

## PM reviews preparations F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif on Friday visited the capital city to review the arrangements being made for the upcoming SCO. On the occasion, the prime minister was briefed on the reception arrangements for the guests attending the SCO Summit. Interior Minister Mohsin Naqvi, Information Minister Attaullah Tarar and other key officials accompanied him.

# The Frontier Post

## President arrives F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: President Asif Ali Zardari arrived here after concluding his two-day official visit to Turkmenistan. During his stay in Ashgabat, the President Asif Ali Zardari attended the international forum on "Interrelation of Times and Civilizations - Basis of Peace and Development". The president also discuss ties with Russian president.



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## Govt vows to use 'full force' to block PTI protest

### F.P. Report

SIALKOT: The government on Saturday vowed to use "full force" to stop the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf's (PTI) planned protest, which coincides with the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO) summit on October 15.

"The call for protest on October 15 is an attack on the integrity of the country [...]. We will not allow [any-

one] to damage the honour and reputation of the country [...]. The state will use it's all of its power and resources to prevent the invasion of Islamabad," said Asif while speaking to the media in Sialkot.

The defence minister's remarks refer to the Imran Khan-founded party's announcement to hold a demonstration in the federal capital on the same day the city is set to host representatives of several coun-

tries who will be visiting Pakistan to attend the Council of Heads of Government meeting scheduled from October 15 to 16.

The demonstrations, if held, would be the second in a month in the city. The previous one last week saw violent protests as the workers of the former ruling party, under the leadership of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Chief Minister Ali Amin Gandapur, took to the streets in what the party

claimed was meant for the "independence of the judiciary" — as the government aims to introduce constitutional amendments — and for the release of its incarcerated founder.

The said protests, as per a report submitted to the city's chief commissioner by the Islamabad Inspector General's office, caused damages worth Rs240 million to private and public property. Firing a

fresh salvo, Asif said that the PTI wanted to repeat the events of the May 9 riots — which saw military installations being vandalised — and that the party wanted to prevent the country's progress and development. The politician also called for the courts to intervene and take notice of the matter. "Do the courts not see what the PTI founder is doing with the integrity of the country? The actions of the judiciary

today will determine their role in history," he remarked.

Meanwhile, Federal Minister for Planning, Development and Special Initiatives, Professor Ahsan Iqbal, here on Saturday strongly condemned Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf's protest call on October 15, labeling it as 'Political Terrorism', aimed at maligning Pakistan and stopping its development and economic progress.

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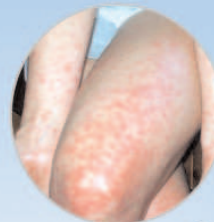
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INF(P)2616/24







# PTI’s protest at D-Chowk during SCO conference is conspiracy, says Kundi

PESHAWAR (APP): Governor Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Faisal Karim Kundi on Saturday said that the announcement of a Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) protest at D-Chowk during the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) conference is part of a conspiracy.

He criticized PTI for consistently pursuing an agenda against the country and collaborating with enemies of the state.

Kundi emphasized that they will not allow any plots to destabilize Pakistan to succeed and urged PTI to retract their call for protest on October 15.

Talking to media here, Kundi pointed out the significance of the upcoming international conference, saying that Pakistan aims to present a positive image to the world.

He expressed concern that PTI's protest coinciding with the conference is detrimental.

He also referenced articles in Israeli newspapers supporting PTI Chief Imran Khan, questioning whether protests at D-Chowk could alter the constitutional process.

Kundi reiterated that if PTI's demands align with the constitution, they will be addressed, recalling that the establishment of a constitutional court was announced by Quaid-e-Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah.

Kundi said that all political parties are united in support of the SCO conference and emphasized that the Pakistan Peoples Party has always advocated for peace.

He lamented the deteriorating security situation in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, accusing PTI of attempting to incite unrest by inviting the Indian minister to address their rally.

Stressing that national interests come first, Kundi highlighted the sacrifices made by the PPP for the country, asserting that they have never rallied against Pakistan but instead promoted the slogan "Pakistan Khappay" (Long Live Pakistan).

He underscored that the best forum for politicians is parliament, criticizing PTI members for promoting violence and suggesting they join in peaceful protests instead.

Kundi praised JUI Chief Maulana Fazlur Rehman as a political figure who has fought for democracy and suggested that Maulana's support would ultimately benefit their cause.

He concluded by addressing the impact of terrorism on tourism in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, calling for collective efforts to restore peace and indicating that he had participated in a peace jirga to promote stability in the province.

Kundi reiterated his call for PTI to withdraw their planned protest.



PESHAWAR: Chairman, Youth Movement Pakistan and Kashmir Muhammad Abdullah Hameed Gul addressing a press conference.

## Health Department establishes free medical camp for jirga

**F.P. Report**

PESHAWAR: On the directives of Chief Minister Ali Amin Gandapur, a free medical camp has been established for the participants of the Pashtun National Jirga under the leadership of Health Advisor Ihtisham Ali. The camp was set up by the Health Department to ensure the well-being of attendees.

On the first day of the Jirga, Health Advisor Ihtisham Ali personally visited the venue, where he issued instructions to the District Health Officer (DHO) of Khyber and other relevant health officials to set up the medical camp to take care of the participants' health.

According to the instructions of the Health Advisor, the medical camp will remain operational until the conclusion of the Jirga to ensure that participants face no health-related difficulties. Dr. Zafar Ali Khan, District Health Officer of Khyber, confirmed that the medical camp was set up immediately and is equipped with free medicines, health check-ups, and emergency services, including ambulances, available at all times.

He further stated that the administration of the Pashtun National Jirga had welcomed this initiative by the Health Department and expressed their gratitude on behalf of the participants. Dr. Zafar Ali, along with the medical team, is personally supervising the camp and ensuring all conditions are being monitored closely.

The details of the camp indicate that, on the second day of the Jirga, over 4500 participants received free medical check-ups. Additionally, a dengue prevention spray was carried out within the venue, and an emergency referral mechanism has been established with Jamrud Type D Hospital and Hayatabad Medical Complex to manage any unforeseen medical emergencies. This initiative by the Health Department highlights the commitment to providing quality healthcare services during the Pashtun National Jirga.

## SCO Summit in Islamabad A catalyst for regional cooperation, strengthening of economic linkages

PESHAWAR (APP): The upcoming Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) Summit, set to take place in Islamabad on October 15-16 next week, is anticipated to serve as a key platform for fostering regional cooperation, bolstering trade and investment besides enhancing socio-economic-cultural linkages among its member states.

Diplomatic and political experts maintained that this important meeting of the heads of governments of SCO's member states will not only help work together to address the pressing regional issues but also significantly enhance Pakistan's role on the global stage as a leader.

Emphasizing the strategic and diplomatic importance of the SCO summit at Islamabad, former ambassador Manzoorul Haq highlighted its key role in addressing security, economic and environment challenges besides promoting regional stability since its establishment in 1996.

"Certainly, the upcoming historic summit will allow all leaders for open discussions on a range of issues from combating terrorism to economic collaboration, climate change to poverty, unemployment and cultural linkages to exchange of delegations, reflecting the organization's commitment to tackling the multifaceted challenges by supporting each others for shared prosperity," he reiterated.

The SCO, which includes member states accounting for approximately 40% of the global population, and 32% of the world's GDP, presents Pakistan with an excellent opportunity to shape its economic and investment future.

Ambassador Manzoor said that the extra ordinary SCO meeting at Islamabad could enhance prospects for trade and energy corridors, as well as leverage Pakistan's abundant natural resources including mines and minerals, gas and hydel power potential for foreign investment.

"This is an important moment for Pakistan to take advantage of its unique strategic position and safeguard its geostrategic interests and strengthen its economy by strongly advocating its principal stand at SCO summit," he added.

The SCO's roots trace back to the Shanghai Five established in 1996, evolving significantly after Uzbekistan joined in 2001, and more recently, Pakistan became a full member in 2017 after excellently performing its observer's role during 2015-17. Manzoor said this expansion underscored the organization's growing relevance as a forum for bilateral cooperation among countries with diverse interests and geographical importance.

Professor Dr. Ejaz Khan, a former chairman of the International Relations Department at the University of Peshawar, highlighted the summit's potential to elevate Pakistan's global image. He emphasized the need for the SCO to expand economic ties in areas such as trade, investment, and innovation, stating that this great summit positions Pakistan as a vital connector in the region.

Moreover, the SCO is expected to discuss crucial topics like countering of terrorism, promotion of bilateral trade and socio-cultural cooperation and helping the underdeveloped and developing partners.

He said climate change, which affects many SCO member states, required a collaborative approach to address this key issue imperative for fostering economic stability, enhancing agriculture production and autarky in food services for the prosperity of billions of people. Dr. Ejaz Khan said SCO's commitment to regional security is evident through its focus on military cooperation and joint exercises aimed at combating terrorism, human and drugs trafficking and other organized crimes in the past. He strongly believed that the summit will catalyze further collaboration in these specific areas besides reinforcing the organization's security paradigm.

Professor Dr. A.H. Hilali, former chairman of the Political Science Department at the University of Peshawar, echoed the sentiment that the summit offers more than mere dialogue. He said it presents a golden opportunity for all states to redefine the SCO's role amid current geopolitical and security challenges faced by the region.

"This is a golden chance for all member states to unite for mutual benefits, addressing issues like poverty and unemployment for the prosperity of its people," he said.

The experts said as the preparation for the summit reached its peak at Islamabad, the collective strength of the SCO can be harnessed through collaborative initiatives aimed at promoting regional cooperation and deepening of economic cooperation vital for shared prosperity of people of all SCO states.

For Pakistan, they said fostering an environment of open dialogue and cooperation would be essential in addressing key challenges besides trade barriers and expressed the hope that Pakistan would effectively highlight its view point on regional issues.

The experts said that the SCO summit represents a pivotal moment for regional diplomacy and deepening economic cooperation, with the potential to significantly impact not only Pakistan positively but also the regional countries.

As discussions unfold at national level about the importance of SCO, the experts emphasized that the historic summit would likely be on building a cohesive framework for collaboration that addresses both immediate concerns and long-term strategic goals of the member states for achieving goals of shared prosperity.



PESHAWAR: A man selecting traditional Karakul cap at Qissa Khwani Bazaar. — INP photo

## PHC accepts pathologist writ for provision of shares

**Humayun Khan**

PESHAWAR: The Peshawar High Court has issued orders to provide a 25% share to a pathologist at the District Headquarters Teaching Hospital in Kohat, pertaining to laboratory tests.

A two-member bench, comprising Justice Ijaz Anwar and Justice Syed Arshad Ali heard the petition filed by Muhammad Akif Javed. The counsel Waseem ud Din Khattak advocate argued that the petitioner entitled to a 25% share in laboratory tests.

The lawyer cited notifications dated April 13, 2005, and August 13, 2021, supporting his claim. He stated that despite multiple requests, the hospital administration failed to provide the share.

Additional Advocate General presented a notification dated August 13, 2024, acknowledging the pathologist's entitlement to the share.

PHC accepted the petition and ordered the hospital to provide the 25% share.

## Police intensifies action against street crimes

**Syed Adnan**

PESHAWAR: The police in Fagirabad Division, specifically within Gulbahar and Fagirabad Circles, have ramped up operations against street criminals, snatchers, and motorcycle thieves.

In various actions, law enforcement officers have recovered a total of PKR 5 million, 40 mobile phones, a car, 15 motorcycles, and weapons.

The police successfully exposed a notorious gang involved in snatching large sums of money at gun-point. Several other gangs involved in snatching and motorcycle theft have also been apprehended during the crackdown.

Among those arrested are Muhammad Zarif, Kifayat, Arifullah, Amir Zada, Imtiaz, and Yasir, also known as Saddam. The arrested individuals are residents of Hazarkhwani, Naguman, Haji Camp, Gulbahar, and Ranugharhi areas of Peshawar. A significant breakthrough came from a case filed by a local businessman, Muhammad Sher Nadeem, who had reported a robbery in Fagirabad just a few days ago.

One of the arrested suspects was identified as a laborer who worked for a ghee merchant, adding to the complexity of the case.

The recovery includes the PKR 5 million that had been stolen, 40 mobile phones, a car, and 15 motorcycles. The recovered items have already been returned to their rightful owners.

Speaking on the matter, SP Fagirabad Division, Syed Talal Ahmad Shah, noted that the arrested suspects are expected to make further important and sensational revelations during interrogation.

**Fake Urea factory sealed in Peshawar**

The district administration has successfully sealed a fake urea factory involved in the mixing of stone and gypsum into urea.

Deputy Commissioner (DC) Sarbad Saleem Akram said that a joint team, led by the Assistant Commissioner (City) and officials from the Agriculture Department, conducted a raid on the factory located on Dallazak Road.

## KP to restart work on Rs16b Safe City Project

PESHAWAR (APP): The Khyber Pakhtunkhwa government has decided to start work on the long-pending Safe City Project as according to a document on Saturday, in the first phase work on the project will be initiated in 5 districts including the provincial metropolis.

The document said that KP government has decided to rebegin work on Safe City Project as district Peshawar and its posh locality, Hayatabad have been selected for the first phase initiation.

The project would cost a sum of 16 billion rupees, the document said and added that in the second phase the project would be extended to Dera Ismail Khan, Lakki Marwat, North Waziristan and Bannu. A comprehensive plan has also been devised for the successful implementation and outcome of the project.

It said the project will help the government in dealing with anti-social and anti-state elements through state-of-the-art machinery and gadgets for their extermination.

This will also be helpful in preserving the record of crimes, a modern backup system will also be the part of this project.

Through installation of Safe City Project equipment and practices, crime curbing and identification of anti-state elements and their facilitators will be made prompt and easier, the document said.

## 5867 clear physical, written tests for joining KP police

PESHAWAR (APP): Out of a total, 40000 candidates, 5867 passed the physical and written tests for recruitment in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa police, said police department on Saturday.

According to the department, in the physical test 13110 candidates were declared successful however their numbers dropped to 5867 after appearing in the written ability test.

The process of testing the physical and mental abilities of the candidates has completed, the authorities said, adding that nine examination halls were set up at all the big cities of the province for the purpose.

Around 40000 candidates applied online for the 3200 vacancies in KP police force.

The entire process of tests was aired live on social media platforms while a short video clip of every candidate was also made to ensure transparency.

During the tests, state-of-the-art software was applied to evade speculations about forgery and cheating. The software also helped in the arrest of 102 forged and cheater candidates. Cases have been registered against the arrested fake candidates.

The department further informed that a quality checkup process of the successful candidates will be carried out at all the divisional headquarters from 20TH October following which the scrutiny of the documents of successful candidates will be conducted.

Following scrutiny of the papers, a final merit list will be uploaded on the EATA and police department websites.

## YMP flays attack on Chinese national

PESHAWAR (APP): The Chairman, Youth Movement Pakistan and Kashmir Muhammad Abdullah Hameed Gul and other officer bearers of his party here Saturday strongly condemned the recent terrorist attack on Chinese nationals at Karachi.

Addressing a press conference here at press club, Muhammad Abdullah Hameed Gul and Provincial President, Youth Movement Pakistan Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Ikraam Ud Din expressed complete solidarity with all the victims families including Chinese nationals of the Karachi attack.

They said Pakistan and China relations are deeper than sea and sweater than honey, and terrorists through such attacks could not create cracks in bilateral relations of both the countries.

They said the all weather relations between the two countries are deep rooted and time tested and touched new heights after CPEC. They said the victims families are not alone in this hour of grief and sorrow and we are with them.





## In brief

### Governor visits Swabi F.P. Report

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

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

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

### Man killed in Sargodha

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

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

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

### FC organizes Convention F.P. Report

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



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

## Officials directed to daily visit hospitals

F.P. Report

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

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

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



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

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

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

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

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

## Govt utilizes available resources for public welfare

F.P. Report

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

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

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

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

## TDCP marks world tourism day

F.P. Report

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

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

## Muqam stresses for welfare of coalmines workers

F.P. Report

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

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

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

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

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

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

Under the leadership of the Prime Minister of

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

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

## KCCI commits for socio-economic uplift

Sahibzada Afridi

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

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

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

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

with or without a position.

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

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

## Malakand University teachers hold protest

F.P. Report

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

F.P. Report

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

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

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

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

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

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





# Food aid to Gaza falls as Israel sets new aid rule

GAZA (Reuters): Food supplies to Gaza have fallen sharply in recent weeks because Israeli authorities have introduced a new customs rule on some humanitarian aid and are separately scaling down deliveries organized by businesses, people involved in getting goods to the war-torn territory told Reuters.

The new customs rule applies to truck convoys chartered by the United Nations to take aid from Jordan to Gaza via Israel, seven people familiar with the matter said. Under the rule, individuals from relief organizations sending aid must complete a form providing passport details, and accept liability for any false information on a shipment, the people said. They said relief agencies are disputing that requirement, which was announced mid-August, because they fear signing the form could expose staff to legal problems if aid fell into the hands of Hamas or other enemies of Israel.

As a result, shipments have not been getting through the Jordan route -- a key channel in Gaza supplies -- for two weeks. The dispute has not affected shipments via Cyprus and Egypt, the sources said. In a parallel move, Israeli authorities have restricted commercial food shipments to Gaza amid concerns that Hamas was benefiting from that trade, the people familiar with the matter and industry sources said. UN and Israeli government data show that in September, deliveries of food and aid sank to their lowest in seven months.

Israeli's military humanitarian unit, Cogat, which oversees aid and commercial shipments to Gaza, confirmed that no UN-chartered convoy has moved from Jordan to Gaza since Sept. 19, but a spokesperson said Israel was not blocking goods. The spokesperson referred questions about the form dispute to Israel's Ministry of Economy. A ministry spokesperson did not answer Reuters' questions. A spokesperson for the UN's emergency-response arm, the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA), declined to comment. Cogat did not address specific questions about commercial shipments. The twin restrictions, which have not been previously reported, have reignited concerns among aid workers that pervasive food insecurity will worsen for the 2.3 million Gazans trapped in the occupied Palestinian territory.

"Lack of food is some of the worst it's been during the war, these past weeks especially," Nour al-Amassi, a doctor who works in southern Gaza, told Reuters by phone. "We thought we'd been able to get a hold on it but it's got worse. My clinic treats 50



children a day for various issues, injuries and illness. On average 15 of those are malnourished." The number of trucks carrying food and other goods to Gaza fell to around 130 per day on average in September, according to Cogat statistics. That is below about 150 recorded since the beginning of the war, and far off the 600 trucks a day that the US Agency for International Development says are required to address the threat of famine in wartime.

Food insecurity has been one of most fraught issues of the war that began after Hamas's Oct. 7 attack on Israel last year. In May, International Criminal Court (ICC) prosecutors asked the court to issue an arrest warrant against Israel's Prime Minister, Benjamin Netanyahu, saying they suspected Israeli authorities had used "the starvation of civilians as a method of warfare." Israeli authorities have denied this, saying they facilitate food deliveries to Gaza despite challenging conditions. In September, they filed two official challenges to the ICC, contesting the legality of the prosecutor's request and contesting the court's jurisdiction. During the war, aid to Gaza has been delivered through several different routes that have come in and out of operation, according to UN and Israeli officials.

