

PM invites allies parties'
F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif invited lawmakers of all coalition parties for a lunch on Thursday ahead of the National Assembly in which the 26th constitutional amendment is likely to be presented. The meeting will take place at Parliament House at 2 pm. All lawmakers of coalition parties in the centre have been issued invitations.

The Frontier Post

KP Assembly passes Bill
F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: The Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Assembly with Speaker Babar Salim Swati in chair here on Wednesday passed the Assembly Secretariat Employees (Rules and Regulations Bill 2024). The bill was presented by Law Minister Aftab Alam that was passed by the house with majority. He appreciated the Chief Minister, Speaker and other members of the Assembly for adoption of the bill.

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SCO states reaffirm commitment to peaceful coop

F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: The member countries of Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) on Wednesday reaffirmed their commitment to peacefully resolving disputes through dialogue and consultations besides emphasizing the importance of strengthening cooperation across various sectors, including politics, security, trade, finance, and cultural ties, to build a prosperous, peaceful, safe, and ecologically sustainable planet.

In a joint declaration issued at the conclusion of the two-day SCO Council of Heads of Government (CHG) meeting held here, the heads of delegations called for sustainable and inclusive economic growth of member states by optimizing the region's potential in areas such as green development, digital economy, trade, e-commerce, finance and banking, investment, high technology, start-ups and innovation, poverty alleviation, health care, including traditional and folk medicine, agriculture, industry, transport, logistics connectivity, energy, including renewable energy, communications, science and technology, environment and climate change.

The heads of delegations, reaffirming their desire to ensure stable economic and social development in the SCO region, noted the importance of implementing the SCO Economic Development Strategy for the period up to 2030 and the Program of Multilateral Trade and Economic Cooperation of the



SCO member states.

They stressed the need for coordinated efforts through the mechanisms of relevant cooperation in order to implement the respective action plans. The event was chaired by Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif and was attended by the leaders from the SCO member states including China's Premier of the State Council Li Qiang, Prime Minister of Belarus Roman Golovchenko, Prime Minister of Kazakhstan Olzhas Bektenov, Russian Prime Minister Mikhail Mishustin, Tajik Prime Minister Kohir Rasulzoda, Uzbek Prime Minister Abdulla Aripov, Kyrgyzstan's Chairman of Ministers' Cabinet Zhaparov Akyzbek, Trade Minister of Iran Seyyed Mohammad Atabek, and Indian External Affairs Minister Subrahmanyam Jaishankar.

Besides, Mongolia is participating in the summit as an Observer State being represented by Prime Minister Oyundorj Luvsannamsrai and Turkmenistan as a Special Guest represented by Deputy Chairman of the Cabinet of Ministers Rashid Meredov. Among other dignitaries attending the moot include SCO Secretary-General Zhang Ming, Director of Executive Committee SCO Regional Anti-Terrorist Structure (RATS) Ruslan Mirzayev, Chairman of the Board of SCO Business Council Atif Ikram Shaikh and Chairman of the Council of SCO Interbank Union Marat Yelibayev.

The heads of delegation noted significant shifts in the global economy due to advancements in technology and e-commerce, expressing concern over reduced investment and disrupted supply chains caused by protectionist

measures and trade barriers. Opposing unilateral sanctions and trade restrictions, the delegations emphasized the need for a multilateral trading system to support global sustainable development.

Belarus, Iran, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Pakistan, Russia, Tajikistan, and Uzbekistan reiterated their support for China's One Belt, One Road initiative, highlighting ongoing collaborative efforts to integrate this project with the Eurasian Economic Union. The heads of delegation underscored the importance of leveraging regional potential and international cooperation to facilitate equitable interactions within the SCO. They called for sustainable and inclusive economic growth, advocating for optimization in green development, digital economy, health care, agriculture, energy, and environmental initiatives.

They reaffirm the commitment to the peaceful settlement of differences and disputes between countries through dialogue and consultations. They emphasized the importance of leveraging regional potential and international cooperation to foster broad, equitable interactions in the SCO region based on international law and mutual respect.

They highlighted the need to enhance trade and economic ties through the "New Economic Dialogue" concept among SCO member states. They also stressed the importance of leveraging the digital economy and technological innovations to boost regional competitiveness and ensure that technology benefits all.

The Heads of delegations stressed the importance of deepening cooperation in the field of

information security, the relevance of the "digital divide" issue and advocated for exploring the creation of a mechanism for cross-border data exchange. They noted the role of standardization tools in trade facilitation and called for the promotion of mutually beneficial and equal interaction between the SCO member states, as well as the exchange of experience in these areas.

They acknowledged the significance of the SCO Industry Ministers' Meeting and proposed its next session in 2025, emphasizing that support for creative industries will enhance competitiveness, reduce unemployment, and foster sustainable growth in the region. They supported establishing an exchange of experiences on national industrial policies and IT standardization. They emphasized the importance of developing micro, small, and medium-sized enterprises to drive economic growth and job creation, advocating continued cooperation under the 2018 Memorandum of Understanding.

Heads of delegation emphasized the importance of a unified energy vision, calling for continued cooperation in energy infrastructure, security, and investment in renewable energy. They reaffirmed the importance of implementing the road map for increasing the use of national currencies in mutual settlements and supported proposals for an independent settlement mechanism and converging payment systems.

They also recognized the SCO Business Council's role in

fostering business cooperation and noted the Interbank Association's efforts in ESG financing and financial innovations, along with Iran's intention to join the IBA. Heads of delegation emphasized enhancing railway transport cooperation and welcomed the upcoming meeting of Railway Administrations in Moscow. They advocated for innovative technologies in multi-model transport and called for developing infrastructure, logistics, and safety measures, aligning with the SCO's Concept of Cooperation on ports and logistics centers.

They also advocated for enhanced cooperation in environmental protection, biodiversity conservation, and waste management. They reaffirmed commitment to addressing climate change through experience sharing and established a Special Working Group to accelerate related initiatives. They supported deepening collaboration among emergency agencies to monitor natural disaster risks and improve response strategies.

Heads of delegation supported enhanced cooperation in preventing and treating diseases, improving healthcare digitalization, and developing medical tourism in the SCO region. The heads of delegations noted the importance of developing further cooperation in overcoming poverty and increasing the well-being of the population within the framework of the activities of the Special Working Group (SWG) of the SCO Member States on poverty reduction issues.

PM stresses enhanced connectivity projects for stronger SCO

F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif on Wednesday calling a stronger SCO essential to achieve sustainable development, emphasised advancing the shared vision of an economically integrated region and investment in the connectivity projects without looking at them through political prism.

"Pakistan firmly believes, that a stronger, more effective SCO is essential, to achieving sustainable development in our region... Let us not look at such projects, through the narrow, political prism and invest in our collective connectivity capacities, which are crucial to advancing the shared vision of an economically integrated region. Let us work together for a well-integrated and prosperous region that benefits all Member states," the prime minister said in his National Statement at the 23rd meeting of the Council of the Heads of Government (CHG) of the member states of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) here.

The prime minister, who earlier received the participating leaders at the venue before a group photo, said that the SCO collaboration, spanned academic and tourism linkages, poverty alleviation, and the empowerment of women and youth across the SCO region-a reflection, of our determination, to promote prosperity through unity.

The leaders from the SCO member states attending the summit include China's Premier of the State Council Li Qiang, Prime Minister of Belarus Roman Golovchenko, Prime Minister of Kazakhstan Olzhas Bektenov, Russian Prime Minister Mikhail Mishustin, Tajik Prime Minister Kohir Rasulzoda, Uzbek Prime Minister Abdulla Aripov, Kyrgyzstan's Chairman of Ministers' Cabinet Zhaparov Akyzbek, Trade Minister of Iran Seyyed Mohammad Atabek, and Indian External Affairs Minister Subrahmanyam Jaishankar.

Besides, Mongolia is participating in the summit as an Observer State being represented by Prime Minister Oyundorj Luvsannamsrai and Turkmenistan as a Special Guest represented by Deputy Chairman of the Cabinet of Ministers Rashid Meredov. Prime Minister Shehbaz said that Pakistan endorsed the ongoing SCO reforms, aimed at modernizing the organization, enhancing the resources and capabilities, of the SCO Secretariat and, the Regional Anti-Terrorist Structure.

"But let us not forget, the true essence of the SCO, extends, beyond political alliances and economic partnerships. It is the rich mosaic of our cultures, the diversity of our people, that forms, the heart of this organization," he remarked. He said that Pakistan remained committed to fostering people-to-people ties and cultural exchanges that bridge divides,

cultivate understanding, and deepen cooperation. In unity and with shared purpose, we can build, lasting legacies, and enrich, the future, of all our nations, he added.

