

PTI announces protest demo
F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: PTI announced another protest demonstration at Islamabad's D-Chowk on October 15, the day when SCO Summit is set to kick-off. The announcement was made after PTI's political committee meeting. Sheikh Waqas Akram, the party's central information secretary, posted on X that a 'powerful' protest would be held on October 15 at D-Chowk in Islamabad.



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Zardari, Putin vow to strengthen ties

ASHGABAT: President Asif Ali Zardari and his Russian counterpart Vladimir Putin held an informal meeting on the sidelines of International Forum on "Interrelation of Times and Civilizations - Basis of Peace and Development" at Ashgabat in Turkmenistan on Friday.

During the meeting, both the Presidents underlined the need of further strengthening bilateral ties. The two sides exchanged best wishes and pleasant words for each other.

Earlier in the day, President Asif Ali Zardari held meeting with the President of Turkmenistan Serdar Berdimuhamedov and National Leader of the Turkmen People and Chairman of Peoples Council of Turkmenistan Gurbanguly Berdimuhamedov in Ashgabat. Pakistan and Turkmenistan have desired to strengthen their bilateral ties in all spheres especially trade and connectivity.

The meetings discussed entire gamut of bilateral relations. Asif Ali Zardari reiterated invitations to the Turkmen President and National Leader to visit Pakistan. President Zardari also addressed an international forum held here in the Turkmen capital, where he stressed an enhanced focus on the promotion of regional connectivity as well as cultural and economic collaboration in the region.

The president, addressing the forum on "Interrelation of Times and Civilizations - Basis for Peace and Development" said that Pakistan and Turkmenistan shared a deep-rooted

bond of brotherhood which was built on mutual respect and commonalities of faith and a shared vision for a better and peaceful future. The event, held to mark the 300th birth anniversary of Magtymguly Faragi, a great Turkmen thinker, poet and philosopher, was also attended by several regional leaders.

Putin meets Pezeshkian amid spiralling Middle East violence: Russian President Vladimir Putin has met Iran's new president as concerns grow over escalating attacks between Israel and Iran along with its network of aligned armed groups. Putin and Iranian President Masoud Pezeshkian discussed the situation in the Middle East on the sidelines of a regional meeting in Turkmenistan on Friday, Russian state media reported.

They met before their two countries are expected to sign a strategic partnership agreement. Pezeshkian said on Friday that he hoped the agreement could be finalised at the BRICS (Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa) summit, which Putin invited him to, in Russia on October 22-24. During their meeting, Putin told Pezeshkian that Moscow's and Tehran's positions on international affairs were often "very close", Russian state news agency TASS reported.

"Relations with Iran are a priority for us. They are developing very successfully," Putin said. Iranian news agency IRNA also quoted Pezeshkian as sharing a similar sentiment: "Economically and culturally, our communications are being strength-

ened day by day and becoming more robust." Pezeshkian also spoke about Israel's "savage attacks" in Lebanon, adding that Israel should "stop killing innocent people" in the region and accused the United States and Europe of backing its actions.

The Israeli military has sent ground troops into southern Lebanon and continues to bombard the country as it battles the Lebanese armed group Hezbollah, which is aligned with Tehran. Russia has also previously condemned Israel for targeting civilian areas during its wars in Lebanon and Gaza.

Relations between Russia and Iran have strengthened significantly since Moscow invaded Ukraine in 2022. The US has accused Iran of supplying Russia with weapons to be used in Ukraine. Tehran has denied that claim. As the conference opened on Friday, Putin said he wanted to create a "new world order" for Moscow's allies to counter the West. He said Moscow supported "the broadest possible international discussion" on the emerging multipolar world and was open to discussing it in various forums, including the Commonwealth of Independent States, the Eurasian Economic Union, the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation and BRICS. Other regional leaders, including Pakistani President Asif Ali Zardari and the heads of Central Asian nations - Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan - attended Friday's conference. — Agencies

KP CM, Governor visit Aman Jirga site

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: Chief Minister Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Ali Amin Khan Gandapur, on Friday paid a visit to the site of Aman Jirga being organized in District Khyber to take stock of the security and other arrangements for the Jirga.

Provincial government representatives, high ups of the relevant divisional and district administration and police officers were also present on this occasion. The Chief Minister on the occasion, was briefed about the security and other arrangements for the Jirga.

The Chief Minister has directed the administration to take immediate steps for providing all necessary facilities for the Jirga, adding that water, temporary washrooms, lighting, medical camps, and other essential facilities must be provided on priority basis further directing them to provide five thousand blankets for the Jirga participants.

The participants on this occasion expressed pleasure over the visit of Chief Minister, took selfies, and chanted slogans of "Long live the Chief Minister." Prayers were also offered for durable peace in the country on this occasion.

Meanwhile, Governor Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Faisal Karim Kundi, visited the Pakhtun Tahaffuz Movement (PTM) Jirga ground in Khyber district to review the security situation.

He was accompanied by Jalal Khan Member Provincial Assembly of PMLN, Riaz Mehsood Commissioner Peshawar Division, district administration officials, and relevant police officers. Governor Kundi reviewed the arrangements for an upcoming event in the area.

The Governor was briefed by local authorities regarding security measures and other arrangements for the event to ensure peace and safety. Governor Kundi directed the concerned authorities to ensure peace, security, and the protection of the public, emphasizing the importance of maintaining law and order in the province. It is worth mentioning here that PTM is holding a three-day Jirga against the worsening law and order situation in the province.

CDA de-seals Islamabad KP House

F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: The Capital Development Authority (CDA) on Friday de-sealed Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP) House Islamabad complying with directives of the Islamabad High Court (IHC).

IHC Chief Justice Aamer Farooq directed the administration to de-seal the KP house while hearing a plea filed by the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa government. The provincial government, through the Secretary Administration, approached the IHC against the sealing of the KP House, requesting to de-seal it until the final decision of the case.

The petitioner argued that the sealing of the KP House, which is a provincial government property, is illegal. Additionally, the petitioner maintained that taking official vehicles into custody after sealing the KP House is also illegal. It is important to note here that the Capital Development Authority (CDA) sealed different blocks of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP) House Islamabad following Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) protest in the capital city.

The sealing operation was led by Special Magistrate Sardar Muhammad Asif. During the operation the CDA, sealed KP House blocks A and B. The authorities said C block was not sealed as the families were staying there.



ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif meeting with the family member of Shaheed Constable Abdul Hameed.

Rocket attack on coal mines kills 20 in Duki

F.P. Report

QUETTA: Protests have erupted in Balochistan's District Duki after at least 20 miners were killed and seven left injured in a rocket attack on coal mines in the area, the latest incident of violence in the southwestern province.

"A group of armed men attacked the mines in the Duki area in the wee hours [of Friday] using heavy weapons," said Humayun Khan, the police station house officer for the town, located east of the city of Quetta. They fired rockets and grenades at the mines as well, he added. The mineral-rich region borders Afghanistan and Iran and has been troubled for decades due to frequent incidents of violence.

No group has claimed responsibility for the latest attack. Following the deadly attack, citizens staged a demonstration at Bacha Khan Chowk with the bodies of the slain miners.

Meanwhile, traders announced a shutter-down strike in the entire district in condemnation of the das-

tardly attack. All trade centres and markets remained closed across Duki on Friday. The area surrounding the coal mines were cordoned off by the police and FC personnel and a search operation was launched soon after the attack.

Bodies of the slain miners and the injured were rushed to nearby medical facility, Teaching Hospital Loralai for medical care. The police had initially reported the deaths of two miners but the death toll soared to 20 in the following hours, Medical Officer Dr Johar Sadozai confirmed.

As per the official, two of the deceased miners belonged to Pishin and two others were residents of Qila Saifullah while one of them was from Kuchlak and three others came for work from Afghanistan, according to the medial officer. The owner of the coal mines, Haji Khairullah Nasir, said that the attackers not only carried out an assault on the mining site but also set the machinery

on fire.

Taking notice of the matter, Balochistan Chief Minister Sarfaraz Bugti condemned the incident and ordered action against the "terrorists" involved in the attack. "Terrorists working on the agenda of destabilising Pakistan. Labourers are soft targets in cowardly attacks by terrorists," he said, pledging to punish the elements involved in such activities.

Pakistan has witnessed a surge in militant attacks since the Taliban government returned to power in neighbouring Afghanistan in 2021, mostly in the northwestern border province of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, but also in southwestern Balochistan, which abuts Afghanistan and Iran. Against this backdrop, the federal cabinet in June this year approved Operation Azm-e-Istehkam, a reinvigorated national counter-terrorism campaign following the Central Apex Committee's recommendations under the National Action Plan to root out terrorism.

Tarar: Nobody allowed to disrupt SCO conference

F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: Minister for Information, Broadcasting, National Heritage and Culture Attaullah Tarar on Friday said Islamabad has been made fully safe and secure to welcome foreign delegations including 12 heads of the governments for the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) Conference, scheduled for October 15-16.

"Those who have a mindset to conspire against the country should better stay at home as no miscreant will be allowed to disrupt the SCO Conference in Islamabad," the minister said while talking to the media. "The announcements do not make any difference as Islamabad has

been made fully safe and secure," he said while referring to the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf which had announced to hold protest in coming days.

"It (SCO Conference) will go as planned and will elevate Pakistan's prestige and improve its image at international level," the minister remarked. He said Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif has personally reviewed the arrangements for the reception of different head of governments arriving in Islamabad to attend the SCO conference. "This shows the importance of such a grand event in Pakistan which will be instrumental to boost the economic growth in the country," he added.

The minister said all the

security arrangements have been finalized in Islamabad with the deployment of all the law enforcement agencies including Pakistan Army and Rangers. He said all the heads of governments participating in the SCO would be accorded a warm welcome in Islamabad as the whole nation is ready to celebrate the event with national pride.

The whole Islamabad has been decorated which would eventually leave a positive impression of Pakistan in minds of the visiting delegations, he noted. He believed that the SCO would be a great success for Pakistan and would help enhance regional cooperation with a discussion on many important topics.

Iran says ready to 'defend sovereignty' against Israel attack

TEHRAN (AFP): Iran said it is "fully prepared to defend its sovereignty" if its arch-foe Israel attacks as it has threatened to do in response to a barrage of about 200 missiles.

The Islamic republic launched the missiles at Israel on October 1 in retaliation for the killing of two of its closest allies, Hamas leader Ismail Haniyeh and Hezbollah leader Hassan Nasrallah, along with an Iranian general. Israeli Defense Minister Yoav Gallant vowed this week that his country's response would be "deadly,

precise and surprising."

In an address to the UN Security Council on Thursday, Iran's permanent representative to the United Nations, Amir Saied Iravani, said the Islamic republic "stands fully prepared to defend its sovereignty and territorial integrity against any aggression targeting its vital interests and security." Iran, he said, was not seeking "war or escalation" but would exercise its "inherent right to self-defense fully in line with international law and will notify the Security

Council of its legitimate response."

Iranian Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi said meanwhile in an interview with Al Jazeera Arabic on Thursday that "we do not want a war," but "we are not afraid of it, and we will be ready for any scenario." The warnings come against the backdrop of a war between Israel and Iran-allied Palestinian militant group Hamas that has been raging for more than a year and has expanded to include Lebanon in recent weeks.

Imran, Bushra should be allowed to meet family

F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: Secretary General of the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) Barrister Salman Akram Raja on Friday said that the PTI founder Imran Khan and former first lady Bushra Bibi must be allowed to meet the family, adding that it was a basic human right to let inmates see their families.

Speaking outside the Islamabad High Court (IHC), the PTI Secretary General said that he would plead before the court to let Khan meet his sister and doctor while hoping that the government may show a more humane approach this time. "It is necessary for us during these distressing times to consult Imran Khan on political matters. Everything is being done to sabotage the political process.

The people of Pakistan want the orders passed on the basis of human rights. Anything can be expected from this fascist regime," he deplored. He said that he was appearing in court cases on a daily basis, adding that the PTI founder was only allowed to meet twice during Toshakhana case hearing.



ISLAMABAD: Chairman PPP Bilawal Bhutto Zardari meeting with Chief of Jamiat Ulema-e-Islam-Fazl, Maulana Fazlur Rahman.

Fazl wants consensus before moving amen in NA

F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: Jamiat-Ulema-e-Islam-Fazl (JUI-F) chief Maulana Fazlur Rahman on Friday urged the government to accept its suggestions related to the constitutional amendments in order to reach consensus.

He was addressing a press conference in Islamabad on Friday. "We can reach the consensus if government shows some flexibility," said the JUI-F chief. He added that the JUI-F has started delibera-

tions on the draft provided by the government.

According to JUI-F chief, he had rejected the draft that was provided in the 'black bag' and people also supported his stance. "JUI-F and PPP will now share the draft with the PTI to reach consensus," he added. The veteran politician said that the judiciary shouldn't be divided over the retirement issue of an individual.

"It took nine months to discuss the 18th amendment and therefore we want to thoroughly study

the draft," he said. Earlier in the day, PPP Chairman Bilawal Bhutto Zardari asserted that complete consensus of all parties on constitutional amendment was needed. He made these remarks in the Parliament's special committee session on Friday, saying they have been making efforts since a month for consensus on the amendment. Bilawal revealed that PPP has submitted its draft on establishment of constitutional court and mechanism of appointment of judges in the court.

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PESHAWAR: Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Governor Faisal Karim Kundi addressing a press conference at Governor's House.

Child Online Protection Package Four-day training held for facilitators



F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: A four-day training for provincial facilitators on Child Online Protection Package was held in Peshawar from October 8-11 with the support of UNICEF. The training module has jointly been developed by UNICEF, Telenor, and PTA with an aim to educate adolescents, parents, and caregivers about healthy and harmful behaviors in and around the digital space. Child Protection staff of the Social Welfare Department (MDs) and representatives from the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Child Protection and Welfare Commission (KPCPWC) attended the training. The participants comprised psychologists, Child Protection

Officers and community animators. The participants shared their experiences from field on various social media applications like TikTok and Facebook and their impacts on children and adolescents. They emphasized that this training would greatly help the local communities in managing online threats to their children. The training helped the participants understand the harmful effects of inappropriate digital content and equipped them with skills to protect children from these risks by introducing different controls within online applications & games for protection. As children increasingly spend more time online and on mobile devices, they are exposed

to potentially harmful content, which increases their risk of exploitation (sexual, economic, &/or identity theft). It is significant that the caregivers and parents are aware of preventing these risks. This training will be taken to the ground level in communities within KP to make digital spaces safe for our youth. Closing Remarks: With the growing use of digital space, it has become a challenge to protect our children and adolescents from the threats present online. We have been hearing news about increasing violence and mental health issues amongst adolescents. Based on this gap, UNICEF, Telenor, and PTA joined hands to develop this training module. The intent is to orient our adolescents as well as parents and caregivers on online risks and tools to reduce these risks. The training also aims to highlight reporting channels for online threats and risks, which can help the communities actively make online space safe. We look forward to successfully rolling out this training all over the province.

Ihtisham visits HMC

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: Advisor to Chief Minister Khyber Pakhtunkhwa for Health Ihtisham Ali, visited the Hayatabad Medical Complex to inquire after the injured participants of the Jirga being held in Jamrud. During his visit, Hospital Director, Dr. Shehzad Akbar, and Administration Director, Dr. Sher Zaman, accompanied him on a tour of the hospital's various departments. Ihtisham Ali met with the injured Jirga participants admitted to different wards and ICU of the hospital. He assured that all possible facilities are being provided to the patients free of charge. The Health Advisor stated that Hayatabad Medical Complex and Jamrud Hospital are on high alert to provide medical facilities to participants of the Jirga. Emergency medicines and medical staff are available 24/7 to ensure prompt care.

Amin of DGIPR promoted

PESHAWAR (APP): On the recommendations of the Provincial Selection Board (PSB), the competent authority has promoted Mr. Ibni Amin, Deputy Director Information (BS-18) of the Directorate General Information & Public Relations, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa to the post of Director Information/Press Registrar (BS-19) on regular basis with immediate effect, said a notification issued here on Friday. The officer, on promotion will remain on probation for a period of one year, in terms of Section-6 (2) of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Civil Servant Act, 1973 read with Rule-15 (1) of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Civil Servants (Appointment, Promotion & Transfer) Rules, 1989.

Commissioner directs improved security at UOP

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: A meeting chaired by Commissioner Peshawar Division, Riyaz Khan Mahsud, focused on enhancing administrative affairs at Peshawar University, preventing conflicts, and improving security measures on campus. A committee has been established under the leadership of the Additional Deputy Commissioner Peshawar to implement necessary actions within a week.

The meeting was attended by Vice Chancellor of Peshawar University, Dr. Naem Qazi, the university registrar, the DSP of the university campus, and other relevant officials. Discussions centered around improving administrative operations at the



university, leading to the decision to form a committee to take necessary steps within the designated time-frame. Commissioner Mahsud emphasized the need to facilitate a smooth teaching and learning process and provide a peaceful environment for students. He directed that all available resources be utilized to ensure that students can continue their studies with satisfaction and tranquility.

The meeting addressed issues such as expelling unrelated individuals from university premises, preventing robbery incidents, curbing the distribution of drugs, and enhancing overall security.

Regional Head of Federal Ombudsman visits BRT Chamkani station



F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: Following the directives of Federal Ombudsman Ejaz Ahmed Qureshi, Mushataq Judoon, the Regional Head of the Federal Ombudsman in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, along with senior officials, launched

an awareness campaign against mismanagement at the BRT Chamkani Station in Peshawar. During the visit, Judoon addressed the media, stating that the purpose of the awareness campaign is to highlight the objectives of the Federal Ombudsman's

establishment and to resolve complaints regarding mismanagement, thereby promoting good governance. He emphasized that the campaign aims to facilitate complainants against approximately 180 federal government institutions, including electrici-

ty, gas, NADRA, the Benazir Income Support Program, Pakistan Bait-ul-Mal, Pakistan Post Office, Passport Office, FBR, and EOBI. Judoon further noted that there are no fees for filing complaints with the Federal Ombudsman, nor is there a need for legal representation. The public can easily submit complaints via letter, email, the website, mobile app, or by visiting their nearest regional office. Complaints are addressed within sixty days. As part of the awareness campaign, banners have been displayed at various BRT stations in Peshawar, including Saddar, Chamkani, Dabgari Garden, and the University of Peshawar, to ensure that as many people as possible can benefit from the services of the Federal Ombudsman.

World Mental health Day observed

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: World Mental health Day was celebrated at Special Education Complex, Hayatabad, Peshawar with collaboration of Social Welfare, Special Education & Women Empowerment Department and Sarhad Rural Support Program with the support of

UNFPA, IOM and the Embassy of Netherlands. The Honorable Minister for Social Welfare Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Syed Qasim Ali Shah was chief guest of the occasion. Ms. Mahjabeen Qazi of UNFPA and Mr. Ameer Hamza of IOM participated in the event along with representatives of civil society, government departments, par-

ents and media persons. Mr. Masood Ul Mulk, CEO, SRSP in his speech highlighted the importance of mental health and raising awareness among general public about mental health issues. Syed Ali Bakhsh, Director, Special Education Complex, Peshawar informed that Mental Health Day is celebrated throughout the world,

including Pakistan, on 10 October to raise awareness about mental health and well-being. Minister for Social Welfare Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Syed Qasim Ali Shah appreciated efforts of the organizations and assured his cooperation. Special students presented tableaux, skits and songs which were appreciated by the participants.