The main route before the war was to southern Gaza via Egypt, after a detour for Israeli scans. Since Israel launched a military assault on the town of Rafah in May, UN aid coming that way has slumped because insecurity made it increasingly difficult to organize, UN relief agencies have said. In May, a US-led effort launched a pier to deliver humanitarian aid by boat, but the jetty was damaged by storms and abandoned in July. Some shipments that were earmarked for the pier at the time have yet to reach Gaza even after they were re-routed through the Israeli

port of Ashdod, aid workers said. Israel opened the Jordan route in December, allowing trucks to move directly from the Hashemite Kingdom to Gaza. UN and NGO aid workers say the Jordan corridor became the most reliable until the recent suspension.

Transportation via the route was helped after Israeli authorities agreed with Jordan to simplify customs procedures for humanitarian aid transported by UN agencies. But in mid-August, Cogat informed UN relief agencies that this fast track had been revoked, the people familiar with the matter said. That generates additional costs and delays. The new customs form is an extra headache, the sources said, adding the UN side had proposed an alternative and was hopeful Israel would accept it. Compounding concerns about hunger in Gaza, the sources pointed to a recent drop in commercial supplies.

Commercial imports by Gaza-based traders made up the majority of the 500 trucks that entered the territory daily before the war. Israel halted most of these supplies when war broke out, but allowed food imports to resume from Israeli-controlled territory in May, helping to augment the supply of fresh, nutritious products not contained in aid shipments, four Gazan traders and four UN officials said. But commercial shipments have fallen from a daily average of 140 trucks in July to 80 in September, according to Cogat statistics. In the last two weeks of September, Gaza-based traders said the daily average fell even further, to a low of 45 trucks. Israeli authorities actively promoted commercial supply since May, saying in June it was a more efficient alternative to UN aid. But they changed tack after realizing that Hamas managed to levy taxes on some commercial shipments and seize some of the food, people familiar with the matter said.

## Ukraine's military will pull out of Vuhledar

KYIV (AP): Ukrainian forces are withdrawing from the front-line town of Vuhledar, perched atop a tactically significant hill in eastern Ukraine, after more than two years of grinding battle, military officials said.

Vuhledar, a town Ukrainian forces fought tooth and nail to keep, is the latest urban settlement to fall to the Russians as the war stretches deep into its third year and the Ukrainian army is gradually being pushed backward in the eastern Donetsk province. It follows a vicious summer campaign along the eastern front that saw Kyiv cede several thousand square kilometers (square miles) of territory as the Russian army hacks its way westward, obliterating towns and villages with missiles, glide bombs, artillery and drones.

Ukraine's Khortytsia ground forces formation, which commands eastern regions including Donetsk, said in a statement posted on Telegram it was withdrawing troops from Vuhledar to "protect military personnel and equipment." "In an attempt to take control of the city at any cost, (Russian) reserves were directed to carry out flanking attacks, which exhausted the defense of the units of the Armed Forces of Ukraine. As a result of the enemy's actions, there arose a threat of encircling the city," the statement said. The tactical significance of the town, situated at the confluence of two major roads, is twofold. Dominant heights and proximity to railway lines offer Moscow greater protection for their own logistics routes, and a better vantage point for attacks against Ukrainian forces and supply lines feeding the south. Its capture is another notch in Moscow's belt, bringing it closer to the key logistics hub of Pokrovsk.

## Dominican Republic will deport Haitians

SANTO DOMINGO, Dominican Republic (AP): The Dominican Republic announced that it would start massive deportations of Haitians living illegally in the country, expelling up to 10,000 of them a week.

Government spokesman Homero Figueroa told reporters that the government took the decision after noticing an "excess" of Haitian migrants in the Dominican Republic, which shares the island of Hispaniola with Haiti. Figueroa said officials have seen an increase in Haitian migrants as a UN-backed mission in Haiti to fight gang violence flounders. He said authorities also agreed to strengthen border surveillance and control, but he did not provide details.

Last year, the Dominican Republic deported more than 174,000 people it says are Haitians, and in the first half of the year, it has expelled at least 67,000 more. Activists have long criticized the administration of President Luis Abinader for what they say are ongoing human rights violations of Haitians and those of Haitian descent born in the Dominican Republic. Abinader has denied any mistreatment. Announcement comes a week after Abinader announced at the UN General Assembly that he would take "drastic measures" if the mission in Haiti fails. It is led by nearly 400 police officers from Kenya, backed by nearly two dozen police and soldiers from Jamaica and two senior military officers from Belize.

# Ukraine ramps up arms production, says Zelenskiy

KYIV (Reuters): Ukraine can produce four million drones annually and is quickly ramping up its production of other weapons, President Volodymyr Zelenskiy said in comments authorised for publication. Speaking to executives from dozens of foreign arms manufacturers in Kyiv, Zelenskiy said Ukraine had already contracted to produce 1.5 million drones this year.

Drone production was virtually non-existent in Ukraine before Russia's invasion in February 2022. "In extremely difficult conditions of the full-scale war under constant Russian strikes, Ukrainians were able to build a virtually new defence industry," said Zelenskiy. Ukraine tripled its overall domestic weapons production in 2023 and then doubled that volume again in just the first eight months of this year. Prime Minister Denys Shmyhal told the same gathering. Ukrainian officials gave no absolute figures. More than 31 months into its war with invading Russian forces, and with no

end in sight, Ukraine now spends roughly half of its state budget - or about \$40 billion - on defence. Ukraine also receives large amounts of military as well as financial support from its Western allies. Russia, which is much larger and richer than its southern neighbour, is expected to hike its own military spending by 25% next year from its 2024 level, to about \$145 billion. Ukrainian officials say they expect foreign funding to steadily diminish while its defence needs continue to balloon. Kyiv is increasingly focused on producing as much as possible domestically.

Shmyhal said the government plans to increase spending to help bolster growth in domestic weapon production in 2025. "Next year's budget envisages a 65% increase in funds for weapon purchases. This is an increase of almost \$7 billion," Shmyhal told the forum. He said Ukraine's strategic task was to increase its domestic long-range capabilities and create conditions to have a techno-

logical advantage over Russian forces. Moscow forces have been steadily advancing in Ukraine's eastern Donetsk region and claimed complete control of the small mining town of Vuhledar.

The ability to strike deep inside Russia is a priority for Ukraine. Zelenskiy has been seeking permission to use Western long-range missiles for strikes inside Russia, so far without any agreement. "Among our strategic tasks is to strengthen the long-range capability of Ukrainian weapons, so that there is no safe place in the European part of Russia where the 'debris' of our drones and missiles could not reach," Shmyhal said. During event, several agreements were signed between Ukrainian and foreign companies to produce ammunition, different types of drones and also to repair Western equipment in Ukraine. Franco-German defence group KNDS, which produces heavily armoured wheeled and tracked vehicles, announced it had opened a subsidiary in Kyiv.

# CIA expands online recruitment of informants

WASHINGTON (Reuters): The US CIA launched a new drive to recruit informants in China, Iran and North Korea, adding to what it says has been a successful effort to enlist Russians.

The premier US spy agency posted instructions in Mandarin, Farsi and Korean on its accounts on X, Facebook, Instagram, Telegram, LinkedIn and the Dark Web on how to contact it securely, a CIA spokesperson said in a statement.

"Our efforts on this front have been successful in Russia, and we want to make sure individuals in other authoritarian regimes know that we're open for business," the spokesperson said, adding that the CIA was adapting to increased state repression and global surveillance. A Mandarin-language video posted to YouTube featuring only written instructions advised individuals to

contact the CIA via its official website using trusted encrypted Virtual Private Networks (VPNs) or the TOR network. "Your safety and wellbeing is our foremost consideration," it said.

It asked for individuals' names, locations, and contact details not associated with their real identities, along with information that could be of interest to the CIA, cautioning that responses were not guaranteed and could take time. Liu Pengyu, a Chinese embassy spokesman, accused the US of waging "an organized and systematic" disinformation campaign against China and said that "any attempts to drive a wedge between the Chinese people and the CCP (Chinese Communist Party) or to weaken their close bond will inevitably fail." The Russian embassy and Iran's UN mission did not immediately respond to requests for comment. The CIA's thirst for intelligence

has grown as China expands cooperation with Russia and Iran and flexes its regional military muscle. Russia, China, Iran and North Korea are known within the US intelligence community as "hard targets" - countries whose governments are difficult to penetrate.

The US also is grappling with Iran's conflict with Israel, its nuclear program, its growing links with Russia and its support for militant proxies. North Korea's nuclear weapons program is another US intelligence target, along with what US officials say are Pyongyang's arms supplies to Moscow for the war against Ukraine, an allegation that Moscow and Pyongyang deny. The CIA began recruiting Russians in 2022 by posting Russian language texts on its social media accounts on how to contact the agency securely, followed by videos in 2023.

# German ships that passed through Taiwan Strait were warned off

SINGAPORE (Reuters): The German Navy ships that transited the Taiwan Strait last month received close scrutiny and repeated radio messages from Chinese vessels, the German task group's commander said, but there was no unsafe behaviour.

The frigate FGS Baden-Wuerttemberg and logistics ship FGS Frankfurt am Main were "shadowed by Chinese surface vessels," who sent radio messages that the South China Sea waters were theirs by law, said Rear Admiral Axel Schulz, adding the German ships responded that they were in international waters exercising freedom of navigation. "They actually acted in a safe and professional manner, although they have let us know that we are not really welcome," Schulz said, standing on the helicopter deck of the Baden-Wuerttemberg. "But we haven't really experienced any dangerous situation whatsoever."

Sept. 13 was the first time German military ships had passed through the strait in 20 years. The People's Liberation Army's Eastern Theatre command said at the time that the ships had been warned and monitored, and that the passage "increases

security risks and sends the wrong signal". Since then, naval vessels from Japan, Australia and New Zealand have transited the sensitive waterway, and US aircraft have flown above it, underlining their position that they were international waters. The two German ships were there as part of their country's second Indo-Pacific deployment, a mission to conduct exercises with allies and partners, and to ensure freedom of the seas, Schulz said. They travelled to the Philippines after their strait passage, then headed to Singapore, where they arrived. Two German vessels participated in a bilateral exercise with Singapore's navy to "enhance interoperability".

Their presence in the Indo-Pacific was important because it showed Berlin's commitment to its partners in the region, and to being a responsible member of the rules-based international order, said Bettina Fanghanel, Germany's ambassador to Singapore. "Germany is not an Indo-Pacific power," Fanghanel said. "We have vital interests in the Indo-Pacific. ... It's important for me to stress that we are here to stay, that this is a lasting

engagement." The ships will next head to India, and the Baden-Wuerttemberg will eventually be posted off the coast of Lebanon, said German Navy Frigate Captain Alexander Gottschalk. The frigate, whose main weapons are a 127-millimetre (5-inch) cannon and Harpoon anti-ship missiles, was designed to accommodate special mission personnel, meaning it has 80 spare berths beyond what is needed for the crew of 126, Gottschalk said. That gives it flexibility to help with an evacuation if needed, for example.

The activity of foreign vessels in the strait has come against the backdrop of increased Chinese exercises in the waters around Taiwan, which Beijing claims as its own over the strong objections of the government in Taipei. At the end of September, China test-flew an ICBM, with the dummy warhead landing in the Pacific Ocean - the first missile test to do so since the 1980s. Confidential estimates put together by Taiwan's armed forces said that China spent about \$15 billion or about 7% of its defence budget, on military activity around the island in 2023.

# Taiwan shuts down as Typhoon Krathon approaches

BANGKOK (AFP): Taiwan shut down schools and closed its financial markets as Typhoon Krathon pounded the island with torrential rains and strong winds ahead of its expected landfall.

Krathon, with sustained wind speeds of 144 kilometres (89 miles) per hour and gusts of up to 180 kph, was 100 kilometres southwest of the major port city Kaohsiung at 9 pm (1300 GMT), the Central Weather Administration (CWA) said. The government announced that offices and schools across the island will remain closed on Thursday. The interior ministry said around 10,000 people had been evacuated from vulnerable areas as a precaution.

The typhoon, downgraded overnight to medium from strong under Taiwan's measurement system, was expected to arrive near southwestern Kaohsiung or Tainan on Thursday morning, the agency said, a day later than previously forecast. "This typhoon is moving very slowly. The time of its landfall continues to be delayed," said CWA chief Cheng Chia-ping, adding it will weaken rapidly after landing. Premier Cho Jung-tai urged the public to stay at home and remain vigilant. "Krathon is moving very slowly, which also pro-

longs the time it may cause damage to Taiwan... It is necessary to strengthen vigilance in the south and the eastern areas affected by continuous rainfall."

All domestic flights and around 250 international flights were cancelled. Domestic flights will be suspended again on Thursday. Two people had been killed, two were missing and more than 100 injured, according to the National Fire Agency. A 70-year-old man was rushed to hospital after he fell while trimming trees in eastern Hualien county and died in hospital. And a 66-year-old man, hospitalised in nearby Taitung after his truck hit a huge rock that had fallen onto the road, also died. Krathon also temporarily disrupted electricity in nearly 55,000 homes, authorities said.

Typhoons are common around the region at this time of year. However, a recent study showed that they are increasingly forming closer to coastlines, intensifying more rapidly and lasting longer over land due to climate change. The streets of Kaohsiung were nearly empty and trees were bending as heavy rain and strong winds lashed the port city. Its airport was almost deserted, with staff putting up metal bars to brace the

entrance gates in preparation for the typhoon while a handful of tourists tried to reschedule their flights. "We came to the airport counter but unfortunately it's not in service... We have to stay at least two or three days longer," Malaysian tourist Chan Kawoh told AFP after his flight home was cancelled. Powerful waves pounded Kaohsiung's coast, with some seawater spilling onto the road near the scenic Sizihwan Bay. Local authorities have distributed sandbags and cleared storm drains to avoid a repeat of the widespread flooding seen during typhoon Gaemi in July.

In neighbouring Taitung, TV footage showed rivers swelling as torrential rain hit the county. Gaemi was the strongest typhoon to make landfall in Taiwan in eight years, killing at least 10 people and injuring hundreds. Taiwan is accustomed to frequent tropical storms from July to October, but experts say climate change has increased their intensity, leading to heavy rains, flash floods and strong gusts. The storm was approaching Taiwan after slamming into a remote group of Philippine islands, where it cut power and communications and damaged "many" houses, according to a local mayor.

# 5 Chinese nationals charged

DETROIT (AP): US authorities charged five Chinese nationals with lying and trying to cover their tracks, more than a year after they were confronted in the dark near a remote Michigan military site where thousands of people had gathered for summer drills. The five, who were University of Michigan students at the time, were not charged for what happened at Camp Grayling in August 2023. Rather they are accused of misleading investigators about the trip

and conspiring to clear their phones of photos, according to a criminal complaint filed in federal court. The FBI noted in the court filing that there have been instances of college students from China taking photos of vital defense sites in the United States.

There was nothing in the file revealing the whereabouts of the five men. "The defendants are not in custody. Should they come into contact with US authorities, they will be arrested and face these charges," Gina

Balaya, a spokesperson for the US Attorney's Office in Detroit, said. In summer 2023, the five were confronted after midnight near a lake by a sergeant major with the Utah National Guard. One said, "We are media," before they collected their belongings and agreed to leave the area, the FBI said. The FBI learned that the men had booked a room at a nearby motel a week before they were spotted outside Camp Grayling, 200 miles (320 kilometers) north of Detroit.



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## Double act cause for grave concern

AS the single-minded Benjamin Netanyahu Cabinet doubles down on its war against Israel's regional foes, the anxieties of Israel's Western allies about the prospect of the ongoing conflict escalating into a Middle East war are growing.

But it seems increasingly obvious they will not be able to rein in the Netanyahu government, which seems lost in a berserker-like frenzy of violence for violence's sake. This inability leaves Israel's closest allies in an awkward position as it promises to leave them facing troubles far beyond the credibility conundrum they already face.

Balancing support for Israel's crackdown on alleged terrorist threats and handling the worsening resultant humanitarian crisis as the Israel Defense Forces intensify their clearing offensives in the Gaza Strip and Lebanon is proving increasingly tricky and sensitive for many Western governments.

At a meeting of the United Nations Security Council on Wednesday, the US' ambassador to the UN urged Israel to urgently address the "catastrophic conditions" among Palestinian civilians in the besieged Gaza Strip and to stop "intensifying suffering" by limiting aid deliveries. The United Kingdom's UN ambassador told Israel that it "must do much more" to avoid civilian casualties and ensure the UN and aid groups can operate safely and effectively in Gaza. While France's UN ambassador complained "delivery of humanitarian assistance is being hindered, and humanitarian workers are constantly under threat".

The head of the UN Palestinian refugee agency painted a grim picture of the situation, warning that "Yet again, Gazans are teetering on the edge of a man-made famine".

Turning a blind eye to the broadening humanitarian crisis is severely undermining the moral ground for not only Israel's ongoing offensives, but also that for Western support for Israel. But Netanyahu's eyes are focused solely on his military agenda, and he is dismissive of any calls to heed the humanitarian crisis that continues to worsen by the day and urgings that he end the military operations.

In his Sunday exchange with French President Emmanuel Macron, who called for stopping arms shipments to Israel to make way for a political solution, Netanyahu told the latter that placing restrictions on Israel will just serve Iran and its proxies.

Despite the acute international concern that Israel's present military operations in Lebanon may turn the country into another Gaza, and US President Joe Biden's reported warning that "the perception of Israel around the world increasingly is that you're a rogue state, a rogue actor", Netanyahu shows no sign of backing down. Instead, he said on Tuesday that Lebanon would meet the same fate as Gaza if its people did not rise up against Hezbollah.

Immediately after his Wednesday discussion on the phone with Biden on Israel's plan for retaliating against Iran's missile attacks, during which the latter urged him to avoid escalating the tensions and a further slide into a broader war, the Israeli defense minister simply promised that a strike against Iran would be "lethal, precise and surprising". Considering Teheran's warning of greater devastation in case of any Israeli counter-strike, the retaliation the Netanyahu government is preparing would only perpetuate the military tit-for-tat.

While the White House is reportedly increasingly frustrated at Netanyahu's disregard of US concerns, there seems to be little it can do about it. After all, tampering with arms supplies to Israel, which some believe is the most important leverage it has, is politically dangerous. The position the Biden administration has put the US in may prove disastrous for Kamala Harris and the Democratic Party's prospects in the November elections, with the dissatisfaction of Arab American voters in the battleground state of Michigan having the potential to hurt the Harris campaign dearly.