He said when Pakistan assumed the SCO CHG chair last year, the country had reaffirmed its commitment to the regional peace, stability, enhanced connectivity, and sustainable socioeconomic development as the fundamental, to the SCO's progress.

Prime Minister Shehbaz said the joint communique of the meeting was a testament to shared commitment, to fostering sustainable, and inclusive economic growth, leveraging enhanced connectivity, and adopting forward-thinking mechanisms for green development. Highlighting several forward-looking initiatives taken during Pakistan's Chairmanship, the prime minister mentioned SCO Economic Preference Base, enhanced cooperation between Trade Promotion Organizations, the Creative Economy framework, and the SCO New Economic Dialogue Program.

"These initiatives, chart a promising course, but now, it is imperative, that we shift to tangible actions-through coordinated implementation, -strengthening our cooperation, in the vital sectors of trade and economy. Coming to Afghanistan, he said the country presented an invaluable opportunity for trade and transit, benefiting all SCO member states.

Cabinet okays export of sugar

F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: The federal cabinet approved the export of an additional 500,000 metric tons of sugar, with conditions applied to ensure price stability and domestic supply.

The federal cabinet gave the approval through a circular. The retail price of sugar is fixed at Rs. 145.15 per kilogram. If prices exceed this benchmark, exports will be cancelled immediately, as per one of the conditions. The sugar mill owners must begin production by November 21. The Sugar Advisory Board will regularly monitor sugar prices to prevent price hikes.

The centre also directed the provincial governments to monitor sugar prices. It also asked the mills owners to ensure that the price of ex-mill sugar does not exceed Rs 140 per kilogram. The State Bank of Pakistan will inform the Economic Coordination Committee about the status of sugar exports on a 15-day basis. It may be noted here that a total of 750,000 tons of sugar has been allowed to be exported since June 2024, the sources said.

Tarar warns of action against those inciting violence

F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Information, Broadcasting, National Heritage, and Culture Attaullah Tarar on Wednesday warned that the state would respond firmly to those responsible for inciting violence and threatening the lawmakers.

Speaking to the media here, the minister expressed concern over the threats hurled by the leadership of the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) to the lawmakers for supporting constitutional amendments. "No one will be allowed to take the law into their own hands. The writ of the state will be established, and those issuing threats will be dealt with iron hands," the minister said.

He warned that strict action would be taken against anyone attempting to harm others' lives or property, condemning PTI's habitual use of threats against the opponents. He said that if anyone tried to harm another person, the state will set an example by holding the perpetrators accountable. He also

accused the PTI of writing letters to the International Monetary Fund to push Pakistan towards default, orchestrating the May 9 attacks, vandalizing memorials of martyrs, and calling for protests during the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) Summit.

"This is a non-serious threat," he remarked, pointing to the internal conflicts and divisions within PTI. He added that those responsible for committing treachery against the country were well-known, and the nation was fully aware of PTI's actions during its tenure. "Pakistan comes first; no political party is bigger than the country," he asserted. The minister expressed the opinion that peace and stability will move the nation forward, highlighting that the economy was progressing and Pakistan's foreign policy was advancing.

Highlighting the successful conclusion of the SCO Summit, the minister said that the event helped restore Pakistan's image on the global stage. He said

that visiting dignitaries praised Pakistan's key role in the region and commended the excellent arrangements for the summit. He also acknowledged the contributions of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Ministry of Information, and other institutions in making the SCO Summit a success.

He thanked the public for their cooperation during the summit. He said it was an honour for Pakistan to host its first major international event in 27 years, describing the summit as a milestone in the context of international relations. The minister said that the country's economic indicators were showing improvement due to government policies and expressed optimism that the summit would bring long-term benefits to Pakistan.

He also hinted at more positive news in the coming days, with several important bilateral meetings having taken place during the summit to enhance trade and investment, which would prove fruitful for the country's economy and its people.

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Students misled to run 'malicious' campaign over fake incident: CM

LAHORE (INP): Punjab Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz said on Wednesday that a mountain was made out of a molehill to malign the image of Pakistan.

Addressing the media here in connection with an alleged rape of a college student, she said an issue was made about something that did not exist.

She said students were misled to run an "ugly" campaign. "A girl was named as a victim. The girl had been admitted to the hospital since October 2 and was in the ICU."

She said that the police received information that the incident of rape had taken place. After which the police took immediate action.

A conspiracy was hatched after failing to spread anarchy, she said and added that those who hatched the conspiracy would be taken to task.

The chief minister said a story was fabricated. False accusations were made against the girl. Police wanted to be complainant. But, I think, the Punjab government should be the

complainant as this is not just the case of one girl.

Chief Minister Maryam introduced a student Mahnoor during her press conference who was sitting beside her.

Mahnoor said she did not want to talk to media [regarding the incident]. A teacher asked her to raise voice for her rights.

The teacher stood by an anchor who wrote her a script to read on camera. But, Mahnoor said, she did not read that script.

The chief minister said the registration of the col-

lege should not have been cancelled abruptly and all matters should have been explored before any hurried decision.

She said an incident [of violence] took place in Gujarat and it was linked to the Lahore incident.

She vowed that she would not spare those who are involved in propaganda, who tried to defame the girl. She said the accounts of those involved in social media campaign have been traced and a crackdown on them would be launched soon.

Punjab confirms 172 new dengue cases

LAHORE (APP): The Punjab Health Department confirmed on Wednesday that 172 new cases of dengue were recorded across the province in the last 24 hours.

According to the latest data, Rawalpindi reported 157 cases, Lahore 8, Jhelum 2, while Gujranwala, Chakwal, Attock, Sargodha, and Okara each reported one case.

Over the past week, 904 new cases of dengue virus infection were identified, bringing the total number of cases in Punjab for the year 2024 to 3,771.

The health department assured the public that all necessary arrangements to counter the outbreak were in place, with a sufficient stock of medicine available in all public hospitals across the province.

In response to the rising number of cases, the department issued a strong advisory urging the public to maintain clean and dry surroundings to prevent the spread of the Dengue virus. Citizens were also encouraged to fully cooperate with health teams actively working to control the outbreak.

For those seeking treatment, information, or wishing to register complaints related to Dengue, the Health Department has provided a free helpline at 1033. Officials emphasized the importance of vigilance and proactive measures to contain the spread of the virus across Punjab.

Kundi pledges support for D.I. Khan and Sukkur airport projects



F.P. Report

KARACHI: Governor Kundi assured the PAA leadership of his unwavering support and cooperation and stresses that projects like Dera Ismail Khan and Sukkur airports should commence at the earliest, benefiting the local population and boosting regional development.

Governor Khyberpakhtunkhwa, Faisal Karim Kundi, visited the Pakistan Airports Authority (PAA) Headquarters, where he

was warmly welcomed by Director General PAA, Air Vice Marshal (AVM) Taimur Iqbal. Also present on the occasion were Additional Director General PAA (Designate) AVM Zeeshan Saeed and Deputy Director General Works and Development, Sumair Saeed.

During his visit, Governor Kundi received a comprehensive briefing on the Dera Ismail Khan and Sukkur airports projects. Discussions also encompassed the Hyderabad, Mohenjodaro, Chitral and Gilgit

airports, highlighting the significance of these projects in enhancing regional connectivity.

Governor Kundi assured the PAA leadership of his unwavering support and cooperation in their endeavors. Emphasizing the importance of people-centric initiatives, he stressed that projects like Dera Ismail Khan and Sukkur airports should commence at the earliest, benefiting the local population and boosting regional development.

BISP Chairperson calls on Sindh Home Minister

KARACHI (APP): Benazir Income Support Program (BISP) Chairperson Senator Rubina Khalid called on Sindh Home and Law Minister Zia-ul-Hasan Lanjar at his office on Wednesday.

Senator Rubina Khalid expressed gratitude to Provincial Minister Ziaul Hasan Linjar for the security arrangements made by

the Sindh Government during disbursement of the quarterly installment to BISP beneficiaries.

Rubina Khalid said that over 2.5 million deserving women in Sindh province should be provided adequate security for payments in a transparent manner.

She said that on the directives of President Asif Ali Zardari, payments are

being made in a transparent and respectable manner. BISP chairperson said more lady police personnel should be deployed during the upcoming quarter to make disbursement of payments in transparent way, Rubina Khalid said.

Senator Rubina said the BISP and the police should jointly take action against those who make fake sur-

veys or payments.

