling slabs of marble around the factory.

Ramiro Rodríguez Alaez, co-owner of the business, which employs around 20 people, says that finding workers is not easy. "We need a lot of manpower in this profession. But it's tough, it gets cold, you have to lift heavy weight, so it's not a job that many young people here want to do. "There aren't a lot of companies in this industry around here, but those that do exist all need people. We're all looking for people locally and we can't find them." He adds: "Immigrants provide an important source of manpower for us."



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## Inventors of AI tools on proteins get Chemistry Nobel

ON Tuesday, the Nobel Committee for Physics honoured two physicists, John Hopfield and Geoffrey Hinton, for laying the foundations of Artificial Intelligence (AIF) through the modelling of Artificial Neural Network (ANN). On Wednesday, the Nobel Committee for Chemistry chose David Baker at the University of Washington in Seattle, the United States, and Demi Hassabis and John Jumper at Deep Mind at Google, London, Britain, the 2024 Nobel Prize for Chemistry for creating the Artificial Intelligence (AI) software, called Rosetta by Baker, and AlphaFold2 by Hassabis and Jumper to predict the protein structure of all the possible proteins, 200 million so far, of all organisms, including human.

While Baker's Rosetta is based on the protein patterns, AlphaFold2 creates three-dimensional models of all the proteins. Baker incorporated the AlphaFold 2 into his Rosetta called RoseTTAFold to improve the prediction of protein structures. The methods of Baker, Hassabis and Jumper speed up the discovery of new proteins, which will help in faster drug development. But there is a caveat.

While in the majority of cases, AlphaFold2 has turned out to be accurate or accurate enough, it has been found that the AI product cannot predict if there is no structure of the protein. This happens quite often in the human organism. The deformed protein leads to diseases like cancer. The AI mode of predicting protein structures has to be backed by the older methods of X-ray crystallography and electron microscopy testing real-world protein structures. There is this fact that AlphaFold2 has run through the test of Critical Assessment of Protein Structure Prediction (CASP), and it has won the competition in 2020, and the beginning of the "Digital Age of Biology" was proclaimed.

An interesting aspect of the Nobel Prize for Chemistry this year is that the AI products, Rosetta and AlphaFold2, have been of recent making. While AlphaFold had debuted in 2018, Baker had come up with Rosetta a decade earlier. And improvements are being made in both the AI products. Google has also created a free AlphaFold database of the protein structures which researchers can access. The availability of millions of protein structures in their virtual form makes things easy for the researchers in the universities as well as in the research and development departments of the pharmaceutical companies.

But there is need for caution. The virtual models of proteins generated by AlphaFold and RoseTTAFold are accurate but their properties and how they would interact with other combinations of proteins remains an uncharted territory.

Baker, Hassabis and Jumper came from unorthodox academic backgrounds and interests. Baker started off with philosophy and social science. After a course in evolutionary biology, he became interested in cell biology and then was fascinated by protein structures. He started with chess and became a master at the age of 13. He became a programmer and games developer. Then he got interested in neuroscience, and he used this knowledge to develop the artificial neural network (ANN). Jumper was interested in the universe and started with physics and mathematics. Then he joined a company where supercomputers were used to "simulate proteins and their dynamics". He kept his interest in proteins when he did his doctorate in theoretical physics.

There are many things at work here. The traditional divisions between the scientific disciplines are breaking down. The American higher education system seems to keep the doors open from all sides. And the computers, and from the computers the AI, have become creative tools in probing scientific secrets. It does appear that AI is the magic key that will open all doors of knowledge. It is an exciting prospect indeed.

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## Domestic concerns overshadow global crises in US election

Dalia Al-Aqidi

WHILE global attention remains riveted on the ongoing Middle East conflict, particularly the escalating tensions between Israel and Iran, another significant event looms large on the horizon — the upcoming US presidential election.

The Nov. 5 election is anticipated to carry substantial weight in shaping not only the future of US foreign policy, but also the geopolitical dynamics of the Middle East. The stakes are high, as the outcome may shift the course of American involvement and influence in the region, reshaping alliances and power balances.

However, within the US, the importance of foreign policy appears somewhat diminished in the eyes of many voters. Unlike previous eras, which were marked by direct military involvement in large-scale wars such as those in Afghanistan and Iraq, the US is not currently directly embroiled in a widely publicized armed conflict overseas.

As a result, voters' priorities have shifted inward, focusing more on domestic issues. The absence of American boots on the ground in large numbers abroad means that foreign policy does not weigh as heavily on the minds of the electorate, particularly as there is no immediate sense of military sacrifice or national threat.

This inward focus raises an interesting paradox: while decisions made at the ballot box may have far-reaching consequences for international relations, particularly in volatile regions like the Middle East, they are often driven more by US voters' concerns about the economy, healthcare and other domestic matters. Despite their complexity and importance, foreign

affairs remain a secondary issue for many American voters, who are more concerned with the immediate, day-to-day challenges they face at home. Though profound globally, US foreign policy's impact might be relegated to the background as voters cast their ballots, broadly prioritizing what directly affects their own lives.

Several key factors contribute to why global events, particularly those in the Middle East, wield limited influence over the US presidential election. First and foremost is the distinct set of priorities held by American voters. Domestic issues consistently overshadow international concerns. Another significant reason is the inherent complexity of foreign policy. International relations involve a web of diplomacy, military strategy, economic sanctions and cultural considerations, which makes foreign policy challenging to distill into clear, digestible talking points during a campaign.

Politicians frequently find it difficult to frame these issues in a way that resonates with voters, who may not fully grasp the nuances or the broader implications of international events. As a result, candidates often sidestep deep discussions of foreign policy, preferring to focus on more tangible domestic issues that are easier to communicate and debate.

Lastly, there is the matter of long-standing bipartisan support for Israel, which further diminishes the likelihood that recent global events will significantly sway voter opinions. Both Republicans and Democrats, despite their many differences, have historically maintained strong backing for Israel, making the conflict there

less of a divisive issue in American politics. This enduring consensus means that, while international developments involving Israel may be deeply significant on the world stage, they rarely serve as a point of contention or a substantial influence on the electorate.

There is, however, a potential challenge facing the Democratic Party in this election, one that could shake its voter base in unexpected ways. Arab American voters, historically reliable party supporters, have shown growing signs of disillusionment, signaling a shift that could erode Democratic support. Simultaneously, within the Jewish community — long considered a steadfast Democrat stronghold — concerns are rising over the party's approach to foreign policy, particularly about Israel. Although distinct in their priorities, both groups share a growing sense of dissatisfaction that could prove problematic for Democrats as they head into a crucial election.

For Arab Americans, the Biden administration's policies on Middle East conflicts, particularly regarding the Palestinians, have fallen short of their expectations. While this demographic may not be large enough to alter the national outcome drastically, its concentrated presence in key battleground states makes Arab Americans' discontent significant. Many of them feel that the current administration's efforts are insufficient and this perceived neglect could cost the party votes in areas where every ballot counts.

At the same time, Jewish voters are voicing their own frustrations, particularly regarding Washington's response to

Israel's ongoing conflict with Hamas. Many in the Jewish community believe that the administration should take a firmer stance to secure the release of hostages held in Gaza and work more decisively to end the conflict in Israel's favor. This sense of dissatisfaction threatens to undermine the party's long-held support within the Jewish electorate.

Recent polls show that Kamala Harris is struggling to maintain the support that helped President Joe Biden secure Michigan in 2020. The potential loss of this key state underscores how vital these shifting dynamics could be to the overall electoral map.

Several recent polls make one thing clear: for the average American voter, the economy and the rising cost of living remain the top priorities. These bread-and-butter issues — jobs, inflation, healthcare costs — are the concerns that resonate most with everyday people and the challenges they experience firsthand. Kitchen table conversations across the nation are not about global conflicts or diplomatic maneuvering, but about the price of groceries, the cost of gas and how to make ends meet. This reality speaks volumes about the mindset of the American electorate.

Foreign policy, meanwhile, consistently ranks at the bottom of voters' concerns. No matter how consequential international events may be, most Americans feel they are distant and abstract compared to the tangible issues they confront daily.

Therefore, politicians who hope to capture the attention and support of the electorate must address these day-to-day concerns, for it is here — in the practical, lived experiences of the American people — that elections are won or lost.

## SCO Summit: A strategic opportunity for Pakistan and the region

Muhammad Mohsin Iqbal

THE upcoming meeting of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) in Pakistan this month presents a significant diplomatic event for the region and beyond. In the current regional context, characterized by political tensions, economic uncertainty, and evolving security challenges, this meeting comes as a breath of fresh air. The SCO, an intergovernmental organization founded in 2001, has grown in importance over the years, bringing together countries with shared interests in maintaining peace, stability, and cooperation in a dynamic and complex international environment.

The history of the SCO dates back to the end of the Cold War, when nations in Central Asia sought new platforms for regional dialogue and security cooperation. Initially founded by China, Russia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, and Uzbekistan, the SCO aimed to address border security issues and foster trust among its members. Over time, the organization expanded its scope to include broader concerns such as combating terrorism, extremism, separatism, and promoting economic cooperation.

In 2017, Pakistan and India were admitted as full members, adding further geopolitical significance to the organization. Today, the SCO consists of eight full members: China, Russia, Pakistan, India, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, and Uzbekistan. Additionally, there are several observer states, including Afghanistan, Belarus, Iran, and Mongolia, as well as dialogue partners like Turkey, Azerbaijan,

and Armenia. The SCO's member states account for nearly half of the world's population and represent some of the fastest-growing economies, making it an influential player in global affairs.

The SCO's importance lies not only in its geographic expanse but also in the diversity of its member states. It serves as a platform where countries with differing political systems, historical backgrounds, and economic aspirations can engage in dialogue. For Pakistan, membership in the SCO has been particularly valuable. It has provided an avenue for Islamabad to enhance its diplomatic ties with key regional players such as China and Russia, while also engaging in discussions with India on issues of mutual concern. The SCO's focus on counterterrorism has aligned with Pakistan's own security concerns, particularly in the context of its ongoing fight against extremism and militancy.

As Pakistan prepares to host this month's SCO meeting, the event is expected to draw attention from across the globe, bringing representatives from all member states and observers to Islamabad. The timing of this meeting is crucial, given the current state of affairs in the region. The withdrawal of NATO forces from Afghanistan has left a security vacuum that the SCO members are keen to address. Afghanistan, an observer state in the organization, remains a focal point of concern for many SCO countries, particularly Pakistan and the Central Asian states that share borders with it. The stability of Afghanistan is essential for regional security, and the SCO provides a platform where these concerns can be discussed and addressed collectively.

Economically, the SCO presents opportunities for enhanced cooperation in areas such as trade, infrastructure development, and energy. With Pakistan's strategic location along key trade routes, including the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC), the meeting could result in discussions that further integrate Pakistan into regional and global trade networks.

The presence of China, a major investor in Pakistan's infrastructure and energy projects, further underscores the potential economic benefits of the SCO's engagement in the region. Additionally, Russia's growing interest in South Asia offers new avenues for bilateral and multilateral cooperation in energy, defense, and technology.

The impact of the SCO conference on Pakistan's international image is also of significance. Pakistan has faced diplomatic challenges in recent years, particularly in its relations with India and the United States. Hosting an international event of this magnitude provides Pakistan with an opportunity to project itself as a responsible member of the global community, committed to regional stability and cooperation.

The participation of high-level delegations from member countries will enhance Pakistan's diplomatic profile, providing a platform for Islamabad to engage in meaningful dialogue with global powers on issues ranging from security to trade.

Moreover, the SCO meeting in Pakistan highlights the organization's growing role as a multilateral forum that can address not only security issues but also economic and political challenges. The discussions during this conference are expected to focus on regional security, counterterrorism, and economic cooperation, all of which are vital for Pakistan's national interests. In a world increasingly defined by shifting alliances and global uncertainties, the SCO offers a stable and inclusive platform for Pakistan to engage with its neighbors and beyond.

Lastly, the upcoming SCO meeting in Pakistan presents a unique opportunity for the country to strengthen its diplomatic relations, address regional security concerns, and enhance its role in regional economic development. The presence of key global and regional players underscores the importance of the event, which comes at a critical juncture for both Pakistan and the region.

As the member countries convene in Islamabad, the SCO continues to evolve as a vital forum for dialogue and cooperation, one that holds promise for fostering peace and stability in a region marked by both challenges and opportunities. For Pakistan, the meeting offers a chance to reinforce its commitment to multilateralism and regional cooperation, while showcasing its potential as a bridge between South Asia, Central Asia, and beyond.



## SCO, Pakistan and the age of regionalism

Qasim Farooq

WE live in an age where regionalism has eclipsed bilateral relations. Global groupings such as the ASEAN and BRICS showcase how nations are increasingly gravitating towards multilateral frameworks to address shared challenges like security, economy and environmental sustainability.

As Pakistan gears up to host the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) summit in a few days, the significance of this event cannot be overstated.