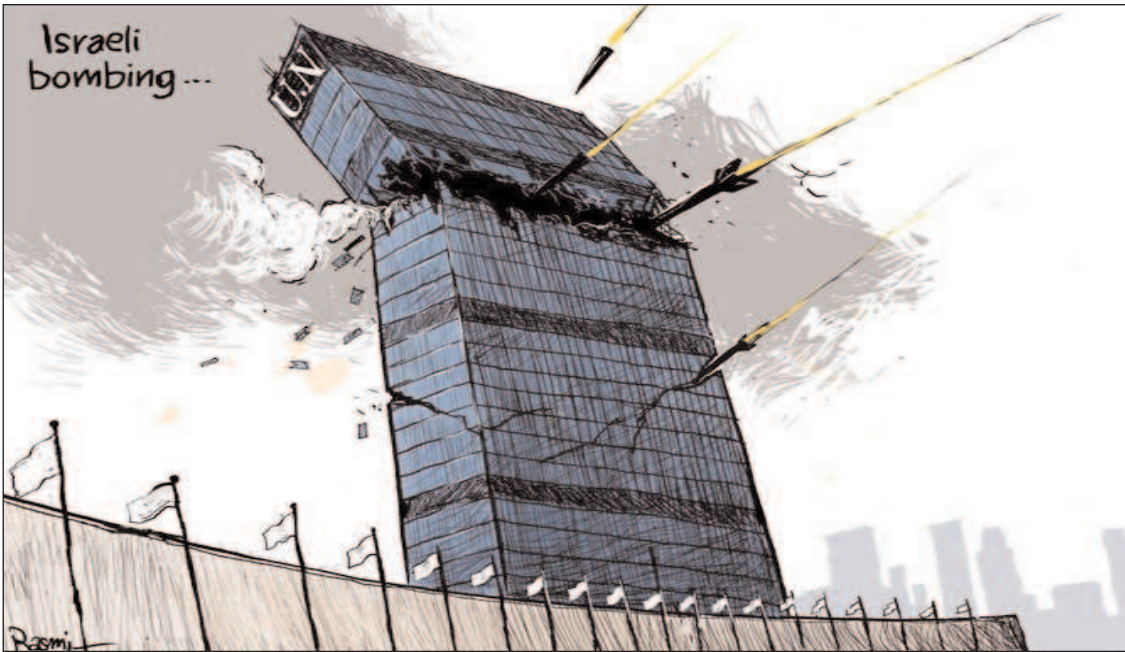
Israel has refused to embrace US proposals for a cease-fire in Gaza and Lebanon. That is why there has been speculation that Netanyahu is hoping to influence the US elections in favor of the Republican Party candidate, Donald Trump.

Trump has sided with Netanyahu, saying that the latter "knows what he's doing". While encouraging Netanyahu "to get this over with", Trump told reporters at a news conference on Aug 15 that he would give Israel the support that it needs to win fast.

It seems that it is not just the Netanyahu government that needs reining in, but the US as well because enabling Israel has become the default position as the presidential election looms ever closer.

### Important Notice

The Frontier Post will not be responsible for the comments in the articles and letters. The Frontier Post requests the writers of articles and letters to please make sure that they write their email addresses and mention the names of the cities, towns, districts or tehsil of their residences at the bottom of their articles and letters.



## Protecting children's rights should be a global priority

Sinem Cengiz

IN the 1950s, the UN secretary-general at the time, Dag Hammarskjöld, famously stated that the organization "was not created to bring us to heaven, but to save us from hell." Today, as the flames of hell encircle the globe, the UN may not be as effective as it once was, but its presence remains crucial.

The Turkish parliament last week received a presidential decree approving the establishment of a UNICEF global office in Istanbul. The agency will relocate to the Istanbul office its key operations, including human resources, emergency operations and major finance and administration units. The Turkish side stated that this relocation aligns with Türkiye's vision to turn Istanbul into a UN hub akin to New York and Geneva, in line with the country's humanitarian foreign policy.

UNICEF is the UN agency responsible for providing humanitarian and developmental aid to children worldwide. The most authoritative body for monitoring and enforcing children's rights at the international level is the Committee on the Rights of the Child, which operates under the UN. Additionally, UNICEF is tasked with advocating for the protection of children's rights, ensuring the fulfillment of children's basic needs and creating the necessary opportunities for children. Within this context, UNICEF Türkiye will provide social protection, child protection and education services to thousands of children and families.

The safety and protection of children is a global concern, particularly amid the many new wars and geopolitical conflicts seen today. Many children are living in a world where their fundamental rights are increasingly being violated every day. In recent years, we have been bombarded with devastating reports of children suffering death, abuse and violence — tragedies that the international community has shamefully failed to prevent.

In conflict zones, 468 million children struggle to survive, while 43.3 million children are living in forced displacement. However, beyond conflict areas, children's rights are also under significant threat as many developed countries are witnessing cases of sexual and physical abuse against children.

Not a day goes by without news of the tragic death of a child. For instance, the murder of an 8-year-old girl, Narin Guran, in Türkiye in August raised further concerns over the safety of children, as the incident was not an isolated one. According to a report by the FISA Child Rights Center, at least 343 children in Türkiye lost their lives due to preventable causes in just the first half of 2024. The report revealed that 95 of these children lost their lives in traffic accidents, 32 died by suicide and 33 died in workplace incidents — a clear indication that child labor continues to be a critical issue. Most alarmingly, 23 of the children were victims of various forms of violence.

Although it is hard to access official data, advocates and journalists claim there are thousands of missing child cases, which is seriously concerning.

Concerns over the safety and vulnerability of children have also increased following the Feb. 6, 2023, earthquakes in Türkiye and Syria, after which a Turkish parliamentary earthquake investigation commission reported that 1,118 surviving children were missing or potentially abducted in Türkiye's impacted region.

The UN and all its member states must prioritize the protection of all children, especially those who are child laborers, child soldiers or victims of sexual and/or physical violence. It is also crucial to safeguard the rights of refugee children. In addition to all this, thousands of children are abducted or go missing each year for various reasons.

Refugee children are another group deprived of fundamental children's rights. Although children make up less than a third of the world's population, they tragically account for nearly half of the global refugee population.

According to an agreement signed between Türkiye and the UN in November 2022, the UN will also open an Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs in Istanbul. Türkiye currently hosts the largest registered refugee population in the world. As members of refugee families, children need further care. The OCHA will accelerate

humanitarian assistance delivered from Türkiye to Syria, where many children are displaced or deprived of their fundamental needs.

There is a systemic failure in child protection across the world. The field of child rights is one of human rights and global policymaking. Türkiye has the relevant instruments to ensure refugee child protection, yet its collaboration with UN agencies is a significant step in advancing child protection measures and ensuring that children's rights are prioritized in national and international agendas. By working closely with UN agencies, Türkiye can enhance its policies, improve support systems and effectively address the root causes of child vulnerability, ultimately fostering a safer and more equitable environment for all children, including refugee children.

Children need stable and safe spaces in a caring family environment. Toward this aim, a strong and sustainable civil society is an important lever for change. Although children's rights are guaranteed in the broadest sense by the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, significant responsibilities fall on states, civil society organizations and communities in terms of the processes for protecting and implementing these rights. Effective measures need to be implemented by states. As critical as political, economic and climate issues are, the protection of children's rights is just as serious because these children are our next generation, our future.

## Little for Ukraine to cheer

Luke Coffey

AS Americans head to the polls next month to elect their next president, traditional bread-and-butter issues dominate the political debate. Concerns about rising grocery bills, access to affordable healthcare, debates over what is being taught in public schools and responses to illegal immigration are at the forefront of voters' minds. Unless the US is directly involved in a war, foreign policy typically takes a back seat in election campaigns, and Ukraine is no exception.

While former President Donald Trump and Vice President Kamala Harris have occasionally been asked about Ukraine in interviews, the conflict has not featured prominently on the campaign trail, despite its high geopolitical stakes. During the Trump-Harris presidential debate, there was one question on Ukraine, but the issue was completely absent from the recent vice-presidential debate. However, by piecing together their past public statements, we can form a reasonable picture of how each candidate might approach the Ukraine-Russia war — and, for Ukraine, neither scenario looks particularly hopeful.

Trump has been the most vocal critic of continued US aid to Ukraine. He has mocked President Volodymyr Zelensky for seeking American support, suggested that Moscow has a legitimate claim to some of Ukraine's territory and repeatedly claimed he could end the war within 24 hours of taking office. For a country fighting for its survival, Trump's statements do not inspire confidence. His running mate, Sen. J.D. Vance, has gone

even further, suggesting that Ukraine might have to cede territory to Russia and make a formal pledge to remain outside of NATO in the future as part of any peace plan.

Although Trump frequently claims he can quickly end the war, he has yet to offer even a basic outline of how he would achieve this. The worst-case scenario for Ukraine under a Trump administration would be the withdrawal of US support, potentially forcing Ukraine to cede parts of its territory to Russia as part of a ceasefire agreement. Given Russia's track record — such as its failure to honor the peace deal that ended the 2008 Russo-Georgian war or the Minsk agreements following its 2014 invasion of Ukraine — there is little reason to believe Moscow would honor any new ceasefire. While Trump's approach might bring a short-term halt to hostilities, history suggests that Russia would use the time to rebuild its military and resume its assault on Ukraine later.

A Harris administration, while less overtly hostile to Ukraine, may not be much better for different reasons. It is likely that Harris would continue the Biden administration's strategy of doing just enough to support Ukraine while avoiding decisive action. Since the war began, nearly every major decision to provide Ukraine with critical weapons and munitions has been met with hesitation. While the Biden administration deserves credit for accurately predicting Russia's invasion, its response has been marked by delays.

Key military aid, includ-

ing air defense systems, tanks, fighter jets and long-range missiles, has been slow to arrive and often too late to make a meaningful impact on the battlefield.

So far, Harris has not given any indication that she will change from the approach taken by President Joe Biden. Without arming Ukraine to win, the war is needlessly dragged out longer.

Neither Trump nor Harris seems to fully grasp the historical significance of this moment. Russia's invasion of Ukraine and annexation of parts of its territory represents the first time since Saddam Hussein's invasion of Kuwait in 1990 that armed forces have been used to seize part of a neighboring country. The outcome of this war will have lasting implications for the stability and security of Europe throughout the 21st century.

Europe's importance to the US cannot be overstated. It is America's biggest export market and the single largest source of foreign direct investment, leading to the creation of millions of American jobs. US policymakers have a lot at stake in ensuring Europe remains stable and secure. However, neither Trump nor Harris has shown on the campaign trail that they understand how vital Ukraine's success is to Europe and, by extension, the US' own economic and strategic interests.

So, what can be done to mitigate the worst outcomes under either a Trump or a Harris administration? For Ukraine, it is crucial to continue making the case to the American public about why supporting its defense is in the US' interest. At the same time,

Ukraine must ramp up its own domestic military production to reduce its reliance on foreign partners such as the US.

Europe will also need to do more. Right now, there is an equitable balance between what Europe is collectively providing to Ukraine and what the US is doing. If the stakes are high for the US, they are even higher for Europe. Should American leadership falter under either potential administration, Europe will have no choice but to step up, regardless of how reluctant it may be to do so.

Finally, the US Congress will play a pivotal role in ensuring continued American support for Ukraine after the election. Congress holds the power of the purse, which gives it significant influence over foreign policy. Despite vocal critics from both the far left and far right, there is still strong bipartisan support in Congress for providing military aid to Ukraine. Congress must work with the next occupant of the Oval Office to ensure that US policy toward Ukraine remains sound and consistent.

As the world watches the outcome of the American election, perhaps no other country is doing so more than Ukraine. Regardless of who wins the White House, the reality on the ground for Kyiv remains unchanged. Hundreds of thousands of Ukrainians continue to fight for their country's survival, culture, language and borders.

For Ukraine, this is a war of national survival and the next US president will be just one of many factors in its continued struggle. Sadly, things are not looking good.

## Illahi Bakhsh Soomro: A Pillar of Parliamentary Integrity

Muhammad Mohsin Iqbal

**FORMER Speaker of National Assembly of Pakistan Illahi Bakhsh Soomro was a prominent figure in Pakistan's political landscape. His contributions to the country's parliamentary and political history remain significant, leaving behind a legacy that reflects his dedication to public service, seasoned political acumen, and deep-rooted commitment to democratic principles. As a seasoned politician, Soomro's political journey is marked by pivotal moments, leadership, and the influential roles he played in shaping the country's political discourse.**

Born into a well-established family in Sindh, Soomro's early education and exposure to politics

mentarians of the need to maintain decorum and respect for the legislative process. His ability to control the assembly floor, even during heated debates, was one of his defining traits as Speaker. Under Soomro's leadership, the National Assembly passed several important pieces of legislation, many of which had a lasting impact on Pakistan's governance structure. His role in guiding the assembly through these legislative milestones highlighted his legal and constitutional expertise. His emphasis on dialogue and consensus-building helped defuse many political tensions during his tenure.

One of the memorable moments before Illahi Bakhsh Soomro left office in 2002 was when he administered the oath

**Soomro's political career spanned several decades and witnessed the shifting tides of Pakistan's political landscape. He was known for his adaptability and ability to work across party lines, earning respect from both allies and opponents. His entry into national politics was under the banner of the Pakistan Muslim League (PML), a party that he remained loyal to throughout most of his political career. In various capacities, Illahi Bakhsh Soomro played a key role in the party's internal dynamics, gaining a reputation as a leader who could be counted on to mediate conflicts and uphold party discipline.**

**One of the most significant highlights of Soomro's career was his tenure as Speaker of the National Assembly of Pakistan. He took charge of this crucial office in 1997, a period that was characterized by a heightened political atmosphere in the country.**

came through his lineage. His family's background in public service instilled in him a sense of responsibility towards the nation. This early foundation set the stage for what would be a long and varied political career. After completing his education, he became actively involved in politics during the 1960s, making his mark in Sindh's provincial political scene before eventually moving on to national politics.

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One of the most significant highlights of Soomro's career was his tenure as Speaker of the National Assembly of Pakistan. He took charge of this crucial office in 1997, a period that was characterized by a heightened political atmosphere in the country. His election as Speaker was seen as a strategic move aimed at bringing a seasoned and balanced individual to one of the highest offices of the country's legislative system. Soomro's calm demeanor and impartiality during his time as Speaker helped maintain a sense of order in the Assembly during turbulent times, earning him widespread respect.

As Speaker, Illahi Bakhsh Soomro presided over some of the most contentious and critical sessions in Pakistan's parliamentary history. One of the most notable moments of his tenure came during the constitutional debates and legislative reforms that shaped the future of Pakistan's political system. He was known for his strict adherence to parliamentary procedures and rules, often reminding parlia-

to his successor, Chaudhry Amir Hussain. This event marked a symbolic passing of the torch in Pakistan's parliamentary history. Soomro, in his dignified manner, handed over the responsibilities to Chaudhry Amir Hussain, emphasizing the continuity of democratic traditions and the importance of the Speaker's impartial role in maintaining the integrity of the National Assembly. His graceful conduct during this transition reflected his respect for democratic processes and his deep-rooted belief in institutional stability.

Apart from his role as Speaker, Soomro's broader political career included several other key positions. He served as a federal minister in various capacities, overseeing portfolios such as health, education, and commerce at different points in time. His contributions to these ministries were marked by efforts to modernize and reform sectors that were crucial for Pakistan's development. In particular, his work in the health and education sectors earned him recognition for attempting to improve service delivery and increase access for underserved communities.

Soomro's career was not without its challenges, particularly during times of political upheaval in Pakistan. Throughout military takeovers, political infighting, and shifting alliances, Soomro maintained a reputation for being a steady hand in turbulent times. His ability to navigate these complexities without compromising his principles made him a respected figure not only within his party but also in the broader political sphere.

As Pakistan reflects on his contributions, it is clear that Elahi Bakhsh Soomro was a politician who put the nation's interests above all else. His commitment to public service, his deep respect for parliamentary traditions, and his unwavering belief in democracy will be remembered as the hallmarks of his life and career. With his passing, Pakistan has lost one of its most seasoned and respected statesmen, but his legacy will endure in the institutions he helped strengthen and the principles he upheld.



# Israel’s mass detention of Palestinians is aimed to break our spirit

ON November 28, Israeli soldiers stopped my car at the Jaba checkpoint in the occupied West Bank and kidnapped me. I spent the following 253 days in detention without charge, without ever being told why this was happening to me.

That morning, I didn't want to leave the house because my wife and my three-month-old son were suffering from the flu, but I could not postpone an English language exam I had to take as part of my application for an MA programme at a British university. As I was making my way back, I called my wife to tell her that I was coming home and bringing food. I could hear the sound of my son crying in the background. His cries stayed in my head for the next eight months.

At the checkpoint, the Israeli soldiers took me out of the car, handcuffed me, blindfolded me and made me kneel for five hours inside a military camp. I was moved from camp to camp until I was eventually transferred to a detention centre in an illegal Jewish settlement in Hebron.

I was not permitted any contact with a lawyer or my family, despite my constant requests. It was only after two months of detention that I was finally able to speak with a lawyer and learned there were no charges against me. I was under administrative detention – a legal measure applied to the Palestinian population that allows the Israeli occupation forces to

arbitrarily detain whoever they want.

This measure has been used heavily since October 7, 2023, as yet another means of collectively punishing Palestinians. As of this month, more than 3,300 Palestinians are still being held in Israeli prisons without trial or charges.

As an administrative detainee, I – like the rest of the 10,000 Palestinian political prisoners – experienced inhumane prison conditions designed to cause maximum suffering.

For over eight months, I was starved, humiliated, insulted and beaten by Israeli forces. I was held with 11 other detainees in a small concrete cell meant for five. It felt like we were being suffocated alive, like we were being kept in a mass grave. It was hell on Earth.

The guards would walk around with heavy protective gear, beating us regularly with sticks, hands and feet. They would unleash large police dogs to terrorise us. They would bang their batons nonstop on the metal bars of the cells or other metal objects, not giving us a moment of peace. They would insult us constantly, cursing the women in our lives, degrading our mothers, sisters, daughters and wives, and referring to the detainees as subhuman. They would also insult and degrade national symbols like Palestinian leaders, slogans and our flag, trying to degrade our very identity as Palestinians.

We had no privacy,

Anas Abu Srouf

except for the brief moment we were allowed to use the toilet and we were not permitted to shave for the first six months. The amount of food provided was less than what is necessary for an adult to stay alive. I lost more than 20 kilogrammes while in detention.

We were watching our bodies change, kept isolated from the world without even knowing why we were there. The only way we got any news was from the new detainees constantly being brought in. This isolation was part of the psychological torture.

If I could hardly recognise myself, how would I recognise my son when I get out, I wondered. I kept imagining him growing, meeting milestones without me being there to support him and hold him. I also worried for my elderly father, who was ill and who I had been caring for over the last few years. I kept wondering who was taking care of him when he had seizures, and whether he was being taken to his hospital appointments.

During the time I spent in Israeli prison, it became clear to me that the Israelis use detention to try to break us, so when they release us – if they ever do – we are a shell of who we were, humiliated and broken. The release of detainees who hardly look like themselves any more, starved and unshaven, suffering from physical illnesses and psychological disorders, is meant to serve

as a message to the rest of the Palestinian population, to break their will, resilience, and hopes for liberation, a dignified life and a bright future.

But this sinister strategy is meeting resistance. Crowded into our concrete cells, we would still find something to smile about. Smiles were our weapon against the Israeli guards' brutality. Hope was our shield.

Thinking of my baby boy gave me hope. I imagined reuniting with him and looking into his eyes.

When I was released and called my wife, and the camera was pointed at my son, I couldn't control myself and tears began to flow. I kept repeating, "I am your baba, I am your baba."

The moment I came home and saw my son was one of the most beautiful moments of my life. I embraced him and looked at him, examining his eyes, his mouth, his hair, his feet. I was trying to memorise every detail quickly, to correct the image I had created of him in my mind over the previous 253 days. He surpassed the most beautiful image I had drawn of him in my head.

Israel tried to break me and destroy my spirit, but I emerged from this difficult experience tougher and stronger. My imprisonment is a wound that will remain with me, but it will not halt my mission in life.

Before I was detained, I had been working as the executive director of Aida Youth Center for five years. This organisation

has provided essential support to the residents of Aida refugee camp near Bethlehem for years. The children and youth have benefitted from our education programme and music and sports classes, while the community at large has received humanitarian and medical aid during crises.

Now I am back at the centre and as a parent and a community leader, I am more determined than ever to continue working with Palestinian children and youth to make sure they realise their potential and build a brighter future.