The Provincial Home Minister assured BISP chairperson of full cooperation and assistance from Sindh government. Deputy Inspector General Police Fida Hussain Mastoi and DG BISP Sindh Zulfikar Ali Shaikh were authorized to decide the joint action plan for the next quarterly installment.

Malik Adeel presides over meeting of Standing Committee

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: The introductory meeting of the Standing Committee for Information & Public Relations was held today at the Provincial Assembly Secretariat under the chairmanship of Member Provincial Assembly (MPA) and Chairman of the Standing Committee, Malik Adeel Iqbal.

Members of the Provincial Assembly, along with officials from the Department of Information & Public Relations and other relevant authorities, participated in the meeting. During the meeting, Secretary of the Information & Public Relations Department, Arshad Khan, gave a

comprehensive briefing to the committee. He discussed the key challenges faced by the department, particularly regarding budget constraints.

He also highlighted the department's initiative to establish a Directorate of Digital Media, aiming to enhance the use of both traditional and digital platforms for effectively promoting the provincial government's welfare projects on social media.

Additionally, Deputy Director IT, Zar Ali, presented a special summary outlining various future-oriented measures undertaken by the Information Department to address emerging challenges. Chairman Malik Adeel Iqbal stressed the importance of effective

media coverage for the Provincial Assembly's sessions and Standing Committee meetings. He proposed the establishment of a dedicated desk for Information Department within the Provincial Assembly building to further improve communication.

A detailed discussion was also held on creating an action plan to effectively promote the government's people-friendly initiatives. The committee emphasized taking necessary steps to improve the department's overall performance. At the conclusion of the meeting, Chairman Malik Adeel Iqbal expressed his gratitude to all participants for their valuable contributions and insights.

Micro plans for Polio vaccination to be digitalized

LAHORE (APP): The Punjab government has decided to digitize the micro plans to make the anti-polio campaign more effective. The campaign would be monitored with the help of GIS-based maps, firstly in Lahore and then other districts of the province.

The decision was taken in a meeting chaired by Chief Secretary Punjab Zahid Akhtar Zaman here on Wednesday. Secretary Primary Health Nadia Saqib, the commissioner and deputy commissioner Lahore, representatives of international organizations working for polio eradication attended the meeting, while all divisional commissioners and deputy commissioners participated through video link.

KARACHI (PPI): Young lawyers from PTI Sindh today held a protest demanding the recovery of missing advocate Intizar Panjotha and condemning what they called the police brutality against advocate Romaisa Javed during a peaceful demonstration in Karachi.

The protest, led by advocates including Ahsan Adil Sheikh, Daniyal Baloch, Barrister Malik Asif, Advocate Kashif Hussain Wastaro, Advocate Nasir Buneeri, took place at the City Court Karachi.

The young lawyers marched from the Karachi Bar Association to the main gate of the City Court, calling for action against the police officers involved in the mistreatment of Advocate Romaisa Javed and demanding the immediate recovery of Advocate Intizar Panjotha. Speaking to the media during the protest, Advocate Ahsan Adil Sheikh, son of PTI Sindh President Haleem Adil Sheikh, condemned the

enforced disappearance of Advocate Intizar Panjotha. He stated that despite several days passing, Panjotha, a distinguished Supreme Court lawyer, has not been presented in any court or brought to light. He demanded his immediate release.

Advocate Ahsan further condemned the police for their violent treatment of Advocate Romaisa Javed during her peaceful protest. He expressed solidarity with her and called for strict action against the

officers responsible for her mistreatment.

Speaking at the protest, PTI Sindh leader Advocate Daniyal Baloch reiterated the lawyers' community's demand for the immediate release of Advocate Intizar Panjotha, stating that the forced disappearance of any citizen is a violation of the law and constitution.

He warned that the lawyers would launch stronger protests if such oppressive and fascist practices are not stopped.

Meeting reviews arrangement for Baba Guru Nanak birthday

LAHORE (APP): A meeting of the Pakistan Sikh Gurudwara Perbandhak Committee (PSGPC) was held here at the Head Office of the Evacuee Trust Property Board under the Chairmanship of ETPB Chairman Syed Attaur

Rahman. Sardar Tara Singh, Sardar Stowant Singh, Sardar Sahib Singh, Sardar Gian Singh Chawla, Sardar Bhagat Singh, Baba Harmeet Singh along with Deputy Secretary Shrinves Abdullah Owais, Security Officer Asim Chaudhry and others

participated in the meeting.

Chairman Board Syed Atta Rahman said that all possible measures will be taken for the facilities of Sikh pilgrims, renovation of Gurudwaras and promotion of religious tourism. In the meeting, the chairman board

approved the arrangements and expenses in Gurudwaras, increasing the number of "Sevadars, granthis", including birthdays and other expenses.

OFFICE OF THE DISTRICT & SESSIONS JUDGE BAJAUR NOTICE INVITING OF TENDER (Single stage single envelop)

The District & Sessions Judge Bajaur/Chairman of the Project committee invites Bids from eligible firms/contractors in accordance with work plan "Access to Justice Development Fund" read with guidelines & instruction issued by Peshawar High Court, Peshawar, KPRA Procurement Rules 2014 (amended 2022), and terms as agreed by the committee to be submitted to the office of Budget & Accounts Assistant, District Court, Bajaur on or before 13/11/2024. The bids so received will be opened on the same day at 12:00 PM by the committee in presence of the bidders or their representatives.

| Name of Work | Required Access PEC Category | Estimated Cost | Bid Security | Period of Completion | Stamp Duty | Last Date and Time of Submission | Date & Time of Opening of Bid |
|--|------------------------------|----------------|--------------|---|------------|----------------------------------|-------------------------------|
| Construction of Prayer Hall and Day Care Center 1. (Detail in bid Documents. | Relevant Category | 3.5 Million | 2% | 08 Months (from issuance of work order) | 4000/- | 13-11-2024 Till 11:30 AM | 13-11-2024 12:00 PM |

TERMS & CONDITIONS

- Bid Solicitation Documents & Instructions to bidders can be obtained from the office of the undersigned in working hours or can be downloaded from District Judiciary Bajaur website www.districtjudiciarybajaur.gov.pk and KPRA website www.kppra.gov.pk.
- Bid Security shall be submitted in the shape of call deposit receipt (CDR) from scheduled bank in favor of District, Sessions Judge, Bajaur from the account of the firm who submits its bid.
- Separate CDRs must be submitted for bid security, stamp duty and form fee.
- Bidding Documents shall be submitted to the office of the District & Sessions Judge, Bajaur on or before the closing date & time.
- Eligible bidders, who are on active taxpayers list (ATL) of FBR and eligible to supply goods services and works to Government Departments, can apply.
- Income taxes @ 7% shall be deducted from the bills of payment.
- Venue of bids opening is **Conference Hall of District Courts Baiaur at Civil Colony Khar Baiaur.**
- Bids will be opened in the presence of bidders / their representative who choose to be present.
- Competent Authority reserves the right to reject any or all the bids as per provisions contained in Rule 47 of KPRA Rules 2014.
- Incomplete, ambiguous, conditional bids and those received after due date and time shall not be accepted.
- All bidders are required to be registered with the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Revenue Authority, established under the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Finance Act, 2013 (Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Act No. XXI of 2013), for works, consulting and non-consulting services as listed in Schedule-II of the Act ibid.