Pakistan's flagship ecological project in limbo as climate financing declines

PESHAWAR (AA): Pakistan's flagship ecological project is in jeopardy as a lack of international climate financing collides with financial troubles at home, exacerbating the nation's struggles with water shortages and food security risks. As one of the top 10 countries vulnerable to climate change, Pakistan requires a staggering \$17 billion investment to execute the "Indus Living Initiative," which aims to revive the mighty Indus River, the backbone of the country's agriculture and food production. Government officials and analysts agree that securing this financing is "highly unlikely," primarily due to unfavorable global economic conditions. Launched in 2021 under the Ministry of Climate Change, the initiative is envisioned as a 10- to 15-year umbrella program focused on restoring the ecological health of the Indus Basin within Pakistan. "Pakistan is facing significant hurdles in securing climate financing for critical projects like the Living Indus due to multiple reasons, mainly the global economic conditions," said Saad Hayat Tamman, a former national coordinator of the Living Indus project. Speaking to Anadolu, he noted that the COVID-19 pandemic, coupled with inflation, rising energy costs, and economic

uncertainty, has reduced the availability of climate finance globally. To complicate matters further, he added, Pakistan's existing economic struggles — such as high debt levels, fiscal deficits, and currency devaluation — have raised concerns for potential lenders and donors. "This project is very crucial for Pakistan because the Indus River sustains 90% of the country's population, supports over 80% of its agriculture, and provides water to nine out of 10 largest cities," maintained Tamman. Echoing this sentiment, Hussain Jarwar, an Islamabad-based water expert, emphasized the river's vital role in the country's food security, water availability, and economic stability. "Living Indus is a significant initiative to rehabilitate the Indus Delta, which is dying due to climate change, water scarcity, and sea intrusion," he told Anadolu. Competition for funds and administrative complexities Beyond economic factors, Tamman identified growing competition among developing countries for climate funds and local administrative complexities as critical barriers to the project's launch. "Developing countries across the globe are competing for the same limited pool of climate finance, particularly those



vulnerable to climate change. This makes it harder for Pakistan to secure a significant share of the available funds, especially when many other nations are in equally precarious positions," he explained. He asserted that Pakistan also faces internal challenges in streamlining processes for accessing international funds. "Complex bureaucratic procedures, a lack of capacity in preparing compelling proposals, and weak institutional mechanisms for fund management hinder the ability to attract and mobilize climate finance," he added. Endorsing Tamman's

perspective, a senior official from the Climate Change Ministry admitted that Islamabad is "struggling" to secure the necessary financing for the project, which is "extremely" important, especially given the meager rainfall in the lower Indus Valley. "A combination of global economic conditions and national fiscal challenges has made it difficult for the country to access the necessary funds," said the official, who requested anonymity due to restrictions on speaking publicly. Agreeing with this assessment, a spokesperson for the ministry's Living Indus Team,

responsible for coordinating required investments, stated, "A more concerted and coordinated approach to climate financing is crucial for the long-term success of the initiative." "Failing to act would not only escalate environmental crises but could result in economic losses estimated at \$1.2 billion annually through natural disasters and resource depletion," he warned. Climate 'debt trap' and green-washing The project encompasses 25 critical interventions aimed at restoring and preserving the ecological health of the Indus River Basin. Key initiatives include ecological restoration

through reforestation, water management, and biodiversity conservation, sustainable agriculture and water governance to address soil degradation and water scarcity, flood control and groundwater recharge through green infrastructure, as well as initiatives like zero plastic waste cities and urban forests. The federal cabinet approved eight priority interventions in December 2022, yet execution remains elusive. While climate financing is intended to mitigate the consequences of climate change, concerns linger regarding its negative impacts. "Many forms of cli-

mate financing, particularly loans, come with strings attached. For countries like Pakistan, these funds may increase the national debt burden if they are provided as loans or concessional credits rather than grants," cautioned Jarwar. Although the terms may seem favorable, repayment can still strain already fragile economies, he observed. This situation, he added, can lead to a "climate debt trap," where countries are compelled to repay loans for issues they did not primarily cause, further deepening their financial challenges. The World Bank Group has a history of promoting large hydro projects in Pakistan through its Investment Finance. However, little has been done to account for the perspectives of downstream communities and to address their grievances. This pursuit of unhindered hydropower development undermines the true potential of renewable energy generation in southern Pakistan, Jarwar argued. Another factor hindering financing, according to Jarwar, is that debt-ridden Islamabad is cautious about accruing additional loans, relying instead on the "loss and damage fund" initiated by the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change following the catastrophic floods of 2022, which inundated one-third of Pakistan and

caused colossal losses estimated at \$30 billion. "It can be an opportunity for Pakistan, but the commitments from rich countries, whose fossil fuel-based economic model is the main reason for climate change, are lacking," he added. Supporting this view, Tamman expressed concern that climate financing from developed nations or international financial institutions, including the World Bank, may sometimes prioritize donor interests over the actual needs of recipient countries. "For instance, funding may be directed toward projects that align with the donor's climate agenda, such as renewable energy development, rather than urgent local needs like flood protection or water management, which are more critical for Pakistan's context," he said. Additionally, he argued that some donor countries or institutions may use climate financing as a means to improve their global image or offset their own emissions while continuing environmentally harmful practices domestically. "This can lead to accusations of green-washing, where the actual impact of the financing in terms of mitigating climate change is limited, while the donor countries continue to benefit from industries that contribute to global warming," he added.



In brief

Dr. Ali named AD (ORIC) F.P. Report

MARDAN: Dr. Ali Khan, President of the Radio Broadcaster Association Mardan Region, has officially taken charge as the Assistant Director of the Office of Research, Innovation, and Commercialization (ORIC) at Abdul Wali Khan University. Dr. Ali Khan has been associated with the university since its early days, where he made significant contributions to education and various awareness programs. Dr. Ali Khan began his career as a renowned radio broadcaster before joining the university. He earned his MS from Macharata University in Italy and recently completed his PhD in Pakistan. His appointment to this new position marks yet another milestone in his academic and professional journey. The Radio Broadcaster Association, along with its Secretary General Ajmal Shah Yousafzai, extended their heartfelt congratulations to Dr. Ali Khan, praising his accomplishments and wishing him continued success.

Several houses gutted in fire F.P. Report

NEELUM VALLEY: A massive fire swept through a locality in Neelum Valley of Azad Kashmir destroying houses in the wee hours of Friday. A short-circuit in a house was said to be the reason behind the destructive blaze in Jagran Shawl area of Neelum Valley which completely destroyed 10 houses and one shop and partially damaged another 12 houses. According to District Disaster Management authorities, the blaze which erupted at 3:00 am engulfed the whole locality. The authorities said that due to the fire all the households were reduced to ashes. Local residents tried to control the blaze on their own but it spread rapidly as all the houses were constructed with wood. Due to non-availability of road, fire-bridge team failed to reach the affected area, while rescue and other district management teams reached the area and brought the fire under control after four hours. Chairman District Disaster Management Authority directed to provide all necessary items to the affected homes.

2 terrorists killed in Sahiwal F.P. Report

SAHIWAL: Two hardened terrorists who orchestrated the terror attack on Dasu hydel power project in which 11 Chinese were shot dead by Counter-Terrorism Department (CTD) personnel in a gunbattle in Sahiwal. In a statement on Friday, a CTD spokesman said that they were shifting five terrorists who were involved in Dasu terror attack from Sahiwal Jail due to a threat alert when suddenly unknown assailants attacked the prison van on Sumandri Road and tried to get freed their colleagues. During heavy exchange of fire, two terrorists identified as Mohammad Hussain and Ayaz alias Jahanzeb were killed on the spot. Three other terrorists were safe as they were being shifted in a separate prison van. It is necessary to mention here that on 14 July 2021 nine Chinese and 13 others were killed while more than 20 received critical injuries in the terror attack on the Dasu hydel power project.

Govt commits for elimination of polio virus

F.P. Report

HAFIZABAD: Government is taking all possible measures to eliminate polio from the country but it is obligations of Ulema, parents, teachers, social workers, civil society and prominent personalities to play their vital role to achieve the destination of polio free Pakistan to ensure administer drops of polio vaccine to hundred percent children up to five-year-old during five-days anti-polio campaign being started from October, 28.

These views were expressed by the Deputy Commissioner Hafizabad Abdul Razzaq while addressing the meeting of District Anti-Polio Committee held at district complex. ADCG Hammadullah, AC Hafizabad, Sohail Riaz, AC Pindi Bhattian Ishaq Ahmad, CEO Health Dr. Umer Sharif, representative of WHO Dr. Touqeer Ahmad, DHO Dr. Faiq Ali Tarar, Ulema, representatives of traders attended the meeting.

DC appealed the Ulema, representatives of traders, social workers, parents, teachers and civil society to cooperate with polio teams constituted by the Health Department for giving polio drops to target children to save new generation from crimping disease of polio. He urged the officers of health department to launch campaign to create awareness among parents about importance of vaccination of children as well as counter baseless propaganda against

polio drops.

While giving briefing regarding arrangements made for making anti-polio campaign successful, they told that health department was constituted 998 polio teams to administer drops of polio vaccine to 238551 children below five-year-old to visit door to door during anti-polio campaign while arrangements were also made to give polio drops to children at railway stations, bus stands, business centres and hospitals.

GC Varsity campus secures 2nd position: Director Government College University Faisalabad (Hafizabad Camps) Dr. Khuram Shahzad said that Government College University Faisalabad stood first in the Punjab and second in the Pakistan in World University Ranking.

He said that hectic and joint struggle of Vice Chancellor Professor Dr. Nasir Amin, Director Quality Enhancement Cell Professor Dr. Asif Manshah, Government College University Faisalabad was stand first in Punjab and second in the country for its educational standard, promoting literary and positive activities.

He said that GC University achieved this ideal success due to the best abilities of administration, concerted efforts and ideal academic activities. GC University Faisalabad stand at No. 601 amongst 800 the best universities of the world and credit of this achievement go to Vice Chancellor, he added.

Commissioner visits various depts

Sahibzada Afridi

KOHAT: Commissioner Kohat Division Syed Motasim Billah Shah has made a surprise visit to various departments and schools of the district Hangu along with its Deputy Commissioner Gohar Zaman to review the activities under the Chief Minister Khyber Pakhtunkhwa's Program "Awami Agenda".

Meanwhile, he found the Assistant Director Local Government, SDO, Sub-Engineer and Accounts Officer of Irrigation Department, District Zakat Officer with his staff, District Planning Officer with his subordinate staff and all the teachers of Government Primary and Middle Schools of Lakhtibanda absent from duty.

Commissioner Kohat himself Conducted the Morning Assembly at Middle School Lakhtibanda. Commissioner expressed his deep anger over the poor cleanliness of the district offices of Hangu and recommended stern action against the 25 Officers and other officials to various administrative secretaries and district heads. The Commissioner himself will monitor the action taken against the said officers and officials so that they can be punished.

Later, in a meeting held by the Commissioner along with the Deputy Commissioner Hangu with the district heads of the

concerned departments, warned that in the future, the head of the department will face legal action in case of lack of cleanliness and absence of staff in any department.

In Lakhtibanda, while appreciating the action of the Divisional and District Administration, the parents complained about the absence of teachers in the school. On this occasion, the Commissioner also visited District Zakat Officer's Office, Farmer Facilitation Centre, Fertilizer and Seed godowns, Agricultural Farms, Agricultural Machinery and Geological Conservation and appreciated the excellent performance, cleanliness and attendance.

Commissioner also visited the Population Welfare Department and found all the staff present and engaged in their work. Finally, he visited Technical Center Hangu and praised the principal for his excellent performance. He also met the students undergoing training in various technical skills and ascertained their problems and assured them of their immediate solution.

Commissioner Kohat instructed the Deputy Commissioners of all the five districts of the division to personally ensure daily morning and afternoon attendance in offices and there should be no leniency with anyone in this regard.

Remat-ul-Lil Alameen PBUH Scholarship ceremony held: Deputy Commissioner Kohat

Abdul Akram has said that the Holy Life of Sayyidina Hazrat Muhammad Mustafa Peace Be Upon Him (PBUH) is a beacon light not only for Muslims but for the entire humanity. Success in this world and hereafter lies in following the Teachings of the Holy Prophet PBUH.

These views he expressed while addressing the ceremony organized in the District Council Hall Kohat regarding the Rehmat-ul-LilAlameen Scholarships. The Holy ceremony beside the Chairman DDAC Kohat Shafullah Jan MPA, was also attended by the ADC F&P, Religious Personalities, Heads of Line Departments and students of schools. Cash prizes were distributed among the students of the schools under Rahmat-ul-LilAlameen Scholarships on this occasion.

Deputy Commissioner Kohat said that the Imam-ul-Anbia, Sayyidina Hazrat Muhammad Mustafa PBUH, came to this world as mercy for the entire world and He PBUH struggles for the welfare of humanity and did not hesitate to make any kind of sacrifice to spread the divine message of Allah the Almighty.

DC stressed for holding of maximum events on Oswa-e-Hassana of the Holy Prophet Hazrat Muhammad PBUH to enlightening the next generation of Holy Life of Hazrat Muhammad PBUH.

DRC takes action on road accidents

F.P. Report

TARBELA: According to the details, the Dispute Resolution Council (DRC) in Ghazi has taken strong action in response to the growing number of accidents on Ghazi-Sarikot Road, caused mainly by stray animals and construction materials left on the roadside. In a meeting led by Chairman Muhammad Shakir Qureshi, the DRC expressed serious concern over this issue and sent urgent recommendations to the authorities, calling for immediate steps to make the road safer for everyone.

The DRC's investigations found that both government and private individuals often leave construction materials, like sand, gravel, and debris, on or near the road for long periods. This creates dangerous conditions and has led to many accidents. The DRC recommended that no construction materials should be left on the road or its sides for more than 24 hours. They also called for strict enforcement of this rule and the removal of all encroachments to ensure the road stays clear.

Another major problem

the DRC identified was stray animals, such as cows and goats, wandering freely on the road, especially at night. This puts motorists in great danger. The DRC urged livestock owners to keep their animals away from the road, warning that if any accident happens due to stray animals, the owners will be held responsible and would have to pay the damages and compensation for loss of life or property.

The DRC also recommended a strong crackdown on risky activities like one-wheeling and illegal motorcycle racing, which have become common on Ghazi-Sarikot Road. These reckless actions have caused many serious accidents, and the DRC has called for legal action against those involved.

Chairman Shakir Qureshi sent these recommendations to all relevant and important authorities, including the Khyber Pakhtun Khwa Highway Authority, the Communications & Works (C&W) Department, the Tehsil Municipal Authority (TMA) Ghazi, local police, Assistant Commissioner Ghazi, and neighborhood

and village council's chairpersons and they have been urged to take quick, coordinated action to ensure the safety of the local community.

Additionally, the DRC asked the local leaders, especially those from areas like Umarhkhana, Kundi, Sherawal, and Sarikot, to start public awareness campaigns. These can include announcements in mosques, Friday prayers, and by distribution of pamphlets to inform people about the dangers of stray animals and roadside construction materials.

The Ghazi-Sarikot Road, once a beautiful and safe route, has now earned the sad reputation of being a "road of death" due to frequent accidents. Over the past few years, many lives have been lost, often because of stray livestock or construction debris on the road. Despite these tragedies, the authorities had not taken any meaningful action until now.

A recent tragic accident that claimed the life of a 17-year-old boy pushed the DRC to intervene in the matter through a local Jirga to raise the public concerns of high intensity.



FAISALABAD: Senator Rubina Khalid, Chairperson of BISP, visiting garment city.

DC holds meeting on 'Ekhtiar Awam Ka' Portal F.P. Report

KOHAT: Deputy Commissioner Kohat Abdul Akram has under the Chief Minister Khyber Pakhtunkhwa's Program "Awami Agenda", held a special meeting on "Ekhtiar Awam Ka" Portal on Friday. The meeting was attended by the heads of Line Departments of Kohat District.

Deputy Commissioner Kohat while directing the Heads of Departments said that the government of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa has launched a special Portal namely "Ekhtiar Awam Ka" for solving the public problems/complaints with the aims to empower the people and make them part of the decisions making process.

A dashboard has been provided for all the Departments and Officers to ensure speedy implementation of government agenda and decisions through this portal. Deputy Commissioner asked the Heads of Departments to ensure implementation on Provincial Government decisions in letter and spirit.

Meanwhile, Provincial Sports Department has under the Chief Minister Khyber Pakhtunkhwa's Program "Awami Agenda", and on the special directions of Adviser to Chief Minister on Sports Fakhar Jahan and Law Minister Aftab Alam Afridi Advocate formally started the Sports Galaat the ground of Government Degree College Dara Adam Khel on Friday in a colorful program.

The said Sports Gala is being held with the full support of Secretary Sports Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Matuallah, Commissioner Kohat Division Syed Motasim Billah Shah, Director General Sports Abdul Nasir, Deputy Commissioner Kohat Abdul Akram, Director Sports Merged Areas Raziullah Bitanni, Assistant Commissioner Dara Adam Khel Amir Nawaz and DSO Sub Division Dara Adam Khel Sajid Afridi.

The opening of the Sports Gala was made with the Cricket, Football and Badminton matches. Apart from Football, Cricket, Volleyball, Basketball, Athletics, Tug-of-war and Badminton, traditional games including Shooting, Chindro, GoliDhanda etc. will also be a part of the said Sports Gala. Locals have wholeheartedly welcomed the holding of Sports Gala and stressed for conducting such events in future also.

Readers' Forum hold protest

F.P. Report

LARKANA: The Readers' Forum of the famous Sir Shah Nawaz Bhutto Library of Larkana protested in front of Shaheed Benazir Bhutto Press Club against the cancellation of 15-year age relaxation for jobs by the Sindh government. Slogans of restoration were raised on this occasion while addressing the demonstration.

Leaders Sartaj Jatoti, Abdul Razzaq Soomro, Waqar Ahmad Sodhar and others said that the Pakistan Federal Public Service Commission and other provinces of the country, Punjab,

Police arrest kidnappers in Dir

F.P. Report

LOWER DIR: The Balambat police have claimed to have arrested three abductors posing to be officials of the police special branch who kidnapped a 23-year-old Sajid for ransom a few days ago. Briefing local journalists, the Lower Dir SP investigation Rashid Ahmad said that Sajid 23, a resident of Stanadar Balambat went missing and the Balambat police was tasked to trace him out.

He said the Balambat police team led by ASHO Fahim Khan traced the case through modern technology and arrested Aman Bahadar s/o Sher Bahadar who not only confessed the crime but also identified his accomplices. The official said that two other accused belonging to the district of Mardan were also arrested. The police also recovered the car and arms used during the crime.

The SP investigation said that Sajid's brother used to send millions of rupees from abroad on his account and the accused wanted to get the money, so they planned his abduction and called him at night on phone for his account verification to the Chakdara Scouts' Fort. He said the accused posing to be special branch police, kidnapped him for ransom to Peshawar at gunpoint.

The SP investigation appreciated the Balambat police for tracing the case within days. The Balambat police also arrested two drug sellers, Sardar Ali and Muhammad Ayaz and recovered 1392 gram of charas from their possession. Meanwhile the Lal Qila police during a search operation arrested a proclaimed offender Bahadar Gul, a resident of Maidan wanted by police in a double murder case since 2006. The accused was sent to jail.

Shops sealed: The

Additional Assistant Commissioner Samarbagh Muhammad Younus on the directives of high ups sealed the under-construction shops on government land near the Samarbagh Hospital. The Assistant Commissioner, Muhammad Suhail had issued notices to the shopkeepers after marking the state land to remove the encroachments within three days. The administration sealed the shops after getting its possession through a heavy contingent of police, Dir Levies and tehsil municipal administration when the shopkeepers failed to remove the encroachments.

Talking to local journalists the AAC warned the Samarbagh subdivision residents to avoid selling and purchasing of the state land in the area. Otherwise, the official said that legal actions would be taken against the people involved.

Positive face of Bannu should be shown to world

F.P. Report

BANNU: DIG Bannu Region Imran Shahid has said that Bannu Region Police is alert to deal with all kinds of terrorism. The situation has improved a lot in the police system, efforts are being made to ensure the provision of justice to the common man at the police station level.