I know that the persecution of the Palestinian people, particularly our youth, aims to radicalise them, deprive them of their rights and hope for a dignified prosperous life.

I believe that working with young people, giving them guidance, encouraging them to develop themselves and to be active members of society can counter this brutal Israeli strategy and help build the Palestine that I dream of.

Having experienced the horrors of the occupation and now being a father of a one-year-old, who is making his first steps and speaking his first words, I am more determined than ever to make sure he has a better future. To make sure he never suffers the fate of Palestinian political prisoners being held by Israel just because of their Palestinian identity. To make sure that he has the opportunity to grow up hopeful, resilient and proud. That is what I will keep fighting for.

— Aljazeera

## How Beijing should address world’s questions

THE resolution of the third plenary session of the 20th Central Committee of the Communist Party of China, which was held in July, has evoked a mixed response from the international community. While the wider world recognizes China's achievements, many still misunderstand and even distort the achievements of China.

Under such circumstances, China should better convey its story on the global stage, and improve communication with other countries. As Karl Marx said, "They cannot represent themselves; they must be represented."

The "Resolution of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of

played an important role in socialist revolution, construction and reform.

Xi Jinping Thought on Socialism with Chinese Characteristics for a New Era has put forward a series of new ideas, new thinking and new strategies on national governance. It embodies the best of Chinese culture and the ethos of our times. Hence, it is essential to spread the core concepts of the thought and new ideas of comprehensively deepening reform.

By promoting the common values of humankind, helping build a community with a shared future for mankind, and promoting the Global Development Initiative, the Global Security Initiative and

should highlight its long history and cultural heritage by outlining its concepts on development, civilization, national security, human rights and ecological conservation, as well as its perception of the world order and global governance.

China can clear other countries' doubts about its people-centric development philosophy by explaining that it follows a political system different from the West because it best suits its real conditions, while seeking points of diplomatic convergence with the rest of the world. This will help the international community better understand China, its people and the CPC.

And third, there is a need for China to demonstrate its national

International communication plays a significant role in comprehensively deepening reform and advancing Chinese modernization in the new era, and therefore it must uphold the fundamental principles, break new grounds and promote human progress.

China's communication with the rest of the world should be aimed at maintaining global peace, facilitating common development, cooperation and mutual benefit, clearing other countries' doubts about China's approach to global development, and contributing to civilizational exchanges. To make China's voice heard on the global stage, it is necessary to demonstrate the spirit, values and strength of the Chinese nation. First, during the past more than 100 years, the integration of the basic tenets of Marxism with China's realities and traditional Chinese culture has helped the country make remarkable achievements, and played an important role in socialist revolution, construction and reform. Xi Jinping Thought on Socialism with Chinese

Characteristics for a New Era has put forward a series of new ideas, new thinking and new strategies on national governance. It embodies the best of Chinese culture and the ethos of our times. Hence, it is essential to spread the core concepts of the thought and new ideas of comprehensively deepening reform. By promoting the common values of humankind, helping build a community with a shared future for mankind, and promoting the Global Development Initiative, the Global Security Initiative and the Global Civilization Initiative, China can help the world better understand that these ideas reflect the trend of development, facilitate common progress and safeguard universal security.

China on Further Deepening Reform Comprehensively to Advance Chinese Modernization", adopted by the third plenary session, stressed the importance of creating a healthy external environment for advancing Chinese modernization by establishing a more effective global interactive communication system.

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the Global Civilization Initiative, China can help the world better understand that these ideas reflect the trend of development, facilitate common progress and safeguard universal security.

Second, the country should also highlight the importance of Chinese values. China's unique political system and cultural advantages, and core socialist values have been playing important roles in advancing socialism with Chinese characteristics, and are valuable resources for shaping China's national image.

Also, China should refine the defining symbols and best elements of these concepts, and come up with new ideas that reflect its stance and values, which can be easily understood and accepted by the international community. These defining symbols and best elements can be used to enrich China's discourse and narrative on the global stage.

China needs to speak with facts that support the country's development. Its communication with the international community should demonstrate Chinese values, highlighting how they have helped create a new path of modernization.

It needs to state clearly what kind of civilization and country China is, and clearly narrate Chinese people's outlook on the world and international relations. China also

strength. Since the 18th National Congress of the CPC in 2012, China has made a series of achievements on the political, economic, cultural and ecological fronts, reflecting the Chinese people's ability to overcome difficulties.

It should also take measures to encourage the international community to focus on the country's development achievements by providing accurate data. For example, China should highlight the fact that it has lifted more than 800 million people out of extreme poverty in just over four decades, and thus made the greatest contribution to global poverty alleviation, and has been contributing more than 30 percent to global economic growth for the past few years.

The most vivid interpretation of China's development achievements is reflected in the struggle stories of the ordinary people, as well as their positive and optimistic attitude toward life. The country should also make the international community realize that China is an important and responsible member of the international community, its development is intertwined with global development, and its development path are useful references for both developing and developed countries.

## Will the UK step up its Middle East diplomacy?

IN July, the UK's Labour Party took over a country riddled with domestic socioeconomic crises. Its landslide victory was the result of a curious mix of the public's disappointment with its predecessor and the hope that Labour would breathe new life into governance in the UK. At the same time, Labour's ascent to power came in the context of an increasingly volatile Middle East. From the get-go, the Labour government was faced with the herculean task of developing a balanced yet effective British foreign policy in the region.

The Middle East remains a challenge for the Labour government, which marks its 100th day in power on Saturday. The war in Gaza, which is now more than a year old, continues without the establishment of a ceasefire and has now expanded into hostilities between Israel and Lebanon, Iran and Yemen. The instability in Lebanon is of particular concern to the UK, given the presence of more than 10,000 British nationals in the country. The government is actively working toward their safe evacuation and has deployed nearly 700 troops to Cyprus for contingency planning.

The choice of David Lammy to take over as foreign secretary was initially met with optimism. Lammy comes with more

than two decades of political experience, including three years as shadow foreign secretary. Known for his penchant for altering views to find a common ground between actors, Lammy was expected to use this flexibility to devise a British foreign policy in the Middle East that would bring the warring parties to the discussion table. In the past year, he has visited the region nearly 10 times, highlighting its strategic importance for the UK.

However, critics question whether Lammy has the gravitas to shape a bold British foreign policy in the region. Despite several rounds of diplomatic negotiations with regional players, the prospects for a ceasefire are negligible and Israeli hostilities continue. Other policies, such as the UK's decision to hand over sovereignty of the Chagos Island to Mauritius, are also being criticized. Separately, the Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office is focused on the war in Ukraine.

The Labour government has not failed entirely in prioritizing the Middle East in its first 100 days. In July, Lammy visited Israel and Palestine on his first trip to the Middle East since becoming foreign secretary, followed by another visit to Qatar, Lebanon and Israel in August with Defense Secretary John Healey to discuss de-escalation in the

Zaid M. Belbagi

region. Lammy made another visit to Israel and Palestine later in August along with his French counterpart Stephane Sejourné. Moreover, he has repeatedly called for a ceasefire in the region, joined by his French, Irish and American counterparts.

Indeed, the government has taken some tangible measures toward mitigating the conflict in the Middle East. It has increased its humanitarian pledges in Gaza and Lebanon. In September, the UK halted nearly 30 out of 350 arms export licenses for Israel after assessing that there was a risk that such exports might be used in violation of international humanitarian law. However, critics have argued the impact of such a move is negligible and its efficacy is reduced by the government's assertion that "the suspension will not change the UK's steadfast support for Israel's security."

The Labour government faces the dual challenge of attending to domestic concerns as well as rapidly spiraling geopolitical developments in the Middle East. Early in its tenure, the government had to put all hands on deck to solve a host of domestic challenges. An ailing healthcare system, prolonged housing and cost-of-living crises and rising numbers of asylum seekers and migrants are just some of

the reasons that led to the public's resounding rejection of the previous Conservative government. It was thus inevitable that the Labour government would prioritize working on these issues as the electorate observes its performance with impatient anticipation.

While its approach to conflict resolution has been frail, the Labour government has been proactive in developing trade relations with the Gulf Cooperation Council. In July, the government announced its intention to establish a trade deal with the GCC, which could boost the UK economy. Earlier this month, UK ministers visited the Gulf ahead of the upcoming International Investment Summit in the UK. Trade Secretary Jonathan Reynolds and Trade Policy Minister Douglas Alexander met their GCC counterparts in Riyadh to discuss the growth of the UK economy by enhancing trade and investment ties with the region.

Security and stability in the region is crucial for deeper trade relations between the UK and the Gulf states. Given that the Labour government has prioritized such economic cooperation, it must bolster its endeavors to secure the necessary regional peace. This will allow the UK to open new avenues of cooperation with the Middle East, such as collaboration

with the Gulf states in the renewable energy sector, which is a shared interest. Shifting to sustainable energy sources is emerging as a top priority for the UK, given its focus on enhancing its wind energy sector and the recent closure of the UK's last coal power station.

The Labour government is unlikely to significantly alter its approach to the Middle East in what remains of 2024. The incumbent government is expected to continue aligning with its Western partners on the Middle East. However, the war in Gaza is rapidly evolving into a regional conflict. British citizens, troops, assets and trade in the region are under significant threat and this may drive the Labour government to attempt to expedite a resolution of the conflict.

The upcoming budget and strategic defense review will provide important clues as to where the government's priorities lie in its first year in power and how financially viable it is for the UK to prioritize conflict resolution in the Middle East. This comes as the region is reevaluating its international partnerships and the UK itself is faced with a crisis of global influence. Thus, in shaping its foreign policy, the Labour government must realize that its vision of a "Britain reconnected" goes through a conflict-ridden Middle East.

## Israel’s forgotten terror

Derek Leebaert

THE International Criminal Court's (ICC) January finding of a "plausible genocide" in Gaza, and subsequent ruling that Israel is responsible for an apartheid system in the West Bank and East Jerusalem would not have surprised former Presidents Truman, Eisenhower, Johnson, Carter, or indeed Reagan, who famously denounced Israel's 1982 levelling of West Beirut to Prime Minister Menachem Begin as a "holocaust".

Israel is the only US ally that has been exercising such oppression and terror for a lifetime. For many years, consecutive American administrations, both Democratic and Republican, condemned Israel's recurring practice of terror. Today, however, the Biden-Harris administration has been supporting these practices to the extreme.

Harry S Truman recognised Israel in May 1948,

yet once re-elected in November, wrote of his "disgust" over how "the Jews are approaching the refugee problem". Then his successor, Dwight Eisenhower, joined Winston Churchill, who'd returned as the UK's prime minister, to censure Israel in the UN Security Council in November 1953.

Paratroopers under Colonel Ariel Sharon, a future Israeli prime minister, had "shot every man, woman and child they could find," in the Jordanian-controlled West Bank village of Qibya, according to Time magazine, leaving 69 dead. Prime Minister Ben-Gurion cried "anti-Semitism."

Eisenhower had Israel censured twice more: In March 1955, after a self-designated Israeli "terror unit" bombed US consulate libraries in Cairo and Alexandria, seeking to blame Egypt, followed by an attack on Egyptian-controlled Gaza that killed 38; and in March 1956 over a

so-called "retaliation" against Syria that killed 56 soldiers and civilians.

"Upward of 2,700 Arab infiltrators, and perhaps as many as 5,000, were killed by the [Israeli military], police, and civilians along Israel's borders between 1949 and 1956," writes Israeli historian Benny Morris, "the vast majority of those killed were unarmed." They were shepherds, farmers, Bedouins, and refugees.

Eisenhower was unpersuaded by Israeli ambassador Abba Eban's claims of self-defence, and Israel would keep inflicting vastly asymmetric episodes of terror for decades.

In October 1956, after killing some 49 civilians in the village of Kafir Qasim near Tel Aviv, Israel invaded Egypt and immediately began massacring refugees in Khan Yunis and Rafah. Eisenhower responded by declaring that the US would "apply sanctions" on Israel. When Israel still refused to withdraw from Gaza and

Sharm El Sheikh, the US president threatened to block its access to US financial markets. The Israeli retreat followed.

In November 1966, Lyndon Johnson once again put "the Palestine Question" on the UN agenda to condemn Israel, this time after a massive attack on Jordan involving more than 3,000 soldiers. "The Israelis have done a great deal of damage to our interests and to their own," concluded his National Security Adviser W W Rostow, adding that "they've wrecked a good system of tacit cooperation."

All-out war followed in 1967, after which Israel occupied the West Bank, Gaza, and East Jerusalem. The martial law imposed on the Arab population in Israel since the founding of the state was lifted in 1966, but Jimmy Carter described the conditions imposed on Palestinians in the occupied

Palestinian territory after the beginning of illegal Israeli settlement there as "apartheid".

With nothing resolved by 1982, Prime Minister Begin, a former Irgun terrorist against British authorities, vowed to "destroy" the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO). He oversaw then-Defence Minister Ariel Sharon's killing of some 18,000 Palestinians and Lebanese, overwhelmingly civilians, in Beirut. Belatedly, Reagan stopped the slaughter with a phone call, given Israel's dependence. It was then that he described the Israeli onslaught as a "holocaust".

Despite using a word with such weight, however, the White House did not demand the UN censure Israel. The US had not attempted to sanction Israel even over its illegal settlements which spanned from the 1967 war. Israeli Ambassador to the US

Michael Oren explained why in his 2007 book, Power, Faith, and Fantasy: America in the Middle East 1776 to the Present. In the mid-1970s, he wrote, Israel's supporters began to achieve "the financial and political clout necessary to sway congressional opinion" – meaning that they had acquired enough power to impede US official opposition to Israel at the UN or elsewhere. Ever since, Israel has taken US backing for granted, no matter the record of wildly disproportionate atrocities.

In 1991, Israeli Prime Minister Itzhak Shamir, who had approved the murder of UN negotiator Folke Bernadotte, tried to explain why terrorism was "acceptable" for Jews, but not Arabs: Palestinians are "fighting for land that is not theirs. This is the land of the people of Israel."

Hamas's October 7 attack on Israel was distinct. It was the only time that Palestinian resistance groups were able to react to

decades of Israeli terror on a similar scale. In response to the attack, Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu simply doubled down on Israel's recurring massacre-making, now backed by starvation and disease. The US administration took no meaningful action to stop "plausible genocide."

At this time, Israel has also become the only entity in the world that Washington allows to kill US citizens with impunity. The ever-growing list from the West Bank includes Aysenur Ezgi Eygi, Mohammad Khmour, and Shireen Abu Akleh – each killed with a shot to the head. No sanctions or renditions followed their deaths. The White House simply suggested the sniper-killings were "not acceptable" and asked Israel to "investigate" itself. The issue was swiftly dismissed.

As Gaza's torment enters its second year, Israel's killing has reached

unprecedented levels in the West Bank, and Lebanon once again becomes a target of Israel's self-described retaliation. More is needed from Israel's patron than mutterings to perhaps halt some arms shipments. Washington should not only stop upholding Israeli brutality, which includes apartheid but, like the UK, it can support the pending International Criminal Court indictments which are to, finally, include an Israeli prime minister.

Past US presidents had tried to reign in Israeli behaviour of the sort that statesman Abba Eban came to describe, during Israel's previous bombing of Beirut, as "wantonly inflicting every possible measure of death and anguish on civilian populations." Time is overdue for Washington's decisionmakers to follow those presidents' examples, and to rescind diplomatic protection as well as weapons exports for Israel.





PESHAWAR: Sarhad Chamber of Commerce and Industry president Fazal Moqem Khan talking to a delegation of City traders.

## NAVTTC Punjab DG visits PSGMEA

SIALKOT (APP): Director General (DG) National Vocational and Technical Training Commission (NAVTTC) Punjab, Asifa Maqbool, visited the Pakistan Sports Goods Manufacturers and Exporters Association (PSGMEA) and emphasized the need to further strengthen bilateral cooperation.

Chairman Pakistan Sports Goods Manufacturers and Exporters Association (PSGMEA), Khawaja

Masood Akhtar, Senior Vice Chairman (SVC) PSGMEA Sheikh Abrar Sandal and Vice Chairman (VC) PSGMEA Chaudhry Muhammad Aslam warmly welcomed NAVTTC Punjab DG Asifa Maqbool. During an important meeting held at PSGMEA, Pakistan Sports Goods Manufacturers and Exporters Association (PSGMEA) Chairman Khawaja Masood Akhtar said that both PSGMEA and NAVTTC are trying to promote skilled people.

He said that he would fully support NAVTTC in all its activities which will help in the growth of skilled manpower. Asifa Maqbool said that NAVTTC is ready to provide all possible support for increasing skilled manpower and concrete steps are being taken in this regard. She said that NAVTTC is encouraging skilled people and also giving scholarships to children who are learning technical work. She said that NAVTTC

is introducing modern technology in its institutions keeping in view modern requirements so that after learning practically from here, boys and girls can become useful citizens of the country and the nation and support their families in the future. Secretary General Pakistan Sports Goods Manufacturers and Exporters Association (PSGMEA) Mohsin Masood and newly elected members of PSGMEA were also present.

## China flags more fiscal stimulus for economy

BEIJING (Reuters): China pledged on Saturday to "significantly increase" debt to revive its sputtering economy, but left investors guessing on the overall size of the stimulus package, a vital detail to gauge the longevity of its recent stock market rally.

Finance Minister Lan Foan told a press conference Beijing will help local governments tackle their debt problems, offer subsidies to people with low incomes, support the property market and replenish state banks' capital, among other measures.

These are all steps investors have been urging China to take as the world's second-largest economy loses momentum and struggles to overcome deflationary pressures and lift consumer confidence amid a sharp property market downturn.

But Lan's omission of a dollar figure for the package is likely to prolong investors' nervous wait for a clearer policy roadmap until the next meeting of China's rubber-stamp legislature, which approves extra debt issuance. A date for the meeting has yet to be announced but it is expected in coming weeks.

The press conference "was strong on determination but lacking in numerical details," said Vasu Menon, managing director for investment strategy at OCBC in Singapore.

"The big bang fiscal stimulus that investors were hoping for to keep the stock market rally going did not come

through," said Menon, adding this may "disappoint some" in the market.

A wide range of economic data in recent months has missed forecasts, raising concerns among economists and investors that the government's roughly 5% growth target this year was at risk and that a longer-term structural slowdown could be in play.

Data for September, which will be released over the coming week, is expected to show further weakness, but officials have expressed "full confidence" that the 2024 target will be met.

New fiscal stimulus has been the subject of intense speculation in global financial markets after a September meeting of the Communist Party's top leaders, the Politburo, signalled an increased sense of urgency about the economy.

Chinese stocks (CSI300), opens new tab reached two-year highs, spiking 25% within days since that meeting, before retreating as nerves set in given the absence of further policy details from officials. Global commodity markets from iron ore to industrial metals and oil have also been volatile on hopes stimulus will stoke sluggish Chinese demand.

Reuters reported last month that China plans to issue special sovereign bonds worth about 2 trillion yuan (\$284.43 billion) this year as part of fresh fiscal stimulus.

Half of that would be

used to help local governments tackle their debt problems, while the other half will subsidise purchases of home appliances and other goods as well as finance a monthly allowance of about 800 yuan, or \$114, per child to all households with two or more children.

Separately, Bloomberg News reported that China is also considering injecting up to 1 trillion yuan of capital into its biggest state banks, though analysts say more lending firepower will come up against stubbornly weak credit demand.

STIMULUS STEP-UP

The central bank in late September announced the most aggressive monetary support measures since the COVID-19 pandemic, including interest rate cuts, a 1 trillion yuan liquidity injection and other steps to support the property and stock markets.