Dr. Muhammad Aamir Nazir,
District & Session Judge, Bajaur
Chairman Project Committee (AJDF) 0942-220872

INF(P) 2721/24



GOVERNMENT OF KHYBER PAKHTUNKHWA COMMUNICATION & WORKS DEPARTMENT NOTICE INVITING E-BIDDING

(SINGLE STAGE TWO ENVELOP E-BIDDING SYSTEM)

The C&W Department Office of the Executive Engineer Building Division II Peshawar Government of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa invites Electronic Bids from the eligible firms/bidders in accordance with KPRA procurement rules 2014 on single stage two envelop procedure for the below mentioned works. The Bidders should be registered with KPRA & Pakistan Engineer Council (P.E.C) for the Year 2024-25 in relevant category & field of specialization, enlisted with

| S. No | Name of Work | Required Category of PEC | Bid Security | Period of Completion | Last date of submission of Bids and time | Date of Opening of Technical Bid and time | Date of opening of Financial Bid |
|-------|--|--|------------------|----------------------|--|---|--|
| 1 | CONSTRUCTION OF SIX (06) RESIDENTIAL QUARTERS AND TWO (02) TUCK SHOPS AT BISE, PESHAWAR. (RE-TENDER) | PK-C4 and Above & EE-04/ EE-06 CE-09 / CE-10 | 2% of the E/Cost | As per Work Order | 07.11.2024 12:00 hours | On Same day at 12:30 hours | After approval of Technical evaluation |

- Bid documents Instructions/Conditions of bidders can be downloaded up to one day prior to the opening date from C&W web site www.cwd.gkp.pk. A Complete set of Bid Solicitation Documents may be obtained on Submission of a written application one day prior to the opening date from the office of the undersigned otherwise bids submitted without these documents will not be processed for post qualification.
- All bidders are required to be registered with the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Revenue Authority, established under the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Finance Act, 2013 (Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Act No. XXI of 2013), for works, consulting and non-consulting services as listed in Schedule-II of the Act ibid.
- All the bidders will have to submit CDR from scheduled Bank on Account of bidding entry fee (Not refundable) for each bid @ 0.03% of the estimated cost without fail, otherwise his bid will not be entertained.
- The contractors quoting their bids up to a limit of 10% below Engineer Estimate shall submit bid security @ 2% only of Engineer Estimate.
- The contractors quoting their bids more than 10% below upto 20% below on Engineer's Estimate shall submit along with their bids 8% Additional Security of Engineer's Estimated cost in addition to 2% bid security. If the bid is not accompanied with the required amount of Additional Security then it will be considered as non-responsive and the 2% bid security shall be forfeited in favour of Government and the second lowest bidder and so on will be considered accordingly.
- Similarly, a contractor quoting bid more than 20% below shall submit with his bid an additional security on Engineer's Estimated cost equal to the differential amount of submitted bid and Engineers' Estimate along with detailed rate analysis. In case of more than 20% below bids, if the bid is not accompanied by the detailed rate analysis and/or required amount of additional security, then the said bid shall be considered as non-responsive. All the securities submitted along with such non-responsive bid shall be forfeited in favour of Government and the 2nd lowest bidder and so on will be considered accordingly.
- In case detailed rate analysis submitted with the bids is, in view of the Procuring Entity, not convincing the Head of the Procuring Entity may declare such bid as non-responsive without any forfeiture of bid securities and record reasons thereof

Executive Engineer
Building Division-II Peshawar
Ph# 091-9212417

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TENDER NOTICE

- Tenders are invited for two (02) years Service Level Agreement/Maintenance Contract, for Qty. 122 UPS(s) rating from 02 KVA to 08 KVA with parts and without batteries installed / working HQPAA, Airports / Locations of PAA, The firm must be included in Active Tax Payer List of FBR and registered with Directorate of General sales tax and Services sales tax in accordance with PPRA Rule No.36-b, The firm must have at least 03 years experience in repair, maintenance and servicing of UPS(s) with proper workshop facility alongwith qualified manpower (Engineer/Technician) at Karachi, Lahore and Islamabad for Preventive and Corrective maintenance of UPS(s).
- Bids must be submitted on or before **05th November, 2024. (1100hrs)** as per conditions set out in bidding documents available on PPRA E-PAD System <http://eprocure.gov.pk> (Free of Cost). Bid will be open on same date at **1130 hrs.** Bidders are require to get registered at E-PADS PPRA (Federal) to access the bidding documents and other relevant information including electronic bid submission.
- Bid must be submitted electronically through PPRA E-PADS web portal <http://eprocure.gov.pk> before closing date & time as well as in hard format in a (separate sealed envelopes for Technical and Financial Bids as per single stage two envelopes method) duly filled and attached with requisite information in specified format provided in the Bidding document to the Office of Additional Director Telecom & Electronics CNS Directorate Headquarters Pakistan Airports Authority, Terminal-1 Jinnah International Airport Karachi.
- For registration and training on E-PADS or in case of any technically difficulty in using E-PADS, prospective bidder may contact Mr. Rizwan Mehmood Director MIS PPRA Room No. 109, 1st Floor FBC Building Sector G-5/2 Islamabad and contact Number 051-111-137-237.

[Note: All prospective Bidders shall immediately inform PAA before bid opening date/time and submit proof of Active Tax Payer List (100% compliance) & GST/NTN certificates of FBR at the address below]

- Fixed Bid security of an amount in the shape of Pay Order/Bank Draft / Bankers Cheque from any Schedule Bank, drawn in favour of Pakistan Airports Authority should be submitted alongwith the tender in sealed envelope copy of same must be attached through E-PADS online submission as well before submission Date & Time.
- The advertisement is also available on CAA website www.caapakistan.com.pk and PPRA website www.ppra.org.pk.
- Warning: Any financial instrument submitted by bidder. If found fake or got dishonored at any stage would result in blacklisting and legal action as per law.

Address:

Additional Director Telecom & Electronics
CNS Engineering Directorate
Headquarters, Pakistan Airports Authority,
Terminal-1, JIAP, Karachi.
Phone No. 021-99072257 / 99072234
Fax No. 021-99242131



PID K-1185/24

Dialogue on Judicial reforms organized at Governor's House

PESHAWAR (APP): The Human Rights Cell of the Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP) organized the fourth seminar titled "Dialogue on Judicial Reforms" at the Governor House here on Wednesday.

The event focused on discussing necessary reforms within the country's judicial system.

Key speakers included Farhatullah Babar President of the PPP Human Rights Cell, Ahmad Karim Kundi Member of the Provincial Assembly and General Secretary Malaika Raza, alongside various legal experts.

Attendees comprised legal and political professionals as well as representatives from civil society.

The speakers emphasized the importance of constitutional amendments to ensure judicial representation across all provinces.

They said that constitutional courts remain an incomplete aspect of the Charter of Democracy and reaffirmed the PPP's commitment to fundamental rights and the rule of law.

It was highlighted that over 50 democratic countries have established constitutional courts, positioning every Pakistani citizen as a vital stakeholder in these proposed amendments.

The President of the Pakistan Labour Federation (PLF) commended the PPP Human Rights Cell for fostering dialogue with legal experts and civil society, asserting that the party's chairman is uniquely engaging the public by sharing the draft of the constitutional amendments.

The speakers reiterated the party's dedication to judicial reforms and the supremacy of the constitution in Pakistan.

They praised Chairman Bilawal Bhutto Zardari's efforts regarding the proposed amendments, stressing the urgent need for a constitutional court in the current landscape.

Participants concluded the event by sharing their perspectives on judicial reforms, engaging in a fruitful discussion on various aspects of the topic.

Health Department holds performance review meeting

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: A high-level performance review meeting of the Health Department was held under the leadership of Health Adviser Ihtisham Ali to assess the department's performance. The meeting was attended by Health Secretary Adeel Shah, Director General Health Services Dr. Muhammad Saleem, Additional DGs, Director of the Independent Monitoring Unit (IMU) Dr. Ejaz, and all District Health Officers (DHOs).

During the meeting, the performance of DHOs was reviewed in areas including the daily outpatient department (OPD) visits at Basic and Rural Health Centers, availability of medicines, functionality of medical equipment, and the overall management and cleanliness of healthcare facilities.

Addressing the participants, Health Adviser Ihtisham Ali emphasized that this performance review meeting will now be held monthly to ensure continuous monitoring and improvement. The agenda of these meetings will be to review various health-related initiatives and assess the way forward. Key focus areas highlighted were the provision of essential medicines, the establishment of Basic Emergency and Neonatal Care Centers, effective utilization of human resources, improvement of immunization coverage, and the activation of Primary Care Management Committees.

The Health Adviser stressed that any DHO or Medical Superintendent (MS) whose hospital sees a decline in OPD patients will no longer have the right to remain in their position. "Free access to medicines is every citizen's fundamental right, and it is the responsibility of the DHOs to ensure that every patient visiting a Basic Health Unit receives the prescribed medicines free of cost," he added.

He also pointed out that while 40% of the ordered medicines have been delivered, the remaining medicines must be made available as soon as possible.

Health Secretary Adeel Shah directed the DHOs to expedite the procurement of medicines ordered in June and investigate any delays. He instructed that suppliers who fail to deliver within 90 days should be blacklisted.

"The funds have already been released, and the drugs cleared by the Drug Testing Lab must be immediately supplied to the health facilities," he said. He also emphasized the need for prompt action against chronically absent medical staff.

During the meeting, Director of IMU presented a detailed review of regional and district performance. According to the provincial scorecard for September, the average daily OPD at Basic Health Units was 20 patients, while Rural Health Centers saw an average of 68 patients daily. The availability of 20 essential medicines stood at 51%, medical equipment functionality at 91%, administrative structure functionality at 81%, and cleanliness at 71%.