The SCO, with its roots in the Shanghai Five, has evolved into one of the most significant regional organizations - especially after the inclusion of Pakistan and India in 2017.

Dubbed as the "NATO of the East", the organization encompasses nearly 40% of the global population and 25% of the world's GDP.

Pakistan's hosting of the 2024 SCO summit comes at a time when the country seeks to reestablish itself as a key player in regional geopolitics.

In this context, SCO offers Pakistan a platform that it can leverage to move beyond its historical diplo-

matic isolation, and emerge as a strong regional player in the Eurasian landscape.

One of Pakistan's greatest geopolitical advantages is its strategic location - connecting resource efficient countries to resource deficient countries. Through SCO, Pakistan can enhance this conduit role by solidifying itself as a bridge between Eurasia and South Asia.

The recent agreements between Pakistan and Russia on energy cooperation and the deepening of ties with China - especially vis-a-vis CPEC - further bolster the country's position as a vital link in the regional connectivity chain.

Hosting the SCO summit is also Pakistan's chance to champion its vision of a more interconnected Asia. An Asia where economic and infrastructural integration is prioritized, over friction and conflict.

Here the country's access to Central Asian markets, enhanced by its role in the SCO, can unlock new opportunities for trade and investment. This potential to become a transit economy, can position the country as an important

player in the region (on which other states depend on for their trade) and give a much-needed boost to its struggling economy.

Beyond economy, hosting SCO is also an opportunity for Pakistan to further bolster its security landscape. Security remains a core focus of the SCO, particularly in the fight against terrorism and drug trafficking. The Regional Anti-Terrorist Structure (RATS) based in Tashkent is a testament to the organization's commitment to regional stability.

Pakistan, where insecurity is once again poking its head, stands to benefit significantly from enhanced cooperation on these issues within the SCO framework. Especially when the situation in Afghanistan continues to raise concerns about cross-border militancy, the SCO provides Pakistan a multilateral forum to address these challenges in coordination with regional powers like China and Russia.

Additionally, the SCO's charter encourages its members to refrain from military conflict with one another. For Pakistan and India, both nuclear-armed rivals, this presents a rare

opportunity to engage diplomatically under the aegis of a neutral multilateral platform.

The participation of India's Foreign Minister, Mr S. Jaishankar, in the SCO meeting in Pakistan is a positive sign. And while the Indian FM has ruled out any bilateral talk, even a symbolic engagement through the SCO could contribute to de-escalating tensions and present a rare diplomatic window for cooperation on shared challenges (albeit cautiously).

So, as Pakistan prepares to host this pivotal summit, the stakes could not be higher.

The world is moving deeper into the age of regionalism, and Pakistan's role in the SCO could - quite frankly - define its place on the global stage for years to come. Whether Islamabad seizes this opportunity or allows it to slip through its fingers will be a testament to its diplomatic agility and strategic foresight.

The Writer is a LUMS graduate, currently serving as an Information Officer at the Press Information Department, Karachi. He belongs to the 48th Common Training Programme.



# To endorse or not

REPUBLICAN presidential candidate Donald Trump is facing revolt by brave souls within his own party. After endorsing Democrat party challenger Vice President Kamala Harris, the most prominent Republican stalwart Liz Cheney joined Harris at a rally in Wisconsin. Cheney was elected by Wyoming to the House of Representatives where she served from 2017-2023 when she was chairwoman of the party's faction.

Her father Dick Cheney, former Vice President during the administration of George W. Bush, also endorsed Harris. The elder Cheney bore considerable responsibility for Bush's disastrous 2003 war on Iraq and was regarded the most influential vice president in US history.

Liz Cheney explained her defection by castigating Trump for refusing to accept he lost the 2020 presidential election and urging his supporters to march on Congress to prevent the confirmation of Joe Biden. She said, "Donald Trump was willing to sacrifice our Capitol, to allow law enforcement officers to be beaten and brutalised in his name, and to violate the law and the Constitution in order to seize power for himself."

In an appeal to voters she stated, "I don't care if you are a Democrat or a Republican or an independent. That is depravity, and

we must never become numb to it."

She added, "In this election, a broad coalition has come together to support Vice President Kamala Harris. Now, we may disagree on some things, but we are bound together by the one thing that matters to us as Americans more than any other, and that's our duty to our Constitution and our belief in the miracle and the blessing of this incredible nation... So, today I ask all of you here and everyone listening across this great country to join us. I ask you to meet this moment. I ask you to stand in truth to reject the depraved cruelty of Donald Trump. And I ask you instead to help us elect Kamala Harris as President."

Republican House member from Illinois from 2011-2023, Adam Kitzinger was a critic of Trump as soon as he mounted his campaign to undermine the 2020 election result. Kitzinger was among 10 Republicans who voted to impeach Trump for incitement to insurrection and served along with Liz Cheney on the Congressional committee to investigate the Capitol attack. Kitzinger did not stand for re-election in 2022 but has become a prominent Trump critic.

Former Republican representative and senator Jeff Flake endorsed Harris last month, arguing, "I want to support a presidential candidate who seeks to unite our country rather than one

Michael Jansen

who divides us." He also backed Biden in 2020 and served as US ambassador to Turkey.

In February, Utah Senator and party elder Mitt Romney said he would not support Trump. Romney stated, "No, no, absolutely not." He was mainly motivated by Trump's character.

He warned, "Having a president who is so defaulted of character would have an enormous impact on the character of America." Romney has had a peripatetic Republican life. He grew up in the Michigan governor's mansion while it was occupied by his father George Romney. Mitt Romney served as Massachusetts governor before entering the Senate. As the Republican party's presidential nominee in 2012, Romney lost to Democrat Barack Obama. While denouncing Trump before his 2016 election and subsequently calling for his impeachment.

Romney has, however, not endorsed Harris. In the last two elections, he has reportedly written in the name of his wife on his ballot. He argued in The Washington Post that he wants to retain an influential position in the Republican party with the aim of reforming it and he told the Atlantic that he feared for his large family if vindictive Trump wins in November.

Despite Romney's rebuff, The Washington

Post has reported Harris has received endorsements from leading Republican politicians and officials who have established "Republicans for Harris" to win over moderate party members who are leery of Trump. In August more than 200 Republicans who worked for Romney, the late Senator John McCain, and President George W. Bush published a letter backing Harris and warning that a second Trump presidency "will hurt real, everyday people and weaken our sacred institutions."

Harris is not having an easy ride. A week ago, Harris faced Biden administration critics over Israel's Gaza and Lebanon wars. During a visit to critical swing state, Michigan, she met Wa'el Alzayat, head of Emgage Action which has endorsed her, and Ed Gabriel, president of the American Task Force on Lebanon. During the brief half-hour encounter, she expressed concern over civilian displacement and suffering in Gaza and Lebanon and discussed the administration's feeble and failed efforts to end the war.

She did not invite to the meeting activists of the Uncommitted Movement which voted "uncommitted" during the Democratic primary which endorsed Biden as the party's candidate. Michigan's vote matters as the state has 300,000 residents who are of Middle Eastern and North African heritage.

Many are furious with Biden for his submission to Israel and insist that Harris distance herself from his policies.

Last week, Kamel Ahmad Jawad from the heavily Arab community in Dearborn, Michigan, was killed in an Israeli airstrike, deepening anger against the administration. Biden won Michigan by 154,000 votes in 2020 and Harris is in a tight contest for the state's Electoral College votes which could determine the winner. For some inexplicable reason, US voters of Arab background are evenly split between Harris Trump.

Harris drew some comfort from the formation of a group calling itself "Arab Americans for Harris-Walz" which is made up partly of former uncommitted voters.

The group argued Harris would be more ready to act on Arab concerns than Trump.

He dropped the US demand for the "two-state solution" involving the emergence of a Palestinian state, defunded the UN agency caring for Palestinian refugees, closed the Palestinian mission in Washington, shuttered the US East Jerusalem consulate which served Palestinians, and shifted the US embassy from Tel Aviv to occupied Jerusalem. Unfortunately for Harris, Biden has given full military and political support to Israel in its year-long offensive in Gaza and recent attacks on Lebanon and has been as deaf to Arab concerns as Trump.

# In 1982, Reagan put an end to Israel's bombing in 20 minutes, Biden could too

Sholto Byrnes

FOR one reporter, the evasions of the current US administration had evidently become just too much on Tuesday. Addressing the US State Department spokesman Matthew Miller, the Grayzone's Liam Cosgrove said: "This administration has financed a genocide in Gaza for the last year, and every day you're up there denying accountability for it. People are sick of the [expletive] in here."

Mr Cosgrove's words struck a chord; a clip of him speaking has already had hundreds of thousands of views on X alone.

I had my own moment of sudden ire on Sunday morning. I had to resist the urge to break my coffee mug after I read the headline, "Biden issues terse words to Netanyahu over peace deal". Because isn't it time we're honest about the fact that President Joe Biden and Vice President Kamala Harris have been gaslighting us for months and months?

They keep telling us that they've been putting pressure on Israel and working "tirelessly" for a ceasefire. Oh, come off it. It strains credulity that they haven't worked out by now that all they have to do, if they really want a ceasefire, is this: cut off the supply of arms and money to Israel.

In August 1982, then US president Ronald Reagan was so appalled by Israel's bombing of Beirut that he phoned then prime minister Menachem Begin to tell him it was a "holocaust" and had to stop. It took just 20 minutes for Mr Begin to call him back to say he had ordered an end to the bombing.

Mr Biden has had no end of opportunities to do the same. He hasn't. And the endless equivocation and covering for Israel's murderous campaign from his spokespeople, Mr Miller and John Kirby in particular, over the past year have been so awful that I have to switch off after a few seconds every time I watch a clip.

This is terribly damaging for all sorts of reasons.

I wrote in these pages last November that the impunity Mr Biden had granted Israel to flout international law, to the point of what no one can doubt are the commission of war crimes, had blown up the so-called "rules-based international order". It is also, tragically, leading to a huge rise in anti-Semitism around the world, with incidents rising to their highest levels for decades in the US and UK, according to reports published in the past week.

Why should innocent Jewish people far from Israel suffer because of the actions of that country's administration? First, it's important to say that they certainly shouldn't, and second that it is considered anti-Semitic to hold Jewish people anywhere else responsible for whatever the state of Israel does. But many don't see so

much of a distinction, and it doesn't help when Britain's chief rabbi, Ephraim Mirvis, describes Israeli troops as "our incredible heroic soldiers".

That sounds perilously close to what the historian Deborah Lipstadt calls "the dual loyalty canard", although having dual nationality myself – and, indeed, having an Irish friend who was called up to serve in the Israeli army during the First Gulf War – I don't see anything inherently wrong in Jewish people feeling a close connection to Israel as well as their home country. But it does serve to weaken the

ing any restraint on him at all. He could be wilfully provoking untold disaster in the Middle East and yet all we hear, from the US and UK at least, is "we stand with Israel".

This not to say that Israel should have not retaliated after the attacks of October 7 last year. Any administration would have had to do so. Both critics and those of us overwhelmed by the catastrophic destruction wrought by Mr Netanyahu need to acknowledge how much of a life-changing, existential shock the Hamas-led attack was for the vast majority of ordinary Israelis. No, the conflict may not have begun on October 7. But this part

**In August 1982, then US president Ronald Reagan was so appalled by Israel's bombing of Beirut that he phoned then prime minister Menachem Begin to tell him it was a "holocaust" and had to stop. It took just 20 minutes for Mr Begin to call him back to say he had ordered an end to the bombing. Mr Biden has had no end of opportunities to do the same. He hasn't. And the endless equivocation and covering for Israel's murderous campaign from his spokespeople, Mr Miller and John Kirby in particular, over the past year have been so awful that I have to switch off after a few seconds every time I watch a clip. This is terribly damaging for all sorts of reasons. I wrote in these pages last November that the impunity Mr Biden had granted Israel to flout international law, to the point of what no one can doubt are the commission of war crimes, had blown up the so-called "rules-based international order". It is also, tragically, leading to a huge rise in anti-Semitism around the world, with incidents rising to their highest levels for decades in the US and UK, according to reports published in the past week.**

idea that Israelis and diaspora Jews are two totally different groups. It may not be fair or right, but the latter are being held responsible for the crimes of the former's government.

And those crimes, the privileging of Israeli lives over Arab lives, the outrage when Iran fires a missile barrage that kills no one and what appears to be a collective shrug by western leaders when huge numbers of Palestinians are killed in the West Bank or Gaza, has become so glaringly obvious that even The Washington Post reported there was "overwhelming anger" at the country at the recent UN General Assembly meetings. Jewish communities around the world are feeling a chill up the spine, and often far worse, as a result.

There's a further aspect to this, too.