While the measures have lifted market sentiment, analysts say Beijing also needs to firmly address more deeply-rooted structural issues such as boosting consumption and reducing its reliance on debt-fuelled infrastructure investment.

Most of China's fiscal stimulus still goes into investment, but this leads to debt outpacing economic growth as returns are dwindling.

The International Monetary Fund estimates central government debt at 24% of economic output. But the fund calculates overall public debt, includ-

ing that of local governments, at about \$16 trillion, or 116% of GDP.

"There is still relatively big room for China to issue debt and increase the fiscal deficit," said Lan.

He added local governments still have a combined 2.3 trillion yuan to spend in the last three months of this year, including debt quotas and unused funds. Municipalities will be allowed to repurchase unused land from property developers, he said.

Low wages, high youth unemployment and a feeble social safety net mean China's household spending is less than 40% of annual economic output, some 20 percentage points below the global average. Investment, by comparison, is 20 points above.

Chinese officials have repeatedly pledged over the past decade to increase efforts to boost domestic demand, but made little progress on that front, which would require a fundamental structural rethink of many policies and institutions.

Lan said more reforms will be announced "step-by-step." "The focus seems to be around funding the fiscal gap and solving local government debt risks," Huang Xuefeng, credit research director at Shanghai Anfang Private Fund Co, said of the press briefing.

"Without arrangements targeting demand and investment, it's hard to ease deflationary pressure."

## JPMorgan sets aside more money for potential bad loans

NEW YORK (AP): JPMorgan's net income fell 2% in the third quarter as the bank had to set aside more money to cover bad loans, but the results topped Wall Street estimates and shares rose in morning trading.

Net income fell to \$12.9 billion from \$13.2 billion in the year-ago quarter, the New York bank said Friday. However, earnings per share rose to \$4.37 from \$4.33 because there were fewer outstanding shares in the latest quarter. The result beat Wall Street analysts' forecasts, which called for a profit of \$3.99 a share, according to FactSet. Total revenues rose to \$43.3 billion from \$40.7 billion a year ago.

JPMorgan set aside \$3.1 billion to cover credit losses, up from \$1.4 billion in the same period a year ago. Consumers' credit card debt has been on the rise

due to the lingering impact of the bout of inflation that hit the U.S. economy starting in 2021 and delinquencies have been rising. But JPMorgan Chief Financial Officer said on a call with analysts that the consumer is "on solid footing."

Net interest income, the difference between the interest the bank takes in on its loan portfolio and the interest in pays out on customer deposits, rose 3% to \$23.5 billion. That came in above estimates of \$22.9 billion, according to FactSet. JPMorgan raised its forecast for net interest income for the full year, but cautioned the measure should start to decline as the Federal Reserve continues to cut interest rates.

JPMorgan shares rose 4.6% in morning trading.

The country's biggest banks have benefited from higher interest rates for the last two years. The Fed's

mid-September interest rate cut happened too late in the quarter to significantly influence results, but investors are watching closely to see how that rate cut — and expected future ones — will affect banks' results going forward.

At their last meeting Sept. 18, Fed officials reduced their rate to 4.8%, from a two-decade high of 5.3%, and penciled in two more quarter-point rate cuts in November and December.

CEO Jamie Dimon said the bank continues to monitor geopolitical tensions that he called "treacherous and getting worse." While Dimon did not cite specific any specific conflicts, he has previously voiced concerns about the war in Ukraine and the growing tensions in the Middle East.

"There is significant human suffering, and the outcome of these situations

could have far-reaching effects on both short-term economic outcomes and more importantly on the course of history," Dimon said in a statement.

Dimon often weighs in on global and economic issues that go beyond the scope of banking. He's often seen as the banker that Washington and global leaders can turn to for advice, solicited or unsolicited. His comments tend to reverberate through Washington and Corporate America.

In fact, Dimon's name has in the past been floated as a possible Treasury Secretary or other Cabinet position. When asked on the call if he would serve if asked by the next administration, he responded, "I think the chance of that is almost nil and I probably am not going to do it but, you know, I always reserve the right."

## SCCI stresses signing free trade agreement on Pak-Afghan trade

### F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: Sarhad Chamber of Commerce and Industry president Fazal Moqem Khan stressed the need for signing of a free trade agreement to improve Pak-Afghan bilateral trade.

Similarly, he urged for reviewing the present duties and tariffs structures and reduce them at an optimal level. The SCCI chief demanded pragmatic steps for ease of doing business and taking the chamber and business community on board before implementation of rules and policies. Fazal Moqem was addressing a delegation of

traders belonging to Khushal Bazaar, Gur Mandi Peshawar during a meeting held at chamber house on Saturday.

The delegation was headed by a member of SCCI executive committee Saifullah Khan.

The Meeting was attended by SCCI senior vice president Abdul Jalil Jan, vice president Shehryar Khan, executive committee members Nadeem Rauf, Ashfaq Ahmad, Haji Aftab Iqbal, and Hamoodur Rehman, Gur Mandi Khushal Bazar Peshawar office bearers and members Haji Sher Ali, Sher Afzal, Fareequllah, Shafqat

Mehmood, Rehman Gul, Baghi Jan, Sultan Aziz, Haji Sanaullah Khan, Mahazullah and Imadaadullah.

Traders at the meeting raised serious concerns over closure of seed supply from trade routes including Torkham, Kharlachi and Ghulam Khan, imports from Iran at various checkpoints, hurdles in supply of pesticides from Multan and Kasur, districts of Punjab, and craters unfilled by SNGPL after digging for laying new pipelines, difficulties in provision of visa for China and other issues. Fazal Moqem assured the delegation to take up all

issues with relevant authorities to resolve them amicably.

Earlier, the SCCI chief took a prompt notice and made telephone contact with SNGPL General Manager Peshawar Region Waqas Shinwari and apprised the senior officials about gas related issues.

Swiftly taking action on complaints and reservations of traders, the SNGPL GM assured the issues would be resolved by Monday next. The SNGPL senior officer also invited the traders in his office to discuss issues in detail.

## Gold prices up by Rs.1,600 per tola

ISLAMABAD (APP): The per tola price of 24 karat gold increased by Rs.1,600 and was sold at Rs.275,500 on Saturday compared to its sale at Rs. 273,900 on last trading day.

The price of 10 grams of 24 karat gold also increased by Rs. 1,372 to Rs. 236,197 from Rs. 234,825 whereas the price of 10 gram 22 karat gold went up to Rs. 216,514 from Rs. 215,256, the All Sindh Sarafa Jewellers Association reported.

The price of per tola and ten gram silver remained unchanged at Rs. 3,050 and Rs. 2,614.88, respectively.

The price of gold in the international market increased by \$16 to \$2,656 from \$2,640, the Association reported.

## Fisker bankruptcy plan approved

NEW YORK (Reuters): Electric vehicle startup Fisker received court approval of its bankruptcy liquidation plan on Friday, following last-minute negotiations to preserve the company's \$46 million sale of its remaining inventory of about 3,000 Ocean SUVs.

U.S. Bankruptcy Judge Thomas Horan signed off on Fisker's bankruptcy plan at a court hearing in Wilmington, Delaware, clearing the company to repay creditors with assets remaining after it sold off its vehicle fleet.

Fisker filed for bankruptcy in June, after failing to reach a partnership with Nissan (7201.T), opens new tab for production of its electric vehicles. While those talks were ongoing, Fisker's cash flow problems forced it pause vehicle production and lay off staff.

Fisker ultimately chose to liquidate its operations in bankruptcy, selling off its remaining vehicle fleet to buyer American Lease and transferring its intellectual property to creditors. The vehicle fleet sale hit a last-minute snag this week, after American Lease realized that Fisker would not be able to transfer essential data and support services to new servers operated by the buyer.

Without the data transfer, the vehicle fleet would be cut off from essential services such as updating vehicle software, reviewing diagnostic data, and allowing drivers to remotely access their vehicles.

American Lease resolved the dispute by agreeing to pay an additional \$2.5 million over five years for future tech support services. The deal also will benefit other Fisker Ocean owners, who had similarly expressed concern about what would happen to their vehicles after Fisker's servers shut down, attorneys said in court on Friday.

The hyper-competitive EV market has seen several companies, including Proterra, Lordstown and Electric Last Mile Solutions, file for bankruptcy in the past two years as they grappled with weakening demand, fundraising hurdles and operational challenges from global supply chain issues.

### F.P. Report

KARACHI: Pakistan Petroleum Limited (PPL) has been conferred the Federation of Pakistan Chambers of Commerce and Industry's (FPCCI) Best Performance Excellence Award on its outstanding performance in the Petroleum Sector. The Honourable

President of Pakistan Mr. Asif Ali Zardari presented the award to Syed Mahmood ul Hassan General Manager Shared Services, PPL at FPCCI's 12th Achievement Awards Ceremony held on October 8 at Aiwan-e-Sadr, Islamabad. The ceremony was graced by high profile dignitaries, including leading exporters, businessmen,

parliamentarians and bureaucrats.

FPCCI's annual achievement awards recognizes excellence in various business endeavours, including skill development, energy, finance, exports, investment, tourism and construction, that enable to boost the economy and has a positive impact at the regional and national level.

## Google wants US judge's app store ruling put on hold

WASHINGTON (Reuters): Google has asked a California federal judge to pause his sweeping court order requiring it to open up its app store Play to greater competition.

In a court filing, opens new tab on Friday night, Google said U.S. District Judge James Donato's injunction order, which goes into effect on Nov. 1, would harm the company and introduce "serious safety, security, and privacy risks into the Android ecosystem."

The tech giant, a unit of Alphabet (GOOGL.O), opens new tab, asked

Donato to stay the order while it pursues an appeal.

The judge issued the injunction on Oct. 7 in a case brought by "Fortnite" maker Epic Games, which persuaded a federal jury last year that Google was illegally monopolizing how consumers download apps on Android devices and how they pay for in-app transactions.

The judge's order said Google must allow users to download competing third-party Android app platforms or stores and can no longer prohibit the use of competing in-app payment methods. It also bars Google from making pay-

ments to device makers to preinstall its app store and from sharing revenue generated from the Play store with other app distributors.

If Donato denies Google's bid to put the injunction on hold, the company can ask the San Francisco-based 9th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals to do so while it appeals the jury's underlying antitrust verdict.

Google filed its notice of appeal to the 9th Circuit on Thursday. The appeals court ultimately would be expected to weigh and rule on Google's challenge to Donato's order.

## Changing OpenAI's nonprofit structure could have big consequences

NEW YORK (AP): The artificial intelligence maker OpenAI may face a costly and inconvenient reckoning with its nonprofit origins even as its valuation recently exploded to \$157 billion.

Nonprofit tax experts have been closely watching OpenAI, the maker of ChatGPT, since last November when its board ousted and rehired CEO Sam Altman. Now, some believe the company may have reached or exceeded — the limits of its corporate structure, under which it is organized as a nonprofit whose mission is to develop artificial intelligence to benefit "all of humanity" but with for-profit subsidiaries under its control.

Jill Horowitz, a professor in law and medicine at UCLA School of Law who has studied OpenAI, said that when two sides of a joint venture between a nonprofit and a for-profit come into conflict, the charitable purpose must always win out.

"It's the job of the board first, and then the regulators and the court, to ensure that the promise that was made to the public to pursue the charitable interest is kept," she said. Altman recently confirmed that OpenAI is considering a corporate restructure but did not offer any specifics. A source told The Associated Press, however, that the company is looking at the possibility of turning OpenAI into a public benefit corporation. No final decision has been made by the board and the timing of the shift hasn't been determined, the source said.

In the event the non-

profit loses control of its subsidiaries, some experts think OpenAI may have to pay for the interests and assets that had belonged to the nonprofit. So far, most observers agree OpenAI has carefully orchestrated its relationships between its nonprofit and its various other corporate entities to try to avoid that.

However, they also see OpenAI as ripe for scrutiny from regulators, including the Internal Revenue Service and state attorneys general in Delaware, where it is incorporated, and in California, where it operates.

Bret Taylor, chair of the OpenAI nonprofit's board, said in a statement that the board was focused on fulfilling its fiduciary obligation.

"Any potential restructuring would ensure the nonprofit continues to exist and thrive, and receives full value for its current stake in the OpenAI for-profit with an enhanced ability to pursue its mission," he said.

How could OpenAI convert from nonprofit to for-profit?

Tax-exempt nonprofits sometimes decide to change their status. That requires what the IRS calls a conversion.

Tax law requires money or assets donated to a tax-exempt organization to remain within the charitable sector. If the initial organization becomes a for-profit, generally, a conversion is needed where the for-profit pays the fair market value of the assets to another charitable organization.

Even if the nonprofit OpenAI continues to exist

in some way, some experts argue it would have to be paid fair market value for any assets that get transferred to its for-profit subsidiaries.

In OpenAI's case, there are many questions: What assets belong to its nonprofit? What is the value of those assets? Do they include intellectual property, patents, commercial products and licenses? Also, what is the value of giving up control of the for-profit subsidiaries? If OpenAI were to diminish the control that its nonprofit has over its other business entities, a regulator may require answers to those questions. Any change to OpenAI's structure will require it to navigate the laws governing tax-exempt organizations.

Andrew Steinberg, counsel at Venable LLP and a member of the American Bar Association's nonprofit organizations committee, said it would be an "extraordinary" transaction to change the structure of corporate subsidiaries of a tax-exempt nonprofit.

"It would be a complex, involved process with numerous different legal and regulatory considerations to work through," he said. "But it's not impossible."

Is OpenAI carrying out its charitable mission?

To be granted tax-exempt status, OpenAI had to apply to the IRS and explain its charitable purpose.

OpenAI provided The Associated Press a copy of that September 2016 application, which shows how significantly the organization's plans for its technology and structure have changed.





In brief

Van Dijk and Salah released

LONDON (Agencies): Liverpool duo Virgil van Dijk and Mohamed Salah will return to the club earlier than expected after being released from international duty. Netherlands captain Van Dijk was sent off during his side's 1-1 draw with Hungary on Friday and is suspended for Monday's Nations League match against Germany. Egypt captain Salah scored in a 2-0 Africa Cup of Nations qualifier victory over Mauritania in Cairo on Friday. He had been expected to feature in Tuesday's return fixture but, like Van Dijk, he has been released early. It is a boost for Liverpool manager Arne Slot, whose side host Chelsea in the Premier League on Sunday, 20 October (16:30 BST). The Reds went into the international break at the top of the table, one point above champions Manchester City.

Saka out of England squad

LONDON (Reuters): England winger Bukayo Saka has returned to Arsenal for further assessment of a leg injury and will miss Sunday's Nations League match in Finland, the England team said on Saturday. Saka was forced off in the 51st minute of England's 2-1 loss to Greece at Wembley on Thursday. England interim manager Lee Carlsley had said that Saka suffered a leg injury. A 22-man squad will fly to Helsinki ahead of Sunday's Nations League fixture as Liverpool midfielder Curtis Jones has withdrawn due to personal reasons, the team statement added. England are in second place in the GroupB2 standings, three points behind Greece after three games. Saka's injury is a blow for Arsenal with their captain Martin Odegaard also sidelined. Mikel Arteta's side play Bournemouth away in the Premier League next Saturday.

Brook has everything to be England's finest

LONDON (Reuters): England batter Harry Brook has all the attributes needed to overtake the country's highest run-scorer in test cricket, Joe Root, and former top order batter Kevin Pietersen, bowling great James Anderson said. The 25-year-old Brook became the first England batter in 34 years to score a triple-century when his side thrashed Pakistan by an innings and 47 runs on the fifth day of their opening test of the three-match series in Multan on Friday. Root, 33, made a double ton during the same test, placing him fifth on the all-time list with 12,664 runs. "He's on the way to being in the top three that I've played with," Anderson said on the Tailenders podcast on Friday. "It's Root, Pietersen and him. He's definitely got all the attributes to overtake them. "He's just got everything. Without trying to big him up too much because he's still really early in his test career, I do think that he's got the perfect amount of each of those two and that's what will make him the best that we've ever had." Anderson, 42, retired in July after finishing his 188th test and having taken 704 wickets in a career spanning 21 years, during which he became the third-highest wicket-taker in the format. Having played with Root and Pietersen, Anderson believes Brook has the temperament and technique of the former. "But he's got the shots of both Root and Pietersen. He can destroy an attack if he wants to, he can play a longer innings if he needs to," Anderson added.



DUBAI: Annerie Dercksen dismissed Shathi Rani, Bangladesh vs South Africa, T20 World Cup.

PSB issues NOC for Pakistan Women's Football team

ISLAMABAD (APP): In a move aimed at supporting the players, the Pakistan Sports Board (PSB) has issued the No Objection Certificate (NOC) for the Pakistan Women's National Football Team to participate in the SAFF Football Championship, scheduled from October 17 to 30 in Nepal.

This action follows significant delays caused by the Normalization

Committee (NC) of the Pakistan Football Federation (PFF). Sources reveal that the PSB had repeatedly requested the NC PFF to submit the necessary documents for obtaining the NOC.

However, the committee failed to comply in a timely manner and did not follow the prescribed procedure, which is available on the PSB website.

Despite these delays, the PSB, committed to supporting athletes, reportedly took the decision to issue the NOC to ensure the team's participation in the SAFF Championship. This development highlights the PSB's continued dedication to Pakistan's athletes, ensuring their presence in international competitions despite administrative hurdles.

Sabalenka downs Gauff in three sets to reach Wuhan final

WUHAN (AFP): Top-seeded Aryna Sabalenka fought back from a set down to beat Coco Gauff 1-6, 6-4, 6-4 on Saturday and reach the Wuhan Open final for the third time.

A champion in Wuhan in 2018 and 2019, Sabalenka improved her perfect record in the tournament to 16-0 and will next face Zheng Qinwen, who became the first Chinese player to reach a WTA 1000 final on home soil.

It will be a rematch of the Australian Open final, which Sabalenka won earlier this season. In an all-Chinese affair, the fifth-seeded Zheng defeated Wang Xinyu 6-3, 6-4 to reach her fourth final of the season. "I never imagined that my first WTA 1000 final would happen here in Wuhan," said Olympic champion Zheng, who was born in the Hubei province and moved to Wuhan when she was a child.

"Today was a very tough match, Xinyu played really well. The crowd was very supportive and fair to both of us," Gauff, who was on a nine-match winning streak on the back of her title run in Beijing last week, played a perfect first set but committed a whopping 21 double-faults during a semi-final lasting two hours, 26 minutes. Sabalenka has now won 19 of her last 20 matches, a stretch that includes titles in Cincinnati and at the US Open.

"It definitely felt like one of the biggest matches of my career because the crowd made it feel like it was a Grand Slam final," said Sabalenka, who is now 4-4 in career meetings with Gauff. Sabalenka struggled to serve early on and couldn't control her forehand as a clinical Gauff leapt to a double-break 5-0 lead inside 19 minutes.

The American fourth seed dropped a mere two points behind her first serve and limited the Belarusian to just two winners throughout that opening frame. Down 2-4 in the second set, Sabalenka took seven games in a row, capitalising on Gauff's double-faults to build a 3-0 lead in the decider. Despite Gauff's best retaliatory efforts, Sabalenka held on to close out a gritty victory. Sabalenka, who has had her fair share of serving woes in the past and worked with a specialised biomechanics coach to overcome them, said she could relate to Gauff's double-faulting issues during the semi-final.