It was noted that OPD performance improved in the Central and Southern regions, while there was a noticeable decline in the Hazara and Malakand regions. The availability of 90 essential medicines across the province was recorded at 40%, while the availability of Medical Officers was at 63%. In September, 356 Medical Officers were found absent. All hospitals have now activated their Primary and Hospital Management Committees, with funds amounting to 87 million PKR available in these committees. Additionally, over 1,400 deliveries were conducted at Basic Health Units in September.

3-day youth summit concludes at Malakand Varsity



F.P. Report

MALAKAND: The 5th Edition of The Metrix Pakistan Youth Summit, which is the largest Youth Summit in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, concluded at Malakand Varsity. The 3 day summit was carried out in collaboration with Metrix Pakistan, Directorate Of Youth Affairs, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Information Technology Board, and Government Of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa to motivate the youth and encourage innovativeness within the different sectors. The summit featured keynote addresses, panel discussions, and workshops focused on cutting-edge areas such as cyber security, artificial intelligence (AI), and digital marketing. Experts from across Pakistan shared insights on protecting digital information & moderation of data, combating cyber threats, and leveraging AI to transform industries. Professionals also shared strategies for effective online marketing and brand building.

More than 10,000 students from all over Pakistan attended the summit, thereby emerging as the most populous congregation of the young brains within the country. More than 50 renowned experts such as speakers from various industries, academicians, and businessmen attended the event, and over 20 companies exhibited their products, services, and innovations through their exhibitions. The companies included RankingGrow, TechBrixia, Lets Grow by Huzaifa Behram, CodeCrush Tech, Prisons Department Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Information Technology board, Tanawal Welfare Organization and others.

Humayun Khan, who is the Special Assistant to the Chief Minister of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa on Prisons, attended the ceremony and officially inaugurated. In his address, he highlighted how the government has prioritized the issues of the youth and the promotion of entrepreneurship, declaring that the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Government will be providing loans without any interest to the youth with business plans through the Directorate of Youth Affairs. He went on to say that every subdivision of Lower Dir will also be organized such summits to reach out more of the youth and aid their ambitions. High aspirations were also nurtured by Humayun Khan as he described the possibilities of the region, transforming itself into a technology centre, projecting plans on the digitization of the Prisons Department via e-governance projects. He also thanked Vice Chancellor of the university of Malakand and Metrix Pakistan CEO Hassan Nisar for quite a number of reasons in relation to the success of the summit.

The Metrix Pakistan Youth Summit has provided an important focus for the youth of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. The fifth edition preserved its tradition of providing those various seminars, roundtable discussions, and proper communication needed to prepare the younger generation for employment in the current labor market. An exhibit on technology, education, and business development was also organized as a part of the event, allowing students to meet with specialists and learn about the latest trends in the area.

One of the key highlights of the summit was the Pride of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Awards, which recognized 19 individuals for their exceptional contributions to their respective fields and communities. Awardees included notable figures such as Muhammad Ali Swati (Pakistani Rescuer & Philanthropist), Muhammad Tawseef Khan (Climate Change Activist), Ammad Ali (Entrepreneur & Philanthropist), Ayesha Ayaz (Taekwondo Champion), Muhammad Irfan (Social Worker), Qaiser Nawab (Global Youth Leader & Climate Activist), Adil Nawaz Khan (Social Entrepreneur & Community Leader), Adnan Khan (Journalist), Noorena Shams (Squash Player), Raja Ahmed (Technology Strategist & Entrepreneur), Muddassir Shaffique (Telecom and IT Solution Specialist), Sumera Shams (Politician & Social Worker), Hamra Farhan (social activist), Farishta Noor (Social Activist), Talat Azam Khan (Mentor Community Leader), Rafiullah Kaki (Teacher & Trainer), Waqas Bloodwala (Blood Activist), Qaisar Akash Khan (Philanthropist), Saira Shams (Social Activist). These awards celebrated the achievements of young leaders and highlighted the potential of Pakistan's youth to make meaningful impacts in society. Notably, Hisham Sarwar, a renowned influencer, received the prestigious Pride of Nation Award for his genuine services to the nation.

The University of Malakand's Vice Chancellor, Professor Dr. Rashid Ahmed, addressed the attendants and expressed satisfaction with the improving status of the university. He indicated that the University of Malakand has been declared the best university in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa by Times Higher Education Rankings thanks to the commitment of its workforce. He appreciated the Directorate of Youth Affairs and Metrics Pakistan for their assistance with the activities and reiterated the university's belief in the need for youth development activities.

The CEO of Metrix Pakistan, Hassan Nisar, mentioned that the summit serves as a tool for the Pakistani youth to achieve and employ themselves with other relevant individuals.

He also stated that in the coming years, he envisions growth of the summit so that more youth from every corner of the country to learn and access the tools and networks that are able to guarantee success in the modern economy. In addition, he expressed satisfaction as to the student's attitude as well as the administration and faculty of the University of Malakand.

The three-day event concluded with a closing ceremony, where certificates were distributed to organizers, participants, and speakers. A VIP dinner was also hosted for the distinguished guests and contributors. The summit proved to be a resounding success, leaving a lasting impact on all those who attended and setting the stage for future initiatives focused on youth empowerment in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa.



PESHAWAR: National Institute of Management's Chief Instructor Tariq Bakhtiar with the participants of the mandatory course for promotion in Grade 20 in a group photo with Chief Executive of Paraplegic Center Peshawar Dr Syed Muhammad Ilyas

Power suspension notified

Barkwal chairs meeting of joint coordination committee

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR (APP): Peshawar Electric Supply Company (PESCO) on Wednesday notified that due to maintenance work power supply will remain suspended from Hayatabad Transmission Line on 20th October from 8:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. Hayatabad grid connected feeders will face inconvenience.

Likewise, it said that power supply will remain suspended from University Grid Station on 17th October from 8:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. resultantly Danish Abad, Rahat Abad, Agriculture University, Academy Town, Circular Road, Sufaid Dheri and Achini feeders will face inconvenience. The power supply will remain suspended from Peshawar University Grid Station on 18th October from 8:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. resultantly, Gharib Abad, Engineering College, Canal Town, University Campus, Taj Abad and Hassain Zai feeders will face inconvenience.

The power supply will remain suspended from Peshawar University Grid Station on 21st October from 8:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. resultantly Ring Road 5, HMC, Jamal u Din Afghani, Old Bara Road and Lala zar feeders will face inconvenience. The power supply will remain suspended from Shahi Bagh Grid Station on 17th October from 8:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. resultantly Nasapa, Naguman, Dalazak, Khazana, Sirbuland Pura, Samar Bagh feeders will face inconvenience.

The power supply will also remain suspended from Shahi Bagh Grid Station on 18th October from 8:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. resultantly feeders Naguman Industrial, Bakhsho Pull, New Ghari, Latif Abad, Eidgah and Charsadda Road will face inconvenience.

The power supply will remain suspended from Peshawar City Grid Station on 19th October from 8:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. resultantly Sethi Town, Gulbahar, Zaryab, Phandu Road, City Home feeders will face inconvenience.

Non-formal education problems to be resolved

MD ESEF visits DPO Abbottabad

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: MD - ESEF Khawaja Faheem Sajjad visited District Program Office Abbottabad and detailed presentation about all the streams of Non-Formal Education (GCS ,NSIs , ESS and POHA Centers) was given to him. Different issues regarding all the ongoing activities were discussed and he noted the issues being faced by the District Office in promotion of Non-Formal Education and ensured to resolve them. The MD also inquired about the data of OOSC in the District and directed the DPO to enroll maximum number of OOSC in Community Schools to bridge the gap.

MD ESEF Khawaja Faheem Sajjad visited two POHA Centres established in two different VCs of Abbottabad namely GCS Mangal and Madrassa Darul Quran (where 24 and 149 OOSC respectively were enrolled).

Moreover , MD ESEF visited Girls Community School Mangal where 180 OOSC were enrolled. The MD evaluated the overall performance of the School and visited all the classrooms and asked questions from students to get an idea about quality of education. The MD noted all the issues and directed DPO to forward all such cases to the Head Office for further process. MD appreciated the performance of Teachers.

Furthermore , MD ESEF visited ESS partner School Ashat ul Quran Public School Tarhana (where 87 OOSC from Class 6th to 10th are enrolled under the supervision of ESEF KPK.