When Malaysia's then prime minister, Dr Mahathir Mohamad, made the claim in front of the Organisation of Islamic Co-operation in 2003 that "today the Jews rule the world by proxy", I tried to persuade an old associate of his that this was "unhelpful" to say the least. "But it's true," he replied. What Mr Netanyahu is doing is making it all the harder to argue against that awful anti-Semitic trope, because no one who has the power to hold him back is exercising

of it did for them. It must also be acknowledged that any long-term peace has to entail not only Palestinian statehood but also an Israel that both is, and feels, secure. Whatever one thinks about the original establishment of the state of Israel, it is a reality, and seven million Israelis are not, and should not, have to go anywhere, any more than seven million Palestinians.

Regional peace agreements should have been a way to start building that peaceful future. The blame for the fact that that happy prospect currently appears to be no more than a mirage lies not with the state of Israel, but with its disastrous prime minister – and with the American president who has enabled him.

We should call out Mr Biden and Ms Harris, because you can't honestly express regret for any of the tens of thousands of deaths, the children maimed, the desolate moonscapes created, or the blighting of at least a generation's future, if you're the one supplying the arms and money.

So cut the "malarkey", to use one of Mr Biden's favourite words, Mr President. Let's hear no more of your "ceaseless" efforts. Because the world knows you could have stopped all this. And you didn't.

# Fostering mental health in the workplace should be a common goal

IN 1938, Harvard University embarked on a landmark study that yielded fascinating insights into the human condition. By following the lives of 724 men from adolescence to old age, researchers found that the quality of our connections is the most important factor in determining happiness.

These findings were echoed in last year's TV documentary Live to 100: Secrets of the Blue Zones. It found that communities with the longest age and health spans were all places where people enjoyed strong social connections and had a purpose deep into old age. Conversely, 60 per cent of people experiencing chronic loneliness also experience mental distress, compared to just 15 per cent of people who are not chronically lonely.

According to the World Health Organisation, an estimated 12 billion working days are lost every year to depression and anxiety at a cost of \$1 trillion a year globally in lost productivity.

As we mark World Mental Health Day today, there is much we can and should do to improve or maintain our mental health – diet, exercise, cultivating personal connections, and finding balance and meaning in our lives. But we should also remember that we cannot be expected to do all this on our own.

Given the time we spend at the workplace, there is much that businesses can do to foster meaningful connections. I am fortunate to do this for a living, in my role at NYU Abu

Dhabi's (NYUAD) Office of Social Responsibility.

Since 2012, we have served a non-traditional student population at our campus of over 800 contracted and domestic workers from over 30 countries who participate through our free Adult Education Programme. They are not

**According to the World Health Organisation, an estimated 12 billion working days are lost every year to depression and anxiety at a cost of \$1 trillion a year globally in lost productivity. As we mark World Mental Health Day today, there is much we can and should do to improve or maintain our mental health – diet, exercise, cultivating personal connections, and finding balance and meaning in our lives. But we should also remember that we cannot be expected to do all this on our own. Given the time we spend at the workplace, there is much that businesses can do to foster meaningful connections. I am fortunate to do this for a living, in my role at NYU Abu Dhabi's (NYUAD) Office of Social Responsibility. Since 2012, we have served a non-traditional student population at our campus of over 800 contracted and domestic workers from over 30 countries who participate through our free Adult Education Programme. They are not direct employees of the university but are very much at the front lines of daily operations as security guards, housekeepers, cooks, technicians, cashiers, and more. Each day, they are the first to greet and support our students, faculty and staff. The growth of this venture has yielded some profound lessons about the value of human connections and creating an environment of inclusion in which everyone is supported in their development. Last year we ran 22 programmes in subjects ranging from ChatGPT training to entrepreneurship, financial literacy and English in the Workplace to learning Arabic. As a result of surveys to gauge preferences, we added more mental health workshops, hosting new classes on mastering negative emotions, cultivating strength for personal and professional triumph, finding effective ways to build confidence at work and cultivating self-worth and self-love. Requests for courses of**

direct employees of the university but are very much at the front lines of daily operations as security guards, housekeepers, cooks, technicians, cashiers, and more. Each day, they are the first to greet and support our students, faculty and staff.

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this nature reaffirm the fact that we all have the innate need to feel and be seen, heard and understood. Most of us in the UAE are expatriates, a long way from home, and beyond our professional pursuits, we seek meaningful connections and yearn for a sense of belonging.

These are not just "nice to have" additions. Mental health challenges significantly impact workplace performance. There are many additional payoffs to a more thoughtful, inclusive approach for people and organisations. Having completed one such course, a nanny for one of our faculty members opened a supermarket in Sri Lanka that she runs

from Abu Dhabi. One of our security guards developed and pitched a business plan to build a school back in Uganda. Another domestic worker colleague is now a licensed freelance photographer in her spare time.

Thanks to an appreciation for the programme by our vendors, we now also offer English classes to our contracted staff during their work hours, to upskill them without upsetting their work-life balance.

Equally important, our lessons recognise our contracted colleagues as both learners and teachers. Our "each one teach one" model has seen domestic worker colleagues guest lecture in a sociology class on migration. Several contracted workers engaged with students on a CSR case study for a business course while other colleagues taught courses in photography and the arts. Classes like Arabic are also open to our university faculty and staff. This is important because the invisible barriers that tend to exist in any organisation are removed when we are all in a room together as students.

I would urge every organisation to think about the many powerful ways its employees can teach and learn from each other. In a country full of people from somewhere else, we have a unique opportunity to appreciate and learn from the dynamic diversity of cultures. By embracing this abundance, we can create a community of happier, better-connected people who forge a bright future for the country and themselves.

— The National

# Weakening of France, Germany creating an EU power shift

Khaled Abou Zahr

THE Franco-German duo has been the keystone of the EU for many decades. It is through this strong alliance that the bloc has maintained its course and grown with great stability. Through every European or global crisis, this partnership has been able to find solutions and maintain trust in EU institutions. The world is nevertheless changing and, through geopolitical and economic crises, the leading and dominant position of this duo is eroding.

There is no doubt that the German economy, which is the largest in Europe, has positioned Berlin as a de facto kingmaker in Europe. Despite this still being true, Berlin's status has been shaken by a reversal of fortunes and, more precisely, a series of bad decisions that have raised doubts over its capacity to ensure a stable future for Europe. It has shown a lack of political vision with its reliance on Russian energy and this has weakened its authoritative

voice. This is amplified by the fact that Germany's economy is projected to shrink by 0.2 percent in 2024, marking a period of stagnation after several years of slow recovery. Factors contributing to this include structural challenges such as the ill-managed energy transition, as well as the impact of an aging population. Additionally, increasing competition from Chinese industrial exports have put further pressure on the manufacturing sector, a foundation of Germany's economy.

France did not make the energy transition mistake or, to be precise, it reversed course in the nick of time when it came to abandoning nuclear power, unlike Germany. Yet, it now faces higher debt levels than ever before to maintain its current GDP growth. For the first time in history, France is borrowing at higher rates than Italy, Greece or Spain. Indeed, France cannot abide by the EU guidelines regarding debt ceilings and fiscal deficits. This in turn shakes

its ability to have a leading voice, as it is not even respecting the rules.

This is due to the fact that France's economy is also struggling, with GDP growth forecast to be about

**This is due to the fact that France's economy is also struggling, with GDP growth forecast to be about 0.7 percent in 2024. This weak performance is largely due to the lingering effects of rising interest rates, the energy crisis and the withdrawal of governmental fiscal support measures. Moreover, budgetary cuts of approximately 10 billion (\$10.9 billion) have reduced its growth potential. If we add to these issues the policymaking mayhem on Ukraine and the Middle East, with contradicting positions between Paris and Berlin and spurs of tension that, despite friendly declarations, are not being resolved. This puts the two countries in a tough spot to continue showing leadership for Europe. This unique situation is raising questions on whether it is time to give more power to the European Commission itself.**

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on Ukraine and the Middle East, with contradicting positions between Paris and Berlin and spurs of tension that, despite friendly declarations, are not being resolved.

This puts the two countries in a tough spot to continue showing leadership for Europe. This unique situation is raising questions on whether it is time to give more power to the European Commission itself.

It is hence not surprising that, during recent crises and particularly under the leadership of Ursula von der

Leyen, the European Commission has taken on a more assertive role. This has been very clear, especially with regard to the war in

Ukraine. In turn, this has pushed forward the EU's geopolitical agenda. Von der Leyen's second term is expected to witness confirmation of this trend as global tensions increase. The dominant role taken by the European Commission during the COVID-19 pandemic and now the Ukraine war will continue solidifying Brussels' influence. This is

in light of the leadership gap caused by the weakening of France and Germany, meaning it is acting more as a central authority, superseding national governments.

Indeed, this growing power was clear in the intricate backstage negotiations for the nomination of EU commissioners. Some analysts even claim that Von der Leyen has gained the upper hand on both French President Emmanuel Macron and German Chancellor Olaf Scholz.

Therefore, it is not astonishing that EU pundits are starting to whisper via social

media and other "leaks" that, with both France and Germany in a weakened state, there is a unique opportunity to take concrete steps toward establishing a new phase in the EU process that involves greater decision-making authority being transferred to Brussels.

As with all signs of weakness, we also notice that several European countries are uniting to counterbalance the traditional Franco-German dominance in the EU. This has also strengthened the leadership of Von der Leyen. Nations like Poland, under Donald Tusk, have significantly raised their profile by investing heavily in defense and playing a critical role in supporting Ukraine, positioning themselves as key players in European security. Italy, under Giorgia Meloni, has also aligned with Eastern European countries by advocating for a more diverse leadership structure and stronger EU action on geopolitical issues. We can notice that Meloni succeeded in the strategy Macron

tried to put forward to empower France within the Franco-German duo.

Additionally, other Eastern European nations like Estonia, the Czech Republic and Slovakia have amplified their influence by pushing for greater EU involvement in defense, particularly in response to Russian aggression. The role of the European Commission in the potential reengagement of the UK under its new Labour government could further dilute Franco-German dominance.

The combination of a more dangerous world, greater uncertainty and the weakening of the Berlin-Paris duo has empowered the European Commission. This is also a sign of a shift toward a more multipolar Europe, which will enable the European Commission to take a more active role in shaping EU policy, especially on defense and economic security. All these factors raise the question of whether we will soon witness an all-powerful, sovereign European president.





# PSX holds Gong Ceremony on listing of Burj Clean Energy Modaraba

## F.P. Report

KARACHI: A gong ceremony was held at the Pakistan Stock Exchange (PSX) to mark the listing of Burj Clean Energy Modaraba ("Burj Modaraba"). Burj Modaraba is the first green energy fund in accordance with Shariah principles to be listed on the Stock Exchange on the Growth Enterprise Market (GEM) Board of PSX. The gong was struck by Mr. Muneer Kamal, Chairman, Burj Modaraba; Mr. Saad Zaman, Sponsor Director, Burj Modaraba; other Director(s) and top management of Burj Modaraba, amidst the presence of Mr. Shahid Ali Habib, CEO of Arif Habib Limited (Advisor to the Issue); Mr. Nadeem Naqvi, Acting CEO of Pakistan Stock Exchange, and senior management of PSX.

The listing of Burj Modaraba marks a pivotal moment for Pakistan's capital markets and for sustainable energy investments. As Pakistan's first green energy fund, Burj Modaraba serves as a bridge for clean energy project between developers and investors and fosters the growth of renewable

energy initiatives across the country.

Burj Modaraba is supported by esteemed partners and investors such as Meezan Bank Limited, Habib Bank Limited and Arif Habib Corporation Limited, who are committed to promoting the use of renewable energy in Pakistan. AKD Securities serves as the underwriter, with Arif Habib Limited (AHL) as the financial advisor and Usmani & Company Shariah Advisors (Pvt.) Limited as the Shariah advisor.

With a diversified portfolio that is intended to include solar, wind, energy storage, and energy efficiency solutions, Burj Modaraba is positioned to meet the growing demand for clean energy in Pakistan. The fund aims to alleviate the country's reliance on conventional fuel sources and reduce the financial burden of high electricity costs on consumers, while adhering to the highest standards of Environmental, Social, and Governance (ESG) principles.

In the Initial Offering of Burj Clean Energy Modaraba, the Modaraba offered 10,000,000 certificates to the investors,



against which applications for a total of 10,244,000 certificates were received. The entire Issue was offered through Fixed Price Mechanism at a Price of Rs 10/- per certificate. The amount to be raised was Rs 100,000,000/-, however subscription for an amount of Rs 102,440,000/- was received. The capital raised is to procure and install Solar Power solutions for Residential clients up to a total capacity of 700 Kwp within 6 months of business commencement. The average capacity per residential site is assumed to

be 9.86 Kwp, resulting in a total of 71 sites for the installation of the entire 700 Kwp capacity.

Welcoming the guests at the gong ceremony, Mr. Nadeem Naqvi, Acting CEO, Pakistan Stock Exchange, stated, "It is an honour for me to welcome you all at the listing of Burj Clean Energy Modaraba. It is a first of its kind of opportunity for Pakistani shareholders. Globally, solar is now a leading energy source, and it will become even more so in the near future. The cost of solar panels and solar

plants is reducing sharply because the demand is increasing which is being met by increasing supplies. I think there cannot be a better and more opportune time than now for such an investment to come for investors".