New Zealand keep up semi hopes with Sri Lanka win

SHARJAH (Agencies): New Zealand kept their pursuit of a Women's T20 World Cup semi-final berth alive with victory over already-eliminated Sri Lanka in the heat of daytime Sharjah.

Set a target of 116 to win, New Zealand comfortably chased it down in 17.3 overs but may rue not having the power and positivity to get the job done sooner.

New Zealand's inferior net run-rate remains a potential barrier to their progression ahead of India after they were unable to accelerate quickly enough to a potentially decisive victory. Opener Georgia Plimmer and all-rounder Amelia Kerr took a while to get going but batted beautifully in a partnership of 46.

Earlier, Sri Lanka captain Chamari Athapaththu found form for the first time in a disappointing tournament to score 35 from 41 balls but her side's threat left with her. Sri Lanka did at least reach triple figures for the first time in their four matches but were unable to create chances with the ball in punishing temperatures touching 39C. New Zealand remain third in Group A behind Australia and India, while winless Sri Lanka stay bottom.

Could New Zealand have got there quicker?

Victory against Pakistan in Dubai on Monday could still be enough for the White Ferns to qualify for the semi-finals.

But much will depend on Sunday's meeting between Australia and India - where a win for India would keep them in pole position because of their still superior net run-

rate. New Zealand needed to reach their target inside 15 overs to move ahead of India on net run-rate but captain Sophie Devine said the team did not discuss that target.

"We actually didn't [talk about the run rate], to be perfectly honest," she said.

"We set targets at the innings break and that was always to get us to win in the 17th or 18th over, but we know that winning the game is the most important thing."

"We will see how results play out on Sunday and then by the time of our final game against Pakistan we will know exactly where we stand." New Zealand struggled with the ball early on, some erratic bowling from Rosemary Mair abetting Athapaththu's fluid knock.

The Sri Lanka captain hit five boundaries but the run rate was never too scary, and once Athapaththu was bowled trying to step on the accelerator her side collapsed somewhat. A run of two wickets for five runs in 15 balls put the brakes on as excellent control from Kerr and a fine catch from Devine brought the game back into New Zealand's control. New Zealand were slow to reply initially, only hitting their first four off the 25th ball of the innings, but once Plimmer found the fence the opener was able to cut loose. Plimmer was put down on 33 by Inoshi Priyadharshani - a difficult caught and bowled chance - and made Sri Lanka pay, moving to her half century in 41 balls with a flurry of crisp shots down the ground. Plimmer holed out to deep square shortly after but Devine came in and ended the match with the first six of it.

Over-hyped players lose touch with reality: Arthur

KARACHI (Monitoring Desk): Former Pakistan cricket coach Mickey Arthur has expressed concerns over the impact of excessive promotion of players, stating that it distances them from reality and makes them believe they are more important than they actually are.

"The inconsistency around selection, environment, and administration plays a role in team morale, give the players structure, and they will perform," said Arthur in a post on X.

His remarks come against the backdrop of the Shan Masood-led side's baffling defeat against England where the latter secured innings and 47-run victory on the fifth day of the first Test in Multan.

During the match, despite scoring 556 runs in the first innings, the national side found themselves under the gun trailing England by 115 runs at the end of the fourth day and subsequently crumbled under pressure on the final day.

Arthur emphasised that Pakistan's players are exceptionally talented and deserving of their spots on the team. However, he stressed that in order to improve performance, consistency in selection, environment, and administration is crucial.

"The players are very, very skilled and are the right ones," said ex-coach.

He also pointed out the harmful role of media-driven narratives, describing

how the media's negative rhetoric can hurt the team noting that the "vile rhetoric from media and media-driven agendas do not help".

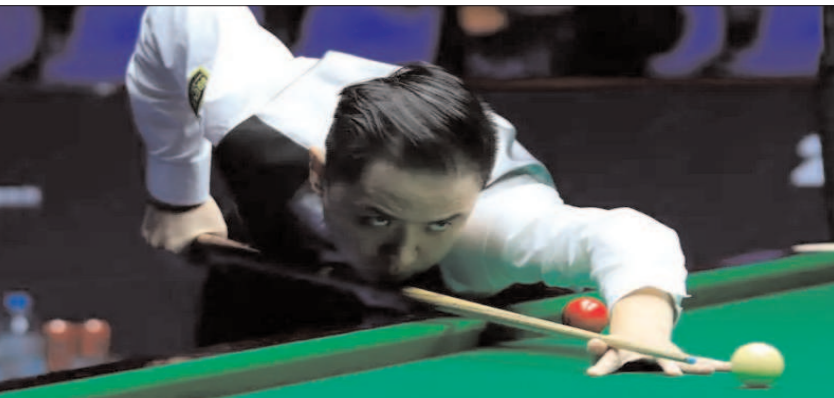
A key point in Arthur's critique was the overpromotion of players by agents or the media, which he believes gives them a false sense of importance.

"The promotion of players by player agents or media makes the player sometimes think he is way more important than he is in reality, creating a false view," Arthur highlighted.

The former coach emphasised that representing Pakistan should be the highlight of a player's career.

"Playing for Pakistan should be the best time ever!" he remarked.

Xiao wins Wuhan Open to end 17-year title wait



WUHAN (Agencies): China's Xiao Guodong beat compatriot Si Jiahui 10-7 in the Wuhan Open final to earn his maiden ranking title after 17 years as a professional.

In his third ranking final - 11 years after losing the first of those to Chinese snooker doyen Ding Junhui in Shanghai - Xiao withstood a fightback to prevail in a high-quality match.

Xiao made an impressive start and moved into a 5-3 lead following a 129 break in the opening session of only the third tour final between two players

from mainland China.

Si showed resolve with a century break in the eighth frame to pull one back but Xiao later made a run of 113 to extend his lead to 8-4 before winning the next frame of the evening session to move one away from victory. He would have to wait for his crowning moment as Si produced a stirring surge, which included a break of 131, to reduce the deficit to 9-7.

The 22-year-old Si, who made the first 147 break of his career in a semi-final win over world number one

Judd Trump, was playing elegantly as he chased down the lead.

He had the first opportunity of the 17th frame but a miss on 46 opened the door for Xiao, who crafted a testing snooker and went on to end Si's challenge.

The 35-year-old Xiao's success secured the top prize of £140,000.

Xiao, who knocked out reigning world champion Kyren Wilson earlier in the tournament, will jump 11 places to 18th in the world rankings with his long-awaited title.

Chelsea win at Arsenal to move top of WSL

LONDON (Agencies): Chelsea claimed a significant victory to increase pressure on Arsenal boss Jonas Eidevall as his side fell further behind in the Women's Super League title race.

Mayra Ramirez's inventive overhead kick bounced into the bottom corner within four minutes to give Chelsea the perfect start, and matters got worse for the Gunners when Sandy Baltimore was given a free header to make it 2-0 shortly afterwards. Arsenal boss Eidevall needed a response from his players and got one as Caitlin Foord danced around Lucy Bronze to fire

the ball past goalkeeper Hannah Hampton just before half-time at Emirates Stadium.

But they could not find a much-needed second - despite substitute Stina Blackstenius volleying against the underside of the crossbar with minutes to go - as Chelsea showed grit to hold out and added salt to Arsenal's wounds following a disappointing week.

A goalless draw with Everton and a thumping defeat by Bayern Munich meant it was a crucial match for Arsenal - and this was a damaging result.

Chelsea, meanwhile, still

appear to have teething problems under new manager Sonia Bompastor but maintain their unbeaten start to the season. They were confronted for most of the second half, with defenders Millie Bright and Kadeisha Buchanan making numerous blocks as Arsenal's Foord and Alessia Russo came close, and goalkeeper Hannah Hampton had to make some big saves late on. At the other end, Chelsea's Ramirez remained a threat until her substitution midway through the second half, having picked up an earlier knock.

Djokovic to face Sinner in Shanghai final with 100th title in sight

SHANGHAI (AFP): Novak Djokovic battled through "an incredible fight" with Taylor Fritz on Saturday, shrugging off physical discomfort to set up a Shanghai Masters final with world number one Jannik Sinner where he will look to secure his 100th career title.

Djokovic saw off Fritz 6-4, 7-6 (8/6) after Sinner had beaten Tomas Machac 6-4, 7-5, ensuring in the process that he will finish the year at the top of the rankings.

"It feels like destiny to fight for a 100th title here in a place where I've had great success in the past, where I have tremendous support," said four-time

Shanghai champion Djokovic.

Only Jimmy Connors (109) and Roger Federer (103) have previously broken through the 100-title barrier in the men's game.

"I won't be a favourite on the court, but hopefully I'll be able to come out physically fresh enough to challenge him for what may be a long match," added Djokovic of Sunday's final.

"I have to expect probably the toughest encounter of the tournament, and I have to be ready for it."

Sinner said playing Djokovic would make the final "even more special".

"It's going to be a very tough one, it's one of the

biggest challenges we have in our sport," he said.

Fighting spirit Djokovic has now beaten the United States' Fritz at each of their 10 encounters. The Serb broke the 26-year-old US Open finalist in the fifth game to win the first set in 38 minutes.

But the second set lasted twice as long, and was a much more tense affair, as the players sent each other scrambling across the court in a series of thrilling rallies. The 24-time Grand Slam champion called it an "incredible fight".

"He could have easily won the second set... In the tiebreak it was really anyone's game, (but) I feel like

I was never giving up," Djokovic said.

In the second set, after an almost 13-minute fifth game eventually held by Fritz, Djokovic bent over in exhaustion, breathing heavily. The world number seven missed a good chance in the eighth game when he failed to convert a break point, with Djokovic recovering to hold.

"I just never really came up with what I needed to come up with in a lot of big moments and the big points," said the American.

Djokovic came from 3-5 down in the tiebreak to level and then win after three unforced errors from Fritz. The 37-year-old, who has been wearing a

brace on his right knee and has been having trouble with his left one too, had to take a medical time-out for his left leg towards the end of the second set.

However, he said after the match none of the issues were serious.

After physio, "I could move freely and run and sprint, which is good news", he said.

"I guess at this age you kind of have to expect that each match something different happens physically," Sinner on top

The 23-year-old Sinner has been top of the world rankings since June and after his ruthless semi-final victory will stay there until at least the end of the sea-

son, the first Italian to do so. "It was only a dream just to become number one... Now finishing (the year there) is also a different feeling," the Italian said.

"It's a good feeling. I'm very happy to achieve this. It was an amazing season for me and it's not finished yet," he said, adding that for now he was "focused on tomorrow".

Sinner's meeting with Machac got off to an electric start when the Czech broke in the first game of their semi-final.

The 33rd-ranked Machac was looking to repeat his giant-slaying of Thursday, when he knocked out world number

two Carlos Alcaraz in straight sets.

But two-time Grand Slam champion Sinner kept his cool to break back in the fourth, then claimed the tenth game to clinch the set.

In the second set neither was able to break serve until the 12th game, when the Italian hit a winner to book his place in Sunday's final.

"It was very tough... he is playing with so much confidence and he can hit a ball really hard, and is serving very well," said Sinner.

"I tried to stay there mentally... I'm very happy about how I'm fighting at the moment."





## In brief

### Excise, Social Welfare offices sealed

RAWALPINDI (APP): Rawalpindi's district administration continues actions against dengue SOPs violations, the Excise, Taxation and Narcotics Control (ET&NC) office was sealed on Saturday by the health teams after dengue larvae were found in the samples collected from the building. According to the details, Focal Person on Dengue Tahira Aurangzeb, Parliamentary Secretary for Information and Culture Shazia Rizwan and Deputy Commissioner Hassan Waqar Cheema along with officials from the health authority visited the city's different areas during which various government departments were examined. Larvae were recovered from four water points in the Excise and Taxation Office after which the office was immediately sealed. Larvae were also recovered from the office of Social Welfare and it has also been sealed. The DC directed the relevant authority to register cases against concerned officers for non compliance of the government's clear instructions regarding preventive measures against dengue fever. The deputy commissioner on the occasion said that unannounced visits were being made to government offices to eradicate dengue. He repeated that the cases would be registered against officers found guilty of negligence.

### IRSA releases 121,100 cusecs water

ISLAMABAD (APP): Indus River System Authority (IRSA) on Saturday released 121,100 cusecs water from various rim stations with inflow of 90,300 cusecs. According to the data released by IRSA, water level in River Indus at Tarbela Dam was 1536.33 feet and was 138.33 feet higher than its dead level of 1,398 feet. Water inflow and outflow in the dam was recorded as 47,600 cusecs and 52,000 cusecs respectively. The water level in River Jhelum at Mangla Dam was 1205.00 feet, which was 155.00 feet higher than its dead level of 1,050 feet. The inflow and outflow of water was recorded 8,600 cusecs and 35,000 cusecs respectively. The release of water at Kalabagh, Taunsa, Guddu and Sukkur was recorded as 69,500, 69,400, 55,600 and 16,500 cusecs respectively. Similarly, from River Kabul, a total of 19,100 cusecs of water released at Nowshera and 6,300 cusecs released from River Chenab at Marala.

### 70 liters liquor seized

RAWALPINDI (APP): Police have arrested nine liquor suppliers and recovered 70 liters and 05 bottles of liquor from their possession during crackdown here on Saturday. According to police spokesman, Race Course Police held Yaqoob and recovered 05 liters of liquor from his possession. Similarly, Gujjar Khan Police seized 10 liters liquor each from Shamim Abbas, Meraj, Jawad Ali, Rashid, and Shahid Rehman. Kahuta police also apprehended Faisal and confiscated 10 liters of liquor from his custody. Additionally, Kalar Syedan police held Ghulam Rabbani and Wajid and found with each five liters of liquor. Divisional SPs commended police team efforts and stated that the operation against liquor suppliers will be continued and strict action will be taken against such anti social elements.



ISLAMABAD: A gypsy person is scavenging and gathering onions from a pile of discarded onions left behind by vendors at the Fruit and Vegetables Market. —APP Photo

## Rawalpindi police deploy 3500 personnel during SCO Summit

RAWALPINDI (APP): The Rawalpindi police have completed the security arrangements for the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) summit, scheduled on 15 to 16 October in Islamabad.

As many as 3500 personnel would perform their duties for the much important international forum while around 700 officers and traffic wardens will be deployed to maintain traffic flow.

According to police

spokesman, the police mobiles, elite force, and the dolphin force have been deployed for patrolling in the key areas, and snipers will be deployed on rooftops surrounding sensitive movement areas during the summit.

City Police Officer (CPO) Syed Khalid Mehmood Hamdani emphasized that foolproof security would be ensured for the international event.

"Section 144 has already been imposed throughout

Rawalpindi, ban on illegal gatherings and double riding on motorbikes will be prohibited", he said.

He also expressed appreciation for the cooperation of traders and local organizations in this regard.

He urged citizens to cooperate with police to comply with security measures and to ensure public safety during the summit.

"The protection of life and property, along with maintaining law and order is the top priority", he added.

## Online e-Protector stamp facility directed

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Wafaqi Mohtasib, Ejaz Ahmad Qureshi on Wednesday intervened to resolve the long-standing issue of affixing of e-protector stamp on the passports of Pakistanis intending to proceed abroad for employment or higher education. As a result, the Bureau of Immigration has now started online e-protector stamp facility also, which is available at the airports too.

It may be informed that it is obligatory for all those traveling to middle eastern or other countries for employment to get the protector stamps affixed on their passports otherwise they have not been granted permission to travel abroad and many had to return from the airports due to its non-availability. This resulted in not only the loss of foreign employment but also the money spent on buying the tickets.

On the directions of the Wafaqi Mohtasib online e-protector stamp facility is now available at all international airports of the country on 24/7 basis so that a protector stamp may be affixed on the passports of anyone desirous of going abroad who might have forgotten to get his passport stamped. During this year 14,339 Pakistanis have already availed themselves of this facility till date.

## “Yeh Roshni Fareb Hai” launched

RAWALPINDI (APP): Punjab Arts Council, Rawalpindi organized a ceremony on Saturday, in which a poetry book titled “Yeh Roshni Fareb Hai” by famous writer and critic Sajjad Ahmed Lakha, was launched. The event was presided over by Dr. Waheed Ahmed whereas Prof. Dr. Ravish Nadeem was the chief guest at the ceremony. Addressing the event, the Director PAC, Sajjad Hussain mentioned that Sajjad Lakha has a unique identity in poetry. Lakha, after his journey of journalism has shaped his thoughts into verses and poems. Remarkably, his skill in composing poetry is exceptional in both Punjabi and Urdu languages, he said. Dr. Waheed Ahmed commented that Sajjad Lakha's poetry was a reflection of contemporary imagery, highlighting human issues in his work. Professor Dr. Ravish Nadeem also paid tribute to the writer and said that Lakha's poetry aligns with his conscience making his subjects a matter of thoughtful discussion.

## Bhatti slams PTI agenda as 'Harmful to Pakistan's Interests'

ISLAMABAD (APP): A prominent leader of the Pakistan Muslim League-N (PML-N) Zulfiqar Ali Bhatti Saturday strongly condemned Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf's (PTI) agenda, labeling it as harmful to Pakistan's interests and the nation.

He shared his serious concerns with PTV News and sounded the alarm on PTI's policies, calling them detrimental to Pakistan's interests, especially with the SCO conference underway in Islamabad.

He said the SCO summit, a significant event for regional cooperation and security has already drawn attention due to PTI's planned protest at D-Chowk on October 15, coinciding with the conference.

This move has sparked

worries about disrupting the event and undermining Pakistan's hosting efforts, he mentioned.

Zulfiqar Bhatti reaffirmed the government's commitment to safeguarding national sovereignty, stating, "We will not tolerate any compromise on Pakistan's sovereignty and integrity."

He assured that robust measures are in place to prevent unauthorized protests and maintain law and order. We are fully prepared to ensure the summit's success and protect our national interests," Bhatti emphasized and underscored the government's resolve to prevent any disruptions or unrest.

Responding a query, he said constitutional courts are the need of the hour in

Pakistan where PML-N and Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP) have already been working towards introducing reforms, but Jamiat Ulema-e-Islam (JUI-F) chief Maulana Fazal Ur Rehman has expressed some reservations. Despite these reservations, Maulana Fazal Ur Rehman is personally in favor of reforms.

However, the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) must demonstrate maturity and engage in dialogue with other parties to work towards the betterment of the country, he added.

He called unity and cooperation among all political parties which is crucial, especially considering the significant events unfolding in Pakistan, such as the recent SCO conference in Islamabad.

## Tahseen Sayed calls on Albania's PM to promote bilateral ties

ISLAMABAD (APP): Honorary Consul of Albania in Islamabad, Tahseen Sayed, has returned to Pakistan after an important and successful visit to Albania to promote Pakistan's trade and tourism plus strengthening bilateral ties.

In an interaction with media here on Saturday, Tahseen Sayed, formerly the senior-most Pakistani in the World Bank as Regional Director, referred to her role as an international expert member of Albania's National Economic Council chaired by Prime Minister Edi Rama. She said, "During my visit, I met with the top Albanian leadership including Prime Minister

Rama, Ministers of Foreign Affairs, Tourism, Defense, Entrepreneurship, European Integration, Finance, Economy & Planning, and the Mayor of Tirana."

She said that 'main focus of my visit was to have discussions with representatives of the private sector, including Chambers of Commerce, banking sector and tourism and travel operators. She expressed satisfaction that 'Albania's leadership expressed their country's desire to strengthen engagement with Pakistan and especially welcomed opportunities in the areas of, labour market, tourism and trade'.