The MD visited the classrooms (by asking questions from the students from their concerned syllabus to assess the quality of education being provided to them by the partner school) , Science Lab, Computer Lab, Library and different instructions were given to the Owner/Principal of School for further improvement. The MD appreciated the School Principal and DPO for the efforts for enrollment of OOSC of the area.

KP Chief secretary reviews by-elections

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: A high-level meeting to review preparations for the upcoming local government by-elections, scheduled for October 20, was held presided by Chief Secretary Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Nadeem Aslam Chaudhry. The meeting was attended by Provincial Election Commissioner Saeed Gul, Inspector General of Police Akhtar Hayat Khan, Secretary of Local Government Department, Special Secretaries of the Home and Finance Departments, and other senior officials. During the meeting, a comprehensive review of the arrangements and security measures for ensuring the transparent conduct of the by-local elections was undertaken.

Media Cricket League

PPC Qalandars, PPC Lions, and PPC Qabails win matches



F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: In the ongoing Media Cricket League organized by the Peshawar Press Club with the support of DHA Peshawar and RMI three more matches were played yesterday. In the first match PPC Qalandars triumphed over PPC Gladiators by 10 wickets. In the second match PPC Lions defeated PPC Bulls by 10 runs while in the third match PPC Qabails secured a 10-wicket victory over PPC Tigers.

On this occasion former President of Peshawar Press Club M. Riaz senior journalist Saif ul Salam Saifi Peshawar Press Club General Secretary Irfan Musa Zai, and President of Sports Writers Association Asim Shiraz awarded medals to the players who performed outstandingly.

In the first match PPC Gladiators batting first scored 57 runs for the loss of 2 wickets with Nauman scoring 18 Mudassir Zeb 15 and Tanveer 13. For PPC Qalandars Waqas and Zeeshan took one wicket each. In response PPC Qalandars chased down the target without losing a wicket. Zeeshan remained unbeaten on 26 and Asghar on 24. Zeeshan Kakakhel was named the Man of the Match.

In the second match PPC Lions batting first posted 63 runs with Azmatullah scoring 14 Fida Adeel 12 and Kaleem Qureshi 10. Adnan and Arif took two wickets each for PPC Bulls. In reply PPC Bulls managed 53 runs with Adnan scoring 15 and Khair Muhammad 10. Ehsan and Haq Nawaz took two wickets each with Haq Nawaz being declared Man of the Match.

In the third match of the day PPC Qabails easily defeated PPC Tigers by 10 wickets. PPC Tigers batting first scored 92 runs in the allotted overs with Dost Muhammad hitting a brilliant half-century scoring 50 runs including five sixes and two fours. Bilal Afridi took two wickets. In response PPC Tribes chased the target in the sixth over without losing a wicket. Shah Faisal played a superb innings of 63 runs while Bilal Afridi remained unbeaten on 26. Bilal Afridi was awarded the Man of the Match award.



In brief

Two killed in violence F.P. Report

LARKANA: A fight broke out between two parties of Maurya and Agani communities near Nodero. As a result of firing, 2 people were killed while 4 people were critically injured due to bullets. In details, last day in the village of Moriya Fakeer, a fight broke out between two parties of the Moriya and Agani community over a simple matter. As a result of blind firing, 2 people, Abdul Latif Moreo and Mujahid Agani, were killed on the spot, while 4 people each, Ayub, Farhan, Gul Hasan Moreo was seriously injured. The bodies of the deceased were handed over to their relatives after necessary steps were taken from Nodero Hospital, on the other hand, the injured were transferred to the hospital. No case has been filed, while the firing between the parties continued.

Punjab CM visit canceled F.P. Report

TOBA TEK SINGH: The visit of Punjab Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz Sharif to Toba Tek Singh was canceled due to important official engagements in the federal capital Islamabad. The visit was scheduled for a one-day and all other arrangements including the venue set up in the sports stadium were complete for his arrival. She was chief guests in this program, they were to distribute Kissan cards to 1150 farmers, in the visit to Toba Tek Singh. Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz Sharif was expected to inaugurate the Deputy Commissioner Complex, Al-Khitmat Center and visit the District Headquarters Hospital.

White Cane Safety Day F.P. Report

HAFIZABAD: World White Cane Safety Day observed in Hafizabad. In this connection, special education school arranged a seminar. Chief Officer Municipal Committee Hafizabad Ansar Sahi, Incharge Principal Raheela Hanif, Ex-District Nazim Hafizabad Col. (R) Ali Ahmad Awan, prominent educationist Imran Habib and a large number of prominent personalities and blind people attended the seminar. Addressing the seminar, speakers said that this day was being celebrated to pay tribute to blind people who were serving the nation at local and national level. They said that special children were deserving our special attention and cooperation whereas it was our moral duty to encourage blind people and create opportunities for getting education and vocational training so they could enable to earn their livelihood in respectable manners. The speakers said that blind people had special God gifted abilities which were excited in any normal person. It needs to pay special attention towards blind people so that they could be demonstrated their God gifted abilities, they added. They added that it was responsibilities of every citizen to ensure respect of while cane to provide different facilities to blind people.

Another Nadra center setup

MULTAN (INP): Another Nadra center was setup at Sher Shah Adhiwala here on Wednesday. Pakistan People's Party Leader, Member National Assembly (NA-157), Syed Ali Kasim Gillani, inaugurated the new Nadra office. According to the spokesperson, locals of four union councils would get benefit as they had to travel far to Katcheri chowk office.



HYDERABAD: Workers busy in repairing of railway tracks.

One day seminar held at KKKUK

F.P. Report

KARAK: Khushal Khan Khattak University (KKKU) hosted a one day seminar on Wednesday to address the pressing issue of the declining enrollment in social sciences and the broader challenges facing higher education. The seminar organized by the Directorate of Academic and Research, brought together faculty members, administrative officers, staff, and students from the university.

Distinguished speakers, including the Vice Chancellor Professor Dr. Naseer Ud Din, and Professor Dr. Farid Ullah Khan, delivered keynote addresses that provided valuable insights into the factors contributing to the decline of social sciences and explored potential strategies for reversing this trend.

The seminar featured discussions on various topics related to higher education, including the significance of social sciences in contemporary society. Factors influenc-



ing the declining enrollment in social sciences Innovative approaches to enhance social science education Strategies to attract and retain students in higher education.

The participants engaged in thought-provoking discussions and shared their experiences and perspectives on the challenges and opportunities facing higher education. The seminar served as a platform for fostering

collaboration and exploring potential solutions to address the pressing issues confronting the academic community.

Director academic and Research Dr. Fasih Ur Rehman expressed their gratitude to all the participants for their valuable contributions and expressed their commitment to continuing efforts to promote and strengthen higher education in Pakistan.

GDC Bakhshali hosts seminar F.P. Report

MARDAN: A function was organized on the topic of anti-narcotics in Government Degree College Bakhshali. The function was presided over by the principal of the college Prof. Muhammad Asim Iqbal, while SP Rural Division Salahuddin Kundi was the chief guest.

The event started with recitation of Holy Quran and praise of Allah, students presented an effective anti-drugs outline, Principal Professor Muhammad Asim Iqbal gave a speech and emphasized on the harms of drugs and the importance of avoiding them. He advised the students to stay away from drugs and take steps towards a healthy future.

The chief guest of the event, highlighted the importance of anti-drugs and advised the students not only to avoid drugs themselves rather, do your part to protect the people around you from this scourge. At the end of the event, a peaceful anti-drug walk was organized, in which students, teachers and staff of the college participated. During the walk, the students raised anti-drug slogans and reiterated their commitment to create awareness in the society.

DDAC chairman visits Rescue 1122: Member of Provincial Assembly and DDAC Chairman Zarshad Khan visited Rescue 1122 Katlang Station and was welcomed by Station House Incharge Shahid Zaman and other officials reviewed the services/facilities provided by Rescue 1122 to the area and briefed on all activities. Chairman Zarshad Khan appreciated the services of Rescue 1122 and assured all possible support.

Four die in mishap

VEHARI (INP): At least four members of a family lost their life after a vehicle overturned in Vehari.

As per details, the incident occurred near Ladan area of Vehari where vehicle overturned when the driver slept while driving. The rescue officials stated that the incident reportedly claimed life of four family members who were on their way back from Lahore.

PWDs demand increase in job quota

F.P. Report

LOWER DIR: The persons with disability belonging to the Lower Dir district on Wednesday complained the incumbent government was doing nothing to resolve issues faced by them.