He further stated, "There are many private sector solar panel distributors and installers but nothing has been done in an institutionalised manner. This partnership is going to give us the model that will grow by itself and also attract a large number of new entrants in the market. An

interesting factor of this fund is that it is Shariah compliant. Thereby, we have an effective green energy product on Shariah compliant basis. I think you couldn't get the best of both worlds anywhere else. I look forward that your growth will be so rapid that you will soon want to move to the Main Board as well. I thank you and congratulate you, your team, and that of Arif Habib Limited, as well as that of PSX, that played a significant role in this important listing of Burj Clean Energy Modaraba on the GEM Board of Pakistan Stock Exchange."

Speaking at the ceremony, Mr. Muneer Kamal, Chairman Burj Clean Energy Modaraba, added, "Burj Clean Energy Modaraba is set to transform Pakistan's energy market. We are not just a financial entity; we are a catalyst for holistic energy solutions, positioning ourselves as leaders in energy as a service. Our commitment to ESG-compliant financing fosters responsible energy practices".

Mr. Saad Zaman, Sponsor Director of Burj Modaraba, stated, "At Burj Modaraba, we are more than just a Power Purchase

Agreement (PPA) provider. We are committed to offering comprehensive energy solutions that disrupt the market by delivering energy as a service. Our focus on environmentally friendly and ESG-compliant financing will empower renewable energy projects across Pakistan. We are also excited to bring cutting-edge energy storage technologies to the country, having already invested in Dubai. We are also committed to promote E-mobility and the electric vehicle (EV) sector".

Mr. Shahid Ali Habib, CEO of Arif Habib Limited (AHL), expressed his enthusiasm over the strong response to Burj Clean Energy Modaraba's Initial Offering (IO). He highlighted Burj Clean Energy's pivotal role in Pakistan's renewable energy sector, with a focus on solar, wind, and energy efficiency solutions.

Expressing his views on the listing of Burj Clean Energy Modaraba, he stated, "The Offering marks a significant milestone, launching the company's renewable energy initiatives.

The transaction enables a smooth entry into Pakistan's expanding ener-

gy market, offering Shariah-compliant, diversified energy solutions. AHL is proud to have acted as Advisor to this Issue, and we look forward to bringing more innovative companies to Pakistan Stock Exchange".

The gong ceremony concluded with the distribution of tombstones to the representatives of the participating institutions in the listing of Burj Clean Energy Modaraba. Mr. Saad Zaman, Sponsor Director of Burj Modaraba, presented the tombstones to Mr. Nadeem Naqvi, Acting CEO PSX; Mr. Fareed Alam, CEO AKD Securities Limited (Underwriter to the Issue), Mr. Aamir Irshad, Group Head, Corporate, Commercial and Investment Banking (Pre-IPO Investor), and Mr. Muneer Kamal, Chairman, Burj Clean Energy Modaraba presented the tombstones to Mr. Shahid Ali Habib, CEO Arif Habib Limited; Mr. Nasim Beg, CEO Arif Habib Consultancy (Pvt.) Limited, and Mr. Zia Ul Hasan, Group Executive - Operations & Branch Banking, Meezan Bank Limited (Pre-IPO Investor & Banker to the Issue).

## SNGPL intensifies crackdown on gas theft

## F.P. Report

LAHORE: In its ongoing campaign against gas theft, Sui Northern Gas Pipelines Limited (SNGPL) has disconnected 148 illegal gas connections across Punjab, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, and Islamabad, while imposing fines totaling Rs 4.3 million.

In Lahore, 29 illegal gas connections were cut off, and fines amounting to Rs 1.58 million were imposed on offenders. In Gujranwala, one illegal

connection was disconnected, resulting in a fine of Rs 0.05 million. In Faisalabad, the team disconnected seven illegal connections and imposed a fine of Rs 0.04 million. The Sheikhupura team severed four illegal connections, imposing fines worth Rs 1.33 million.

In Multan, 32 illegal connections were terminated, along with five cases involving the use of gas compressors. In Sahiwal, four illegal connections were disconnected, with fines totaling Rs

0.14 million imposed. The Bahawalpur team disconnected seven gas compressors and two illegal connections.

In Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, the Mardan team disconnected 20 illegal connections and imposed fines amounting to Rs 1.17 million. Meanwhile, 34 illegal connections were severed in Karak, with nine FIRs filed against violators. In Gujrat, three illegal connections were disconnected, and a fine of Rs 0.05 million was imposed.

## FBR directed to take action against smuggling

## F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: In a decisive move to intensify the government's ongoing anti-smuggling campaign, Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif directed all relevant government bodies, particularly the Federal Board of Revenue (FBR) and Pakistan Customs, to take stringent measures to combat smuggling across the country. One of the key amendments reinforcing these efforts is the recent change to S.R.O. 499(I)/2009 dated 13-06-2009, introduced via SRO 1619(I)/2024 dated 03-10-2024, which empowers authorities to confiscate vehicles and other conveyances used in transporting smuggled goods. This amendment,

announced earlier this month, is a reflection of the government's firm resolve to eradicate smuggling, which has long plagued the nation's economy, depriving it of critical revenue while encouraging the informal market. Under the amendment, all conveyances involved in the transportation of smuggled goods are now subject to immediate confiscation without the option for redemption fine. This is a significant shift from the previous regime under S.R.O. 499(I)/2009 dated 13-06-2009, where offenders had the opportunity to recover seized vehicles by paying a redemption fine. The new measure closes that loophole, ensuring that the tools used in smuggling operations are permanently

removed from circulation.

The Chairman FBR has called for immediate action by the Customs officials and law enforcement agencies to enforce this amendment through coordinated efforts and ensure that all conveyances used in smuggling activities, once apprehended, are confiscated, and permanently removed from operations.

With these renewed efforts, Pakistan moves one step closer to securing its economic borders and ensuring that those who contribute to the illicit economy are held accountable.

The recent amendment is just one of the many steps being taken to eliminate smuggling and protect the integrity of Pakistan's economy.

## Higher food prices lift US consumer prices

WASHINGTON (Reuters): U.S. consumer prices rose slightly more than expected in September amid higher food costs, but the annual increase in inflation was the smallest in more than 3-1/2 years, keeping the Federal Reserve on track to cut interest rates again next month.

Other data from the Labor Department on Thursday showed first-time applications for unemployment benefits surged last week to the highest level in more than a year, boosted by Hurricane Helene and a nearly four-week-old strike at Boeing (BA.N), opens new tab, which has forced the U.S. planemaker to furlough workers and impacted suppliers. The strike and hurricanes could distort the labor market picture this month.

Despite the firmer-than-expected monthly inflation reading last month, a sharp moderation in rent increases led economists to expect a more muted rise in the main inflation measures tracked by the U.S. central bank for its 2% target. "The September CPI rose more than expected, but the details do not suggest enough acceleration to sway the Fed from a 25 basis points rate cut next month," said Will Compennolle, macro strategist at FHN Financial. "While there were some components that showed concerning acceleration, the slowdown in shelter inflation bodes well for future cool core services prices."

The consumer price index increased 0.2% last month after gaining 0.2% in August, the Labor Department's Bureau of Labor Statistics said. Food prices jumped 0.4% after rising 0.1% in August. Grocery store food prices increased 0.4%, lifted by higher costs for meat, poultry, fish and eggs. Fruits and vegetable prices rebounded 0.9% after dropping 0.2% in August.

But consumers got some relief from gasoline prices, which plunged 4.1%. Rents increased 0.3% after climbing 0.4% in the prior month. In the 12 months through September, the CPI rose 2.4%. That was the smallest year-on-year increase since February 2021 and followed a 2.5% advance in August. Economists polled by Reuters had forecast the CPI edging up 0.1% and rising 2.3% year-on-year. The annual increase in inflation has slowed from a peak of 9.1% in June 2022.

Inflation is a major issue for voters in next month's presidential election. Vice President Kamala Harris, the Democratic Party's nominee, is locked in a tight race with the Republican Party's candidate Donald Trump.

As many as 313 companies transacted their shares in the stock market, 115 of them recorded

## CDC organizes 'Investor Weekend 2024'

## F.P. Report

KARACHI: With the support and guidance of the Securities and Exchange Commission of Pakistan, Central Depository Company (CDC), in collaboration with leading AMCs and brokerage houses of Pakistan, has organized a 3-day long "Investor Weekend 2024" event at Dolmen Mall Clifton, Karachi from October 11-13, 2024.

CDC has especially organized this event to mark the World Investor Week 2024, a global initia-

tive organized by the International Organization of Securities Commissions (IOSCO), dedicated to promoting investor education and protection.

The event will be inaugurated by Mr. Abdul Rehman Warraich - Commissioner SECP, Mr. Mujtaba Ahmad Lodhi - Commissioner SEDP, Mr. Farrukh H. Sabzwari - Chairman CDC, Mr. Badiuddin Akber - CEO CDC along with representatives of top asset management companies, stock brokers companies and other financial institutions.

The entire ground floor arena of Dolmen Mall Clifton will showcase Capital market participation led by CDC and SECP along with leading Asset Management Companies and Brokerage Houses, all of whom will share their expert insights and experiences with the public to assist them in making safe and informed investment decisions, thus promoting the investment culture in Pakistan.

The participating organizations include ABL Funds, AKD Securities, Al-Habib Funds, Al-Meezan

Investment Management Limited, Atlas Asset Management, Faysal Funds, HBL Asset Management Limited, MCB Funds, Pakistan Mercantile Exchange (PMEX), Trust Securities and Brokerage Limited, UBL Funds and WE Financials.

CDC has invited masses to attend this 3-day event for learning key information on diverse investment avenues and how to actively participate in the financial market by making smart and informed investments.

## Fazal for taking concrete steps for investment-friendly atmosphere

## F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: The president of Sarhad Chamber of Commerce and Industry (SCCI) Fazal Moqem Khan on Thursday stressed the need for removal of hurdles in export and conducive atmosphere for local and foreign investors to enhance economic activities and boost economy.

Speaking to a three-member Chinese delegation comprising Zhou Jion Lin, Mr Ma and Mr Zhou here at the chamber house, Fazal Moqem demanded pragmatic steps to an investment-friendly atmosphere in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, said a press release issued here.

The SCCI chief highlighted the extensive investment opportunities in the different potential sectors of the province and said that export and trade halted from KP after the imposition of two percent cess on export and lack of business-friendly policies. The meeting was informed investors' and exporters' concerns over



imposition of two percent cess on export, security arrangements, issues relating to customs and other departments.

It was informed that talks were underway with the provincial government about imposition of two percent cess on export and hoped that the ratio of cess would be decreased to 0.5 percent.

KP exporters attached with the business of gemstone and carpet Jameel Khan, Atif Khawaja, Kamran and traders and

others were also accompanying the delegation.

They emphasized foolproof security arrangements for investors with police high ups and relevant authorities. They also called for removal of hurdles in the way of export and trade.

Fazal Moqem assured to take up all issues of exporters and foreign investors with relevant authorities and would address them amicably.

The meeting was also attended by former FPCCI

president Ghazanfar Bilour, SCCI senior vice Abdul Jalil Jan, vice president Shehryar Khan, lifetime president of Anjuman e Tajran Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Haji Muhammad Afzal, former president Faiz Muhammad Faizi, Husnain Sheraz and others.

The SCCI chief stressed the need for complete abolishment of cess on export from KP to give a boost to export and investment in the province.

## Wall Street falls after inflation, jobless claims

WASHINGTON (Reuters): Wall Street opened lower on Thursday as hotter-than-expected September inflation data reinforced expectations of a 25-basis-point rate hike by the Federal Reserve at its upcoming meeting.

The closely watched Consumer Price Index rose 0.2% on a monthly basis and 2.4% on an annual basis, with both figures being slightly higher than estimated by economists Reuters polled.

The core figure, which excludes volatile food and energy prices, rose 0.3% year-over-year, versus an estimated 0.2%.

The Dow Jones Industrial Average (DJII), opens new tab fell 75.96 points, or 0.18%, to 42,433.87, the S&P 500 (SPX), opens new tab lost 15.88 points, or 0.27%, to 5,776.16 and the Nasdaq Composite (IXIC), opens new tab lost 69.40 points, or 0.38%, to 18,222.22.

The Russell 2000 (RUT), opens new tab, which tracks economically sensitive small-cap stocks,

lost 1.09%.

Rate-sensitive sectors fell, with Real Estate (SPLRCR), opens new tab losing 0.6%, while Information Technology (SPLRCT), opens new tab dropped 0.5%.

After the inflation data was released, traders firmed bets on a 25-bps cut in November at 86.9%, with a 13.1% chance of no change at all, according to CME's FedWatch.

"The market's reacting because you're pricing out the possibility of big Fed rate cuts and the risk that the Fed isn't going to be as supportive to markets," said Cameron Dawson, chief investment officer at NewEdge Wealth.

However, weekly jobless claims also rose to 258,000 for the week ending Oct. 5, versus an estimate of 230,000.