Tahseen Sayed welcomed the recent decision by

Government of Pakistan to include Albania among the countries listed for receiving tourists with visa on arrival, which will help in trade and tourism with Pakistan.

Albania is located in southeastern Europe in the Balkans on the Adriatic and Ionian seas and has land borders with Greece, Serbia, Montenegro, Kosovo and North Macedonia. The country is well situated for connecting to European markets, especially in southeastern Europe. During recent years, it has seen a phenomenal rise in tourism with tourist arrivals doubling from the pre-Covid period. Albania was once part of the Ottoman Empire.

## OPF set up PGFRC to assist returned Overseas Pakistanis

ISLAMABAD (APP): Ministry of Overseas Pakistanis and Human Resource Development has set up a Pakistani-German Facilitation & Reintegration Centre (PGFRC) in Lahore with an advisory desk at Overseas Pakistani Foundation (OPF) here at the head office.

An official source told APP that the objective was to facilitate the return of overseas Pakistanis in terms of their skill development in Pakistan's social and economic fabric for gainful employment.

It is being implemented in collaboration with Deutsche Gesellschaft für

International Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) GmbH and supported by the German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ).

The Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) between Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) GmbH and Overseas Pakistani Foundation, Ministry of Overseas Pakistanis & Human Resource Development on technical assistance to the facilitation & reintegration centre for Pakistani workers has been signed.

This initiative is helping

to create more job opportunities/employability for Pakistani workers, which will improve economic development in the long run. The centre provides various services including advice on training and skills development.

Technical and vocational training, advice on job market trends and opportunities, advice on finding a job in Pakistan, Entrepreneurship and start-up support, psychosocial support and information on the health system in Pakistan and information on living conditions, advice on getting microfinance and loans.

## Jordan keen to expand trade ties with Pakistan: Envoy

RAWALPINDI (APP): Maen Khreasat, Ambassador of Jordan in Islamabad has expressed keen interest to expand bilateral trade cooperation between Pakistan and his country, through enhanced bilateral cooperation across various sectors including tourism, Agricultural, tourism and health services.

He said that Jordan valued its historical and friendly relations with Pakistan and was keen to further enhance its trade ties with it for mutual benefit.

The ambassador remarked this while talking to a delegation of

Rawalpindi Chamber of Commerce and Industry (RCCI) led by President Usman Shaukat, who called on him on Friday evening.

According to the details, the delegation which included Vice President Fahad Barlas, and EC member Falak Anjum discussed with the ambassador the matters related to bilateral trade, investment opportunities, networking & chamber to chamber connectivity and exchange of trade delegation to explore the potential cooperation between the two countries.

RCCI President Usman Shaukat in his remarks

reiterated RCCI's commitment to facilitating joint ventures, promoting bilateral trade, and enhancing investment opportunities. He highlighted the chamber's readiness to assist in organizing business forums, exchanging trade delegations, and cultural exchange programs to strengthen bilateral economic ties between the two nations.

He further reiterated that RCCI would work tirelessly to support initiatives aimed at mutual growth and development, ensuring a prosperous partnership between Pakistan and Jordan.

## FIA academy hosts Inter-Ministerial workshop

ISLAMABAD (APP): The FIA Academy in Islamabad recently hosted an inter-ministerial consultative workshop focused on the Anti-Human Trafficking Action Plan 2024-2025.

The event, organized by the Ministry of Interior and the Federal Investigation Agency (FIA), brought together representatives from various government departments and international organizations to make strategy and enhance efforts against human trafficking and smuggling in Pakistan.

The workshop was opened by Special Secretary of the Ministry of Interior, Waqas Mehmood, alongside Muhammad Jafar, Additional Director General of the FIA's Law

Wing. Both officials emphasized the importance of strengthening Pakistan's response to human trafficking.

Muhammad Hamza, Assistant Director (USA) from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, discussed the country's Tier Ranking in the U.S. Department of State's Human Trafficking Report and its significance.

The workshop also featured presentations aimed at addressing concerns raised in the U.S. Department of State's 2024 Trafficking in Persons (TIP) Report.

Deputy Director FIA, Rai Nasrullah, and Ms. Saip Jan, Section Officer from the Ministry of Interior, provided detailed briefings during the event, highlighting the current state of anti-trafficking

efforts and plans for future improvements.

Ms. Shahida Gilani from the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) addressed the role of international organizations in combating human trafficking, adding an important global perspective to the discussions.

Under the guidance of FIA's Director of the Anti-Human Smuggling Wing, Saqib Sultan Mehmood, the progress of the TIP Committees was reviewed, and targets for 2024-2025 were outlined.

The workshop concluded with closing remarks from Shahida Gilani, reiterating the need for collaborative efforts to successfully combat human trafficking and achieve the objectives of the Action Plan.

## SSDO's Climate Optics Initiative engages youth, advocates policy action on Climate Crisis in Pakistan

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Sustainable Social Development Organization (SSDO) has expanded its efforts to address Pakistan's escalating climate challenges through the Climate Optics initiative, a platform aimed at raising awareness and fostering solutions to climate-related issues.

By focusing on youth engagement, policy advocacy, and research, Climate Optics is playing a crucial role in Pakistan's battle against climate change while also

addressing interconnected challenges such as health, gender, trafficking, food security, and child protection, said in a press release issued here on Saturday.

Pakistan remains one of the most climate-vulnerable countries, with millions affected by disasters like floods, heatwaves, and droughts. As the impact of climate change worsens, SSDO's Climate Optics initiative emphasizes the importance of involving youth and communities to promote sustainable practices and advocate for

meaningful policy change.

Key components of the Climate Optics initiative includes 1) Empowering young people to lead the charge in environmental activism and advocacy, 2) raising awareness about climate impacts and sustainable practices, 3) Engaging policymakers to ensure climate and health policies prioritize vulnerable communities, and that international commitments, such as the Paris Agreement, are upheld, 4) Facilitating research on climate

issues and promoting citizen journalism to give voice to those most affected by climate change, 5) Offering training and resources focused on the intersections of climate with health, gender equality, trafficking, hygiene, food security, nutrition, and child protection, equipping communities to respond to these challenges.

Speaking on behalf of SSDO in a press release, Maryam Jawad, Director Climate Optics program said, "Through Climate Optics, we are not only

addressing the climate crisis but also integrating related issues such as health, food security, and gender equality into our work. Our goal is to build a more resilient society that is better equipped to handle both current and future environmental challenges."

Climate Optics calls on the government, civil society, and international stakeholders to collaborate on climate adaptation and resilience, particularly in support of vulnerable populations. It also emphasizes the

importance of improving early warning systems, promoting renewable energy, and ensuring that communities have access to the resources they need to build a sustainable future.

With its focus on engaging youth, advocating for policy change, and building capacity on a wide range of social issues, SSDO's Climate Optics initiative is at the forefront of the fight against climate change in Pakistan.

For more information, visit [www.climateoptics.org](http://www.climateoptics.org)



### IEA approves industrial areas law

KABUL (Ariana News): The Ministry of Justice says the industrial areas law has been ratified in eleven chapters and 67 articles by the Islamic Emirate's supreme leader. The ministry said in a statement that this law was created for the growth and development of the country's economy by regulating industrial areas, providing the basis for attracting private investment, and managing industrial areas.

### Three Taliban members shot dead in Ghor, sources say

FEROZ KOH (Amu TV): Three Taliban members were shot and killed by unidentified gunmen in Feroz Koh, the capital of western Ghor province, according to local sources. The attack took place along the Charsadda highway, where the Taliban members were ambushed, sources said. Two of those killed were identified as Najeebullah and Mohammad Tahir, both residents of Charsadda district. The third victim was from Murghab district.

## Nimroz residents: delays in Iranian visas endanger patients

NIMROZ (TOLONews): A number of Nimroz residents have complained about a three-month delay in the issuance of Iranian visas, stating that this problem has prevented them from transferring their patients to Iran for treatment in a timely manner.

They say that even emergency visas take one month to process. Abdul Khaliq, a resident of Nimroz, said: "It has been one and a half to two months that I visit this company every day, but I have still not succeeded in obtaining an Iranian visa. We ask for the cooperation of Iranian authorities."

Gul Ahmad, another resident of Nimroz, said: "They said the visa would be issued within six days, but now 15 days have passed, and it has not yet

arrived. My father is sick, and I don't know how to get him to Iran for treatment on time."

Several tourism companies in Nimroz are asking the interim government to address this issue through diplomatic channels.

Abdul Wahab Khashrodi, head of the Union of Tourism Companies in Nimroz, said: "From our side, the companies have no issues. We send the passports. The reason for the high visa cost is that a ticket is included with every visa. Our request to the government is to pay serious attention to this matter."

Nazar Ali Yousafzai, a representative of one of the tourism companies, said: "We have nine branches in Kandahar that take the passports and have their

quota at the consulate. We just collect the passports and send them to the main office. Any challenges are from the Iranian side."

However, local officials say the issue is due to heightened tensions between Iran and Israel and will soon be resolved.

"We have discussed this matter with the Iranian consulate in Kandahar. They stated that their problems stem from recent tensions in the Middle East and weak internet connectivity and said they will resolve it soon," said Yar Mohammad Haqqar, the head of Nimroz's foreign relations.

Previously, Nimroz residents had also complained about the prolonged process of visa issuance and the high costs associated with it.

## Karzai calls on Taliban to reopen schools and universities for girls

KABUL (Khaama Press): On International Day of the Girl, Hamid Karzai stated that girls, like boys, play a vital role in the advancement of society, and their exclusion from social life and education causes irreparable harm. He urged the Taliban to reopen schools and universities for girls.

Karzai emphasized on Friday that "we must do everything we can to educate our children and for the good and well-being of our country."

Karin Decker, the Chargé d'Affaires at the U.S. Embassy in Afghanistan, stressed that Afghanistan's future is bleak without girls' participation in society.

On October 11, International Day of the Girl, Decker reaffirmed the U.S. mission's commitment to supporting Afghan girls' education.

Many international organizations reiterated the importance of girls' education on October 11, calling for the removal of restrictions on Afghan women.

Rosa Otunbayeva of UNAMA highlighted that it has been 1,120 days since the Taliban banned education for girls, emphasizing their suffering.

The collective calls for action on International Day of the Girl underscore the urgent need to prioritize education and opportunities for Afghan girls, as their empowerment is essential for Afghanistan's future development and stability.

## Taliban flog man in Kandahar

KANDAHAR (Amu tv): Taliban on Saturday announced that they had flogged a man accused of theft in the southern province of Kandahar, administering 39 lashes within the courtyard of a local court.

This incident is part of a broader pattern, with more than 25 individuals publicly flogged across various provinces in the past three weeks, reflecting the Taliban's revival of corporal punishment since their return to power. According to data compiled from Taliban statements, over 720 people have been flogged in Afghanistan over the last three years.

The United Nations, in its latest quarterly report, has expressed deep concern over the continuation of these practices despite widespread international condemnation. Human rights organizations, including the U.N., have repeatedly called on the Taliban to end corporal punishment, denouncing it as a violation of international human rights standards.

A recent resolution from the U.N. Human Rights Council condemned the Taliban's use of corporal punishment—such as flogging, stoning, and death by wall-burial—as severe violations of human rights.

The resolution highlighted concerns over reports of extrajudicial punishments, underscoring the ongoing challenge of upholding human rights in Afghanistan under Taliban rule.

## Twenty-five Afghans released from Iraqi prisons

KABUL (Ariana News): The Ministry of Refugees and Repatriation has announced that 25 Afghan nationals have been released from prisons in Iraq. The ministry said in a statement that they were imprisoned in different provinces of Iraq for six months due to a lack of legal documents.

Based on the statement, the released prisoners returned to the country via Iran on Friday. After being registered at the Nimroz border officials, the individuals were introduced to the International Organization for Migration (IOM) to receive assistance.



## Afghanistan to focus on local development, says Acting Minister

GHOR (BNA): During a recent visit to Ghor province, Mullah Mohammad Younus Akhundzada, the Acting Minister of Rural Rehabilitation and Development, emphasized the importance of self-reliance in Afghanistan's development efforts.

He stated that the country will prioritize using its own budget and local engineers to foster growth and address the needs of its communities.

In a meeting with the head and staff of the provincial office of Rural Rehabilitation and Development, Akhundzada



urged officials to carry out their duties with dedication and integrity. He highlighted that sincere efforts would lead to a positive future for the region. The Acting Minister

reinforced the sentiment that Afghans do not seek charity from others, asserting that the development of Afghanistan will be driven by its own resources and capabilities.

He assured the residents of Ghor that their concerns would be addressed based on the available resources, reiterating a commitment to local solutions.

## Foundation stone of medical center laid in Nuristan

NURISTAN (TOLONews): The foundation stone of a medical center, costing nearly 400,000 US dollars, has been laid in the Nurgaram district of Nuristan province.

Local officials say that this medical center will be built on two acres of land, and once operational, thousands of families will gain access to healthcare services.

Nurgaram is one of the districts of Nuristan located in the western part of the province, where residents suffer from a lack of medical facilities. Zainul Abideen Abid, the governor of Nuristan, said: "The cost of constructing this medical center is 360,000 dollars. It will have 24 rooms and will be equipped with modern facilities."

Saeedullah Nomani, the head of public health in Nuristan, said: "These clinics are built according to global standards and will be equipped with tools and equipment specific to CHC (Comprehensive Health Center) clinics. The



establishment of this clinic will meet the healthcare needs of the entire western Nuristan."

Residents of Nuristan are calling on officials to implement more developmental projects in their areas. Rameez Khan, a resident of Nuristan, said: "All patients from the three valleys of Nuristan will be taken care of and hospitalized here."

Dad Gul Hamdard, another resident of Nuristan, said: "In the past, we had no transportation. When someone got sick, we had to carry them down

with a stretcher and ID card and then transfer them to a vehicle. Unfortunately, we lost many patients on the way." Abdul Waris, another resident of Nuristan, said: "People from some villages in the Alingar district also come here, and their patients' needs will be met in this center."

Nuristan is a province located in the east of the country, and many residents of its remote areas, including Nurgaram district, face serious challenges due to the lack of educational, healthcare, and telecommunications services.

## Afghan businesswomen call for more support

KABUL (TOLONews): Several businesswomen who participated in the Imam Abu Hanifa exhibition in Kabul, while stating appreciation for the event, have called for more exhibitions to be organized.

They are asking the Islamic Emirate to support businesswomen and provide them with more facilities. Hangama Afzali, who participated in the exhibition to showcase her handmade products, says that her sales market no longer has the same momentum as before.

Hangama Afzali said: "Our request from the government is to create a proper market for women so that we can offer the clothes we make to the market." Some businesswomen participating in this exhibition find such events effective for the growth of their businesses, but they also complain about the high cost of renting booths.

Zahra Mohammadi,

another participant, said: "Many artisans have displayed their work here to sell their products. Exhibitions like these, in which we participate, are very good and effective."

Samira, another participant, said: "We pay 400 or 500 dollars for restaurant rent, so we are forced to borrow all our raw materials because we don't have enough resources. Right now, as you can see, we offer more than 20 dishes, including Mantu, Ashak, Sambosa, Bolani, and Qabili (rice). But if the rent were lower, we could prepare up to 50 dishes."

Fariba Noori, the head of the board of directors of the Chamber of Commerce and Industries for Women

told TOLONews: "Currently, the main challenge women face is that they are the breadwinners of their families and lack the financial resources to invest in a business. This is because they have lost their government jobs and

do not have the budget to support themselves."

Meanwhile, the Chamber of Commerce and Investment says that nearly 200 booths were allocated to women at the Imam Abu Hanifa exhibition.

Khan Jan Alokozay, A member of the executive committee of the Chamber of Commerce and Investment said: "Women's presence at this exhibition is more prominent compared to other exhibitions. Almost an entire hall has been dedicated to women, where handmade products such as carpets, pickles, fresh fruits, food, and snacks made by women are being displayed."

Statistics from the Women's Chamber of Commerce and Industry show that over 2,500 businesswomen have obtained operating licenses in the past three years, while more than 130,000 other women are currently working without licenses.

another resident of Mazar-e-Sharif, said: "The expectation of all the people of Afghanistan is that telecommunications companies should improve their services honestly, enhance internet quality, and reduce prices."

Roshan is one of the active telecommunications companies in Afghanistan, which started its operations in 2003 and now covers most areas of the country.

## Roshan company: Balkh province connected to 4G internet

BALKH (TOLONews): The telecommunications company Roshan has upgraded its internet service in Balkh province from 3G to 4G.

The officials of this company, during a program, announced that they have many developmental plans and that Roshan's internet will be upgraded to 4G in most parts of Afghanistan in the coming year.

Mohammad Asif Sharifi,

the provincial head of Roshan's telecommunications network, said: "Roshan Telecommunications Company has provided many development services over the past three years, and a few months ago, we officially activated 4G services in Balkh. We hope that by next year, all districts and villages will benefit from high-speed 4G internet."

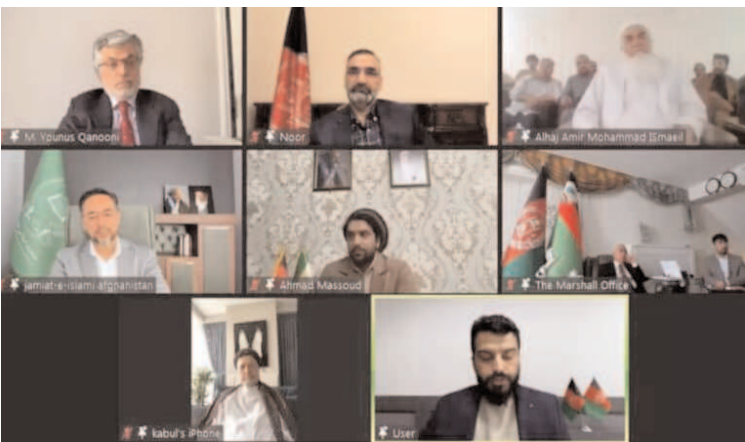
Residents of Balkh, expressing their satisfac-

tion, said that telecommunications networks should work on reducing internet prices while improving the quality.

Nasratullah Azimi, a resident of Mazar-e-Sharif said: "We are very happy that Roshan's internet in our city has become 4G, but our request is that they further increase the internet speed and also pay attention to reducing the cost of packages."

Jamshid Jahanfar,

## Political figures' council denies formal talks with Taliban



KABUL (Amu TV): The National Resistance Council for the Salvation of Afghanistan, a coalition of political figures in exile, denied engaging in formal negotiations with the Taliban, though it acknowledged maintaining informal contacts with the group.

Hassan Yasa, a spokesperson for the council, clarified that while there have been some communications with Taliban factions, a formal negotiating delegation has not yet been established. "The Taliban do not believe in dialogue, and no official talks have been held between the Resistance Council and the Taliban," Mr. Yasa said. He added, "However,

some contacts have been made with various factions of the Taliban, and these contacts are ongoing."

The Taliban, for their part, denied any knowledge of talks with the Resistance Council. In a statement to Amu, Taliban spokesman Zabiullah Mujahid said he was unaware of any discussions with the council.

These remarks come amid reports that the Taliban and the Resistance Council have engaged in negotiations, though no details have been confirmed. Meanwhile, Afghan women and girls continue to call on the international community to prioritize human rights in any engage-

ments with the Taliban.