Through the pen, the positive face of Bannu should be shown to the world so that a better image of the region can be presented to the world. SP CTD Mujibur Rahman, Zonal Chief Khyber Bank Rahm Baz Khan, SDO WAPDA Azam Khan, Mohammad Jamal Qamar, prominent businessman Hamza Khan Mehsood, Abuzar Mehsood, Usama Khan Mehsood, and other family leaders were also present. Bannu Region Imran Shahid said that Bannu Gul is a district of extremely hospitable and gentle people who have given birth to eminent children in every field of life who have made the country famous at the international level.

By playing his role through Bannu Gul, the best and soft face of Bannu can be seen at the global level so that the ambiguity found in the minds of outsiders regarding Bannu can be removed. I have found the leaders and the civil society in a better way. Still as DIG, I will always remember the love of the leaders and the nation towards the police. He said

that overall peace has improved in Bannu Division by increasing police duties.

Special check points have been established on the external routes so that the people do not have to face any kind of difficulties. The police is busy day and night to facilitate the people. There are enemies, now most of the people in Bannu are killed due to enemies, now the police officers are doing their homework to end the local lands and enemies so that they can change the people's thinking and improve the current situation, he said. Bannu Division Police has always faced every situation with bravery, now there is a need for the media of Bannu to tell the world through the soft image of Bannu through pen and camera so that the public can understand Bannu Gul in real sense.

Meanwhile, central leader of PTI Member National Assembly NA-39 Maulana Syed Naseem Ali Shah has said that the provincial government foiled the massacre of Pashtuns in Pakhtun region and Chief Minister Ali Amin Gandapur saved the nation from conflict.

The firing on the Khyber Qaumi Jirga at the behest of the federal government and the testimonies in it will definitely bring color. He has taken an oath to restore peace and protect public interests, whenever there is a problem for the nation, the soldiers of Imran Khan will be in the front line.

And during the meeting with the delegation led by Malik Nordin Khan Wazir, the General Secretary of PTI Dumail, Special Assistant Basir Ali Shah and other leaders and party officials were also present on this occasion.

The role of the Chief Minister to extinguish will always be a part of history because peaceful protest and demands are the basic constitutional right of every citizen, but the federal government coming through oppression and oppression is the number one in hostility with the Pashtun nation. Best firing took place at the behest of fake rulers, as a result of which innocent Pashtuns were martyred and many people were injured.

The law cannot work under any circumstances. For the rich, the law is the slave of the house, while the law is for the poor. Such a system cannot work under any circumstances. According to the Pashtun tradition, Ali Amin's decision in the Malikar Jirga with all political forces and the resulting negotiation process is the victory of the Pashtun nation and the death of fake rulers. He said that as long as Imran is alive, Khan's mission will be completed and corrupt gangs will be removed from the country by eliminating them from the political arena. There are and soon the rulers of form 47 will be out of the assemblies and justice system will be established in real sense

the scope of the protest will increase.

Meanwhile, in the case filed against the leaders in the city of Badah of Larkana district, the defendants, through their lawyer, filed an application for bail in the court of District and Sessions Judge Larkana. His lawyer Mohammad Rafiq Abaro, Luqman Ahmed Magasi, Ahmed Ali Wadho, Waseem Raza Memon, Sajjad Jamarani testified in the case, while the named accused in the case appeared in the court through their lawyer, where the court after hearing the arguments of the lawyers of the parties, named 5 in the case.



‘Russians invaded my house and held a soldier captive there’

KYIV (BBC): Marina Perederii's home in the small mining city of Vuhledar in eastern Ukraine was her pride and joy, 17 Sadovaya Street was little more than a shell when she and her husband bought it. They lovingly renovated the house, painting cherry blossom and doves - symbols of love and well-being - in their bedroom. They built a swimming pool in the garden and a sauna in the basement. "Everything was planned with such passion," she tells the BBC World Service. But the peace was n't to last. In February 2022, Russia launched its full-scale invasion of Ukraine. Marina's husband went to fight while she took their children and ran. Before fleeing, she recorded what she thought could be her last glimpse of their home. "My dear house, I don't know if you will stand or not. I don't know if we'll ever return here... or if we'll even survive at all," she said in a video. The next time she saw her home was a year later in February 2023, through the eyes of a Russian soldier, in bodycam footage posted on social media. A marine going by the name Fima was in her living room, flicking through photos of Marina and her family. "Beautiful," he said, looking at one photo. It was a chilling image that made her angry. "I wish I had taken the albums with me," Marina says. Ukraine spent two and a half years defending Vuhledar before Russia took control of the city at the start of October. During the long battle, in late January 2023, Fima had led a group of soldiers to the suburbs and got caught in heavy fighting on Sadovaya Street. He and some others entered Marina's home. As his bodycam footage went viral back home, Fima was

hailed as a hero. Official documents show that he was recalled from the front in February 2023 because of a leg wound. But what the footage didn't show was that the Russians were keeping a Ukrainian soldier captive in Marina's basement, who was starving and in desperate need of medical care. His name was Oleksii. Before the war, Oleksii worked as an IT specialist. When Russia invaded his country, he volunteered to fight and later became a drone operator in Vuhledar. His love of dancing earned him the nickname Dancer. When the Russians broke through Ukrainian lines in late January 2023, Oleksii and his comrades tried to retreat, but some of them, including Oleksii were shot. Wounded, they were taken from house to house by Russian soldiers, with Oleksii eventually ending up in the basement of Marina's home. He was held captive for almost a month - Russian footage uploaded online shows him wrapped in one of Marina's carpets. When the Russian soldiers eventually retreated, they left Oleksii behind. In all he spent 46 days in Marina's house and for much of that time he had barely any food or water. Injured, starving and dehydrated, he was unable to leave the building. "I was able to find some crumbs on the floor," he tells the BBC World Service from Kyiv. "There was a piece of cracker, which a mouse stole from me at night. I hid it, and then the mouse probably stole it because I couldn't find it." But hunger was nothing compared to thirst. One day, after the Russians had left, the desperate need for water almost killed Oleksii. He tore panels from the sauna in the hope that there

might be water inside the pipes. He managed to break one open and drank some of the liquid inside, but it was antifreeze. Those few sips caused internal burns and were nearly fatal. Then, in March that year, when Ukrainian forces retook parts of Vuhledar and reached Sadovaya Street, another video from Marina's home went viral. It shows ex-New Zealand soldier Kane Te Tai entering number 17 and finding Oleksii. "New Zealand, New Zealand, it's me!" Oleksii shouts at his colleague, who had travelled to fight for Ukraine. Te Tai died in battle just two weeks later. Oleksii was carried out of the house and to safety. Had he been left just a few more days, Oleksii says he wouldn't have made it. Several other Ukrainian and Russian soldiers are known to have died in and around Sadovaya Street during the battle for Vuhledar. "Thank God Oleksii survived. But the fact that people died in my house, it shocked me," she says. "There is only death in there." The BBC World Service asked the Russian Ministry of Defence about Oleksii's treatment but received no response. Half a year after Oleksii's rescue, his Russian captor was being lauded at home. He was no longer just referred to by his call sign, Fima, but by his first name, Andrei. State TV footage shows him reenacting the Vuhledar assault and sharing his experiences with primary school children, where teachers present him as a hero. The BBC compared this footage with photographs of Andrei from hundreds of social media profiles and found a match - the same headline, the same mole on the neck, and clear evidence of a leg injury.

75 migrants rescued from a crippled boat

ATHENS (AP): A group of 75 migrants crossing to Europe from North Africa has been rescued from a crippled boat south of the island of Crete, Greek authorities said Friday. The coast guard said the migrants, who are believed to have set off from eastern Libya, were picked up in the Mediterranean Sea by a merchant ship after issuing a distress call. Their nationalities were not immediately known. The vessel, escorted by a coast guard patrol boat, was taking them to a port in southern Crete. The long voyage from Libya to Crete has emerged this year as a new route for people from Africa, the Middle East and Asia to seek a better life in Europe. People who have completed the crossing told Greek authorities they paid smuggling gangs up to 9,000 euros (\$9,800) each for the passage. More than 3,500 people have made the crossing so far this year, according to the United Nations refugee agency, out of a total of 42,000 who entered Greece illegally — mostly reaching the eastern Aegean Sea islands in small boats from Turkey. The crossing from Libya takes at least two days, while a fast smuggling boat from Turkey can reach the eastern islands in well under an hour, provided it can dodge frequent coast guard patrols. Italy remains the main European destination for illegal migration, with more than 51,000 arrivals so far, and is followed by Spain.

Poland tightens visa rules

WARSAW (AP): Poland is tightening its visa regulations as probes into alleged cash-for-visa scandal have confirmed irregularities under the previous right-wing government which cost the public purse millions of dollars, the foreign minister of this European Union country said. Radek Sikorski said it will be much tougher now to obtain a visa for Poland, a document which gives access to unrestricted travel within Europe's border-free Schengen zone, and the vetting of applicants will be stepped up. For example, student visa applications will be scrutinized to prevent situations in which they were only used as a means of getting into Europe. The state Supreme Audit Office released the report of its investigation into the Foreign Ministry visa department and confirmed media allegations made last year that Polish consulates in Asia and Africa took thousands of dollars for each work visa, against regulations. It said it found 46 kinds of irregularities in five different areas, including a lack of transparency, an environment prone to corruption and poor supervision by the minister at the time, Zbigniew Rau. One of the most egregious examples involved visas for dozens of farmers from India, who were described in their documents as Bollywood filmmakers. The ministry lost control over the visa system, especially in the years 2018-2023, Sikorski told a news conference. "We can confirm that, unfortunately, in a scandalous way, unlawful pressure was exercised over Polish consuls with the intention of increasing the number of visas issued to people ... who should not necessarily obtain them, including the citizens of the Russian Federation," Sikorski said. He said the ministry was contributing to the process of drawing up Poland's new policy for curbing illegal migration, which Prime Minister Donald Tusk is to present on Saturday. Earlier this year, Sikorski's initial reaction to the scandal was to hike visa fees, which used to be among Europe's cheapest and attracted migrants from Asia and Africa seeking access to Europe via Poland. The cash-for-visa system was developed under the previous government of Law and Justice, in stark contrast to its anti-migrant policies and statements. The report released said that between 2018 and early 2024, thousands of visas were issued to people who paid hefty sums to agencies cooperating with Polish consulates.

Somalia says it welcomes Egypt's offer

MOGADISHU (AP): Somalia says Egypt has offered to deploy peacekeeping troops to the Horn of Africa nation in a security partnership that is emerging as the mandate of a long-time group of African Union peacekeepers winds down. Egyptian President Abdel Fattah el-Sissi attended a summit in the Eritrean capital, Asmara, where he and the leaders of Somalia and Eritrea pledged strong cooperation in regional security. Somali authorities said in a statement at the end of the summit that they welcomed Egypt's offer to deploy troops in Somalia as part of a stabilization force when the present African Union force disbands in December. The statement said the leaders welcomed the African Union Peace and Security Council's decision to launch the African Union Mission to Support Stabilization in Somalia, or AUSSOM, under whose mandate the Egyptians or others would be deployed. A separate statement following the summit signed by representatives of Somalia, Egypt and Eritrea asserted Somalia's sovereign right to determine the composition, tasks and deployment timeline for the AUSSOM troops. Somalia's federal government has been supported by an African Union peacekeeping mission since 2007 in fighting the Islamic extremist group al-Shabab, which has ties with al-Qaida and is responsible for deadly attacks in the country.



The summit in Asmara followed a period of tensions in the region stemming from disputes pitting Ethiopia against others. The first dispute — between Ethiopia and Egypt — is over Ethiopia's construction of a \$4 billion dam on the Blue Nile, a key tributary of the Nile River. Egypt fears it will have a devastating effect on water and irrigation supplies downstream in Egypt unless Ethiopia takes its needs into account. Ethiopia plans to use the dam to generate badly needed electricity. The second dispute — between Ethiopia and Somalia — is over Somalia's breakaway region of

Somaliland. Somalia has sought to block landlocked Ethiopia's ongoing efforts to gain access to the Red Sea via a contentious agreement with Somaliland to lease a stretch of land along its coastline, where Ethiopia would establish a marine force base. In return, Ethiopia would recognize Somaliland as an independent country, according to Somaliland authorities. Somaliland seceded from Somalia more than 30 years ago but is not recognized by the African Union or the United Nations as an independent state. Somalia still considers Somaliland part of its territory.

Italy formally opens centers in Albania to process male migrants

SHENGJIN (AP): Italy's government on Friday formally opened two centers in Albania where it plans to process male migrants who are intercepted in international waters. The opening was delayed for several months because crumbling soil at one center needed to be repaired. Italian Ambassador to Albania Fabrizio Bucci said the two centers are ready to process migrants, but could not say when the first ones would arrive. "As of today, the two centers are ready and operational," Bucci told journalists at the port of Shengjin on Albania's Adriatic coast where the migrants will land. Under a five-year deal signed last November by Italian Premier Giorgia Meloni and her Albanian counterpart, Edi Rama, up to 3,000 migrants picked up by the Italian coast guard in international waters each month will be

sheltered in Albania. They will be screened initially on board the ships that rescue them before being sent to Albania for further screening. The two centers will cost Italy 670 million euros (\$730 million) over five years. The facilities will be run by Italy and are under Italian jurisdiction, while Albanian guards will provide external security. An area in Shengjin, 66 kilometers (40 miles) northwest of the capital, Tirana, will be used for screening newcomers. Housing units, a small hospital, a detention center and offices at the port are surrounded by a five-meter (16-foot) high metal fence topped with barbed wire. The other center, about 22 kilometers (14 miles) to its east near a former military airport in Gjader, will accommodate migrants during the processing of their asylum requests in a

roughly 50-acre (20-hectare) site. The centers will only house adult men, with vulnerable people such as women, children, the elderly and those who are ill or victims of torture will be accommodated in Italy. Families will also not be separated. While in Albania, the migrants will retain their right under international and European Union law to apply for asylum in Italy and have their claims processed there. Each claim is expected to take about a month to process. Italy has agreed to welcome those who are granted asylum. Those whose applications are rejected face deportation directly from Albania. The controversial agreement to outsource the housing of asylum-seekers to a non-EU member country has been hailed by some countries that, like Italy, are suf-

fering a heavy burden of refugees. The agreement was endorsed by European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen as an example of "out-of-box thinking" in tackling the issue of migration into the European Union, but has been slammed by human rights groups as setting a dangerous precedent. Rama has made it clear that no other country will be able to have such centers in Albania. For Italy, they are considered an expression of gratitude for the tens of thousands of Albanians it welcomed with the fall of the communist regime in 1991. Meloni and her right-wing allies have long demanded that European countries share more of the migration burden. She has held up the Albania agreement as an innovative solution to a problem that has vexed the EU for years.

German police shut pro-Palestinian camp

BERLIN (AFP): German police have closed a pro-Palestinian protest camp that had invited Greta Thunberg, a vocal critic of Israel, who accused authorities of silencing activists. Police pointed to the fact that the Swedish climate activist had attended a pro-Palestinian rally in Berlin on Monday -- the anniversary of the October 7, 2023 Hamas attack on Israel -- that ended in clashes with police. Police in the western city of Dortmund shut a four-month-old protest camp that had invited the 21-year-old activist. Police said they had carried out a "risk assessment" and found that Thunberg's visit would have drawn large crowds. They amended an initial statement to delete a reference to Thunberg as a "potentially violent"

activist. Thunberg protested the move in a video message on social media site X, speaking with a Palestinian keffiyeh scarf over her shoulders. She said that after Dortmund protesters announced the invitation, "police came and told them that they had to pack up the camp and leave and that I would get arrested if I went there." "Germany is silencing and threatening activists who are speaking up against the genocide and occupation in Palestine," she charged. In an earlier video from the Berlin rally, Thunberg voiced anger about "how Germany and German police are treating peaceful protesters who are saying no to genocide". The Berlin rally ended with disturbances in which protesters hurled rocks,

bottles and fireworks at police. Germany, at pains to atone for the Holocaust, often stresses its strong support for Israel and Jewish communities everywhere. It has also urged Israel to comply with international law in the Gaza conflict and called for ceasefires in Gaza and Lebanon. Conservative politician Alexander Throm of the CDU-CSU demanded Thunberg, a founder of the Fridays For Future climate protest movement, be barred from the country. He told the Bild daily that "there is no place in Germany for haters of Jews, like Greta Thunberg". Throm said the Swede was abusing her prominence as a climate activist and called on Fridays for Future "to expressly distance themselves from Thunberg".

Ramaphosa won't be charged over farm scandal

JOHANNESBURG (BBC): South African prosecutors say they will not pursue criminal charges against President Cyril Ramaphosa in relation to the controversial farm theft scandal that nearly brought down the president two years ago. A former spy chief laid a criminal complaint against Ramaphosa, accusing him of committing irregularities in trying to hide the theft of \$4m (£3.25m) in cash at his game farm in the north-eastern Limpopo province. The president denied any wrongdoing, saying that the money stolen from his sofa in 2020 came from the legitimate sale of buffaloes at his Phala Phala farm. The decision not to bring any charges against Ramaphosa or anyone else came after "a comprehensive investigation process", prosecutors said. Ramaphosa survived the so-called "farmgate" scandal and was re-elected as president in June, albeit after being forced to form a coalition, while the

criminal investigations were still ongoing. In 2022, his African National Congress (ANC) used its majority to block an impeachment motion against him over the scandal. Last year, the anti-corruption watchdog cleared Ramaphosa amid calls for him to resign. Arthur Fraser, who headed the state security agency between 2016 and 2018, claimed that Ramaphosa hid the farm theft from police and tax authorities and instead organised the kidnapping and questioning of the robbers in an attempt to silence them. The president was also accused of money laundering, tax evasion and breaching foreign currency laws over the cash, which was in US dollars. Ramaphosa acknowledged the burglary but denied the criminal allegations, saying he had reported the break-in to the police. He has also disputed the amount of money involved and said it came from legitimate sales of game from his animal-breeding farm. The highly publicised burglary threw

Ramaphosa's government into turmoil ahead of a crucial party leadership vote. But an investigation into the matter has found insufficient evidence of corruption and money laundering, the National Prosecuting Authority (NPA) said. In a statement, Director of Public Prosecutions in Limpopo Ivy Thenga said the decision not to prosecute Ramaphosa was taken after a "careful assessment" of all available evidence presented to the prosecutors by the Directorate for Priority Crime Investigation (DPCI). "The available evidence presented to prosecutors cannot sustain any charge," NPA spokesman Mthunzi Mhaga said. The probe also covered any possible contravention of income tax and exchange control regulations, the prosecutor added. The case against three people accused of breaking into Ramaphosa's farm is set to continue next month. They appeared at a Limpopo court earlier this week on several charges, including money laundering and house-breaking.