"The CPI data coming in hotter than expected, and at the same time (that) initial jobless claims really picked up, is certainly a confusing message for markets," Dawson said.

"Whether or not that

means the Fed is going to be able to deliver the full extent of its expected interest-rate cuts is a good question."

Meanwhile, Delta Air Lines (DAL.N), opens new tab lost 2.1% after forecasting quarterly revenue below expectations in anticipation of slower travel spending.

Other airlines also lost ground, with United Airlines (UAL.O), opens new tab down 1.4%, American Airlines (AAL.O), opens new tab losing 2% and Southwest Airlines (LUV.N), opens new tab slipping 1%.

Equity market performance has been largely led by expectations for easing monetary policy, with traders now scrutinizing how much further the central bank will lower borrowing costs this year.

Among other single movers, shares of Pfizer (PFE.N), opens new tab fell 2.4% as former executives distanced themselves from activist investor Starboard's campaign against the drug-maker.

gains and 189 sustained losses, whereas the share price of 9 companies remained unchanged.

The three top trading companies were PTCL with 52,237,770 shares at Rs 14.52 per share, Hub Power Company XD with 46,573,519 shares at Rs 112.73 per share and PIA

Holding Company with 25,513,036 shares at Rs 20.35 per share.

Unilever Pakistan Foods Limited witnessed a maximum increase of Rs 28.71 per share price, closing at Rs 17,700.50, whereas the runner-up was Buxly Paints Limited with Rs 16.70 rise in its

per share price to Rs 183.72.

Hallmark Company Limited witnessed a maximum decrease of Rs 134.72 per share closing at Rs 1,213.31 followed by Rafhan Maize Products Company Limited with Rs 122.00 decline to close at Rs 7,028.00.







## In brief

## Sri Lanka to participate in Athletics C'ship

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Sri Lanka team has confirmed its participation in the Cross Country Athletics Championship to be held in November, marking the country's debut in organizing this prestigious event. According to Chairman South Asia Athletics Major Gen (R) Muhammad Akram Sahi the championship will be held on November 24 in Pakistan. He said the venue of the championship will be announced in a few days. The government has also issued NOC to organize the championship, he said. Sahi said there are two men's categories in the championship including men's senior and under-20 competitions. Seven nations will compete in the event including Pakistan, Bangladesh, Sri Lanka, India, Maldives, Nepal and Bhutan, he said.

## Football team gears up for SAFF C'ship

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Pakistan national women's football team is set to depart for Nepal on October 12 to participate in the SAFF Women's Championship 2024. According to details, the team has been undergoing an intensive training camp in Islamabad under the guidance of head coach Adeel Rizki. The camp will continue for a few more days to fine-tune the team's preparations. Pakistan will kick off their campaign against arch-rivals India on October 17, followed by a match against Bangladesh on October 20. Both matches are scheduled to start at 4:45 pm Pakistan time.

## Police athletes secure six medals

LAHORE (APP): In the National Inter-Departmental Karate Championship, Pakistan Police athletes achieved remarkable success by securing six medals. The championship was held at the Nishtar Sports Hall Complex in Gaddafi Stadium from October 5 to 9, featuring participants from the Pakistan Army, WAPDA, Railways, Higher Education Commission, and the Pakistan Police team. Nearly 200 male and female athletes took part in the national championship. The Pakistan Police team excelled, winning three silver and three bronze medals. Additional IG Operations Punjab, Shehzada Sultan, who is the patron of the Pakistan Police Karate Team, met with the medal-winning athletes and congratulated them on their outstanding performance. He announced that the winning athletes would be rewarded with cash prizes and CC-1 certificates to encourage their achievements.

## Bolan club reaches quarterfinals

ISLAMABAD (APP): Bolan Club has qualified for the quarterfinals of the ongoing Federal Football League organized by the Federal Football Club here at the G-7/4 Football Ground. Bolan Club outplayed Jinnah Club by 5-4 on penalty kicks. In the match played, Bolan Club had a lead of 0-1 against Jinnah Club until break. In the third minute of the first half, Tahir Khan on behalf of Bolan Club gave his team the lead and in the 50th minute, Shahid scored on behalf of Jinnah Club to make the match 1-1. Federal Club will face Zorroz Club on Friday. Besides Chairman Organizing Committee and Falcon Club President Irfan Khan Niazi, Secretary Abdul Waheed and a large number of fans were also present on the occasion.

# Brook and Root record partnership put England in sight of win in first Test



Harry Brook became the first England batter in 34 years to score a triple-century

MULTAN (Monitoring Desk): England dominated the fourth day's play against Pakistan as the hosts were 152 for six in their second innings, trailing by 115 runs to avoid an innings defeat in the first Test match at the Multan Cricket Stadium.

Pakistan got off to a poor start in their second innings with a deficit of 267 runs, as they lost six wickets for 82 in 24.2 overs. Salman Ali Agha (41 not out, 49b, 5x4s) and Aamir Jamal (27 not out, 48b, 2x4s) returned undefeated as the pair added an

unbeaten 70-run partnership for the seventh wicket.

For the tourists, Brydon Carse and Gus Atkinson bagged two wickets each.

Earlier, resuming their first innings at the overnight score of 492 for three, Joe Root and Harry

Brook went on to record the fourth-highest partnership in Tests. The pair knitted a 454-run stand that saw Root amass a 375-ball 262, hitting 17 boundaries. This was Root's sixth double century and his second double century against Pakistan.

The highlight of the fourth day's play was right-handed batter Brook's remarkable triple century, which made him only the sixth England batter to achieve the feat. Brook was eventually dismissed for 317 off 322 balls, smashing 29 fours and three sixes. England finally declared their innings on 823 for seven in 150 overs – the fourth-highest team total in Tests.

For Pakistan, Naseem Shah and Saim Ayub ended up taking two wickets apiece.

## Scores in brief:

Day 4 of 5: Pakistan trail by 115 runs at the Multan Cricket Stadium  
Pakistan 556 all out, 149 overs (Shan Masood 151, Salman Ali Agha 104 not out, Abdullah Shafique 102, Saud Shakeel 82, Naseem Shah 33, Babar Azam 30, Shaheen Shah Afridi 26; Jack Leach 3-160, Brydon Carse 2-74, Gus Atkinson 2-99) and 152-6, 37 overs (Salman Ali Agha 41 not out, Saud Shakeel 29, Aamir Jamal 27 not out, Saim Ayub 25; Gus Atkinson 2-28, Brydon Carse 2-39)

England 823-7 (dec), 150 overs (Harry Brook 317, Joe Root 262, Ben Duckett 84, Zak Crawley 78; Saim Ayub 2-101, Naseem Shah 2-157).



## Tennis legend Nadal to retire in November

PARIS (Agencies): Rafael Nadal, the 22-time Grand Slam champion, will retire from tennis at the end of this season. The 38-year-old will represent Spain in his final appearance at next month's Davis Cup Finals in Malaga.

Nadal has barely played over the past two seasons because of injuries and suggested last year he could retire at the end of 2024. In a video message released on Thursday, Nadal said: "I am here to let you know I am retiring from professional tennis."

"The reality is that it has been some difficult years, the last two especially. "I don't think I have been able to play without limitations." Nadal retires as the second-most successful men's singles player of all time, behind only long-time rival Novak Djokovic.

Known as the 'King of Clay', Nadal won the French Open singles title a record 14 times, winning 112 of his 116 major matches at Roland Garros. No player has won as many Grand Slam singles titles at the same tournament. Nadal is also a four-time US Open champion and won both the Australian Open and Wimbledon twice.

He also took Olympic singles and doubles gold and helped Spain win four Davis Cup finals, most recently in 2019. Alongside enduring rivals Djokovic and 20-time major champion Roger Federer, Nadal formed the 'Big Three' that dominated the men's game from the early 2000s and drew in legions of fans.

"What a career, Rafa! I always hoped this day would never come," said Federer, who famously cried alongside Nadal when he retired in 2022. "Thank you for the unforgettable memories and all your incredible achievements in the game we love. It's been an absolute honour."

Why Nadal has decided now is the right time

When announcing he would not play in the 2023 French Open, Nadal said he planned to retire at the end of 2024 because of the series of injuries which were taking their toll on his body. But, having returned earlier this season, Nadal became increasingly non-committal about his future. The former world number one regularly said he wanted to keep playing as long as his body let him.

Now, after a chastening defeat by long-time rival Djokovic at the Paris Olympics in July, he has decided the time is right. "It is obviously a difficult decision, one that has taken me some time to make," he said. "But, in this life, everything has a beginning and an end."

After returning to competitive action in Brisbane in January, Nadal was sidelined again with a thigh injury, missing the Australian Open. Nadal played four tournaments during the European clay-court season, culminating in a first-round defeat at the French Open.

Since then he has played just two more tournaments - in Badst and the Olympic Games at Roland Garros. Last month he was included in Spain's squad for the Davis Cup Finals, which takes place between 19-24 November.

"I think it's the appropriate time to put an end to a career that has been long and much more successful than I could ever have imagined," Nadal said. "I'm very excited that my last tournament will be the final of the Davis Cup and representing my country." He has not played competitively since teaming up with Carlos Alcaraz - long seen as Nadal's heir at the pinnacle of Spanish men's tennis - in Olympics doubles earlier this year.

Alcaraz said being given the opportunity to play with his idol was an "immense gift" and the news of his retirement was "tough to accept". "I was in shock a little bit," added Alcaraz, who heard the news shortly before he lost in the Shanghai Masters quarter-finals. "Losing him, in a certain way, is going to be difficult for us, so I will try to enjoy as much as I can when he's going to play."

From Mallorca kid to the King of Clay

Nadal was aged three when he was introduced to tennis by his uncle Toni, who encouraged him to transition to playing left-handed after seeing how strongly he could hit the ball. He turned professional aged 15 and three years later helped Spain win the 2004 Davis Cup as they beat the United States, with Nadal defeating world number two Andy Roddick.

The following year, he began his dominance of the French Open, beating Argentina's Mariano Puerta in the final. Nadal's five-set win over Federer in the 2008 Wimbledon final - an epic that finished 12 minutes short of five hours - is regarded as one of the best matches in history and one of the pinnacles of their 15-year rivalry.

In between those two finals, he won the 2009 Australian Open for the first time with another five-set victory over Federer, and completed the career Grand Slam at the 2010 US Open. Although he won all four majors, Nadal will forever be synonymous with the French Open, where a metallic statue of him hitting his trademark forehand was built in 2021.

From 2005 to 2014, he won nine of 10 Roland Garros titles and then five of six between 2017 and 2022. In 14 final appearances, he was never taken to five sets, beating Federer in four finals and Djokovic three times.

Of his four French Open losses, Djokovic defeated him twice with Alexander Zverev this year and Robin Soderling in 2009 the other two men to topple him.

Fittingly, his final major title came at the French Open in 2022, two days after his 36th birthday. Nadal's success and longevity is even more remarkable considering the series of longer-term injuries - affecting his elbow, ankle, knee, wrist, back, hip and abdomen - he dealt with throughout. Compatriot Carlos Alcaraz: "From the child who watched you on TV and dreamed of becoming a tennis player, to the one who had the immense gift of playing alongside you at Roland Garros representing Spain in the Olympic Games!"

"Thank you very much for being an example at all levels, your legacy is unrepeatable. I've enjoyed you so much and will miss you so much when you quit after Davis Cup, Rafa!" Jannik Sinner, current men's world number one, said: "It's tough news for all the tennis world. I was very lucky to get to know him and he's an unbelievable person. "He gave to all of us a lot of emotions when we saw him playing."

Coco Gauff, women's world number four, on Instagram: "You are amazing! It's been so incredible to witness your greatness and work ethic and be able to learn from it." Casper Ruud, who lost to Nadal in the 2022 French Open final, on Instagram: "RAFA Forever! Thank you for everything legend."

The French Open's official X account: "14 thanks for the millions of memories!" The ATP Tour's official Instagram account: "There are no words for how this feels, the day we wished would never come. You have given us all the most incredible moments and memories."

The Australian Open's X account: "Legendary memories. You are so loved around the world and here with us in Australia. Grateful for all the unforgettable moments. Gracias, Rafa. For everything!" Wimbledon's official Instagram account: "Thank you for everything, Rafa."

ITF president David Haggerty said: "Rafael Nadal is one of the greatest male tennis players of all time and as sad as it is to hear this news, I would like to congratulate him on his phenomenal career."

## WI beat Bangladesh in T20 World Cup

SHARJAH (AFP): Off-spinner Karishma Ramharack took four wickets as West Indies cantered to an eight-wicket win over Bangladesh on Thursday to strengthen their chances of making it to the semi-finals of the Women's T20 World Cup. Ramharack, 29, struck at regular intervals to help West Indies restrict Bangladesh to a below-par 103-8 off 20 overs in Sharjah. West Indies raced to the target in just 12.5 overs on a slow track in Sharjah.