Expressing their grievances during an open kutcheri for special persons arranged by the district administration at the Timergara rest house, the PWDs provincial leader Khurshid Alam, Farmanullah, Ifitikhar, Laal Wahid and Rehman Said, complained that they were facing serious issues regarding their job, access to government facilities and healthcare. The PWDs, Friends of Paraplegic and Helping Hands attended the event.

The assistant commissioner Zaid Khan Safi, DSP circle Iqbal Nasim and heads of government departments were present on the occasion. The PWDs representatives said that most of the administration's events were limited to only photo sessions as they had no outcomes at the end. They said the government had allocated a 2 percent quota in jobs for PWDs but it was not being implemented.

They demanded an increase in the quota by four percent. The PWDs also demanded a special counter and free medicines

for them at the district headquarters hospital Timergara. They also demanded easy access to government buildings, employment in the social welfare department, 50 percent concession in transport fares, stipend from the Pakistan Baitul Mal and monthly stipend for married PWDs from the Benazir Income Support Programme (BISP).

The AC issued directives to the concerned department for resolution of some issues raised by the PWDs on the spot. He said that a letter regarding their issues would be sent to the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa government and chief minister secretariat. The residents of Rabat during an open kutcheri held a day earlier, complained about lack of funds for ongoing development projects, lack of facilities at government schools and hospitals in the area and dilapidated condition of the link roads. Deputy Commissioner Muhammad Arif Khan, district police officer Salim Abbas Kulachi and other officials were present on the occasion.

The JI former candidate for provincial assembly Shad Nawaz Khan, JUI-F Balambat general secretary Rehmanullah, PPP's Tariq Syed, Hassan Zeb Rughani, Dr Hammad Zada, Kamil Khan, Maulana Rahatullah and others highlighted dif-

ferent issues faced by local residents.

Most of the complaints were related to lack of facilities and funds for development projects. They said the post of district education officer (female) was lying vacant for two years. The residents said the building of government higher secondary school Rabat had been demolished three years ago but it was yet to be reconstructed and the students were forced to get education in double shifts.

They complained that there had been no waiting room for passengers at Rabat. The residents also demanded appointment of principal to the Timergara Medical College and said that classes were yet to start in the college despite the passage of seven years. The speakers demanded a special quota of class IV employees for local residents of Rani village in the Timergara Medical College. They said the link roads in their area presented an ugly look and the transporters were reluctant to drive on them. The residents also complained about unnecessary delays in getting passports. Responding to residents' complaints, the DC issued directives to the concerned officials on the spot and said that some of the issues would be sent to the provincial high ups.

Resumption of cross-border trade urged

F.P. Report

WANA: The tribal elders and representatives of the business community voiced concerns over the prolonged closure of the Pak-Afghan border at the Angoor Adda gate. The tribal leaders emphasized the importance of reopening the border to restore economic activity in the region.

The elders highlighted that they have consistently advocated for the reopening of the Angoor Adda gate across various platforms and plan to organize joint gatherings to further press their demand. The closure of the border, now in its 11th month, has devastated the local economy, leading

to widespread unemployment and poverty. Many businesses have shut down, and investors have been forced to relocate their capital to other cities.

According to the elders, the shutdown of the Angoor Adda gate has particularly affected local shopkeepers, fuel pump owners, warehouse operators, and hotel owners, who have been compelled to close their businesses. Thousands of young people have lost their jobs as a result. The Ahmadzai Wazir tribe, whose primary source of income is linked to cross-border trade at Angoor Adda, is facing severe financial hardships.

Expressing frustration,

the Ahmadzai Wazir elders pointed out that despite their tribe making greater sacrifices for the country's security and stability, especially during the war on terror, they have not been granted any relief at the border. The tribe has stood shoulder to shoulder with security forces during difficult times, and yet they feel neglected by the government.

The tribal leaders urged the current administration to take immediate action, considering the dire circumstances faced by the war-ravaged people of Wana, and prioritize the reopening of the Pak-Afghan border to resume trade activities and uplift the local economy.

World White Cane Day observed

F.P. Report

KOHAT: In connection with World White Cane Day a formal function was held at Nishtar Special Education Center KDA here on Wednesday. The function was presided over by Deputy Commissioner Kohat Abdul Akram.

And attended by the district officer Social Welfare Amjad Afridi, Principal Nishtar Special Education

Center Kohat and special persons.

The objective of celebrating White Cane Day is to create awareness in the society regarding the rights of disabled, special persons and to mobilize all stakeholders to collectively work in this respect.

Deputy Commissioner Kohat, in his address said that the White Cane is not just a walking stick for the blind but it is a symbol of their identity and

dignity. He assured all possible help and cooperation from the district administration Kohat in solving all the problems of the visually impaired community.

He also distributed white sticks and gifts among the special persons. It was pledged that whenever a blind person is seen, he should be treated with respect, cooperation and a part of the society instead of a pitiful character.

Dir students, parents demand facilities for Timergara college

F.P. Report

LOWER DIR: Students and their parents have demanded the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa government and the authorities of higher education department to take notice of the dilapidated condition of the Government Postgraduate College (GPC) Timergara.

Talking to local journalists at Timergara here the other day, the students said the 12-room college building constructed in 1969 posed serious threats to human lives which had been declared dangerous several years ago by the concerned department.

The students complained that two buses of the college had been out of order for the last two years while students had no alternate means of transportation. They said the college was being run in double shifts due to the increasing number of male and female students of 17 disciplines. The students said that hundreds of students were denied enrollment this year due to lack of accommodation.

Meanwhile an official of the GPC Timergara told on contact

that more than 3500 students including 1600 females were enrolled in the college. They said that BS classes in the nearby government girls' degree college Balambat had not started to decrease burden on the GPC Timergara and girl students were forced to get co-education. The students said that the number of girl students increased with each passing year despite the fact that it was established only for boys.

They demanded the HED to launch BS classes at the government girls' degree college Balambat so that burden on their college could be decreased. They demanded the government to release appropriate funds for rehabilitation of the college buses, repair of the solar system and furniture. The students and their parents also demanded the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa government to take practical steps for demolishing the college old building and its reconstruction.

Solar defence: A PhD scholar Saddam Hussain successfully defended his thesis under the supervision of Associate Professor Dr. Muhammad Sarwar in Mathematics at University of Malakand here on

Wednesday. Mr. Hussain's thesis titled 'Study of Fractional Order Differential Systems for Controllability Analysis Using Fixed Point Theory and Semigroup Properties' demonstrates exceptional research contributions.

His work has resulted in the publication of five research articles in world-renowned prestigious journals, showcasing his expertise in controllability analysis. The thesis was rigorously evaluated by esteemed external examiners, Professor Dr. Chonkil Park from Hanyang University, South Korea, Professor Dr. Huaping Huang from Chongqing Gorges University, Chongqing, China, Associate Professor Dr. Gul Rehmat from Islamia College Peshawar and Tenured Professor Dr. Muhammad Kamran from COMSATS University Islamabad. The UoM, chairman department of Mathematics Prof Imtiaz Ahmad congratulated the scholar on his achievement and expressed gratitude to Dr. Sarwar for his guidance.

Residents file complaints during an open 'kutcheri': Residents of Rabat have com-

plained about lack of funds for ongoing development projects and demanded the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa government to release appropriate funds for the purpose. They recorded their complaints during an open kutcheri arranged by the district administration at Rabat.

Deputy Commissioner Muhammad Arif Khan, district police officer Salim Abbas Kulachi and other officials were present on the occasion. The JI former candidate for provincial assembly Shad Nawaz Khan, JUI-F Balambat general secretary Rehmanullah, PPP's Tariq Syed, Hassan Zeb Rughani, Dr Hammad Zada, Kamil Khan, Maulana Rahatullah and others highlighted different issues faced by local residents.

Most of the complaints were related to lack of facilities and funds for development projects. They said the post of district education officer (female) was lying vacant for two years. The residents said the building of government higher secondary school Rabat had been demolished three years ago but it was yet to be reconstructed and the students were forced to get edu-

cation in double shifts. They complained that there had been no waiting room for passengers at Rabat.

The residents also demanded appointment of principal to the Timergara Medical College and said that classes were yet to start in the college despite the passage of seven years. The speakers demanded a special quota of class IV employees for local residents of Rani village in the Timergara Medical College. They said the link roads in their area presented an ugly look and the transporters were reluctant to drive on them. The residents also complained about unnecessary delays in getting passports. Responding to residents' complaints, the DC issued directives to the concerned officials on the spot and said that some of the issues would be sent to the provincial high ups.