New mayor takes office in southern Mexico

CHILPANCINGO (AP): A new mayor was sworn in a city in southern Mexico where his predecessor was killed and beheaded less than a week after taking office. The new mayor, Gustavo Alarcón, a doctor, had been elected as an alternate on the same ticket as deceased Mayor Alejandro Arce in the June election. Arcos took office on Oct. 1 in the violence-ravaged city of Chilpancingo, the capital of the southern state of Guerrero. But his beheaded body was found in a pickup truck Sunday; his head had been placed on the vehicle's roof. Two rival drug gangs are fighting to control the

city. Alarcón took the oath of office with a minimal security detail of a handful of police officers. He pledged to "work for the good of all" and fight the violence that has gripped Chilpancingo for years. Before he was killed, Arcos had told local media he needed more protection, but officials said no formal request had been received. State and federal governments can offer mayors bulletproof vehicles, additional bodyguards and emergency alert systems. It was not clear if Alarcón had been granted that kind of protection. Chilpancingo, a city of about 300,000, is dominated by two warring

drug gangs, the Ardiillos and the Tlacos. One staged a demonstration of hundreds of people, hijacked a government armored car, blocked a major highway and took police hostage in 2023 to win the release of arrested suspects. Earlier this week, federal Public Safety Secretary Omar García Harfuch said four mayors from other towns in Mexico had requested protection on Monday, a day after Arcos' remains were found. The requests came from Guerrero and another violence-plagued state, Guanajuato. The situation in Guanajuato is so bad that ahead of the country's June

elections, at least four mayoral candidates were killed. But violence in Guerrero reached such unprecedented levels that earlier this year, Roman Catholic bishops announced they had helped arrange a truce in another part of the state between two warring drug cartels. At the time, former president Andrés Manuel López Obrador—who refused to confront the gangs—said he approved of such talks. "Priests and pastors and members of all the churches have participated, helped in pacifying the country. I think it is very good," said López Obrador, who left office Sept. 30.

NATO will start an annual nuclear exercise

BRUSSELS (AP): NATO will hold a long-planned major nuclear exercise next week, the alliance's chief said, a few weeks after President Vladimir Putin announced changes to Russia's nuclear doctrine to discourage Ukraine's Western allies from supporting attacks on his country. The "Steadfast Noon" exercise starts on Monday and will run for about two weeks. It will be led by Belgium and the Netherlands, use eight military bases and involve 2,000 personnel and 60 aircraft from 13 nations. The exercise has been held at roughly the same time each year for over a decade. Bomber aircraft and fighter jets that can carry nuclear warheads are taking part. No live munitions are used. The bulk of the exercise is being held around 900 kilometers (560 miles) from Russia in the North Sea. Moscow has been informed about the drills, NATO officials say. "In an uncertain world, it

is vital that we test our defence and that we strengthen our defence so that our adversaries know that NATO is ready and is able to respond to any threat," new NATO Secretary-General Mark Rutte told reporters in London. The United States and the U.K., with their strategic nuclear forces, are key to NATO's security deterrence. France also has nuclear weapons but is not a part of the organization's nuclear planning group. Angus Lapsley, NATO Assistant Secretary General for Defense Policy and Planning, said the exercise is aimed at proving that the alliance's ability to counter any threat to its 32 member countries is credible and something that "any adversary would need to take extremely seriously indeed." Lapsley said that NATO has been monitoring the emergence of North Korea as a nuclear power, the rapid expansion of China's nuclear capabilities and developments in Iran —

"but obviously what worries us most is Russia." He said Moscow has been investing in its nuclear forces "with accelerating intensity" over the last two years, and that it is "introducing lots of novel systems and putting more emphasis on investment in short and intermediate range weapons systems." Lapsley noted that Moscow has recently been "talking an awful lot about their nuclear doctrine and how that may or not be evolving." He said that it appears to be "a pretty clear attempt to influence us" when it comes to support for Ukraine. Putin and other Kremlin voices have frequently threatened the West with Russia's nuclear arsenal. In a strong, new warning late last month, Putin said that a conventional attack on Russia by any country with the support of a nuclear power will be considered a joint attack. The threat was meant to dissuade the U.S. and its allies from allowing Ukraine to strike into

Russian territory with longer-range weapons and appears to significantly lower the threshold for the possible use of Russia's nuclear arsenal. But NATO has not seen any real change in Moscow's nuclear posture. Taking office on Oct. 1, Rutte stressed that while Putin's nuclear rhetoric was "reckless and irresponsible," there was no evidence of any imminent threat of nuclear weapons being used. Rutte said it's important to just leave Putin to "talk about his nuclear arsenal. He wants us also to discuss his nuclear arsenal, and I think we shouldn't." At the same time, Rutte said, giving in to any threat "would set a precedent that using military force allows a country to get what it wants, and we cannot do that." Daniel Bunch, the Chief of Nuclear Operations at NATO's military headquarters, said that while dozens of aircraft are involved, a lot of the drill is happening behind the scenes.

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Obama targets young voters

FORMER President Barack Obama will make his case for Vice President Kamala Harris on Thursday night during a rally at a Pittsburgh college campus, as Democrats seek to spur young people to vote in the Nov. 5 election.

Obama has been a vocal supporter of Harris since she ascended to the top of the Democratic ticket after President Joe Biden stepped aside in July following a poor debate performance against Republican former President Donald Trump.

Obama, whose White House term ended in 2017, is still popular with his party's base. His rally at the University of Pittsburgh, which he will headline while Harris campaigns in Nevada and Arizona, is the first of several events he plans to do in battleground states across the country in the coming weeks.

Obama is not the only former president the Harris campaign plans to deploy.

Bill Clinton, a two-term Democratic president and former Arkansas governor, will make stops in Georgia on Sunday and Monday before travelling to North Carolina for a bus tour later in the week in an effort to reach rural voters, according to a Reuters report.

Obama will say Harris and Minnesota Governor Tim Walz, her running mate, are uniquely positioned to lead the United States at this moment, according to his adviser Eric Schultz.

"He'll also talk about the enormous stakes and the risks involved in returning President Trump into office," Schultz said, according to a Reuters report.

Youth are a critical part of the coalition that the Harris campaign hopes will propel her to victory. But voter registration among young people in 34 states is down compared with four years ago, according to data updated in September from the Center for Information & Research on Civic Learning and Engagement at Tufts University.

The number of people between the ages of 18 and 29 who are registered to vote in Pennsylvania in September was 15 percent lower than it was on Election Day in 2020, the center's data showed.

Obama's engagement could help get young people motivated in the campaign's final stretch. The former president has sought to serve as a closer for Democratic candidates before, with events for Hillary Clinton in 2016 and for Biden in 2020, especially at the end of the election cycle when early voting had begun, as it has now.

Obama is focused on voters who can put the White House, the House of Representatives and the Senate in Democratic hands, another aide said. The former president has helped raise \$80 million for the 2024 presidential campaign, the Reuters report adds.

Obama and his wife Michelle gave rousing speeches in support of Harris at the Democratic National Convention in August; the former first lady is expected to campaign further for harris as well.

Harris was an early supporter of Barack Obama's own 2008 presidential bid, and he has helped her behind the scenes as the party's 2024 standard-bearer, encouraging her to tap talent to bolster her campaign, which she did.

The former president is viewed by some as having helped usher Biden out of the race after Democrats' worries about the 81-year-old leader's age and abilities skyrocketed after his June debate against Trump.

Harris and Trump remain in a close race, and winning Pennsylvania could be key to winning the White House.

Vice President Kamala Harris was set to attend a Univision town hall in Las Vegas and an evening rally in Phoenix while remaining in close contact with the White House and monitoring federal disaster response efforts.

Harris agreed to CNN town hall on Oct. 23 in Pennsylvania, her campaign chair Jen O'Malley Dillon said in a Thursday statement.

It comes after former President Donald Trump ruled out another debate with Harris after their first head-to-head contest last month. Harris had called for Trump to face her once more before polls close.

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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.

US hypocrisy on Taiwan hurts world order

Maya Majueran

LAI Ching-te's recent comments on "the motherland" can be seen as a veiled form of "Taiwan independence" theory, which will no doubt escalate cross-strait tensions.

Taiwan has been an integral part of China's territory since ancient times. Separated from the Chinese mainland by the Taiwan Strait, Taiwan's status as part of China has not changed despite the sordid efforts of the "Taiwan independence" forces on the island and some Western powers' attempts to sow discord across the Strait.

This position is backed by international law, including United Nations General Assembly Resolution 2758 which was adopted by an overwhelming majority on Oct 25, 1971. The resolution recognizes the People's Republic of China as the only legitimate government of China and affirms that Taiwan is an integral part of China. Consequently, the government of the People's Republic of China is the sole representative of China in the UN, and the Taiwan island has no status as a separate entity.

The UN and its affiliated bodies have consistently upheld this resolution, rejecting any claims of Taiwan's international representation.

Key historical documents such as the 1943 Cairo Declaration and the 1945 Potsdam Proclamation also confirm Taiwan's status as part of China's territory. These declarations, which are legally binding and integral to the post-World War II international order, mandated that the Taiwan island, seized by Japan during its imperialist expansion, should be returned to China.

Given these historical and legal precedents, Taiwan has no legal standing to participate in the UN or any other global or regional organization exclusive to sovereign states. In spite of these facts, the United States continues to challenge international law and norms by covertly promoting Taiwan's efforts to be admitted as a member to UN bodies, if not the UN itself, and spreading misleading information on the Taiwan question.

As a founding member of the UN, a permanent member of the Security Council, and a signatory to the Cairo Declaration and Potsdam Proclamation, the US should have been fully aware of Taiwan's legal status.

Yet disregarding its responsibilities and commitments, the US has adopted

ed policies and laws that undermine China's sovereignty, such as the "Taiwan Relations Act", which contravenes the three Sino-US joint communiques that form the basis of diplomatic ties between China and the US.

The "Taiwan Relations Act", enacted in 1979, not only violates international law but also contradicts the US' own recognition of the People's Republic of China as the sole legal government of China. It has been a primary driver of continued tensions across the Taiwan Strait, enabling the US to maintain unofficial relations with the Taiwan island, and sell weapons and military equipment to the island. The US' attempts to interfere in the Taiwan question have disrupted peace in the region.

The US' actions expose its double standard. While Washington publicly acknowledges the one-China principle, it simultaneously provokes Beijing with arms sales and high-profile visits by US politicians to the island. The claim that Washington's version of the one-China principle is different from Beijing's is nothing more than a thinly veiled attempt to justify its interference in China's internal affairs.

China has been left with no choice but to respond with legal measures against the separatist activities on the island, including criminal penalties for those advocating for "Taiwan independence". This reflects Beijing's firm stance on protecting its territorial integrity and opposing any form of foreign meddling.

There are those in Taiwan, and the US who benefit from pushing the two sides of the Strait toward conflict. For decades, Beijing has maintained its commitment to reunifying Taiwan with the motherland through peaceful means. The central government has repeatedly emphasized dialogue, economic integration and cultural exchanges as the preferred path to resolving the Taiwan question. However, the rhetoric and actions of certain political actors in the US and Taiwan are complicating this approach.

The Taiwan question is an internal affair of China, and any external interference in it is a breach of international norms. The US must respect the legal and historical realities of Taiwan's status and cease its provocative actions that threaten regional stability. Only by adhering to international law can the US help maintain global peace and order.

Importance of Shanghai Cooperation Organization

Farhan Khan

THE Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) is an intergovernmental international organization, established on 15 June 2001 in Shanghai. The six founding countries included the Republic of Kazakhstan, the People's Republic of China, the Kyrgyz Republic, the Russian Federation, the Republic of Tajikistan and the Republic of Uzbekistan.

In 2002, the Charter of the SCO was signed at the meeting of the Council of Heads of States in St. Petersburg, which entered into force on 19 September 2003. It is a statute that stipulates the goals, principles, structure and major areas of activities of the organization.

The goals of the SCO are to strengthen mutual trust,

General and Director of the RATS Executive Committee, respectively.

The official languages of the SCO are Russian and Chinese and currently, the SCO countries include: Islamic Republic of Pakistan, Republic of Belarus, Republic of India, Islamic Republic of Iran, Republic of Kazakhstan, People's Republic of China, Kyrgyz Republic, Russian Federation, Republic of Tajikistan, Republic of Uzbekistan with two Observer States i.e. Mongolia and Afghanistan (whose current government is not recognized by most of the Member States) and dialogue partners including Armenia, Azerbaijan, Bahrain, Cambodia, Egypt, Kuwait, Maldives, Myanmar, Nepal, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Sri Lanka, Turkey and UAE. The SCO Member States roughly

Internally, the SCO adheres to the "Shanghai spirit", namely; mutual trust, mutual benefit, equality, consultation, respect for diversity of civilizations and pursuit of common development.

The supreme decision-making body of the SCO is the Council of Heads of States (CHS). It meets once a year and decides upon all the important political, security and strategic issues of the Organization. The Council of Heads of Government (CHG) is the second most important forum that deals with socio-cultural, economic, trade and humanitarian as well as personnel and budgetary matters of the SCO. The Member States are represented at the CHS by the Presidents whereas the CHG comprises Prime Ministers of the Members States.

friendship and good-neighbourliness between the Member States; to encourage the effective cooperation between the Member States in politics, trade, economy, science and technology, culture, education, energy, transport, tourism, and environmental protection etc; to jointly ensure and maintain peace, security and stability in the region and to promote a democratic, fair and rational international political and economic order.

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The supreme decision-making body of the SCO is the Council of Heads of States (CHS). It meets once a year and decides upon all the important political, security and strategic issues of the Organization. The Council of Heads of Government (CHG) is the second most important forum that deals with socio-cultural, economic, trade and humanitarian as well as personnel and budgetary matters of the SCO. The Member States are represented at the CHS by the Presidents whereas the CHG comprises Prime Ministers of the Members States.

However, Pakistan and India are generally represented by their Prime Ministers at the CHS and Foreign Ministers at the CHG due to difference in presidential and parliamentary form of government. Iran is also represented by its First Vice President at the CHG. In addition to the meetings of the CHS and the CHG, there are other mechanisms for meetings on foreign affairs, national defense, security, economy and trade, culture, health, education, transport, emergency prevention and relief, science and technology, agriculture, the judiciary, tourism, industry, energy, poverty alleviation, sports, etc.

The Council of National Coordinators is the SCO coordination mechanism. The Organization has two permanent bodies - the Secretariat in Beijing and the Executive Committee of the Regional Anti-Terrorism Structure (RATS) in Tashkent. On January 1, 2022, H.E. Mr. Zhang Ming of China and H.E. Mr. R. E. Mirzaev of Uzbekistan assumed office as the SCO Secretary

comprise over one-fifth of the World's landmass, over two-fifths of the World's population, and around one-fourth of the global GDP.

Pakistan became an Observer State of SCO in 2005. It became a full Member during the CHS meeting, held in Astana in 2017. Pakistan will host the 23rd meeting of the Council of Heads of Government (CHG) of the SCO Member States from 15 to 16 October 2024 in Islamabad. Since being a full member, this will be the first highest level meeting to be hosted by Pakistan. It is a matter of great pride for the country. While Pakistan has been hosting various multilateral events from time to time, an international event of this stature is being hosted after a considerable gap. (Pakistan hosted the ECO Summit in March 2017 and meetings of the OIC Council of Foreign Ministers in December 2021 and March 2022.)

The SCO Member States will be represented at the meeting by the Prime Ministers of China, Russian Federation, Belarus, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan, First Vice President of Iran and Minister for External Affairs of India. Prime Minister of Mongolia (Observer State), Deputy Prime Minister of Turkmenistan (Special Guest) and representatives of some international organizations will also attend.

In his capacity as the current Chair of CHG, Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif will preside over the proceedings of the forthcoming CHG meeting. The meeting will take stock of the ongoing cooperation in the fields of economy, trade, environment and socio-cultural linkages. It will also review the SCO's performance and approve its budget.

Since becoming a member in 2017, Pakistan has worked consistently and constructively to strengthen good-neighbourly relations and mutually beneficial cooperation among SCO member States. Hosting of CHG reflects Pakistan's abiding commitment to the goals and principles of SCO Charter and the values of "Shanghai Spirit." In line with the international practice, and our own traditions, Pakistan will extend due courtesies to all the participating delegations.

Is there a crisis of representative politics in Europe?

THE basis of democracy is political representation, as citizens do not directly rule. Liberal democracy is essentially representative democracy, whereby political rule is effectively conducted by political parties through the electoral process. Direct rule by "the people" has a limited role to play and, as in the Brexit referendum in 2016, it can have a detrimental outcome. The other major dimension of democratic government is the rule of law, as in constitutionalism. Now, in recent years, there has been much talk of the crisis of democracy, even its end. For democracy to be in jeopardy, there would need to be either a major crisis of representation or of the rule of law, or some combination of both. Is this likely?

A shift towards authoritarianism?

In much of the world, there has been a clear, if variable, drift towards authoritarianism, as reflected most notably in the Russian Federation, recently in Israel, India, and the US since former President Donald Trump. But in Europe, aside from some outliers such as Hungary, this trend is less evident — though it may now be emerging with the extreme right gaining electoral ground. In 2023, the extreme right emerged as the largest party in the

Netherlands and in 2024 in Austria. The rise of illiberalism and the specter of authoritarianism need to be carefully assessed and their causes identified. I suggest that such trends, which are not irreversible, are expressions of a crisis of representation rather than a product of widespread approval of fascism or due to the appeal of the extreme right.

It does appear to be the case that there is an increase in public distrust of politicians, lower electoral turnout, and declining membership of political parties. Young people especially appear to be withdrawing, and there is widespread complacency and cynicism about democracy. There is even the belief that democracy does not work or is unable to fix a broken world. Yet, disaffection with democracy does not stop grievances from being expressed.

Instead, disaffection takes the form of anti-establishment attitudes, which are almost always at the expense of the mainstream parties of the right and especially the left.

The extreme right are the main benefactors of this crisis of legitimacy of representative politics, but not the main cause. As these parties enter into government, they also lose their character as anti-establishment.

I suggest that the problems are largely structural in that they derive from the

Gerard Delanty

limitations of representative politics, which is systematically unable to resolve the conflict between individual and collective interests. For democracy to work, it must, at some level, satisfy both. In the period since 1945, it was arguably the case that capitalism tempered by democracy struck a balance between the collective interest and individual interests. The former has been progressively eroded and the era of neoliberalism gave legitimacy to the politics of individual interest (which is easier to satisfy through short-term quick fixes than is the collective interest, which requires long-term goals).

I think what we are seeing today is that many people are now realizing that their own individual interests are also not being served by their electoral representatives. The result, as political theorists such as Ben Ansell in *Why Politics Fails* (2023) and David Runciman in *How Democracy Ends* (2018) have argued, is a failure of politics, which can be understood more as an internal crisis of democracy than an external one (for example, from war or organized political violence) and deriving from its weaknesses.

Crisis of representation in Europe

While constitutionalism

does not appear to be in crisis in Europe in the way that it is in the US, one major weakness is that the demands and expectations of citizens cannot any longer be met by political representation. It is not that there is no desire for collective interests or an absence of solidarity in favor of a turn to individual interests — on the contrary, there is an ever-greater desire for the collective interest to be served. The problem is rather that the institutional form of democratic representation is unable to deal with the expectations of citizens, partly because of the nature of new expectations, which go beyond the older demands that were easier to realize, challenges such as climate politics, a more complicated situation of human rights and gender politics, and greater societal complexity.

Representation, rooted in the old ideologies, also no longer works well in the context of digital media, the tyranny of algorithms, and the perpetual reporting of corruption and scandal. Increased knowledge by citizens leads to greater skepticism and distrust. These trends are all occurring at a time when political parties and political leaders are losing their role as the gatekeepers of the state. In an era of technocracy, experts are playing an increasingly important role in governance, which con-

sequently gradually loses its representative nature, and, as Jonathan White has shown in *The Long Run* (2024), democracy ends up caught in the trap of short-termism. It is also caught in the trap of often being too slow, in contrast to fast capitalism.

In this situation, it is hardly surprising that there is increased polarization, atomization, and a transformation of politics by fear or by the cult of personality. This makes it harder to achieve the kind of rational consensus that Habermas, in his theory of the public sphere, saw as the core of democracy. The resulting instability has not yet led to a crisis of governance, as coalitions are, at least for now, still able to prevent the extreme right from gaining an absolute governing majority.

It is also not the case that progressive politics is at an end. As Simon Torney has shown very well in *The End of Representative Politics* (2015), it is just that it does not express itself entirely through the organs of representative democracy, but through other forms of mobilization and collective action. The fundamental fact is that democracy has reached the critical juncture at which representation and citizen expectations are not identical. This has created an inchoate void that is filled by many voices.