"It was quite slow early on and I felt like you had to vary your pace as much as possible," said Ramharack, named playboy of the match. "We knew that they have a couple of batters who could hit the ball really well, we just had to stay patient."

Skipper Hayley Matthews gave West Indies a flying start as they raced to 48-0 off the first six overs of power-play. Her quickfire 34 runs came with the help of six fours before she was bowled by pacer Marufa Akter.

Stafanie Taylor retired hurt on 27 but by then West Indies had the game firmly in their control. Deandra Dottin (19 not out) smashed two sixes in the 13th over to seal the key game for her team. Put in to bat, Bangladesh struggled against some disciplined bowling after a promising start.

"I think we had a very good start, but in the middle we played so many dots and then we gave them so many wickets as well," said Bangladesh captain Nigar Sultana. "Their bowlers actually bowled really well in the middle overs, and weren't giving us room to play our shots."

Bangladesh lost opener Shathi Rani (nine) to a quick stumping by Shemaine Campbelle off Ramharack in the fourth over. The bowler struck again in the sixth over when she knocked off the middle stump of Dilara Akter (19) as the batter tried to go for a sweep shot.

Sultana (39) underlined Bangladesh's positive intent with three boundaries in the ninth over off leg-spinner Afy Fletcher.

The in-form Sobhana Mostary looked confident as well, but was done in by Ramharack who had her stumped on 16. Fletcher then took two wickets in two balls to leave Bangladesh reeling on 75-5 in the 15th over. Ramharack picked her fourth wicket when Ritu Moni (10) holed out at deep midwicket, where Chinelle Henry took a fine diving catch.

## Babar Azam working hard to regain form: Tim Nielsen

MULTAN (APP): Pakistan's High-Performance Coach Tim Nielsen said that Babar Azam was working hard to regain his form to perform well for the team.

Talking to the media on Thursday, Nielsen discussed the extra pressure on Pakistan's star batter, Babar Azam. He said that teams were coming prepared against Babar, and they knew where he scored and they had adjusted their plans accordingly.

Despite the pressure, Nielsen was confident that Babar was working hard to regain form. "For a player

of his caliber, it is not about a lack of effort; he is putting in the work."

Reflecting on the challenges of Test cricket and the ongoing series against England, Nielsen emphasized the demanding nature of the format, stating, "In Test cricket, the team that plays well for all five days gets better results."

He commended England's batting efforts, acknowledging their strong performance. "England put up a great display of batting," Nielsen noted, while reiterating that Test cricket

remained the most difficult format of the game.

Praising England's Harry Brook, Nielsen pointed out the young batter's rapid rise. "Brook scoring 300 runs in just 20 Tests is remarkable. The way he batted, gave Pakistan little opportunity to stop him," he added.

On the challenges facing Pakistan, Nielsen revealed that their main spinner, Abrar Ahmed, was unable to bowl due to illness. "Our lead spinner Abrar was in the hospital, which was unfortunate," he maintained.

## Irfan Mehsood achieves 2 more Guinness World Records

ISLAMABAD (APP): Pakistani Irfan Mehsood, the first martial artist to achieve Guinness World Records in shortest time in the history has grabbed two more world records.

Mehsood said he broke two more records of 35 squats in one minute with 180 pounds breaking the previous record of 29 squats and the record of 89 jumping jacks by doing 97 jumping jacks in one minute with a weight of 100 pounds.

Mehsood holds the Guinness World Records

for the heaviest weights of 100, 60, and 80 pounds and has so far broken Guinness World Records of 17 countries.

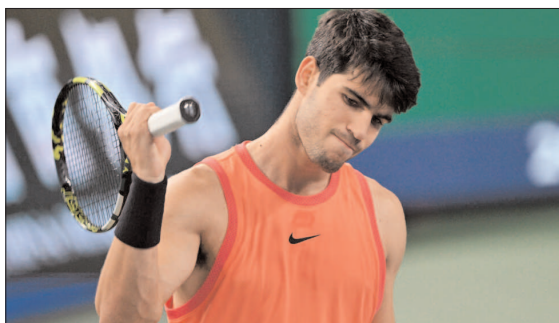
Meanwhile, Mehsood has achieved 100 Guinness World Records in less than 8 years including the deadlift by lifting 40 Pounds for 3 minutes and 20 seconds. Mehsood lifted 70 kg weight with his toe and set a new world record.

"I have set 46 Guinness World Records for the most world-level pay in the push-ups category and 31 records with a weight of

100 pounds," he said.

Mehsood said he has so far held the world record of 100 lbs, 80 lbs, 60 lbs, and 40 lbs. "I have set records for pushups, squats, jumping jacks, step-ups, knee strikes, elbow strikes, side jumps, high jumps, star champs, etc. I have broken world records of 16 countries so far including America, Great Britain, India, China, Norway, Germany, France, Finland, Philippines, Spain, Italy, Lebanon, Egypt, Iraq, and Syria," he said.

## Alcaraz knocked out of Shanghai Masters by Machac



Shanghai (AFP): World number two Carlos Alcaraz has been knocked out of the Shanghai Masters in straight sets by 33rd-ranked Tomas Machac, losing 7-6 (7/5), 7-5 on Thursday.

The Czech will face world number one Jannik Sinner in the semi-finals, after a surprisingly straightforward 6-1, 6-4 victory over an injured Daniil Medvedev earlier.

Machac edged out Alcaraz in a closely fought first-set tiebreak after neither player was able to break their opponent's serve. The four-time Grand Slam champion, who had said before the match that he was wary of Machac's speed, appeared to be struggling at the beginning of the second set.

The Spaniard looked like

he might make a comeback when he broke in the sixth game to level.

However, Machac powered back and broke Alcaraz again in the 11th game to claim the shock victory and progress to the semi-finals. Alcaraz said he was "a little bit disappointed about today's loss."

"I really wanted to go further, to play against Jannik, but that's tennis I guess. I just have to accept it," he said post-match.

"I felt like I was playing against top five — his level was so high," Alcaraz said of Machac. "It was unbelievable, it was crazy for me." Twenty-three-year-old Machac said he had "no other options" when playing against Alcaraz.

"I have to play this well to beat him," he said after

the match.

Sinner, who Alcaraz beat in the China Open final last week, looked strong from the beginning of his match against Medvedev.

In the first set, which lasted only 25 minutes, the Italian broke Medvedev in the second and sixth games to murmurs of surprise from the crowd. The Russian kept holding his shoulder, which he had said the day before had "some niggles", and received medical attention several times during the match.

"He didn't play at his best," said Sinner, acknowledging the injury. "But this can happen and I took advantage of that today. I felt like I was playing some good tennis, especially the first set, trying to keep going in the second set. It was a good performance from my side." This was the fifth time Medvedev and Sinner have met in the latter stages of tournaments this year.

Sinner beat Medvedev in the semi-finals in Miami, the quarter-finals of the US Open, and in the Australian Open final, but the Russian ended the Italian's hopes in the last eight at Wimbledon in an epic five-set battle.

## Spinner Abrar falls ill during test match

MULTAN (APP): On the fourth day of first Test match between Pakistan and England in Multan, Pakistan's leg-spinner Abrar Ahmed fell ill.

According to Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB), Abrar complained of fever and body aches early Thursday morning. He was taken to a local private hospital for an initial medical check-up. Doctors conducted essential tests, including blood work, and have begun treatment. The PCB stated that further updates regarding Abrar Ahmed's condition would be shared once his test results were available.

It was noteworthy that in the first innings of ongoing Multan Test, Abrar bowled 35 overs, conceding 174 runs without taking a wicket. Due to his illness, he was absent from the field on the fourth day of the match. Fans and the team were eagerly awaiting for news of his recovery.



## Nooh shines in Commonwealth Powerlifting C'ships

ISLAMABAD (APP): Pakistan's acclaimed weightlifter, Nooh Dastgir Butt, made a remarkable international debut at the Commonwealth Powerlifting Classic and Equipped Championships, securing gold in the Ascot event.

The Pride of Performance Award winner and Commonwealth Games gold medalist lifted an impressive 370kg in his maiden powerlifting competition, etching his name in history as Pakistan's first powerlifting gold medalist, said a press release.

It is a historic moment for Pakistan, as Nooh won the gold medal in his very first participation. Nooh is set to compete in the Bench Press and Deadlift categories, where he is favoured to win two additional gold medals and claim the overall championship title in the 120kg+ category.

Pakistani nation is urged to support Nooh with their prayers and well-wishes as he strives to bring home a total of four gold medals.





## In brief

### Police issue challan slips to 7269 PSVs

RAWALPINDI (APP): Rawalpindi district police have issued challan slips to 7269 public service vehicles (PSVs) and impounded 904 during 45 days, said a police spokesman here on Thursday. He informed that Rawalpindi district police launched a campaign on the directives of City Police Officer (CPO) Rawalpindi, Syed Khalid Hamdani against unfit PSVs. He said that during the campaign, police challaned 7269 and imposed fines amounting to over Rs 7.9 million on the rules violators. He said that police were taking action in accordance with the law against unfit PSVs, checking route permits and licenses of the drivers. Legal action was taken against 640 drivers for driving vehicles without licenses, he added. The licenses of 27 drivers found guilty of negligence were cancelled, he said adding, 47 cases were also registered against drivers and the owners of public service vehicles.

### Police arrest two bike lifters

RAWALPINDI (APP): Police have arrested two bike lifters and street criminals and recovered 10 stolen motorcycles and other items from their possession, said a Police spokesman here on Thursday. He informed that a team under the supervision of SHO, Race Course Police Station managed to net two bike lifters namely Arslan and Shah Rukh and recovered 10 stolen motorcycles and other items from their possession. A case has been registered against the accused while further investigation is underway. Superintendent of Police, Potohar, Nasir Nawaz said the accomplices and facilitators of the accused would also be sent behind bars.

### Blood donation camp organized

ISLAMABAD (APP): The National University of Modern Languages (NUML), Islamabad, in a joint effort with the Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) wing, Faculty of Management Sciences, and the Directorate of Student Affairs, successfully organized a blood donation camp in collaboration with the Pakistan Red Crescent Hospital. The event witnessed an overwhelming response from students, faculty members, and staff, who generously donated blood to support patients suffering from Thalassemia, Dengue, and other life-threatening conditions. The Director General of NUML, Brigadier Shahzad Munir, along with other senior officials, visited the camp and personally met with the donors. He expressed his admiration for the spirit of service demonstrated by the students and lauded their strong sense of social responsibility and humanity. "Blood donation is a noble act that can save countless lives. I am proud of our students for stepping up and playing their part in supporting those in need," said Brigadier Munir. He also emphasized the critical importance of regular blood donations in addressing medical emergencies and supporting vulnerable patients across the country. To recognize their selfless contribution, certificates were distributed among the donors. The event stood as a testament to the NUML's dedication to serving society and upholding values of compassion and care. Additionally, this blood donation camp is part of NUML's ongoing efforts to promote social responsibility and serve the community through meaningful initiatives.



ISLAMABAD: Interior Minister Mohsin Naqvi overseeing the preparation of SCO Summit in Islamabad City. —APP Photo

## Mushaal urges India to honor Kashmiri aspirations, end occupation

ISLAMABAD (APP): Mushaal Hussein Mullick, the wife of Yasin Malik, Chairman of the Jammu and Kashmir Liberation Front Thursday made a heartfelt appeal to India to listen to the voices of the Kashmiri people and emphasized that the politicians in Indian Illegally Occupied Jammu and Kashmir (IIOJK) are mere puppets who misrepresent the situation during elections.

Talking to PTV news channel, Mushaal expressed concerns over attempts to alter the demographics of IIOJK, which is a critical issue for the Kashmiri people. She has urged the international community, includ-

ing the United Nations and human rights organizations to intervene and save the life of senior Hurriyat leaders in jails, who are facing a potential death sentence.

Mushaal Mullick has strongly criticized politicians in Indian Illegally Occupied Jammu and Kashmir (IIOJK) for their deceitful tactics during election campaigns.

She pointed out that they exploited the name of Yasin Malik, a prominent Kashmiri leader and promised to revoke Article 35A, only to make a U-turn after winning the elections and advocating for a cordial relationship with Delhi instead. Mushaal condemned these

politicians as "puppets" who misused their election platforms to deceive the people of Kashmir.

She highlighted that the low voter turnout in Kashmir was a clear indication of the people's distrust in the electoral process and the politicians who fail to represent their true aspirations. Responding to a query, she said Mushaal emphasized that the Kashmiri people reject Indian governance, stating categorically that no Kashmiri considers themselves Indian.

She condemned the puppet assemblies in Indian Illegally Occupied Jammu and Kashmir (IIOJK) as deceitful mechanisms designed to

manipulate the Kashmiri people. She urged the international community to break their silence and take action against these human rights violations.

Mushaal Hussein Mullick has also strongly criticized politicians in Indian Illegally Occupied Jammu and Kashmir (IIOJK) for their deceitful tactics during election campaigns. She emphasized that these candidates resort to spreading false information and presenting distorted images to manipulate public opinion.