Masouda Kohistani, a member of Afghanistan's women's protest movements, expressed doubt about the Taliban's willingness to engage on these issues. "The Taliban do not believe in human rights values or in inclusive governance," Ms. Kohistani said. "For more than three years, there have been no constructive discussions on human rights or gender equality because the Taliban do not believe in these values."

As frustration grows, Afghan citizens are increasingly calling for the establishment of an inclusive government. "The Taliban must address the demands of the Afghan people," said a Kabul resident. "They should accept peace negotiations and form a government that represents all segments of society, including women and minorities."

Three years after the Taliban's return to power, efforts to achieve progress in peace talks with opposition groups have largely stalled. Observers say the Taliban's uncompromising stance—demanding absolute loyalty to their leader, Hibatullah Akhundzada—has complicated any potential negotiations with political or military opposition. For the Taliban's opponents, this position remains a significant obstacle to meaningful dialogue.

## Rights group criticizes UN Human Rights Council's response to Afghanistan crisis

KABUL (Amu TV): The United Nations Human Rights Council has failed to adequately address the escalating human rights crisis in Afghanistan, according to the International Service for Human Rights (ISHR), a prominent watchdog organization.

In a statement, ISHR condemned the Council's recent resolution, which it said falls short of providing mechanisms for justice, accountability, and reparations for serious human rights abuses, some of which may constitute crimes against humanity, including gender-based persecution.

Despite persistent calls from Afghan, regional, and international organizations, the resolution does not establish an independent investigative mechanism to gather and preserve evidence of international crimes committed in Afghanistan. Such a mechanism, according to ISHR, would bolster accountability efforts and support cases at the International



Criminal Court and the International Court of Justice.

In its statement, ISHR noted that the resolution does, however, contain language that could serve as a "blueprint for future action" by acknowledging the need for accountability measures, including evidence collection and preservation. South Africa, speaking at the adoption of the resolution, emphasized that the document lays a foundation upon which the Human Rights Council "can and indeed must build going forward."

The resolution references a recent report from the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR), which underscored the necessity of addressing impunity for decades of abuses in Afghanistan. The report recommended that accountability efforts be comprehensive, multidimensional, and gender-responsive to address the needs of victims.

ISHR's head, Tess McEvoy, underscored the urgency of establishing an independent mechanism that focuses on the gen-

dered dimensions of abuses in Afghanistan, stating, "An independent accountability mechanism is urgently needed to address past and ongoing abuses, with a gender-responsive approach to justice for all, including women and girls."

The resolution also extends the mandate of Richard Bennett, the U.N. Special Rapporteur for Afghanistan, who has been tasked with monitoring the human rights situation in the country amid ongoing restrictions and abuses under Taliban rule.





ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif visiting capital city to review arrangements for the upcoming SCO meeting.

## Fresh Israeli strikes kill 19 people in Gaza

CAIRO (Reuters): Israeli military strikes on Gaza overnight killed at least 19 Palestinians, medics said on Saturday, while forces continued to push deeper into the Jabalia area, where international relief agencies say thousands of people are trapped.

Residents said Israeli forces continued to pound Jabalia, which is in the north of the enclave and is the largest of the enclave's historic refugee camps, from the air and ground. The Israeli military published new evacuation orders on Saturday to two neighborhoods on the northern edge of Gaza City, which also lies in the north of the enclave, saying the area was a "dangerous combat zone."

In a statement, Gaza's Hamas-run interior ministry urged residents not to relocate within northern areas of the enclave and also to avoid heading south "where the occupation is conducting continued bombing and killing every day in the areas it claims to be safe." There has been no fresh Israeli comment on deaths but the military said in past days that forces operating in Jabalia and nearby areas killed dozens of militants, located weapons and dismantled military infrastructure.

The operation in this area began a week ago and the military said then it aimed to fight against militants waging attacks and to prevent Hamas from regrouping. Palestinian health officials put the number of people killed in Jabalia over the past week at around 150. On Friday, Israeli strikes hit four houses in Jabalia, killing

around 20 people and wounding dozens, medics said. The Israeli military has sent troops into the nearby towns of Beit Hanoun and Beit Lahiya as well as Jabalia and ordered residents to evacuate their homes and head to safe areas south of the enclave.

Palestinian and United Nations officials say there are no safe areas in Gaza. They have also voiced concerns over severe shortages of food, fuel, and medical supplies in northern Gaza, and said there is a risk of famine there. Israel's military campaign in Gaza, aimed at eliminating the militant group Hamas, has killed more than 42,000 Palestinians since it began a year ago, according to Gaza's health ministry, and has laid waste to the enclave.

The war began after a Hamas-led assault on Oct. 7, 2023, on southern Israeli communities in which 1,200 people were killed and about 250 were taken hostage, according to Israeli tallies. In a statement on Saturday, Hamas said Israel's "massacre against the civilians" aimed to punish the residents of Jabalia for refusing to leave their homes. It also said it was a sign of Israel's military failure to defeat the group.

Israel has denied it targets civilians. The armed wings of Hamas, the Islamic Jihad, and smaller other factions said their fighters attacked Israeli forces in Jabalia and nearby areas with anti-tank rockets, and mortar fire. United Nations officials said on Friday an Israeli offensive and evacuation orders in northern Gaza

might affect the second phase of its polio vaccination campaign set to start next week.

The territory's health ministry announced on Saturday that the campaign would begin on Monday in central Gaza Strip areas and would last three days before moving to other territories. Aid groups carried out an initial round of vaccinations last month after a baby was partially paralyzed by the type 2 poliovirus in August, the first such case in the territory in 25 years. As in the first phase, humanitarian pauses in the fighting in Gaza are planned, in order to reach hundreds of thousands of children.

Meanwhile, the Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu said that Israel will only agree to a permanent ceasefire in Gaza that guarantees the border area between southern Gaza and Egypt could never be used as a lifeline for Hamas.

"Until that happens, we're there," he told a news conference in Jerusalem. Netanyahu repeated his outright rejection of a withdrawal from the so-called Philadelphia corridor in the first phase of a deal, expected to last 42 days, saying international pressure would make it effectively impossible to return.

For a permanent ceasefire to be agreed upon after that, Israel would need guarantees that whoever ran postwar Gaza would be able to prevent the corridor from being used as a route for smuggling weapons and supplies for Hamas. "Somebody has to be there," he said.

## UN warns against 'catastrophic' regional conflict

BEIRUT (AFP): UN peacekeepers in Lebanon warned Saturday against a "catastrophic" regional conflict as Israeli forces battled Hezbollah and Hamas militants on two fronts, on the holiest day of the Jewish calendar. Israel has faced a fierce diplomatic backlash over incidents in south Lebanon that saw five Blue Helmets wounded.

On Saturday, the Lebanese health ministry said Israeli air strikes on two villages located near the capital Beirut killed nine people. Israel had earlier told residents of south Lebanon not to return home, as its troops fought Hezbollah militants in a war that has killed more than 1,200 people since September 23, and forced more than a million others to flee their homes.

"For your own protection, do not return to your homes until further notice... Do not go south; anyone who goes south may put his life at risk," Israeli military spokesman Avichay Adraee posted on X. Hezbollah said Saturday it launched missiles across the border into northern Israel, where air raid sirens

sounded and the military said it had intercepted a projectile.

In an interview with AFP, UNIFIL spokesman Andrea Tenenti told AFP he feared an Israeli escalation against Hezbollah in south Lebanon could soon spiral out of control "into a regional conflict with catastrophic impact for everyone." The UN force said five peacekeepers have been wounded by fighting in south Lebanon in just two days, and Tenenti said "a lot of damage" had been caused to its posts there.

Around Israel, markets were closed and public transport halted as observant Jews fasted and prayed on Yom Kippur. After the holiday, attention is likely to turn again to Israel's expected retaliation against Iran, which launched around 200 missiles at Israel on October 1.

Israel began pounding Gaza shortly after suffering its worst ever attacks from Iran-backed Hamas militants on October 7 last year, and it launched a ground offensive against Hezbollah in Lebanon on September 30. On Friday, Israel faced criticism from the UN, its Western allies and

others over what it said was a "hit" on a UN peacekeeping position in Lebanon.

Two Sri Lankan peacekeepers were hurt in the second such incident in two days, UNIFIL said Friday. Israel's military said soldiers had responded to "an immediate threat" around 50 meters (yards) from the UNIFIL base in Naqura, and has pledged to carry out a "thorough review."

The Irish military's chief of staff, Sean Clancy, said it was "not an accidental act," and French President Emmanuel Macron said he believed the peacekeepers had been "deliberately targeted." Both countries are major contributors to UNIFIL whose peacekeepers are on the front line of the Israel-Hezbollah war.

Efforts to negotiate an end to the fighting have so far failed, but Lebanese Prime Minister Najib Mikati said his government would ask the UN Security Council to issue a new resolution calling for a "full and immediate ceasefire." Lebanon's military said Friday an Israeli strike on one of its positions in south Lebanon killed two soldiers.

## Oct 24 is cut-off date for new CJP's notification: Law Minister

### F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: As the coalition government stepped up its efforts to evolve consensus on the proposed judicial package, Law Minister Azam Nazeer Tarar has said that the notification for the new chief justice of Pakistan can be issued one or two days ahead of the retirement of the incumbent top judge Justice Qazi Faez Isa.

"The notification will be issued InshaAllah. The cut-off date [of notification] for the Ministry of Law is October 25," Tarar said while responding to a question in his interaction with journalists in Islamabad. "Government will issue the notification on October 24 for the venue of oath-taking ceremony [for new CJP]," he added.

He added that notification of new CJP is issued one or two days before the retirement of the incumbent in line with the tradition. Detailing reason behind early notification of Justice Isa as the chief justice, the law minister said that it was issued early in view of the formation of the caretaker government.

It is noteworthy to mention here the major opposition party,

Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI), had demanded the federal government for naming the next CJP at the earliest, alleging that the government was planning to extend Justice Isa's tenure via its judiciary-centric constitutional amendment which the party strongly opposed. The Imran Khan-founded party had announced backing Justice Mansoor Ali Shah, who is next in line to become the chief justice, as the next top judge of the country.

Tarar, commenting on progress on proposed constitutional amendment, said that the contentious legislation could be passed after before or after October 25 — the day of CJP Isa's retirement. "We have formed a sub-committee of legal experts to give recommendations to the parliamentary committee [...] discussions are underway on four to five items [of the draft amendment]," he added.

His statement came after a sitting of the special parliamentary committee — a body led by Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP) MNAs Syed Khurshed Shah having representation of all parties — formed to discuss the contentious constitutional amendment and evolve a consensus. The proposed amend-

ments, also called constitutional or judicial package, among other things, aims to set up a federal constitutional court and fix the tenure of the CJP for three years.

The government had attempted to present the bill to amend the Constitution last month, but its allies as well as members from the opposition benches vehemently opposed the proposal, forcing the administration to begin a consultation process.

However, a progress was witnessed in the ongoing consultation process on the 56-point draft as the Jamiat Ulema-e-Islam-Fazl (JUI-F) Chief Maulana Fazlur Rehman, a day ago, showed a willingness to support the government's "constitutional package" with "ifs and buts".

However, after today's meeting the Fazl-led party has refused to back the government's proposal to form separate court to hear constitutional matters, instead proposing to form constitutional bench for such cases. To pass the constitutional amendments, the government needs two-thirds majority in parliament, while it is short of 13 votes in the National Assembly (NA) and nine in the Senate.

## Iran Speaker visits site of Israeli strike in Beirut

BEIRUT (AFP): Iran's parliament speaker Mohammad Bagher Ghalibaf on Saturday denounced Israel's "crimes" as he visited the site of the deadliest Israeli strike on central Beirut in recent weeks, an AFP photographer said.

A source close to Hezbollah has said that the air raid on Thursday night in the densely populated Basta area, which killed at least 22 people, had targeted the Iran-backed Lebanese group's security chief Wafiq Safa. But neither the Israeli military nor Hezbollah confirmed that he was the target of the strike, nor did they remark on his fate.

Speaking to the press, accompanied by two Hezbollah lawmakers, Ghalibaf denounced what he called Israel's "crimes." "International organizations and the UN Security Council have the capability (to stop Israel) but they are unfortunately keeping silent," he said.

Earlier Saturday, Ghalibaf met Lebanese Prime Minister Najib Mikati, who told him his government's priority was

"to work toward a ceasefire," Lebanon's official National News Agency (NNA) said. The premier on Friday urged the United Nations to pass a resolution calling for an "immediate" ceasefire between Israel and Hezbollah.

Ghalibaf was also expected to meet his Lebanese counterpart Nabih Berri, a powerful Hezbollah ally, before heading to Geneva later the same day, according to Berri's office and Iran's state news agency IRNA. When he visited Lebanon on Friday last week, Iran's Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi said his country backed efforts for a simultaneous ceasefire with Israel in both Gaza and Lebanon.

## Protests banned in Karachi

### F.P. Report

KARACHI: The Karachi commissioner has imposed a ban on protests, sit-ins, rallies and public gatherings in Karachi under Section 144 for a period of five days citing security issues.

A notification was issued by the Karachi commissioner's office on Saturday regarding the enforcement of the ban on demonstrations and assembly of more than five persons across the metropolis at the advice of additional inspector general (AIG) Karachi.

The ban would come into effect from October 13 till 17. The notification stated that the Karachi police chief informed the authorities that "protests, demonstrations, sit-ins, and rallies are going to be held by different factions on same day in the city, which may cause security issues, law and order situation, and inconvenience to the general public".

Subsequently, Karachi Commissioner Syed Hassan Naqvi exercised his powers delegated by the Sindh home department imposed a complete ban on any kind of public gathering within the territorial limit of the provincial capital.

In a separate decision, the Punjab government imposed restrictions on public gatherings under Section 144 in five districts for three days over security concerns. The districts include Dera Ghazi Khan, Layyah, Muzaffargarh, Rajanpur, and Kot Addu.

The decision, effective from October 12 to October 14, aims to address security concerns and maintain law and order. According to a spokesperson for the home department, all political gatherings, protests, sit-ins, and similar activities are strictly prohibited under this order. The government highlights the potential risks associated with public assemblies, which could become targets for terrorist attacks.

The decision was made at the request of the district administration concerned, underscoring the importance of maintaining law and order. The Punjab's home department has issued an official notification regarding the restrictions. Authorities stress the necessity of ensuring public safety and protecting human lives and property during this period.

# Bilawal goes public with amends draft

### F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: With the government's much-touted constitutional amendment become bone of contention even before being tabled in parliament, Pakistan Peoples Party Chairman Bilawal Bhutto-Zardari on Saturday shared his party's proposed draft with the general public and sought their "legitimate meaningful" feedback to further improve it.

Talking to his X handle, the PPP chairman shared copies of his party's proposed draft of constitutional amendments and wrote: "I welcome legitimate meaningful feedback back from the public on how to further improve our proposed amendment." The former foreign minister said that PPP's initial proposal aligns with the unfinished agenda of the Charter of Democracy.

"PPP's initial proposal in order to complete the Charter of Democracy's unfinished judicial reforms agenda." The historic Charter of Democracy (CoD) aimed at strengthening democracy in the country was signed between slain PPP chairperson Benazir Bhutto and PML-N President Nawaz Sharif in 2006.

Backing the PML-N-led government, the PPP chairman said that his party proposed the creation of a federal constitutional court,

with equal representation of all federating units. "The court would address all issues pertaining to fundamental rights, constitutional interpretation and federal/inter-provincial disputes."

He further said that they also proposed "ending the process of appointment of the judges, by the judges and for the judges". "Instead, by merging the judicial and parliamentary committees we give an equal role to parliament, judiciary and legal fraternity."

The PPP chief the draft he shared on his X handle was shared with the government months ago and JUI-F weeks ago. Recently, Bilawal said the draft was also shared with the government and opposition members in the meeting of special parliamentary committee setup to debate and evolve consensus on the contentious legislation. The PPP has already been reaching out separately to political parties, bar associations and civil society as part of our broader country-wide engagement on this important amendment, he added.

"We are currently engaged in a meaningful dialogue with JUI-F, a political party from the opposition benches in an attempt to form a consensus draft." Bilawal hoped a joint draft can go on to form the basis of a broader

consensus of political parties to pass the 26th constitutional amendment.

Earlier in the day, yet another meeting of the special parliamentary committee, chaired by PPP's Syed Khurshid Shah failed to end the deadlock as JUI-F refuses to back the government's bid to form constitutional court. Meanwhile, the special parliamentary body's meeting was adjourned till October 17, while a sub-committee was formed to contemplate all the drafts pertaining to the constitutional amendment. The sub-committee will submit its report to the main committee.

Firmly sticking to its previous stance, JUI-F refused to back the government's proposed constitutional package in its current form and suggested to constitute a constitutional bench instead of establishing a separate court to hear constitutional matters. The constitutional package, among other things, aims to set up a federal constitutional court and fix the tenure of the Chief Justice of Pakistan (CJP) for three years.

The government had attempted to present the bill to amend the Constitution last month, but its allies as well as members from the opposition benches vehemently opposed the proposal, forcing the administration to begin a consultation process.

## CJP bench to hear petition against amend on 17th

### F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: The Supreme Court on Saturday fixed for hearing a petition against the proposed constitutional amendment proposed by the coalition government aimed at introducing judicial reforms including establishing separate court to hear constitutional matters.

A three-member bench of the apex court headed by Chief Justice of Pakistan (CJP) Qazi Faez Isa will hear the case on October 17. The bench will also include Justice Naeem Akhtar Afghan and Justice Shahid Bilal Hassan, according to a supplementary cause list issued by the registrar's office. The petition was filed by former Supreme Court Bar Association (SCBA) president Abid Shahid Zuberi, Shafqat Mahmood, Ishfaq Ahmed, Shahab Sarki, Munir Kakar and others.

In a constitutional petition filed under Article 184(3), the apex court has been requested to set aside the proposed amendments and declare them "ultra vires" the Constitution, principle of separation of powers, independence of judiciary and fundamental rights enshrined under the law. "It is prayed that the separation of powers and

independence of the judiciary and its powers and functions to enforce the fundamental rights be kindly declared as sacrosanct under the Constitution and beyond the power and competence of the Parliament to withdraw, interfere or tamper with in any manner whatsoever," the petition read.

The petitioners requested the court to restrain the federal government from tabling the bill, order the suspension of the operation of the proposed amendments, and stop it from being signed into law by the president of Pakistan even if it sails through both houses of parliament. The constitutional package, among other things, aims to set up a federal constitutional court and fix the tenure of the Chief Justice of Pakistan (CJP) for three years.

The government had attempted to present the bill to amend the Constitution last month, but its allies as well as members from the opposition benches vehemently opposed the proposal, forcing the rulers to begin a consultation process. It is pertinent to mention here that CJP Isa is set to retire on the 25th of this month. A full court reference for the outgoing top judge has been scheduled

for the said date.

## Nobel Peace Prize winners warn of rising risk of N-war

TOKYO: Leaders of the group of atomic bomb survivors awarded the Nobel Peace Prize warned on Saturday that the risk of nuclear war was rising, renewing their call to abolish nuclear weapons.

"The international situation is getting progressively worse, and now wars are being waged as countries threaten the use of nuclear weapons," said Shigemitsu Tanaka, a survivor of the 1945 US bombing of Nagasaki and co-head of the Nihon Hidankyo group.

"I fear that we as humankind are on the path to self-destruction. The only way to stop that is to abolish nuclear," he said. In awarding the survivors, the Norwegian Nobel Committee highlighted the devastation of the atomic bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki and the Japanese group's decades-long work to rid the world of nuclear weapons. — Agencies

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