— *Anadolu*

I resigned as a US diplomat because I will not be the face of a policy supporting Israel

Hala Rharrit

WHEN I became an American diplomat in 2006, I swore an oath “to support and defend the Constitution of the United States”. It is in the spirit and implementation of that oath that I resigned from the US State Department in April. My resignation was an act of protest against Washington’s illegal, inhumane and failed Gaza policy, which has continued to surge US military assistance to Israel despite credible evidence of violations of international and US law.

During my 18-year diplomatic career, I served throughout the region, including Yemen, Qatar, Egypt and the UAE. I also had assignments outside the Middle East, in Washington and Hong Kong, and I served as the Political/Economic Unit Chief at the American consulate in Durban, South Africa. Diplomacy has always been a passion and a natural career path, given my undergraduate and master’s degrees in international affairs and Arab Studies from George Washington University and Georgetown University’s School of Foreign Service, respectively. I also worked on Capitol Hill and in think tanks in Washington before joining the State Department. As a political adviser in the US Foreign Service, I worked on a range of issues from human rights to counterterrorism, and collaborated with US agencies on implementing laws like the Leahy Law, which prohibits the American government from providing assistance to foreign military units that commit gross violations of human rights.

Drawing on this cumulative experience, I could not, in good conscience, implement such a catastrophic, militaristic policy as the one we have all seen unfold in Gaza – and now in Lebanon. This policy, characterised by continuous arms transfers to Israel and political protection on the world stage, is enabling actions the International Court of Justice has determined could plausibly violate the Genocide Convention. As an American diplomat who cares deeply about the importance of rule of law and human rights, I could not brush this to the side.

What innocent Palestinians have suffered and endured for the past year is abhorrent – from incessant displacement to constant bombardment, to the deprivation of food, water and medicine. These are potential war crimes.

US policy implicitly supporting the commission of these acts, moreover, is not making Israel any safer (arguably, it does the opposite). Despite its stated goal, it has failed to secure the release of Israeli hostages, whose families continue to suffer. It has destabilised the Middle East to the brink of an all-out war. It has destroyed US credibility while threatening US national security. And it has unleashed generational trauma which, if left unremedied, will ensure a never-ending and vicious cycle of violence.

Crucially, this US policy not only supports violations of international law, but violates US law, too. The US government has systems in place to ensure situations

like this do not happen – specifically, that American arms exports are not used to commit gross human rights violations. This is meant to help prevent American complicity in war crimes or crimes against humanity. These include Leahy Vetting (the process the State Department uses to ensure adherence to the Leahy Law), the Arms Export Control Act and the Foreign Assistance Act. But the administration of President Joe Biden and Vice President Kamala Harris is wilfully bypassing and violating these safeguards.

There is overwhelming evidence, including from within the State Department, that US arms are being used in a manner that contravenes the laws I mentioned above. US military assistance to Israel, in spite of that evidence, has continued to surge – and at record levels. This has emboldened Israel’s Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and resulted in a sense of impunity which assures incessant escalation in the region, threatening everyone’s security.

In my last diplomatic role, as Spokesperson based at the US State Department’s Regional Media Hub at the US Consulate in Dubai, I was charged with reporting to Washington how traditional and social media across the Arab world covered the Gaza crisis and how US messaging was being received throughout the region. Every day, I documented for Washington the massacres Israeli forces were perpetrating in Gaza, often sharing gruesome images and videos that were going viral across the Arab world of children being bombed and starved. These reports included warnings of US complicity, such as the use of American-made bombs on civilians and civilian infrastructure – potential war crimes.

In any other situation, these reports, along with many others that were coming directly from American officials and subject-matter experts, would have prompted, at the very least, concerns and a review of US weapons assistance. Instead, the opposite occurred. Although I was assured throughout the conflict that my reports were being read at the “highest levels” of the State Department and shared many times with the White House’s National Security Council, I was told in January that the daily snapshots I was producing were no longer needed. I was pressured instead to go out on Arab media to promote the Biden-Harris administration’s Gaza policy. I refused.

As an American diplomat, I refused to propagate falsehoods and be the face of a policy that was resulting in the mass killings and starvation of innocent civilians. I objected that this was not only inhumane and immoral, but also illegal and against America’s interests. I warned that Washington’s blatant double standards and dehumanisation of Palestinians was ruinous to America’s credibility throughout the Arab world, resulting in a seismic growth of anti-American sentiment across the region and ultimately threatening to US national security. I contended that, unless we changed course immediately, the impact

would be felt for generations.

It became clear, however, that no matter what I or other American diplomats did, reported, documented or warned, the policy was not shifting. I took my service to the American people very seriously, and after doing all I could from within the system to little avail, I began to feel that I was violating the oath I took in 2006. So I resigned.

As someone who truly believes in the power of diplomacy and in the US’s potential to play a positive role in the world, it has been devastating to watch my country refuse to use its powerful diplomatic leverage on Israel to achieve a ceasefire and secure a sustained and just resolution to this historic conflict.

Now, the region is potentially on the brink of an all-out war. Millions have been displaced and more than 40,000 have been killed in Gaza – including well over 10,000 children. It’s worth repeating: well over 10,000 innocent children killed and another 20,000 orphaned as they continue to be wilfully starved and incessantly bombed. Now in Lebanon, despite reported agreement from Hezbollah to a US and French-supported ceasefire deal last month, Israel continues to pound civilian areas and the death toll has surpassed 2,000. These are not mere numbers, but rather innocent people with families and aspirations. Allowing this level of killing to continue is as unconscionable as it is indefensible.

None of this was necessary and has instead been disastrously counter-productive. Diplomacy, not more arms, was and continues to be the only answer. This failed and intransigent Biden-Harris policy has not achieved any of its stated objectives, most notably the release of all Israeli hostages or the destruction of Hamas. It is only ensuring a never-ending cycle of violence, revenge, extremism and hate. The generational trauma that the children of Gaza, the West Bank and now Lebanon are experiencing will have an enduring impact.

The families of Israeli hostages themselves have been protesting for months against Mr Netanyahu and his far-right government, demanding an end to the violence and agreement to the ceasefire deal Hamas had already accepted. Yet it is abundantly clear, for Mr Netanyahu’s own political survival and in his pursuit to “reshape” the Middle East, civilians are wilfully and easily sacrificed. Enough is enough. This needs to end and it requires collective action.

There is another way. The US needs to implement and follow its own laws requiring a review and suspension of lethal military assistance to Israel. Friends and allies of America ought to implore it to do so. America must end its complicity and insist on a just and sustainable peace. A ceasefire is possible, if Washington uses its leverage with Israel to push the Israeli government to accept one. No more bombs, no more dangerous and catastrophic escalation. Diplomacy and a recognition of our common humanity is the only solution to end the carnage and save the region from all-out war.

— *The National*

Europe needs to help Ukraine defend itself – with or without US support

LAST month, I attended the annual Yalta European Strategy (YES) summit, which brings together many of Europe and North America’s defence communities. The topic this year was clear: Ukraine must win.

Hovering in the background, however, was the constant image of former US president Donald Trump swooping down to end western support for their defence (were he to win the presidential election in November), and the bloody ongoing wars in the Middle East.

In many ways, despite Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy’s embattled pleas at the UN General Assembly earlier this month to continue helping his country, Israel’s war in Gaza and Lebanon – and the fear of a full-scale one with Iran – has dominated the news and many a policymaker’s attention.

And yet the consensus at YES was that Ukraine must win.

There are strategic reasons for holding Ukraine’s frontlines, beyond the moral question of a neighbour whose sovereign territory has been invaded and must be defended. Ever since Russia launched a full-scale invasion against what they believe to be a Nato frontier two years ago, most European capitals have supported Kyiv from the first day of the war.

Ukraine is the US’s top recipient of foreign aid, followed by Israel. It is the first time a

European country has achieved that since the Marshall Plan, the initiative then US president Harry S Truman launched to help rebuild the continent after the Second World War.

According to a recent report by the Council on Foreign Relations, most of the aid sent to Kyiv goes towards procuring defence weapons, training personnel and gathering intelligence to defeat Russia, which has one of the world’s most powerful militaries.

But as the US presidential election rolls closer, with the shadow of Mr Trump – a Ukraine sceptic – lurking, many voters and several members of Congress are questioning why Washington is pouring so much money into the Ukrainian government’s coffers. Isn’t it a European security issue, many ask?

According to CFR, it should not be only Europe’s problem. “Nato allies are particularly wary of being pulled directly into the hostilities, which could dramatically raise the risk of a nuclear war. However, as the fighting has progressed, many donor governments have shed their reluctance to give Ukraine more sophisticated assets, such as battle tanks and modern fighter aircraft,” the report said.

Since Russia’s full-scale invasion, the EU has been united for Ukraine, with the bloc providing more than 88 billion (\$96.3 billion) in economic, humanitarian

Janine di Giovanni

and military support. It has also imposed sanctions on Russian individuals and worked to fight disinformation from the Kremlin.

Victor Pinchuk, the Ukrainian billionaire who hosts the YES summit in Kyiv each year, wrote in *Politico* that, if “the West doesn’t help back Ukraine, your lives will not be the same”. This year, he went so far as to claim that Russian troops could be on the streets of several European capitals if more military aid didn’t reach Ukraine.

If Mr Trump wins in November, there is uncertainty around whether he will return to the “America First” isolationist policies of his previous term. But during an interview to the journalist Fareed Zakaria at the YES summit, Mike Pompeo, secretary of state in the previous Trump administration, suggested that this wouldn’t happen.

In geopolitical terms, he said, Ukraine must win for the US, as well as for Europe, to be secure. America needs strategic partners, he insisted, which runs contrary to Mr Trump’s previous threats of pulling out of Nato.

“Keep in mind that there can be no American security without Ukraine’s victory and strong European security,” Mr Pompeo added.

Let’s assume the worse-case scenario for Ukraine and its western supporters: its troops

cannot push Russia back, and they lose. Many more Ukrainians would flee – which appears to be part of Moscow’s strategy – with Europe being the most likely destination. Another influx of refugees would prove costly for their host countries (at the last count, there are about 6.3 million Ukrainians living outside the country).

As Mr Pinchuk pointed out, “if, for example, five million more Ukrainians flee as Russia advances, it would cost Europe billions of euros more per month additionally”.

Ukrainians are said to be hardworking and often highly educated. After war broke out in 2022, several European countries opened their doors to them. They put their children in schools, offered them language training, and helped find them jobs. It was an extraordinary show of solidarity.

Many of my neighbours, here in France, opened spare bedrooms to strangers. I have never seen this happen before, even during the wave of refugees and migrants pouring into Europe during the Syrian civil war. It is no secret that Ukrainian refugees were treated far better than African or Middle Eastern refugees who were brutally turned away from the Eastern European borders in 2015.

Down the line, this could be problematic, causing rifts for future generations of new immigrants.

There are other major consequences to Ukraine losing the war.

The Baltic states are likely to be under constant threat. With Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania and Finland having already experienced Russian invasions in the past, their peoples are anxious. Political parties sympathetic to Moscow are on the rise in some of these countries. It is no coincidence that Kaja Kallas, Estonia’s prime minister until July, has been chosen to replace the departing Josep Borrell as the EU’s foreign and security policy chief.

Then there is Moldova, just a few hours’ drive from the Ukrainian port of Odesa, a country already in conflict with Russia over the state of Transnistria. President Maia Sandu recently said: “There is nothing more important than helping Ukraine win the war.”

Georgia, a former Soviet republic like Moldova and some of the Baltic states, is equally vulnerable. As this deeply divided country goes to the polls later this month, a pro-Moscow political party called Georgian Dream has unleashed a propaganda campaign.

All this is to say that for Europe to ensure its peace and security, it has no option but to continue supporting Ukraine – with or without America’s help.

The EU has already taken a decisive lead in this regard, but there is a long way to go yet.

EU should avoid trade war over EVs

Harald Brüning

THE dispute within the European Union surrounding Chinese electric vehicles has seen new developments. The European Commission’s proposal to impose definitive countervailing duties on imports of battery electric vehicles from China has obtained the necessary support from EU member states for the adoption of tariffs on Oct 4. The high number of countries that abstained from voting was puzzling, because it included several countries that have sought closer relations with China in the recent past.

The protectionist tariffs were proposed in June by the EC, which claimed Chinese-made EVs were benefiting from government subsidies and thus enjoying an unfair advantage against EU carmakers. Beijing has denied having ever subsidized the EV industry, saying it “firmly opposes the unfair, illegal and unreasonable protectionist practices of the EU in this case, and resolutely opposes the EU

additional countervailing duties on China electric vehicles”.

The fact is that the EC has the exclusive powers to determine the bloc’s external commercial policy, and, in this case, to ensure that its desired tariffs on Chinese-made EVs finally get off the ground.

The problem for the EU is that its number one car-manufacturing state, Germany, voted, understandably, against the proposal, since its giant auto companies such as Mercedes-Benz, Volkswagen and BMW have heavily, and profitably, invested in China. This has set German Chancellor Olaf Scholz of the center-left Social Democratic Party against his compatriot Ursula von der Leyen, whose conservative Christian Democratic Union is Germany’s main opposition party.

Incidentally, the auto industry accounted for nearly one-quarter of Germany’s total domestic industry revenue in 2022.

The Oct 4 vote hurts

Germany’s national interests, that is, the interests of both its carmakers (employers, employees and their families) and consumers that look for affordable, eco-friendly vehicles.

a way out of the conundrum. In this compromise solution, Chinese carmakers would have to commit to setting minimum prices for their

on imported goods to offset the unfair price advantage the goods-making companies hold due to subsidies paid by the government of

.....

Incidentally, the auto industry accounted for nearly one-quarter of Germany’s total domestic industry revenue in 2022. The Oct 4 vote hurts Germany’s national interests, that is, the interests of both its carmakers (employers, employees and their families) and consumers that look for affordable, eco-friendly vehicles. The EC said in its statement that the vote represents another step toward the conclusion of its anti-subsidy investigation. But it was quick to add that, "in parallel, the EU and China continue to work hard to explore an alternative solution that would have to be fully WTO-compatible..."

.....

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I believe the “price commitment” approach could be

EVs sold in the EU, and I hope the minimum prices would be low and acceptable to Brussels and Beijing.

As a German and EU citizen living in China’s Macao Special Administrative Region, I can only hope that both sides will be able to hammer out a win-win deal by the end of this month.

The term “countervailing duty”, that is, a duty levied

the exporting country is often little more than a euphemism for imposing punitive and/or protectionist tariffs.

German Finance Minister Christian Lindner of the pro-business Free Democratic Party responded to the troublesome outcome of the EU members’ vote, saying the EC “should not trigger a trade war...We need a negoti-

ated solution.”

The auto sector accounts for 2.5 million direct and 10.3 million indirect jobs across the 27-member EU. Last year, Chinese-made EVs accounted for 19 per-

The EU auto market is much more important to China than the US market because of which Washington’s recent decision to impose 100 percent tariffs on Chinese-made EVs is politically annoying, but economically less so.

The EC’s aim is to make it more difficult for Chinese automakers to compete in the EU, many of whose automakers are still struggling to catch up with their Chinese counterparts that have rapidly transitioned to EVs.

Instead of resorting to protectionism to cope with the competition from Chinese-made EVs, EU states’ governments should do everything in line with World Trade Organization rules to help their countries’ automakers expedite their development, especially in making EVs.

Protectionism hinders industrial modernization, a field in which the EU and other Western economies are lagging behind China. It’s time Western economies rolled up their sleeves and

learned from their competitors, including those in China, even on the price front.

Let’s hope the last-ditch China-EU negotiations help the two sides to strike a compromise acceptable to both.

In today’s fast-changing political, economic, strategic and environmental landscapes, a trade war between the EU and China is the last thing the world needs, not least because they are among the world’s top three trading economies and their mutually beneficial trade relations still have a lot of potential. What we need most urgently today is free and fair, and mutually beneficial trade. But without the goodwill of all sides, this can never be achieved.

So I hope the EU’s and China’s negotiators will reach a mutually acceptable deal by the end of the month. I am sure car company employers, executives and workers, and consumers both in China and the EU would be grateful for their success.

In the Court of Faheem
Ahmed Civil Judge-IX
Kohat, Suit no.54/1,
Date of hearing: 12-10-
2024, Titled:- Taj Gul Vs
Fazal Hadi (etc), Notice
against:- (6)Naseeb Gul
Son (7)Mst. Meena Jan
(Late)Widow of Siraj
Gul R/o Gumbat District
Kohat presently R/o (now
in Abroad) (Defendants)
Whereas the above plain-
tiff has instituted a civil
suit against you
Defendants in which date
of hearing 12-10-2024 is
fixed for your appearance
Since your
intimation/service is not
possible through ordinary
means/mode therefore
you Defendants is inti-
mated through this publi-
cation to appear before
this court by person or by
pleader on date fixed 12-
10-2024 otherwise court
shall be proceeded in
accordance with law
order Issued on.09-09-
2024 (Court of CJ-IX
Kohat)



In brief

Govt to promote departmental sports

ISLAMABAD (APP): Adviser to the Prime Minister on Political and Public Affairs, Rana Sanaullah, has emphasized the government's commitment to promoting departmental sports, citing it as a top priority for Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif. While presiding over the review meeting on the revival of departmental sports here on Friday, Sanaullah, who also holds the portfolio of Ministry of Inter Provincial Coordination (IPC) stressed that maintaining departmental sports is a national responsibility for every institution. "We must work together to create a sports-friendly environment that attracts youth and everyone towards games," he said. He highlighted the importance of sports in engaging and positively influencing the youth, particularly in the face of negative social media impacts and organized crime. "The future of our generations is linked to sports development and promotion," he said. On revival of departmental sports, Sanaullah directed departments to create their own sports policies for athlete job security. He said steps are being taken to allocate sports quota for recruitment in departments. The formation of a healthy society is connected with sports and the government, under the Prime Minister's leadership, is determined to take all necessary steps to promote sports nationwide, he said. Attendees included Federal Secretary for Ministry of Inter Provincial Coordination (IPC) Nadeem Irshad Kayani, representatives from Wapda, Ministry of Railways, Police, NAB, FIA, Higher Education Commission, Pakistan Army, Rangers, Pakistan Navy, and other departments.

Ronaldo sent fiery message to ex-Real Madrid star

MADRID (Agencies): Portuguese football legend Cristiano Ronaldo has been accused of sending a list of all his trophies and achievements, along with a fiery voice note, to Italian footballer Antonio Cassano. Cassano, 42, accused Ronaldo, 39, of sending him a text listing all of the trophies he has won, the goals he has scored, and the statistics from his career, after the Italian left him out of his top 10 list of the greatest players of all time. Goal reported. He mentioned the likes of Lionel Messi, Pele, and Diego Maradona in his list but left out Ronaldo. The claims, made by Cassano, came as he recently appeared on The BSMT Podcast, hosted by Italian radio host Gianluca Gazzoli. During the podcast, former Real Madrid star told Gazzoli that he believed that "Ronaldo is number one". Then, he clarified that he was referring to the former Brazilian football legend who is the third-highest goal scorer for his national team and goes by the same name as the five-time Ballon d'Or award winner. "I said Ronaldo is number one, the Brazilian. Cristiano Ronaldo doesn't make my top five, or even top ten, because for me the quality of a player is another thing," Cassano told Gazzoli, during the podcast. The former Roma, AC Milan and Inter Milan star alleged that after his remarks, he got a text message from a number originating from Spain, listing all the trophies, goals and statistics Ronaldo has under his name. "Then he (Ronaldo) sends me a voice note, telling me, 'You disrespected me, don't do anything like that again. You only scored 150 goals, you only won four trophies.' Perfect.