This is a clear attempt to mislead the people of Kashmir and undermine their right to genuine representation, she added.

## Empowering youth can transform nation's fate: Syedaal

ISLAMABAD (APP): Deputy Chairman of the Senate, Syedaal Khan said on Thursday that the youth of any country are a valuable asset, and empowering them can transform the nation's fate.

He expressed these views during a meeting with Senator Haji Hidayatullah Khan, Chairman of the Senate Standing Committee on Narcotics Control, Senator Abdul Shakoor Khan, Chairman of the Senate Committee on Government Assurances,

and other officials.

He said, that the government is taking measures to prevent drug abuse, particularly in educational institutions nationwide. The Senate Standing Committee on Narcotics Control, in collaboration with the Ministry of Narcotics Control, is developing an effective strategy to protect the youth from drugs and harness their potential as valuable assets for the country.

He added that the current government is implementing all possible measures to provide relief to the public.

The Prime Minister of Pakistan is actively promoting trade, investment, and international engagement, as evidenced by events such as the Shanghai Cooperation Organization Conference, the All Parties Conference, and the visit of a high-level Saudi delegation, which showcase the government's successes.

He urged all political parties to support the government's efforts for the country's betterment and prosperity, enabling Pakistan to move toward progress.



ISLAMABAD: An art enthusiast keenly observing the exhibits during the inauguration of "PASSAGES OF LIGHT," an exhibition featuring paintings by Sri Lankan artists Mueen Saheed and Bilaal Raji Saheed. —APP Photo

## QAU makes debut in Times World University rankings

ISLAMABAD (APP): Quaid-i-Azam University (QAU) proudly holds its No. 1 position as Pakistan's premier institution, securing a place among the top 400 universities globally in the 2025 Times World University Ranking. Consistently illuminating the realm of academia with its unparalleled success, QAU not only attained the impressive top 400 position in Times world university ranking but also clinched the 315th spot in the global QS world university rankings, solidifying its standing as Pakistan's number one university.

Prof. Dr. Niaz Ahmad Akhtar, the Vice Chancellor of Quaid-i-Azam University, extends his heartfelt congratulations on this momentous achievement, attributing it to the unwavering dedication and excellence of the faculty, students, staff, alumni and ranking committee. Despite encountering financial hurdles and deficits, QAU continues its upward trajectory in rankings year after year.

It is crucial that Govt and HEC should allocate specialized resources and funds to nurture the growth of our nation's foremost institutions. Remarkably, Quaid-i-Azam University emerges as a lighthouse of academic brilliance, uniquely excelling across esteemed ranking agencies such as Times World Ranking.

## Chinese delegation discusses security issues with planning minister

ISLAMABAD (APP): A Chinese delegation, led by China Power Resources Chairman, Zhong Huixiang and Port Qasim Project Chairman, He Shiyong on Wednesday met with Federal Minister for Planning, Development and Special Initiatives, Professor Ahsan Iqbal.

According to press release issued by planning ministry, the delegation members discussed the recent attack on Chinese

personnel in Karachi and security issues for Chinese workers.

They expressed deep concern over the tragic loss of two Chinese workers in the Karachi incident.

Ahsan Iqbal condoled the deaths, offering condolences and sympathy from the Pakistani government. He assured the delegation of Pakistan's commitment to prioritizing Chinese citizens' security.

Iqbal informed the delegation that local authorities were investigating the incident and those responsible will face justice soon. He emphasized that any security lapses will not be tolerated, and measures are being taken to strengthen security protocols.

Both sides reaffirmed their commitment to successfully completing CPEC projects and enhancing bilateral cooperation.

## Ayaz highlights Islam's philosophy of equality for everyone

ISLAMABAD (APP): Speaker National Assembly Sardar Ayaz Sadiq Thursday said that Islam stressed upon the provision of all basic rights to girl child irrespective of gender.

While referring to the profound sayings of the Holy Prophet Muhammad (PBUH), who advocated for empowerment of women and declared them as blessings from Almighty Allah, he said that the teachings of Islam urged for the protection and welfare of girl children. He said the teachings of Islam provide unequivocal rights to women, including the right to inheritance of property and access to education, which underscores their dignity and status in society.

He also highlighted the essential rights and privileges granted to girl children through religion and culture, particularly within Islam. Ayaz Sadiq expressed these views, in his message, on the eve of the 'International Day of the Girl Child', which will be celebrated

with the theme of 'Girls' vision for the future', on October 11 under the auspices of the United Nations.

He urged the nation to treat girls and boys indiscriminately while stating that the women comprise half of the country's population and their empowerment is crucial for socio-economic progress of the country. He said that girls should be considered as integral for future success because their contributions and vision completes the recipe for sustainable growth and progress.

Ayaz Sadiq reiterated that providing equal opportunities to girls, especially educational opportunities, is vital for the well-being of future generations. He reaffirmed the importance of inheritance laws and social safety nets designed for women and girls, stating that our society, especially the Muslim Ummah, honors the girl child, providing her with social and financial comforts alongside necessary protection.

"Our culture and religion encourage us to consider every girl child as an integral member of society," he added. The Speaker emphasized the provisions of the Constitution of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan, stated that every citizen including children are equal before law.

He said that the Constitution of Pakistan, without any gender discrimination, guarantees the right of children to inheritance of property & right to free & compulsory education from the ages of 5 to 16.

Ayaz Sadiq said that the Child Marriage Restraint (Amendment) Act, 2016 is a testament to the commitment of the Parliament of Pakistan to protect children against forced and early marriages. He reiterated that the formation of the Parliamentary Caucus on Child Rights in the National Assembly demonstrates the Parliament's commitment to enhancing the well-being and protection of the rights of children in the country.

## Pakistan girls empowerment forum launched

ISLAMABAD (APP): Pakistan Girl Guides Association National Headquarters on Thursday organized an event to launch "Pakistan Girls Empowerment Forum-Vision of the Future" to mark the International Day of the Girl. As many as 500 students participated in the event.

The event was organized in collaboration with UNICEF Pakistan, the Ministry of Human Rights, and the National Commission on the Rights of the Child. During the event, Girls experienced activities, regarding Health, Nutrition, WASH (Water, Sanitation, and Hygiene), Emotional Wellbeing, and Leadership. 70 Girl Empowerment Champions across Pakistan experienced these activities and replicated them with the rest of the Guides. Mrs. Nuzhat Sadiq, Member of National Assembly was the Chief Guest of the Event.

She represented the Prime Minister of Pakistan, Mrs. Maria Maud Sabri, National Commissioner Pakistan Girl Guides Association welcomed her and the other Guests. She briefed them about the program and activities of the Guiding. She said that Guiding is preparing leaders for tomorrow. While experiencing the Guide program, the girls learn to step

forward whenever there is a need. Mrs. Maria Maud Sabri also informed the guests about the current programs run by the Girl Guides Association which include Financial Literacy, Badge against Child Domestic Labor, Project Stay Safe, etc.

She also briefed them about the health campaigns carried out by the Guides including Breast Cancer Awareness, Prevention of TB, and Say No to Tobacco. Ms. Mehek Naem Member Punjab (NCRC) and Ms. Sharmela Rassool, Deputy Country Representative UNICEF were among the speakers. Guides members and representatives of government departments and other organizations attended.

A Panel Discussion regarding "Inspiring the girls, sharing of experiences by role models" was part of the event. Mrs. Mehaz Akbar Aziz Former Member National Assembly, Ms. Malika Noor Member of the Pakistan Women's National Football Team, and Ms. Fahmida Khan Gender and Development Specialist, UNICEF were the panelists. Their thought-provoking talk inspired and helped the girls to believe in themselves, dream big, and aspire for unconventional roles in the future.

The Chief Guest Mrs.

Nuzhat Sadiq observed the panel discussion. She emphasized the need to develop Leadership skills in girls and appreciated the work Guides and Pakistan Girl Guides Association are doing in this regard. She said that all girls have the right to a safe, educated, healthy life. If effectively supported during adolescence, girls can change the world as the empowered girls of today and as tomorrow's workers, mothers, entrepreneurs, mentors, household heads, and political leaders.

Realizing the power of adolescent girls upholds their rights today and promises a more equitable and prosperous future. She said that the Girl Guides Association has been a transformative force, nurturing the potential of girls and young women, and equipping them with the skills, confidence, and resilience needed to lead and inspire. Through their tireless efforts, they have created a safe and supportive environment where girls can thrive, dream big, and achieve their fullest potential. During the event, Girl Champions expressed their vision for the future through painting. A vision statement derived from the paintings was handed over to the Chief Guest to be presented to the Prime Minister of Pakistan.

## Committee advocates for enhanced research, quality standards and coastal erosion solutions

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Senate Standing Committee on Science and Technology in a meeting held here Thursday advocated for enhanced research, quality standards and coastal erosion solutions.

The meeting, presided over by Senator Kamil Ali Agha, held a comprehensive discussion on the implementation status of the recommendations made during its meeting on September 25. The Joint Secretary of the Ministry of Science and Technology updated the Committee members, informing them that all funds for the Science Expo have been refunded to the respective firms and organizations.

Secondly, regarding the PSQA's submission of a report on the number of cases where fines were imposed, the Chair suggested providing a comprehensive report on the depart-

ment's current activities.

He expressed displeasure, stating that if the department remains inactive, it would be better to shut it down. Senator Kamil Ali Agha added that the PSQA was established in 1996, and after 28 years, no consideration has been given to the total expenditure on 31 inspectors. He also inquired about their remunerations and suggested digitizing the entire system.

Regarding the compliance report for standards and quality assurance in the cement sector, the Chair recommended that the Attorney General may handle it. Senator Kamil Ali Agha commented that this is not merely a matter of money; it concerns construction materials. He emphasized that the government should ensure the protection of quality. Concerning the report on the restructuring process of STEDEC

as IRADA, Senator Kamil Ali Agha also recommended expediting the process of restructuring STEDEC as IRADA.

The Committee held an in-depth discussion on the roles, functions, and performance of ongoing projects at the National Institute of Oceanography (NIO) and the Council for Works and Housing Research (CWHR). Representatives from NIO also highlighted its international footprint, collaboration, and government-to-government (G2G) projects. The Chairman appreciated NIO's achievements and recommended further expediting its efforts.

During a detailed briefing by CWHR, the Chairman recommended the restoration of multi-storey buildings and emphasized that during rightsizing, employee rights must not be violated. Senator Kamil Agha also

stressed the importance of conducting laboratory tests, noting that the quality of construction materials and water in affected areas is crucial for the future of property buyers.

Citing the situation in Faisal Town, the Chairman pointed out that despite being developed and populated, the area suffers from water scarcity and poor material quality. He further recommended that testing facilities should be easily accessible and not located far away. The Committee discussed the status of sea intrusion and erosion along the coastal belt with NIO and its allied agencies.

The Chairman emphasized the need for solutions to address erosion, noting that oceanography plays a crucial role, especially as climate change and environmental degradation worsen over time.

He further stressed that the unchecked dumping of filth into seawater is causing significant damage, and unless this issue is properly monitored and addressed, it could lead to severe consequences. Senator Nadeem Ahmed Bhutto highlighted that both Sindh and Balochistan are directly impacted. Acknowledging this, the Chairman added that the entire country is being affected by these issues, and close monitoring is essential.

The NIO representative mentioned that work on the retaining wall has already begun and specifically noted that the Sur Bunder area of Gwadar is being protected from sea intrusion by the retaining wall. During a detailed presentation on the implementation status of the National Science Technology Innovation Policy, 2022, the Secretary of the

Ministry of Science and Technology recommended convening a joint meeting with the Higher Education Commission (HEC) due to the overlapping functions of both departments.

The Chairman informed the Committee that one of the key reasons for the failure of our departments is their frequent shutdown, while internationally, research departments are highly valued. He further suggested that private universities and all sectors must prioritize research, with efforts focused on motivating the younger generation to engage in it.

The meeting was attended by Senator Husna Bano, Senator Dr. Afnan Ullah Khan Senator Nadeem Ahmed Bhutto, Senator Muhammad Aslam Abro, the Secretary of the Ministry of Science and Technology, and senior officials from the concerned department.









ASHGABAT: Deputy Prime Minister of Turkmenistan, Batyr Amanov welcoming President Asif Ali Zardari upon his arrival at airport.

## Bilawal, Nawaz discuss judicial reforms

F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: Chairman Pakistan Peoples Party, Bilawal Bhutto Zardari, arrived at Punjab House today and met with Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) leader Mian Nawaz Sharif to discuss the prevailing political situation in the country.

During the meeting, Chairman Bilawal Bhutto Zardari and Mian Nawaz Sharif focused on the importance of implementing the Charter of Democracy (CoD). Chairman Bilawal proposed various amendments related to constitutional courts and judicial reforms, emphasising the need for political consensus on these vital changes.

"I hope that the proposed constitutional amendments are approved with the consensus of all political parties," Chairman Bilawal

Bhutto Zardari said during his discussion with Nawaz Sharif. In response, Nawaz Sharif assured, "We stand with every proposal of the PPP that aims for the betterment of the country."