PCB adds Dar, Azhar, others to national selection committee

LAHORE (Monitoring Desk): The Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB) on Friday announced changes to the national selection committee, adding some former Pakistani cricketers to the body.

In its announcement, the governing body of cricket confirmed that the new additions to the committee include, former cricketer Aqib Javed, ex-captain Azhar Ali and former International Cricket

Council (ICC) umpire and first-class cricketer Aleem Dar. Additionally, Hassan Cheema was also confirmed by the board as the new addition to the committee. Meanwhile, right-handed batter Asad Shafiq retained his membership of the committee.

According to sources, Javed will oversee other key matters of committee while top-order batter Ali has been tasked with youth development chores.

Furthermore, Cheema will serve as the data analyst for the selection team.

The previous selection committee consisted of members such as the captain, head coach, Shafiq, and five non-voting members. The latest development comes two weeks after former cricketer Muhammad Yousuf resigned from his position.

In a statement on X, Yousuf said: "I announce my resignation as a selector

for the Pakistan cricket team for 'personal reasons'. Serving this incredible team has been a profound privilege, and I am proud to have contributed to the growth and success of Pakistan Cricket".

In regard to this, the new roles of the captain, head coach, and the non-voting five members in the new selection team is yet to be announced by the national board in the forthcoming week.

Pakistan to overcome mistakes in next matches

MULTAN (APP): Pakistan Test Captain Shan Masood said that mistakes would be overcome in the next test match and the best team would be selected as per the conditions.

He praised the English cricket team after their commanding performance in the first Test match in Multan, which saw the hosts defeated. Holding a post-match press conference, Masood commended England's approach, saying they provided a valuable lesson on how to find ways to win in challenging situations.

"England played exceptionally well and deserved to win. They have shown us how to carve out a path to victory," Masood remarked. "We tend to overemphasize the pitch and we expected the pitch in Multan to break down sooner, but we aimed to extend our first innings" he said and added that, unfortunately, the team could not capitalize.

He added that both teams were evenly matched, but conditions changed over five days adding that by Day 4 or 5, the pitch was not the same as Day 1. We were disappointed with the loss, but credit goes to England for playing a smart, well-executed game," he maintained.

The Pakistan skipper expressed regret over missing the opportunity to secure the match. The team had the game set up, but let it slip away. Moving forward, we need to adapt better to the changing conditions over five days and work as a team to find solutions," Masood said.

When asked about the absence of key spinner Abrar Ahmed, Masood revealed that the bowler was undergoing treatment in hospital. "Abrar was seriously unwell during the match due to fever and body aches. We wish him a speedy recovery," Masood said. On the underperformance of Pakistan's star batsmen Babar Aзам and Mohammad Rizwan, Masood defended his teammates. "Babar and Rizwan were our best batsmen, but unfortunately, their form did not click in this match. It was just bad luck.

Looking ahead, Masood promised that Pakistan will field their best team in the second Test. "We will assess the conditions and select accordingly. We have learned a lot from this defeat and will aim to bounce back stronger," he concluded.

Australia on brink of semis after thumping Pakistan

DUBAI (Agencies): Australia all but secured their place in the semi-finals of the Women's T20 World Cup with a ruthless nine-wicket win over Pakistan in Dubai.

The reigning champions are two points clear at the top of Group A with three wins from three and, given their high net run-rate, it would take an unlikely set of results to deny them a last-four spot.

The only disappointment for Australia on an otherwise comfortable night were injuries to Tayla Vlaeminck and captain Alyssa Healy. After winning the toss, the six-time winners kitted Pakistan for just 82, the lowest total of the World Cup so far.

Ashleigh Gardner was the pick of the bowlers, taking 4-21, with Georgia Wareham and Annabel Sutherland claiming two

wickets apiece.

They then needed just 11 overs to chase down their modest target. Healy top-scoring with 37 from 23 balls before retiring hurt.

Australia take on India in their final group game on Sunday. Pakistan still have a very slim chance of reaching the semi-finals but will need a win in their final game against New Zealand on Monday.

Australia impress but injuries will cause concern. Australia have won six of the nine editions of the Women's T20 World Cup - including the last three - and on this form it will take something pretty special to deny them another trophy.

However, there will be concern about the fitness of Vlaeminck and Healy.

Fast bowler Vlaeminck, whose career has been overshadowed by multiple

injuries, dislocated her shoulder fielding on the boundary in the first over of Pakistan's innings. Healy then pulled up running between the wickets and had to be helped from the field in obvious pain.

Injuries aside, it was a complete performance from Australia.

Just four Pakistan batters reached double figures and there were just four boundaries in the entire innings.

Pakistan were 23-2 after the powerplay and the lowest score at a Women's T20 World Cup of 46 looked under threat when they slipped to 39-5.

Aliya Riaz's punchy 26 from 32 balls spared them that embarrassment.

Healy and Beth Mooney's run-a-ball 15 got Australia's chase off to a flying start, with Ellyse Perry's unbeaten 22 from 23 seeing them over the line.



DUBAI: Ashleigh Gardner picked up all of her four wickets at the death.

Pak delegation participates in ITF, ATF AGMs

ISLAMABAD (APP): A delegation from the Pakistan Tennis Federation (PTF) represented the country at the Annual General Meetings (AGMs) of the International Tennis Federation (ITF) and the Asian Tennis Federation (ATF), held in Hong Kong from October 8 to 11.

The AGMs gathered top tennis officials from around the world to discuss the future of the sport, said a press release issued here on Friday. The ATF AGM was held on October 8 and 9, followed by the ITF AGM on October 10 and 11. Pakistan's delegation included Senator Salim Saifullah Khan, patron of the PTF and member of the ATF Board of Directors, Aisam-ul-Haq Qureshi, president of PTF and Mohammad Ali Murtaza, member of the ATF Marketing Committee.

Senator Salim Saifullah said that representing Pakistan at such a prestigious platform was an honour. "We discussed strategic plans that will not only boost tennis in Asia but also promote its growth in Pakistan," he said. Aisam-ul-Haq Qureshi, who was attending the ITF AGM for the first time as president of the PTF was warmly welcomed by ITF President David Haggerty, ATF President Yuriy Poltskiy and heads of several national federations.

Aisam said, "It was a very positive and enriching experience to attend the AGM as President of the Federation.

We had meaningful interactions with heads of tennis federations worldwide. It was a wonderful experience, and we made valuable contacts, including David Haggerty (President-ITF), Mr. Yuriy Poltskiy (President-ATF), Mr. Bulat Utemuratov (President-Kazakhstan Tennis Federation), Mr. Abdul

Redha J. Al Ghareeb (President-Kuwait Tennis Federation), Mr. Mario Monroy (President-Peru Tennis Federation), Mr. Dietloff von Arnim (President-German Tennis Federation), Mr. Iqbal Bin Issack (President-Sri Lanka Tennis Association), Mr. Mutassim Hamood Sangor Al Zadjali (President-Oman Tennis Association), Mr. Michael Cheng (President-Hong Kong Chinese Tennis Association), Mr. Ceslav Cuihrii (President-National Tennis Federation of Moldova), and Mr. Eziz Dovletov (President-Turkmenistan Tennis Federation).

"I am confident that the outcomes of these discussions will lead to significant improvements for tennis in Pakistan.....we will continue working with all of them to promote and develop tennis in the region and our country."

Djokovic progresses to Shanghai semi-finals

SHANGHAI (AFP): Novak Djokovic proved his staying power on Friday, beating an opponent 6-7 (4/7), 6-1, 6-4 to claim the last spot in the Shanghai Masters semi-finals.

The 37-year-old's victory over the Czech Republic's Jakub Mensik came a day after one of his greatest rivals and contemporaries, Rafael Nadal, announced he would retire in November.

The Serb, who is aiming for a 100th singles title in Shanghai, will next face world number seven Taylor Fritz after the American beat Belgium's David Goffin 6-3, 6-4 earlier on Friday. "Overall, big battle, it took the best out of me to win it," said Djokovic after the match.

Both Djokovic and 65th-ranked Mensik brought serious firepower to the court, their hard-hitting rallies driving the stadium wild with tension.

The first set was closely fought, with Djokovic's break in the ninth game matched immediately by Mensik in the next.

The veteran pulled ahead early in the tiebreak, but seemed to lose focus, allowing the 19-year-old to come from behind to win.

The 24-time Grand Slam champion dominated the second set though, breaking in the second and sixth game. Mensik recovered to pile on the pressure



again in the third, but Djokovic got a crucial break in the fifth game to be crowned winner. Djokovic called his opponent "one of the best players we have on the tour", adding "the future is very bright for him".

"These kind of matches against teenagers is something that really motivates me... and pushes me to really dig deep and to show to the world that I still got it, you know, and my legs can still go the distance with the young guy," he said.

'End of an era'

The fact Djokovic's triumph came the day after the retirement announcement from Nadal -- who he called "the greatest rival that I ever had" -- was not lost on him. "I'm a bit overwhelmed, to be honest, but, you know, I still have the desire to play," the Serb said of being the last man standing from tennis' golden era.

The 26-year-old Fritz, who said he grew up watching Nadal on television, said it was "the end of an era". The American quickly took charge in the first set of his earlier match, breaking the 66th-ranked Goffin in the second and sixth games.

Underdog Goffin -- who knocked out second seed Alexander Zverev in the last round -- looked stronger in the second set, but ultimately couldn't replicate his feat with another top 10 scalp. It is the first time US Open finalist Fritz has progressed past the third round in Shanghai. He has lost to Djokovic at every one of their previous nine encounters.

"We've played a lot of times and I've never gotten him... (So I'm) waiting for that time that, you know, maybe I can get a first win on him," said Fritz.

"I'm only getting better and better, and I'm excited for the opportunity to play him." Djokovic said he expected the match-up to be tight.

"It's the final stages of a tournament, anybody can beat anybody. I'm going to need all of my speed, all of my precision, all of my strength," he said.

World number one Jannik Sinner booked his place in the semi-finals on Thursday, as did Mensik's compatriot Tomas Machac, who upset four-time Grand Slam champion Carlos Alcaraz.

England complete record-breaking win over Pakistan

MULTAN (Web Desk): Jack Leach took the three wickets England required for a record-breaking win over Pakistan and a 1-0 lead in the three-match series.

Though Pakistan began the fifth day six wickets down, Abrar Ahmed was absent through illness, and England were initially held up by Salman Agha and Aamer Jamal adding 109 for the seventh wicket.

Leach needed only four deliveries to trap Salman lbw for 63, then took a sharp caught-and-bowled to remove Shaheen Shah Afridi. Naseem Shah charged to be stumped, giving Leach 4-30 in his first Test since January.

Pakistan's 220 all out left England victors by an innings and 47 runs. No team in Test history has ever conceded as many as the 556 as England did in Pakistan's first innings then gone on to win by an innings.

It means England have now won on three successive occasions when they have leaked totals in excess of 500. Only once before have England fielded first, been hit for more runs and gone on to win and that was in 1894.

The turnaround was built on a staggering batting effort, when England amassed their highest total since 1938, 823-7 declared. Harry Brook's 317 was



England's first triple-century for 34 years and his 454-run partnership with Joe Root, who made 262, their highest in Tests.

England have now won four consecutive Tests in Pakistan and can win the series in the second Test on the same ground, beginning on Tuesday.

England do it again in Pakistan

England's 3-0 win in Pakistan two years ago was unprecedented and one of their all-time great series triumphs. In the canon of their best overseas wins, this probably does not quite touch the 2022 opener in Rawalpindi or their defeat of India in Hyderabad earlier this year, yet it will live long in the memory because of the mind-boggling numbers.

Even with the context of an extremely flat pitch and some fragile opponents, England's batting achievements are astonishing. The victory is made all the more impressive given the tourists' short preparation time, inexperienced bowling attack and continued absence of captain Ben Stokes.

Stokes stepped up his return from a hamstring injury during

this first Test, bowling in the middle during intervals. He looks close to being fit for the second Test. The skipper would probably come in for one of the three frontline seamers, most likely Chris Woakes, who began England's acceleration towards victory by bowling Abdullah Shafique from the first ball of Pakistan's second innings.

The hosts' unravelling to 152-6 by the end of the fourth day, still 115 behind, meant their only realistic hope on the final day was avoiding the unwanted record for an innings defeat.

Jamal, who was dropped twice on Thursday, was hit on the head by Brydon Carse in the solitary moment of discomfort Pakistan experienced in the first hour. Salman backed up his first-innings century, only to be pinned on the front pad when England turned to left-arm spinner Leach. Jamal attacked Carse's bouncers, producing a steeping top edge that Ollie Pope dropped while back-peddalling from square leg.

But Jamal was left stranded on 55 when Leach got Shaheen and Naseem in the space of four balls, giving England only their second Test win by an innings in Asia, and first since 1976.

Pakistan plumb new depths This is another humiliating

defeat for Pakistan, who are enduring one of the worst periods in their history. Beaten by the USA at the T20 World Cup in June, Pakistan are on an awful run in Test cricket, their winless streak at home now extended to 11 matches.

This is also their third humbling in as many Tests following Bangladesh's stunning 2-0 series win here just over a month ago. Overall, captain Shan Masood has lost all six Tests in charge and is under huge pressure. In Jason Gillespie they have an experienced and calm head coach, though even the Australian will wonder how he can inject some confidence into his team.

Their batting is inconsistent, talented pace bowlers Naseem and Shaheen are short of their best and Pakistan wilted in the field, both physically and tactically, in the face of England's relentless run-scoring.

One certain change for the second Test will be a replacement for Abrar, though his replacement is unclear. Spinners Noman Ali and Zahid Mahmood were released from the Pakistan squad for the first Test. It is a tight turnaround to the next contest. It is hard to see what Pakistan can do in order to battle back into the series.



In brief

IRSA releases 132,200 cusecs water

ISLAMABAD (APP): Indus River System Authority (IRSA) on Friday released 132,200 cusecs water from various rim stations with inflow of 99,200 cusecs. According to the data released by IRSA, water level in River Indus at Tarbela Dam was 1536.49 feet and was 138.49 feet higher than its dead level of 1,398 feet. Water inflow and outflow in the dam was recorded as 61,700 cusecs and 50,000 cusecs respectively. The water level in River Jhelum at Mangla Dam was 1205.80 feet, which was 155.80 feet higher than its dead level of 1,050 feet. The inflow and outflow of water was recorded as 10,300 cusecs and 35,000 cusecs respectively. The release of water at Kalabagh, Taunsa, Guddu and Sukkur was recorded as 69,500, 69,400, 56,600 and 16,500 cusecs respectively. Similarly, from River Kabul, a total of 22,500 cusecs of water released at Nowshera and 4,700 cusecs released from River Chenab at Marala.

IESCO issues power shutdown programme

ISLAMABAD (APP): Islamabad Electric Supply Company (IESCO) on Friday issued a power suspension programme for Saturday for various areas of its region due to necessary maintenance and routine development work. According to IESCO Spokesperson, the power supply of different feeders and grid stations would remain suspended for the period from 07:00 AM to 13:00 PM, Islamabad Circle, H-8, NPCC-1, Shifa International, I-8/3, I-8/2, H-8/2, Carriage Factory, Kand Rajgaon Feeders, Rawalpindi Cantt Circle, Mehboob Shaheed, Park View, Pindi Board, Jail Park, Car Chowk, Chaklala, PAECHS, Old Rawat, CWO, Sparco, DHA Homes, Basali, Pind Jhatla Feeders, Rawalpindi City Circle, EME Complex, Khayaban Sir Syed, Dhok Hassu, Pirwadhai, Quaid Abad, Muslimabad, Gulzar Shaheed, Ahsanabad, Industrial, Social Security, Bagh Sardaran, Officer Colony, Radio Pak, Rajahabad, Pindhoon, I-14/2, I-14/3, Noon, I-16/1, HPT Radio Pak, Lakho Road, Ameer Hamza, Officer Colony Feeders, Attock Circle, Air University, PM Housing Colony, Qaziabad Feeders, Chakwal Circle, Rawal, Bahrpur, Kariala, KSM Unit-3, Bhawan, Sarkal, Mureed, Al Qaim Mills Feeders, Jhelum Circle, Ajmal Shaheed, F-7 Kachhari, Abbaspora Feeders.

ICT admin target 'agent mafia'

ISLAMABAD, Oct 11 (APP): The Islamabad district administration on Friday launched a campaign against unauthorized agents operating near government offices in the Federal Capital and arrested 6 agents. According to the spokesman of Islamabad Capital Territory (ICT) administration, these agents were arrested outside the Passport Office in G-10 area, marking a step toward curbing this illegal activity. In a recent move to tackle the presence of unauthorized agents near government buildings, the Assistant Commissioner Saddar, Maheen Hassan raided with the district administration teams and arrested these agents. On the occasion, Deputy Commissioner Irfan Nawaz Memon emphasized the need for daily operations outside all government offices to address the growing issue of unauthorized intermediaries.



ISLAMABAD: The Ambassador of the United Arab Emirates (UAE), Mr. Hamad Obaid Ibrahim Salem Al-Zaabi, called on the Acting President Syed Yousaf Raza Gilani. —APP Photo

Naqvi strongly condemns attack on coal miners

ISLAMABAD (APP): Federal minister for Interior Mohsin Naqvi has strongly condemned the brutal attack on coal miners in the Duki area of Balochistan, where 20 workers were tragically killed by armed individuals. The minister expressed deep sorrow over the incident, labeling it a grave tragedy for the nation.

In a statement, Naqvi conveyed his heartfelt condolences to the families of the deceased, offering sympathy and support to those affected by the loss. "We

share the grief of the bereaved families equally," he stated, emphasizing the government's solidarity with the mourning families during this difficult time.

He also prayed for the swift recovery of those injured in the attack and reassured the public that justice would be served. "The malicious elements involved in this tragic incident will not escape the law," Naqvi declared, vowing that the perpetrators of this heinous crime would face the full force of justice.

Naqvi firmly stated that those responsible for the senseless killing of innocent workers would not be granted any leniency, stressing the need for accountability and ensuring the safety of laborers across the country.

The attack on the coal miners has sparked widespread outrage, with leaders across the political spectrum expressing their condemnation and calling for urgent measures to prevent such atrocities in the future.

CDA embarks on beautification drive

ISLAMABAD (APP): Islamabad is undergoing a citywide beautification drive ahead of the highly anticipated Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) summit.

Capital Development Authority (CDA) has launched a detailed initiative aimed at enhancing the city's aesthetic appeal, featuring vibrant floral displays, intricately designed peacock structures, and decorative globes strategically placed at prominent locations throughout the capital.

These installations symbolize Islamabad's commitment to hosting international events in style and with grandeur. The city's main roads, intersections, and public spaces are being adorned with seasonal flowers, adding a burst of color and life to the urban landscape. Iconic figures, including peacocks, butterflies, and globes, have been installed, reflecting themes of peace, unity, and progress.

CDA Chairman Muhammad Ali Randhawa expressed his satisfaction with the ongoing progress, noting that these beautification efforts not only aim to showcase Islamabad's natural charm but also underscore its status as a modern, welcoming city for international delegates. CDA is making sure that all beautification and infrastructural projects are completed in time, ensuring that the city presents a warm and visually stunning environment for the summit's participants and visitors alike.

Gilani calls for promoting cooperation with UAE

ISLAMABAD (APP): Acting President Syed Yousaf Raza Gilani on Friday said that Pakistan greatly valued its long-standing relationship with the United Arab Emirates (UAE) and highlighted the importance of enhancing bilateral cooperation in key sectors such as Information Technology, renewable energy, agriculture and tourism. The acting president expressed these views while talking to the Ambassador of UAE Hamad Obaid Ibrahim Salem Al-Zaabi, who called on him, at Aiwan-e-Sadr. Yousaf Raza Gilani applauded the vision of the late Sheikh Zayed bin

Sultan Al Nahyan in the economic transformation of UAE and extended condolences on the sad demise of His Highness's close family members, late Sheikh Tahnoon bin Mohamed Al Nahyan and late Sheikh Hazza bin Sultan.

During the meeting, the ambassador stated that bilateral relations between Pakistan and the UAE have been following an upward trajectory over the years. UAE has encouraged its companies to invest in Pakistan, particularly in the areas of communications, climate change and renewable energy. He further informed that the UAE

would like to increase the number of flights to facilitate travelling and strengthen bilateral economic cooperation.

The acting president apprised the ambassador about the All Parties Conference (APC) held on 07 October 2024 to extend consistent and unequivocal support to our Palestinian brothers and sisters.

During the meeting, visa difficulties for Pakistanis were also discussed and it was decided to make the visa process more efficient and accessible for promoting economic development and people-to-people linkages between the two countries.

Pakistan is heading in the right direction, says Muqam

ISLAMABAD (APP): Federal Minister for State and Frontier Region, Kashmir & Gilgit Baltistan (GB) Affairs, Engineer Amir Muqam, Friday expressed confidence that under the leadership of Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif, Pakistan was heading in the right direction, where the country was successfully reviving its foreign ties, particularly with Saudi Arabia.

In an interview with the PTV news channel, he said, "This renewed diplomatic effort is crucial for stimulating economic growth and combating inflation." He also expressed heart-

felt gratitude to the Saudi government for their unwavering support of Pakistan.

Amir Muqam had congratulated the nation on Pakistan's economic stability and improving conditions, crediting Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif's relentless efforts and visionary leadership for this progress. "Continued public trust and support for the Prime Minister's initiatives will yield further positive developments in the near future," Muqam stressed.

Responding to a query, he said, "Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP) fragile peace requires urgent attention beyond politics,

emphasizing the need for the provincial government to prioritize stability and public welfare."

"To achieve lasting peace, the KPK government must focus on economic development, boosting industries, and creating jobs, particularly for young individuals," he added.

Muqam emphasized the importance of collective efforts in overcoming the nation's challenges, expressing pride in Pakistan's resilience and progress despite adversity.

"Unity and cooperation are crucial in addressing economic, social, and security issues," he stressed.

Ayaz declares modern education necessary for girls

ISLAMABAD (APP): Speaker of the National Assembly Sardar Ayaz Sadiq on Friday suggested that the modern education & training must for the girls for the survival of future generations.

In a message on the occasion of the International Day of the Girl Child, he said the day holds great significance in highlighting and addressing the protection of girls' rights and the challenges they being faced.

He said that the protection of girls' rights, their proper upbringing, and ensuring their education and health are top priorities. He said that Islam and the Constitution of Pakistan provide women equal rights. The Constitution of the country guarantees children, both boys and girls aged 5 to 16, the right to free education without any gender discrimination.

"With over half of the country's population con-

sisting of women, ensuring their participation in all sectors of life is crucial for the nation's social and economic development," he added.

He also highlighted that legislation to prevent child marriages is a testament to the government's commitment to protecting children from exploitation. The Parliamentary Caucus on Child Rights is actively working to ensure the welfare and protection of children, he said.

Islamabad Traffic Police issues Diversion Plan for SCO Summit

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Islamabad Traffic Police (ITP) have announced a comprehensive traffic diversion plan for the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) summit, scheduled for October 14, 15, and 16, 2024.

Over 1,100 traffic officers will be deployed across the city to manage traffic flow. Citizens are advised to use alternative routes to avoid inconvenience caused by road closures and diversions due to high profile movement.

According to the ITP spokesperson, traffic traveling from Peshawar to Rawat via GT Road will be diverted through Taxila, Motorway, Chakri Interchange, Chak Beli Road, and Rawat. Drivers are urged to follow these routes to avoid the blocked roads during the summit.

Vehicles traveling from Lahore to Peshawar via GT Road will be redirected to Rawat, Chak Beli Road, Chakri Interchange, Motorway, and

Taxila. The ICT Police have advised motorists to use these alternatives to ensure smooth travel.

Traffic coming from Margalla Road heading towards Rawalpindi will be diverted to 9th Avenue. Additionally, traffic from Faisal Avenue to Zero Point will also be redirected to 9th Avenue, ensuring a clear route for other vehicles.

For those commuting from Bhara Kahu to Rawalpindi, the police have recommended using Korang Road, Bani Gala, and Lehtrar Road as alternative routes. These roads will provide easier access for vehicles traveling during the summit. Traffic coming from Rawalpindi to Islamabad will be redirected to 9th Avenue via Saddar and Murree Road. Motorists should use these alternative roads to avoid congestion on the usual routes.

Moreover, traffic between Zero Point and Koral Chowk on the Expressway will be completely

closed. Citizens can use the service road as an alternative route to bypass this closure. For those traveling from Colonel Sher Khan Shaheed Road to Faizabad, the police have instructed to use 9th Avenue from the Stadium Road signal, providing an accessible route during the event.

Heavy traffic traveling from Peshawar to Lahore will be diverted through Taxila, Motorway, Tarnol Phatak, and Fateh Jang Road Interchange. Similarly, heavy traffic traveling from Lahore to Islamabad and Rawalpindi via GT Road will be redirected to Chak Beli Road and Chakri Interchange, Motorway.

The spokesperson further stated that from October 14 to 16, all types of heavy traffic will be restricted from entering Islamabad. Citizens are requested to cooperate with the traffic police and follow the alternative routes to ensure a smooth flow of traffic during the summit.



ISLAMABAD: CDA gardeners beautified green belt at Taramri Chowk with beautiful artificial flowers and fancy lights in preparation for upcoming the 23rd Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) summit.

RDA seals 601 under-construction buildings amid violations concerns

RAWALPINDI (APP): Rawalpindi Development Authority (RDA) taking strict action against the dengue Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) sealed 601 under-construction buildings.

According to a RDA spokesman, RDA had accelerated its ongoing operation against the SOPs violators to control dengue.

Chairing a meeting held here, former Member National Assembly, Haji Pervaiz and Tayyab Qureshi, coordinator anti-dengue campaign emphasized the need for RDA and the housing schemes to ensure full compliance with anti-dengue SOPs issued by the Punjab government.

Haji Pervaiz said that all anti-dengue SOPs must be fully implemented. Any negligence in this regard would not be

tolerated, he warned.

During the meeting, Assistant Director, Building Control and Dengue Focal Person, Muhammad Dawood gave detailed briefing on anti-dengue efforts.

He informed that under the guidance of Director General, Kinza Murtaza, strict enforcement of dengue SOPs is underway and strict action in accordance with the law was being taken against the violators.

RDA had sealed 601 under-construction buildings during the campaign against dengue started on September 1, in Dhok Munshi, Jalal Deen, Kotha Kalan and other areas.

The current weather conditions are conducive for breeding of dengue larvae, Haji Pervaiz said and underscored the importance of strictly

adhering to anti-dengue SOPs.

He highlighted the critical role of private housing societies during the peak dengue season in collaborating with health department authorities to ensure compliance with the necessary SOPs.

Director Admin and Finance RDA, Asif Mahmood Janjua, Deputy Director Finance, Muhammad Junaid Taj Bhatti, Deputy Director Building Control, Atif Mehmood, Deputy Director Public Relations, Hafiz Muhammad Irfan, Assistant Director Finance, Arshad Javed, Assistant Director Planning, Mehwish Naseem, Assistant Director BC Rimsha and representatives of the approved private housing schemes attended the meeting.

IE's envoy presents credentials to Uzbek

KABUL(BNA): Sheikh Abdul Ghafar Bahr, the Acting Ambassador of the Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan in Uzbekistan, has officially submitted a copy of his credentials to Bakhtiyor Saidov, the Minister of Foreign Affairs of Uzbekistan. During the meeting, Minister Saidov warmly welcomed Sheikh Bahr and described the submission of the credentials as a significant step in enhancing diplomatic relations between Uzbekistan and Afghanistan.

Afghanistan reaches self-sufficiency in producing diesel

KABUL (Ariana News): Officials from the Union of Crude Oil Refining Factories say Afghanistan has reached self-sufficiency in producing diesel fuel by 80 percent. The union officials stated that the private sector has invested hundreds of millions of dollars in the country's crude oil refining field, and this complex is developing day by day. They added that the crude oil currently being refined in domestic factories is equal to international standards.

US envoy says Afghan women and girls face devastating mental health crisis

KABUL (Khaama Press): U.S. Special Envoy for Afghanistan's Women, Girls, and Human Rights, Rina Amiri, said on Friday that Afghans, especially women and girls, are facing a devastating mental health crisis due to the Taliban's extremist policies.

"As we commemorate World Mental Health Day, I want to draw attention to the devastating mental health crisis faced by Afghans, especially women & girls, due to the Taliban's alarming & extreme policies," Amiri said.

"We must all be resolute in supporting them in the struggle for their rights," she added. Over the past three years, the Taliban has imposed widespread restrictions on the private and public lives of Afghan citizens, especially women.

Previously, the United Nations Refugee Agency (UNHCR) reported that the Taliban's enforcement of the "Amr bil Ma'roof" law has significantly increased mental health pressures on Afghan women. The UN agency further stated that the restrictions under this law have left many Afghan women feeling hopeless, depressed, and angry.

The continued impact of the Taliban's harsh policies is worsening the mental health situation in Afghanistan, particularly among women who bear the brunt of these oppressive restrictions. Global support and action are critical to addressing the mental health crisis in Afghanistan, with a focus on protecting the rights and well-being of women and girls in Afghanistan.

Iran deports 270,000 Afghan Migrants

KABUL (TOLONews): Hossein Sharafati, Director General of Foreign Nationals and Migrants of Khorasan Razavi, Iran, says that over 270,000 illegal Afghan migrants have been deported from Iran in the past six months.

In an interview with Iranian media, Sharafati said that none of the Afghan migrants, whether legal or illegal, have the right to reside or work in certain cities of the country.

The Director General of Foreign Nationals and Migrants of Khorasan Razavi said: "None of the Afghan nationals, whether authorized or unauthorized, have the right to reside or work in the seven border cities of the province, and identifying these individuals has become a priority for relevant authorities."

At the same time, some Afghan migrants residing in Iran say they are facing numerous challenges, such as forced deportation and being denied the right to work in the country. They have called on the caretaker government to address their challenges. Mohammad Akbar Soltani, an Afghan migrant in Iran, said: "In a shop, a company, or a store, migrants are not allowed to work. The Afghan passport has no value."

Meanwhile, some migrant rights activists say that the host government must treat Afghan migrants better. Alireza Karimi, a migrant rights activist, said: "Iran, as a host to a large number of Afghan migrants, is obligated to treat them in a humane and just manner in accordance with international laws."

Afghanistan signs \$1 billion Gas extraction contract with Ariel group



KABUL(BNA): The Ministry of Mines and Petroleum officially signed a gas extraction contract for the Tooti Gas Field Block in Jowzjan Province with the Uzbek company, Ariel Group.

The signing ceremony took place at the Government Media Center, attended by Mullah Abdul Ghani Baradar, Deputy Prime Minister for Economic Affairs, and Ismatullo Ergashev, Special Envoy of the President

of Uzbekistan.

During the event, Mr. Ergashev highlighted the robust and amicable relations between Uzbekistan and Afghanistan, emphasizing that the signing of this contract signifies a deepening of cooperation between the two nations. He further noted that this partnership would create numerous job opportunities for Afghan workers, underscoring the mutual benefits of this

collaboration.

Additionally, Mr. Ergashev reaffirmed Uzbekistan's commitment to continuing its support for Afghanistan and expressed intentions to facilitate job opportunities for many Afghans within a shared market framework.

In conjunction with this, Mullah Hidayatullah Badri, Acting Minister of Mines and Petroleum, provided insights into the Tooti Gas Field Block, which

spans an area of 7,000 square kilometers and is part of the Amu Darya Basin located in Jowzjan Province. He revealed that Ariel Group, in collaboration with its Afghan partner Kam Energy, is set to invest \$100 million in the first year, with a total investment of \$1 billion over the next ten years.

Moreover, Minister Badri stated that, under the terms of this agreement, the company would generate 100 megawatts of electricity from gas within the first two years, representing a significant advancement in enhancing electricity supply in the region.

Furthermore, the Ariel Group is expected to undertake a two-dimensional survey covering at least 1,500 square kilometers and a three-dimensional survey of 1,000 kilometers within the first three years. This comprehensive approach aims to uncover new gas resources and facilitate professional extraction practices.

It is essential to note that the initial year of this contract will serve as a trial period; should the company fail to fulfill its commitments within the first year, the contract will be subject to termination.

Russia emphasizes importance of continuing talks with IE

KABUL (TOLONews): Grigory Karasin, the head of the International Affairs Committee of the Russian Federation Council, called the continuation of talks with Afghanistan's interim government important.

In a meeting on Central Asia regional security held in Dushanbe, Tajikistan, this Russian official added that the interim government now holds power in Afghanistan, and dialogue with it is essential to maintain peace and stability in Central Asia.

TASS news agency quoted Karasin as saying: "It appears important to continue dialogue with the Taliban movement in power [in Afghanistan] in order to maintain peace and stability in Central Asia."

"The countries of the region should have good relations with Afghanistan in all areas and cooperate with this country; this will be beneficial for the region and other countries," said Sayed Akbar Sial Wardak, a political analyst.

Meanwhile, the Deputy Foreign Minister of Tajikistan sees peaceful



talks aimed at forming an inclusive government in Afghanistan as beneficial for the country.

Sodik Imom, Deputy Foreign Minister of Tajikistan, said: "That is why our countries agree that peaceful dialogue aimed at forming an inclusive government with the participation of representatives of all political and ethnic forces of Afghanistan is an important guarantee for this country's transition to peaceful development."

"Afghanistan is an important part of the region, and if the region wants peace and to implement large economic projects, it needs, it requires Afghanistan. Without Afghanistan's cooperation, these projects cannot be

realized," said Hewad Zazai, another political analyst.

Although the Islamic Emirate has not commented on the remarks of Tajikistan's Deputy Foreign Minister, it expressed appreciation for the statement of the head of the International Affairs Committee of the Russian Federation Council regarding the continuation of talks with the interim government.

Hamdullah Fitrat, deputy spokesperson of the Islamic Emirate, said: "We welcome the positive stance of the head of the International Affairs Committee of the Russian Federation Council. It is indeed a fact that dialogue between the Islamic Emirate and regional countries is important for regional stability and the expansion of relations."

Russia is one of the countries that has hosted several regional meetings on Afghan issues in the past three years, and in the sixth Moscow Consultative Format meeting, the country's foreign minister also stressed pragmatic talks with the interim government.

Breshna company collects 195 million

KABUL (TOLONews): Officials from Da Afghanistan Breshna Sherkat (Afghanistan's electricity company) have announced the collection of 195 million afghani in debt owed to the company by former government officials over the past three years.

Hikmatullah Maiwandi, the spokesperson for the company, said that the process of collecting these debts is still ongoing.

Maiwandi said: "Politicians and powerful figures who owed the Breshna Company have paid approximately 190 to 195 million afghani, and, God willing, this process will continue until all the debts are paid."

Meanwhile, residents of the capital expressed satisfaction with the collection of debts from former government officials, stating that the collected funds should be reinvested in the country.

These residents also called on Breshna officials to consider the economic challenges faced by citizens and work towards reducing electricity prices, as well as addressing the ongoing issues with power outages.

Abdulrahman, a resident of Kabul, told TOLONews: "Our demand is that since there is little work and people are unemployed, it would be very helpful if the electricity fees were significantly reduced."

Haroon, another resident of Kabul, said: "Our request from the Islamic Emirate is to stop importing electricity from abroad.

The money that has been deposited into Breshna's account should be invested in Afghanistan's power sector."

Mirois, also a Kabul resident, said: "The collected funds should be spent on building dams to prevent power outages during the upcoming winter."

At the same time, some economic experts have consistently emphasized that Breshna should use the collected debts to invest in energy production from various sources within the country.

Germany to deport Afghan migrants with criminal records



KABUL (TOLONews): Nancy Faeser, Germany's minister of interior, has announced the deportation of Afghan migrants with criminal backgrounds from the country.

Nancy Faeser said in a parliamentary session that they will continue their plan to return Afghan criminals and will deport more individuals.

The German Interior Minister said: "In general, not only concerning criminals from Syria and Afghanistan. Unlike all our European neighbors, we have now, for the first time, returned people to Afghanistan. Deporting dangerous individuals contributes to Germany's internal security, and it's a good signal that we have done this."

At the same time, the acting Minister for Refugees and Repatriation also met with the European Union ambassador in Kabul. During the meeting, they discussed the issues of migrants in Pakistan and Iran and the forced deportation of Afghan refugees by Germany and other European countries.

Abdul Mutalib Haqqani, the spokesperson for the Ministry of Refugees and Repatriation, said: "In that meeting, the challenges faced by Afghan migrants in Iran and Pakistan were discussed, and there were talks about preventing the deportation of some Afghans from Germany and European countries."

Meanwhile, several migrant rights activists say that migrants in other countries should abide by the laws of those countries. Ali Reza Karimi, a migrant rights activist, said: "To prevent such situations and build a better life in Germany, migrants should avoid any criminal acts, learn the German language, and respect the culture of Germany and the host country."

Asifa Stanakzai, another migrant rights activist, said: "Residents of Germany must respect the German Constitution and avoid anything that harms the interests of the community." These statements by the German Interior Minister come as Germany deported 28 Afghans accused of crimes at the end of August this year.

Amnesty: HR Council fails to address human rights crisis

KABUL (Khaama Press): Amnesty International has stated that the United Nations Human Rights Council's resolution on Afghanistan has failed to provide an adequate response to the escalating human rights crisis in the country.

The organization asserts that the Taliban continues to suppress the rights of the Afghan people. In a statement released on Thursday, October 10, Amnesty International noted that while the UN Human Rights Council extended Richard Bennett's mandate, it still did not establish an independent international accountability mechanism for the ongoing situation in Afghanistan.

Smriti Singh, Amnesty International's regional director for South Asia, criticized the Human Rights Council for failing to provide adequate support for justice to the people of Afghanistan, who have placed their hopes in the international community.

Amnesty International warned that the shortcomings in this resolution leave brave activists, particularly women human rights defenders, journalists, and others who continue their work in the face of repression, in a precarious situation. The organization emphasized the urgent need for UN member states to act swiftly to establish an independent international accountability mechanism. This would ensure that those responsible for human rights violations are held accountable.

Hillary Power from Human Rights Watch described the latest resolution of the UN Human Rights Council as another failure for the body.

She noted that despite repeated requests from human rights groups, the Council has not created a mechanism for holding the Taliban accountable for human rights violations.

The ongoing human rights violations in Afghanistan, particularly against women and girls, are exacerbating the dire humanitarian crisis in the country. With the Taliban's strict regulations prohibiting women from participating in public life and education, the prospects for future generations are bleak.

These violations not only undermine the dignity and rights of Afghan women but also hinder the country's overall development and stability.

As the international community grapples with the crisis, it is crucial to advocate for stronger mechanisms that ensure accountability and protection of human rights in Afghanistan. Supporting local and international efforts to document abuses and demand justice can empower the voices of those affected and contribute to fostering a more inclusive and just society.

Islamic Emirate Distributes Aid After Poppy Ban, Farmers Seek Alternatives

KABUL (TOLONews): Following the ban on poppy cultivation in the country, nearly 100,000 tons of improved seed varieties and 200,000 tons of chemical fertilizers have been distributed to farmers across the nation.

Misbahuddin Mustaeen, the spokesperson of the Ministry of Agriculture,

Irrigation, and Livestock, stressed that this quantity of materials has been distributed in cooperation with domestic and international organizations to support farmers.