Both leaders agreed on pursuing common goals aimed at fostering development and prosperity in the country, and expressed their determination to guide Pakistan out of its current political and economic crises. Chairman Bilawal Bhutto Zardari reaffirmed the Pakistan Peoples Party's commitment to creating an atmosphere of consensus to ensure the successful implementation of the Charter of Democracy. He further criticised the uncivil political behavior prevalent in Pakistan, blaming it for the ongoing political chaos.

"Constitutional amendments are not only neces-

sary but mandatory to ensure swift justice for the common man," Chairman Bilawal stated. He emphasised that Pakistan must establish the supremacy of Parliament through judicial reforms to move towards the next stages of development. "Countries only progress when there is a balance of power, and we must address past mistakes through judicial reforms," he added.

Chairman Bilawal was accompanied by PPP leaders including Yusuf Raza Gilani, Raja Pervez Ashraf, Khurshid Shah, Naveed Qamar, Raza Rabbani, Jameel Soomro, Sherry Rehman, and Murtaza Wahab. On behalf of PML-N, Mian Nawaz Sharif was joined by Ahsan Iqbal, Irfan Siddiqui, Parvez Rasheed, Rana Sanaullah, Maryam Aurangzeb, and Murtaza Abbasi, among others.

## President arrives Ashgabat

ASHGABAT (INP): President Asif Ali Zardari on Thursday arrived here for a two-day visit to Turkmenistan.

Upon arrival at Ashgabat Airport, the President was welcomed by Deputy Chairman of the Cabinet of Ministers/Deputy Prime Minister of Turkmenistan Batyr Amanov. On the occasion, the president was presented with traditional bread and flowers.

President Zardari will address the International Forum on "Interrelation of Times and Civilizations – Basis of Peace and Development" being held in Ashgabat. The International Forum is being held on October 10-11 to mark the 300th birth anniversary of Magtymguly Faragi, a great Turkmen thinker, poet and philosopher. On the sidelines of the Forum, the president is also expected to hold bilateral meetings with the Turkmen leadership.

## 'Reduction in power tariff top priority'

F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: Minister for Power Division Sardar Awais Ahmed Khan Leghari on Thursday said that reduction in power tariff and provision of electricity to the people at affordable price were government's top priorities.

Addressing at press conference here, the minister said that various pragmatic measures were being taken to slash electricity prices in order to provide maximum relief to the masses. He said the electricity price should reduce Rs 10 per unit for which agreements with Independent Power Producers (IPPs) were mutually revised and reassessed.

He said the prime minister set up a National Task Force to bring reforms in the power sector. Five IPPs were identified and negotiation were started with them, he added. He said every section of the agreements were thoroughly studied and then mutually reached at an agreement to terminate the power purchase agreements with 5 IPPs. The Minister said that it would help save around Rs 60-70 billion annually and cumulative benefit of Rs 411 billion to the national kitty.

He appreciated the owners of five IPPs to terminate the contracts in larger national interest. The Chief of Army Staff (COAS) also supported the National Task Force, he added. He said that the agreement would be materialized in next few days.

## Speaker adjourns PA proceedings

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: Speaker Babar Salim Swati has convened the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Assembly session for October 14, Monday, at 3 PM instead of Friday. This decision follows the adjournment of the previous assembly session, which was initially postponed until October 11, Friday, at 3 PM. The upcoming session will now take place on the newly scheduled date, said a notification issued here on Thursday.

damaging lighting and a relay station." UNIFIL warned the warring sides of their "obligations to ensure the safety and security of UN personnel and property, and to respect the inviolability of UN premises at all times."

The force is "following up with the IDF" over the incident and is present in southern Lebanon to "support a return to stability," the statement said. Over the past 24 hours, Israel also damaged Lebanese army sites as an Israeli bulldozer demolished an observation tower belonging to the fifth brigade at Naqoura.

The tower was built about five years ago by the army as part of a series of sites along the border in the western sector. Two residential buildings containing a scientific library collapsed in the Haret Hreik area of Beirut's southern suburb following a fire caused by airstrikes on Thursday. — Arab News

# Israeli airstrike kills 28 sheltering in Gaza school

## 11 dead in Israeli strikes on Beirut

BEIRUT (AFP): Lebanon's health ministry said Thursday at least 11 people had been killed in Israeli strikes on Beirut — the third such attack on the capital since Israel escalated its air campaign last month. Israel has repeatedly pounded southern Beirut suburbs, the bastion of Lebanon's Hezbollah movement, for more than two weeks but strikes have rarely targeted the city center. "The Israeli enemy's attacks on the capital Beirut this evening killed, according to a preliminary toll, 11 people and injured 48 others," the ministry said in a statement. Lebanon's National News Agency (NNA) said the strikes hit the densely populated neighborhoods of Nweiri and Basta. "The first strike in Beirut targeted the third floor of an eight-story building" in the Nweiri area, and a second strike hit "a four-story building... in Al-Basta Al-Fouqa, which completely collapsed," the NNA.

An AFP photographer at the site of the strike in the Basta area said two old buildings had collapsed, while the windows of surrounding homes had been blown out with the force of the explosion. Civil defense members and local residents were attempting to pull survivors out of the mountain of rubble, with some of them carried away on stretchers. Firefighters were working to put out a blaze in a "residential building" hit in the Nweiri area, with residents being evacuated from the upper floors using a ladder, NNA reported. Immediately after the raids, AFP live footage showed two plumes of smoke billowing in between densely-packed buildings. Earlier this month, Israel carried out a deadly air raid in Beirut, hitting an emergency services rescue facility run by Hezbollah, killing seven workers, the service said. On September 30, an Israeli drone strike on a building in Beirut's busy Cola district killed three members of the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine (PFLP), the leftist armed group said. Lebanon's Iran-backed Hezbollah movement and its foe Israel have been exchanging near-daily cross-border fire for nearly a year in fallout from the Gaza war. But since September 23, Israel has escalated its air strikes on targets in Lebanon, killing more than 1,200 people and forced more than one million to flee their homes, according to official figures.

the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, said an OCHA-World Health Organization team could not reach Kamal Adwan Hospital despite having secured a green light from the Israeli military. "The team was forced to wait at the holding point for hours, and ultimately, the mission had to be aborted. And that's not an unusual practice," Rajasingham told a UN meeting. "In September, less than 10 percent of coordinated missions to the north (of Gaza) were facilitated by the Israeli authorities."

"The essential conditions for effective aid operations are severely lacking or entirely absent," he added. Israeli bombardment near Kamal Adwan Hospital has already caused some damage to the facility, medics said. They said they know of many dead bodies lying on the roads outside the hospital because of Israeli fire. The Israeli military told residents of Jabalia and nearby areas to head to humanitarian-designated zones in southern Gaza, but Palestinian and UN officials say there are no safe places to flee to in the densely populated enclave.

Philippe Lazzarini, the head of the

UN Palestinian refugee agency UNRWA, told the UN Security Council: "Hundreds of thousands of people are again being pushed to move to the south, where living conditions are intolerable." Residents said Israeli forces had encircled Jabalia and ordered them to leave through one corridor. They said troops were interrogating those leaving and making arrests, while anyone trying to leave via a different route gets fired at.

Hamas and ally Islamic Jihad said they continued to fight Israeli forces with anti-tank rockets and mortar bombs. The Israeli military said it killed dozens more militants, seized arms and dismantled militant infrastructure in the north. Israel began its offensive after Hamas-led militants carried out a cross-border attack on southern Israeli communities on Oct. 7, 2023, killing about 1,200 people and taking about 250 hostages, according to Israeli tallies. More than 42,000 Palestinians have been killed in the Israeli offensive, the Gaza health ministry says. Most of Gaza's 2.3 million people have been displaced and much of the enclave has been laid to waste.

## Hurricane Milton leaves 10 dead

ST. PETERSBURG, Florida (Reuters): Hurricane Milton plowed into the Atlantic Ocean on Thursday after cutting a destructive path across Florida that spawned tornadoes, killed at least 10 people and left millions without power, but the storm did not trigger the catastrophic surge of seawater that was feared.

Governor Ron DeSantis said the state had avoided the "worst-case scenario," though he cautioned the damage was still significant. The Tampa Bay area appeared to sidestep the storm surge that had prompted the most dire warnings. US Homeland Security Secretary Alejandro Mayorkas said at a White House briefing the government had reports of at least 10 deaths from Milton, adding it appeared they were caused by tornadoes.

In St. Lucie County on Florida's east coast, a spate of tornadoes killed five people, including at least two in the senior-living Spanish Lakes Communities, county spokesperson Erick Gill said. Search-and-rescue teams there are combing through hard-hit areas, including a mobile-home park. There were 19 confirmed tornadoes in Florida as of 8 p.m. Wednesday, about the time Milton made landfall, DeSantis said. Some 45 tornadoes were reported throughout the day, mostly in the central and eastern parts of the state, the National Weather Service said.

More than 3 million homes and businesses in Florida were without power on Thursday morning, according to PowerOutage.us. At least some had already been waiting days for power to be restored after Hurricane Helene hit the area two weeks ago. Milton shredded the fabric roof of Tropicana Field, the stadium of the Tampa Bay Rays baseball team in St. Petersburg, but there were no reported injuries. The ballpark was a staging area for responders, with thousands of cots set up on the field.

In the Tampa area, the storm toppled trees, threw debris across roadways and downed power lines, video footage from local news showed. Some neighborhoods were flooded, but the extent of the damage will not be known until crews can assess the destruction, Tampa Mayor Jane Castor said at a morning news conference.

## 'Stop Israel from bombing Iran's oil sites'

DUBAI (Reuters): Gulf states are lobbying Washington to stop Israel from attacking Iran's oil sites because they are concerned their own oil facilities could come under fire from Tehran's proxies if the conflict escalates, three Gulf sources told Reuters.

As part of their attempts to avoid being caught in the crossfire, Gulf states including Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates and Qatar are also refusing to let Israel fly over their airspace for any attack on Iran and have conveyed this to Washington, the three sources close to government circles said. Israel has promised Iran will pay for its missile attack last week while Tehran has said any retaliation would be met with vast destruction, raising fears of a wider war in the region that could suck in the United States.

The moves by the Gulf states come after a diplomatic push by non-Arab Shi'ite Iran to persuade its Sunni Gulf neighbours to use their influence with Washington amid rising concerns Israel could target Iran's oil production facilities. During meetings this week, Iran warned Saudi Arabia it could not guarantee the safety of the Gulf kingdom's oil facilities if Israel were given any assistance in carrying out an attack, a senior Iranian official and an Iranian diplomat told Reuters.

Ali Shihabi, a Saudi analyst close to the Saudi royal court, said: "The Iranians have stated: If the Gulf states open up their airspace to Israel, that would be an act of war." The diplomat said Tehran had sent a clear message to Riyadh that its allies in countries such as Iraq or Yemen might respond if there was any regional support for Israel against Iran.

A potential Israeli strike was the focus of talks on Wednesday between Saudi de facto ruler, Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman, and Iranian Foreign Minister Abbas Araqchi, who was on a Gulf tour to rally support, Gulf and Iranian sources said. The Iranian minister's visit, along with Saudi-American communications at defence ministry level, are part of a coordinated effort to address the crisis, a Gulf

source close to government circles told Reuters.

A person in Washington familiar with the discussions confirmed that Gulf officials had been in touch with US counterparts to express concern about the potential scope of Israel's expected retaliation. The White House declined comment when asked whether Gulf governments had asked Washington to ensure Israel's response was measured. US President Joe Biden and Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu spoke on Wednesday about the Israeli retaliation in a call both sides described as positive.

Jonathan Panikoff, former deputy US national intelligence officer on the Middle East and now at the Atlantic Council think-tank in Washington said: "Gulf states' anxiety is likely to be a key talking point with Israeli counterparts in trying to convince Israel to undertake a carefully calibrated response." The Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries, OPEC, which is de facto led by Saudi Arabia, has enough spare oil capacity to make up for any loss of Iranian supply if an Israeli retaliation knocked out some of the country's facilities.

But much of that spare capacity is in the Gulf region so if oil facilities in Saudi Arabia or the UAE, for example, were targeted too, the world could face an oil supply problem. Saudi Arabia has been wary of an Iranian strike on its oil plants since a 2019 attack on its Aramco oilfield shut down over 5% of global oil supply. Iran denied involvement. Riyadh has had a rapprochement with Tehran in recent years, but trust remains an issue. Bahrain, Kuwait, Qatar, Saudi Arabia and the UAE all host US military facilities or troops.

Concerns over oil facilities and the potential for a wider regional conflict were also central to talks between Emirati officials and their US counterparts, said another Gulf source. In 2022, the Iran-aligned Houthis in Yemen fired missiles and drones at oil refuelling trucks near an oil refinery owned by UAE's state oil firm ADNOC and claimed the attack.



ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Information and Broadcasting, Attaullah Tarar talking to media persons.