Mustaeen added that by the end of the current solar year, another 53,000 tons of improved seeds will also be distributed to farmers

nationwide.

The spokesperson for the Ministry of Agriculture, Irrigation, and Livestock said: "One hundred thousand tons of improved seeds and 200,000 tons of chemical fertilizers have been distributed. Additionally, the distribution of 53,000 tons of improved seeds is currently

underway in various provinces and is being distributed to farmers."

Meanwhile, some farmers in the country are calling for more support from the ministry for alternative crops to poppies. "Wheat and corn do not meet our needs, and our request from the government is to provide alternative crops for us

instead of opium," said Hamidullah, a farmer.

"There are seven people in my family who need to be fed, and the government must help us in place of poppies; they should distribute improved seeds or chemical fertilizers because our economy is very weak," said Jamaluddin, another farmer.

Earlier, Mawlawi Abdul

Kabir, the political deputy Prime Minister of the Islamic Emirate, in the first meeting of the High Commission for Combating Narcotics, said that the international community must fulfill its commitments in the fight against narcotics in Afghanistan.

Kabir said that important discussions were held



at the third Doha meeting made to assist Afghan regarding alternative farmers and the agricultural sector of Afghanistan as the commitments will be fulfilled.

Pak-S Arabia Ministers agree to increase trade

F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Planning, Development and Special Initiatives, Professor Ahsan Iqbal, on Friday emphasized Pakistan's commitment to increasing its trade volume with Saudi Arabia by collaborating with the current Saudi leadership.

During a meeting with Saudi Investment Minister Khalid Bin Abdulaziz Al Faleh, the minister highlighted that trade between the two countries stood at \$4.6 billion in 2022. He stated that the relationship between the two countries was unique and had always withstood the test of time. However, he stressed that the challenge now is to align the relationship with modern realities by enhancing trade. "Our political relationship will strengthen with robust economic cooperation," the minister asserted.

Reflecting on the beginning of Chinese cooperation in the form of CPEC projects, he recalled, "In 2013, I was entrusted with the responsibility of launching a game-changing project with China. It started with a piece of paper, and within 3-4 years, Pakistan secured \$25 billion in investments under CPEC."

Quoting the success of CPEC, the minister added that by 2017, Pakistan had reached a point where every American and European businessman was keen on joining CPEC projects. "Unfortunately, due to the poor policies of the then-new government, our policies were discontinued, weakening the economy," he remarked. When the current government took

office again, the challenge was to stabilize the economy for long-term growth. To achieve this, the government created the 5Es framework, which, according to the minister, was developed after consulting 1,000 opinion leaders and sector experts.

Discussing Pakistan's future trajectory, the minister said that the country's most pressing challenge over the next 5-7 years would be increasing exports. "Our weakness is that, over the past 77 years, we have failed to adopt an export-led growth strategy." He further noted that a significant challenge Pakistan faces is the capacity of low-skilled labor working in Saudi Arabia. "If the labor class returns to Pakistan, it will result in a considerable decrease in FDI," he added.

The minister suggested training Pakistan's workforce and upgrading their technical capabilities to retain them within the Saudi economy. Both sides discussed areas in which bilateral trade could be increased. The minister pointed out that both countries could export meat to third-world countries, as Pakistan's agricultural products are on par with those from developed nations.

Highlighting Pakistan's position as the third-largest milk producer in the world, the minister noted that Pakistan's livestock provides an average yield of 1,800 liters, whereas the global standard is 6,000-8,000 liters. He stated that increasing agricultural productivity is a key focus for the government. "Our agricultural products can compete with those of New Zealand and Denmark if we improve

our standards," he said. Talking about Saudi Arabia's vast natural resources, the Planning Minister praised the Kingdom for effectively transforming its deserts into water-rich regions.

The minister also pointed out that a planet with 70% water should not face water scarcity. He referred to the possibility of desalination through both power generation and chemical methods. "In 2013, solar power cost 12 cents per unit; today, it is much cheaper," he noted. The minister suggested that Saudi Arabia lead a project focused on desalination technology, with research facilitated by China. Both sides expressed optimism about the immense potential offered by the Pakistan-Saudi-China partnership.

Highlighting Pakistan's Vision 2025, the minister said it was a three-pronged agenda that also included Vision 2035 and Vision 2047. He explained that Pakistan's goal is to become a trillion-dollar economy by 2035 and a three-trillion-dollar economy by 2047, which will coincide with the country's centennial celebrations of independence. "To celebrate that milestone with positive zeal, Pakistan will greatly value the collaboration of its Saudi friends," he added. On the occasion, the Saudi Minister announced that Saudi Arabia is working on lowering the cost of desalination, which will enable the provision of portable water to its population. He also expressed his willingness to share the Kingdom's National Transformation Plan for the next five years and extended his cooperation in making Pakistan a trillion-dollar economy.



ASHGABAT: President Asif Ali Zardari in a group photo with heads of states, participating in international forum on 'Interrelation of Times and Civilizations - Basis of Peace and Development', being held at Turkmenistan.

Full court reference for CJP set for 25th

F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: The Supreme Court's registrar issued a notice of full court reference over the matter of retirement of Chief Justice Qazi Faez Isa.

According to the notice, the full court reference would take place on October 25. Senior lawyers including Supreme Court Bar Association president have been invited. It merits mention that the Chief Justice Qazi Faez Isa is retiring on October 25.

Earlier, in an informal conversation with journalists at the start of the new judicial year, the outgoing chief justice was asked about a statement by Rana Sanaullah suggesting that if the retirement age for all judges were extended, the chief justice might agree to an extension himself. The CJ responded that Rana Sanaullah should be brought before him.

During that meeting, it was discussed that the tenure of all chief justices would be extended, but he made it clear that he would not accept an extension for himself, although he had no objection if it applied to other judges.

Trump, Kamala locked in close race

WASHINGTON: Democratic candidate Kamala Harris and her Republican rival Donald Trump are locked in a dead heat race for the presidency in the United States less than a month before the vote, a new Wall Street Journal poll suggests. According to the data, published on Friday, the vice president and former president are within two percentage points of one another in six of the seven battleground states that will ultimately decide the next president.

In the poll, while Harris led in the states of Arizona, Georgia and Michigan, Trump was ahead in Pennsylvania, Wisconsin, North Carolina and Nevada. All the results are within the margin of error with the exception of Nevada, where Trump is led by 5 percent in the WSJ poll. The newspaper said it surveyed 600 registered voters per state between September 28 and October 8.

US elections are not won by popular vote nationwide. Rather, candidates compete in individual states to win electoral college votes. It's akin to a point system, where each state is worth a number of points proportionate to the size of its population. In all but two states — Maine and Nebraska — the winner takes all the electoral college votes. Most states are almost certain to go to one party. For example, a Democratic win in California and Vermont is often projected as soon as the polls close, while states like Oklahoma and Alabama are Republican strongholds.

That leaves a handful of states where there are close, competitive elections. These are known as swing states. In this round, all eyes are on the seven states polled by WSJ. In 2016, Trump won the presidency despite losing the popular vote because he defeated the Democratic candidate Hillary Clinton in most battleground states.

According to a Pew Research Center survey released on Friday, Harris is leading the race nationally by one point — 48 percent to Trump's 47 percent. US election poll results have fluctuated in recent months. While Trump enjoyed a solid lead over Joe Biden earlier this year in almost all polls, the Democrats received a boost after the US president stepped aside and was replaced by Harris as the party's nominee. — Aljazeera

Only PPP has shared its draft for amends: Bilawal

F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: Chairman Pakistan Peoples Party, Bilawal Bhutto Zardari while talking to journalists in his chamber at the Parliament House said that the government has given me this space for a month to reach a consensus on constitutional amendments related to judicial reforms.

He said that only the final document of the PPP has come out, while the draft has not been formally received from Maulana Fazlur Rahman. The PPP draft has been with Kamran Murtaza for over a week.

He said that if the government has a two-thirds majority and still wants a consensus, then it is appreciated. How long will the government wait and give us space, so I am trying my best to continuously engage and put an agreed draft before the government through political consultation. The government wants to work according to the constitution and law. The PPP has always made constitutional amendments by consensus. The draft given by the PPP includes the establishment of the Constitutional Court and also includes the proposed amendments in Article 175 A, B, D, E, F.

Chairman PPP said that some points have come out in the draft of the government. He has also asked the government to share the points other than judicial reforms. Of course, there

will be some points according to the government's own manifesto. PML-N has the right to amend the constitution according to the Charter of Democracy. The PPP has not linked its aspirations with the constitutional amendment and we have put forward the constitutional court and judicial reforms.

Chairman Bilawal Bhutto Zardari while answering the questions of journalists said that he is grateful to the government for agreeing to our insistence that there should be a consensus among all political parties. We have been given time by the government and we have been trying for it since September. He said that if there is no consensus, how long will the government wait? So far only the full draft of the PPP has come out and we have not received the JUI draft yet.

He said that a detailed meeting of the Parliamentary Committee took place today [Friday], in which all parties gave their views. The PPP presented its original draft proposals in the committee, which have issues related to the Constitutional Court. We presented this draft to all political parties including the government. Apart from this, the points of the lawyers after consultations by the government were also presented in this committee. The Law Minister

held detailed consultations with the lawyers and the suggestions of the lawyers were also presented. Opposition parties also presented their comments. Maulana Fazlur Rahman reiterated his position that he wants to make a draft by consensus with the PPP. We also reiterated that constitutional amendment should be done by consensus with the political parties. Our efforts are for a consensus draft. We don't want to just oppose any suggestion for no reason.

Chairman Bilawal while answering a question said that the federal government is very confident that they have the numbers. The Law Minister said that they have a two-thirds majority, but we are sitting here for all the political parties to reach a consensus on this issue. I appreciate their words, but since last month till now, efforts are being made to reach a consensus. But how long will the government give us space for consensus and how much time will it give us? In such a case, when the SCO conference is taking place, in that case, I am trying my best to establish a consensus. If the consensus takes more time than required, the government may use its constitutional right and move it. But it is our best effort and we have always maintained this position that a complete consensus should be established.

2 Lebanese soldiers killed in airstrike

BEIRUT (AP): Two Lebanese soldiers were killed and three others wounded in an Israeli airstrike that hit a building near a Lebanese Army checkpoint in Kafra, Bint Jbeil province, the Lebanese Army said Friday.

Since Israel launched its ground invasion of Lebanon, Israeli forces and Hezbollah militants have clashed along the border while the Lebanese army has largely stood on the sidelines. As Israeli troops made their first forays across the border and Hezbollah responded with rocket fire, Lebanese soldiers withdrew from observation posts along the frontier and repositioned about 5 km back.

On Oct. 3, a Lebanese soldier was killed and another injured in an Israeli strike in Taybeh during rescue operations. On Sept. 30, another Lebanese soldier was killed by an Israeli drone targeting a Lebanese Army checkpoint in Wazzani, Lebanon Prime Minister Najib Mikati on Friday urged the United Nations to pass a resolution calling for an "immediate" ceasefire between Israel and the Iran-backed Hezbollah group.

In a televised address, Mikati emphasized his government's commitment to deploy the army on the border with Israel as part of a cessation of hostilities, and said Hezbollah agreed on the matter. Mikati said Lebanon's foreign ministry would ask the UN Security Council to issue a resolution calling for a "full and immediate ceasefire."

He said his government was committed to "the full application of Resolution 1701," which was adopted in 2006 and called for the Lebanese army and peacekeepers to be the only armed forces deployed in the south of the country. Lebanon is committed to "the deployment of the army in the south and the bolstering of its presence along the border," he said.

"Hezbollah is in agreement on this issue," he added. A government source had previously said that Hezbollah informed Lebanese authorities it had accepted a ceasefire with Israel on September 27, the day an Israeli strike killed its leader Hassan Nasrallah. Previously, the Iran-backed militant group had said it would only accept a truce if there was also one with its Palestinian ally Hamas in Gaza.

Mikati also condemned attacks on the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon as a "crime," with peacekeepers targeted two days in a row by Israeli forces, according to Lebanese official media and the foreign ministry. A year of hostilities has killed more than 2,100 people in Lebanon and forced more than one million people to flee, according to Lebanese authorities.

India, Afghanistan lands used against Pakistan: Kundi

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: Governor Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Faisal Karim Kundi, on Friday emphasized the importance of restoring peace and stability in the province, adding India and Afghanistan lands is being used against Pakistan.

Addressing a press conference at the Governor House, he called for collective efforts to lift the region out of darkness and addressed the urgent need to manage internal affairs independently. Kundi highlighted the ongoing challenges, saying, "Our province is facing serious circumstances with rising incidents of terrorism. I have always advocated for peace, and the law and order situation is deteriorating."

He urged both the feder-

al and provincial governments to take the situation seriously and implement measures to improve security. He mentioned recent political gatherings aimed at addressing the province's issues, saying that a committee led by the Chief Minister of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa will engage with local representatives to present their demands to the federal government.

The Governor acknowledged the constructive role played by Federal Interior Minister Mohsin Naqvi, who showed flexibility in accepting recommendations during these discussions. Kundi reiterated the significance of dialogue and reconciliation, referencing the ideals of former President Asif Ali Zardari, who has consistently advocated for peaceful negotiations.

He also encouraged local leaders to voice their concerns through parliamentary representation, asserting, "We will support their case until they have representation in Parliament." Furthermore, he reflected on the historical hospitality extended to Afghan refugees, urging them to contribute to peace and stability in the region.

Addressing the rise in terrorist activities, he reaffirmed the government's position that India and Afghanistan must prevent its territory from being used against Pakistan. The press conference was attended by Jalal Khan, a member of the Provincial Assembly from the Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz, who echoed the Governor's calls for unity and cooperation in overcoming the province's challenges.



PESHAWAR: Chief Minister of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Ali Amin Gandapur inspecting the site of Aman Jirga.

Share of digital payments surged to 84%: SBP

F.P. Report

KARACHI: The State Bank of Pakistan, Friday, said that ongoing transformation of Pakistan's payment landscape towards digital payments underwent significant advancements as share of digital payments surged to 84% during fiscal year 2023-24.

The central bank, in its 'Annual Payment Systems Review - FY24' report issued here, attributed the continued growth of digital payments during the period from July 2023 to June 2024 to the increasing accessibility and adoption of digital payment channels as well as introduction of new and innovative products and services offered by Electronic Money Institutions (EMIs) and Branchless Banking (BB) players.

The retail payments have seen extraordinary growth in FY24, with the volume of transactions rising from 4.7 billion to 6.4 billion, and the value of these transactions increasing from Rs403 trillion to Rs547 trillion—a growth of around 35% in both volume and value, the report stated adding that the share of digital payments by volume has surged from 76% in FY23 to 84% in FY24.

"This expansion is attributed to the growing number of digital channel users, facilitated by the convenience and variety of products offered through mobile banking apps, internet banking portals, and mobile wallets," the SBP report said. The report also highlights the pivotal role of digital payments made through mobile banking apps and internet banking portals, which collectively saw a 62% increase in transactions to 1,346 million, with the value of these transactions rising by 74% to Rs70 trillion.

The report said that mobile app banking users increased by 16%, internet banking users by 25%, while Branchless Banking (BB) mobile app wallet users grew by 2%, and e-wallet users by an impressive 85% during the period under review.

Similarly, mobile app-based wallets experienced substantial growth, with customers making 2,697 million payments through their BB mobile app wallets and 85 million through EMIs e-wallets, it added. The report also encompassed the expansion of the POS machine network that has also contributed to the growth and stated that

number of POS machines increased by 8.9% to 125,593 and the expansion was supporting card-based transactions at a growing number of retail outlets and stores.

As of FY23 end, there were 85,386 POS enabled merchants across the country. The network has now increased to 98,936 merchants as of FY24 end marking a growth of 16% in a single year, it stated. E-commerce payments have also seen a remarkable shift, as 87% of digital payments for e-commerce now being initiated through bank accounts or digital wallets, the report revealed and added that a total of 309 million e-commerce payments were made during FY24, with a transaction value reaching Rs406 billion.

Transactions via RTGS saw a significant uptick, rising from 4.9 million to 5.8 million in volume and from Rs640.4 trillion to Rs1,043.1 trillion in value while a total of 496.1 million transactions amounting to Rs11.6 trillion were processed through Raast, Pakistan's instant payment system. Last year in FY23, number of transactions stood at 147.2 million with value of Rs3.1 trillion.

Vice Admiral, Rear Admiral take over Pak Navy fleet

F.P. Report

KARACHI: Vice Admiral Muhammad Faisal Abbasi took over as Commander Karachi and Rear Admiral Abdul Munib assumed the Command of Commander Pakistan Fleet during Change of Command ceremonies held at Karachi.

Vice Admiral Muhammad Faisal Abbasi handed over the command of PN Fleet to Rear Admiral Abdul Munib and Rear Admiral Muhammad Saleem handed over the command of Commander Karachi to Vice Admiral Muhammad Faisal Abbasi.

Vice Admiral Muhammad Faisal Abbasi is a graduate of Pakistan Navy War College (Lahore), Naval Command College (USA) and National Defence University (Islamabad). The Admiral has an illustrious naval career compris-



ing vast experience of various Command and Staff appointments. His key appointments include Deputy Chief of Naval Staff Operations, Director General Naval Intelligence and Commander Pakistan Fleet. In recognition of his meritorious services, the Admiral was awarded Hilal-i-Imtiaz (Military).

Rear Admiral Abdul Munib is a graduate of Pakistan Navy War College (Lahore), Naval Command

College (USA) and National Defence University (Islamabad). The Admiral has an illustrious naval career comprising vast experience of various Command and Staff appointments. His key appointments include Deputy Chief of Naval Staff Operations, Director General C4I and Director General Naval Intelligence. In recognition of his meritorious services, the Admiral was awarded Hilal-i-Imtiaz (Military).

Sindh CM denies reports of IMF reservations over NFC award

F.P. Report

KARACHI: Sindh Chief Minister Syed Murad Ali Shah has said that neither the federal government nor the International Monetary Fund (IMF) has approached him with concerns regarding the National Finance Commission (NFC) Award or the 18th Amendment.

He said that the federal government has started implementing the 18th Constitutional Amendment by devolving or winding up some of its ministries. He spoke to the media after attending the launch of the World Bank's latest editions of the South Asia Development Update (SADU) and Pakistan Development Update (PDU) for October 2024 at a local hotel.

Shah stated that his government has reservations about some other matters, and he is in discussions with the federal government. He added that the Pakistan Peoples Party would only support measures that are in the interest of the country." — Aljazeera

In response to a question, Murad Shah said that he learnt from media reports that the federal government has terminated power purchase contracts with five IPPs, which is expected to reduce electricity tariffs. Shah suggested that the government should take steps to utilize surplus electricity. He proposed that industrial units could be offered electricity at subsidised rates if they increased their production capacity by starting additional night shifts. "This would help offset the capacity charges paid to the IPPs by the federal government, improve production, and create job opportunities for unemployed workers," he said.

Speaking at the launch of The World Bank's editions of the South Asia Development Update (SADU) and Pakistan Development Update (PDU) for 2024 at a local hotel, the CM said that the reports, which provide critical insights into the economic challenges faced by Pakistan and the South

Asian region, praised for offering a roadmap for sustained growth.

The chief minister said the devastating floods of 2022, which submerged nearly 70 per cent of the province caused extensive infrastructural damage, compounding the developmental issues already exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic," he said and added that despite these challenges his government restored infrastructure and alleviated the economic hardships faced by people of the province. "We are committed to overcoming these obstacles, and the people of Sindh have shown their confidence in the government to serve and uplift them," said Murad Shah.

Talking about poverty alleviation, Mr Shah said that his government responded to findings in the report, which underlined rising poverty during 2023. "The Sindh government has taken several steps to support the most vulnerable segments of society," he said.