Talent award: The Lower Dir deputy district education officer Fayyazud Din has said that teachers should encourage students to take active part in co-curriculum activities during their studies. He was addressing a talent award show held at the government higher secondary

school Sarai Bala as chief guest. The position holder students of the school and board were awarded with appreciation shields and cash prizes.

The school's students presented speeches, naat and songs and got applause from the audience. The DDEO said that strong coordination among teachers, students and their parents was necessary for getting quality education. He asked students to take active part in games and other co-curricular activities as they were important for personality building. He said that so far thousands of out-of-school children had been enrolled in government schools throughout the province.

He appreciated the Lower Dir government schools for showing good results in the board examinations. The official directed the teachers to teach according to the students' learning outcomes (SLOs). The function was also addressed by the school principal Zarif Shah, principal of GHSS Zariat Talash Khwaja Faizul Nasir, retired principal Aftab Alam Khan, principal Salah ud Din, retired headmaster Gul Rehman and others.



Global conflicts driving up to 21,000 deaths daily from hunger

NEW YORK: Hunger caused by conflicts around the world has reached record high levels, a new report by Oxfam has found, which accuses warring parties of weaponising food and blocking aid. Between 7,000 to as many as 21,000 people are likely dying each day from hunger in countries affected by conflict, according to the report, published by the United Kingdom-based charity on World Food Day on Wednesday.

Titled Food Wars, it examined 54 countries experiencing conflict, revealing that they account for nearly all of the 281.6 million people facing acute hunger today. Conflict has also been a major driver of forced displacement in these countries, which has now reached a record 117 million people. Oxfam emphasised that conflict not only fuels hunger, but that warring parties are actively using food as a weapon by targeting food, water and energy infrastructure, as well as blocking food aid.

In September, three humanitarian agencies warned of “a starvation crisis of historic proportions” amid Sudan’s civil war, while the proportion of households affected by high levels of acute food insecurity in Gaza has been the largest ever recorded globally since the end of last year. “As conflict rages around the world, starvation has become a lethal weapon wielded by warring parties against international laws,” said Oxfam’s Emily Farr, who works in the area of food and economic security.

“Today’s food crises are largely manufactured. Nearly half a million people in Gaza – where 83 percent of needed food aid is currently not reaching them – and over three-quar-



ters of a million in Sudan are starving as the devastating effects of wars on food are likely to persist for generations.” The analysis revealed that the crises of war, displacement and hunger occur in countries heavily reliant on primary product exports. For instance, 95 percent of Sudan’s export earnings come from gold and livestock. Mining operations have led to violent conflicts, forcing people from their homes as the degraded and polluted environments become unliveable.

According to Oxfam, this underscores the failures of peace-building efforts that rely on an economic liberalisation model focused on attracting foreign investment and promoting export-driven economies, which often exacerbates inequality instead. “Large-scale private investment – both foreign and domestic – has often exacerbated political and economic instability, as investors seize control over land and water, displacing local

populations,” Farr said. Conflict frequently intensifies other crises like climate shocks, economic instability and inequality. Climate-related disasters such as droughts and floods, combined with rising global food prices due to pandemic shutdowns and disruptions from the Russia-Ukraine war, have escalated hunger crises in East and Southern Africa, it said. Oxfam warned that the global commitment to “zero hunger” by 2030 is becoming increasingly unattainable. It called on the international community, including the United Nations Security Council, to hold accountable those responsible for “starvation crimes” under international law. “To break the vicious cycle of food insecurity and conflict, global leaders must confront the root causes of conflict: colonial legacies, injustices, human rights abuses and inequalities – rather than offering superficial solutions,” Farr said. — Aljazeera

Russia releases man after 22 months

MOSCOW (AP): A Russian man convicted of discrediting the military after his daughter made a drawing criticizing Russia’s military actions in Ukraine was released from prison after serving 22 months, a group that monitors political detentions said.

Alexei Moskalayov was convicted in March 2023 on the basis of posts that he made on a social media site. The post came to authorities’ attention after his daughter, then age 13, made a drawing in school opposing the military operation. Moskalayov was sentenced to two years in prison, but he fled. He was arrested in Belarus a day later and extradited to Russia. A court later reduced his sentence to a year and 10 months.

The OVD-Info group, which reported his release, said that Moskalayov told it that agents of the Federal Security Service questioned other inmates in his unit before he was released and suggested they were looking for cause to file new charges against him. Since sending troops into Ukraine in February 2022, Russia has cracked down harshly on criticism of the military and the operation in Ukraine. Several prominent opponents of the fighting who were sentenced to lengthy prison terms — one of them to 25 years — were freed and sent out of the country in August in a widescale prisoner exchange with the West.

Worst drought in Southern Africa

JOHANNESBURG: Millions of people across Southern Africa are going hungry due to a historic drought, risking a full-scale humanitarian catastrophe, the United Nations has warned. Lesotho, Malawi, Namibia, Zambia, and Zimbabwe have all declared a state of national disaster in the past months as the drought has destroyed crops and livestock. Angola and Mozambique are also severely affected, the UN’s World Food Programme (WFP) said in a briefing, warning that the crisis is expected to deepen until the next harvests in March or April 2025.

“A historic drought – the worst food crisis yet – has devastated more than 27 million lives across the region,” WFP spokesperson Tomson Phiri said. “Some 21 million children are malnourished. “October in Southern Africa marks the start of the lean season, and each month is expected to be worse than the previous one until harvests next year in March and April. Crops have failed, livestock have perished, and children are lucky to receive one meal per day.”

Tens of millions of people in the region rely on small-scale agriculture, irrigated by rain, for their food and to make money to buy provisions. Aid agencies warned of a potential disaster late last year as the El Nino weather phenomenon led to below-average rainfall across the region. Its effects have been intensified by rising temperatures linked to climate change.

In July, a UN official said it was the worst drought to hit the region in a century. It has wiped out 70 percent of the harvest in Zambia and 80 percent in Zimbabwe, WFP’s acting regional director for Southern Africa, Lola Castro, said. The lack of rain has also slashed hydropower capacity in the region, leading to long electricity cuts, while Zimbabwe and Namibia have announced wildlife culls to relieve pressure on resources.

Authorities in Namibia and Zimbabwe have resorted to killing wildlife, including elephants, to provide meat for hungry people. Scientists say sub-Saharan Africa is one of the most vulnerable parts of the world to climate change because of its high dependency on rain-fed agriculture and natural resources. Millions of African livelihoods depend on the climate, while poor countries are unable to finance climate-resilience measures. Experts have also warned that climate change-induced droughts and irregular rainfall patterns are negatively affecting the yield, development, taste, and harvest periods of various crops. — Aljazeera

Ukraine denies supplying drones to Mali rebels

KYIV (BBC): Ukraine has denied allegations that it had supplied drones to rebels fighting against the Malian army and Russia-backed mercenaries. It comes after Paris-based Le Monde newspaper reported that Ukrainian drones were providing support for the Tuareg rebels “who are benefiting from discreet but decisive support from Kyiv”.

Mali’s junta-led government ended a long-running alliance with former colonial power France in 2022 in favour of Russia in a bid to tackle a years-long insurgency in the north. But it has been unable to quell the unrest and recently suffered heavy losses, alongside its Russian allies.

Mali and its neighbours Niger and Burkina Faso, where the military is also in charge, have since accused Kyiv of supporting terrorism in the Sahel after a Ukrainian official said earlier this year that the country had offered support to the rebels. But, Ukraine’s foreign ministry said in a

statement that the country “strongly rejects the accusations that have recently been released by the international media outlets about the alleged involvement of our state in the supply of UAVs [unmanned aerial vehicles] to the rebels in Mali”. It also denied allegations by Malian and Nigerian officials that Ukraine was arming, providing information and giving “support to the terrorist coalition”.

It called for an end to “spreading of the false information that repeats the fake narratives of the aggressor state Russia’s propaganda”. In late July, at least 84 Russia-backed fighters and 47 Malian soldiers were reportedly killed following days of clashes with Tuareg separatist rebels and fighters linked to al-Qaeda at Tinzaouten, in northern Mali. It was seen as the heaviest-ever African defeat for the Wagner mercenary group, which has since been renamed Corps Africa.

A spokesman for Kyiv’s

military intelligence service, Andriy Yusov, then said that the rebels in Mali had “received necessary information” to successfully carry out the attack. Le Monde newspaper reports that since Yusov’s statement, the Mali rebel commanders “have been forced to reluctantly acknowledge a co-operation they would have preferred to keep secret”. The paper says that the rebels have admitted having “links” with Kyiv, although “they were not forthcoming about the provenance of their drones”.

Mali cut diplomatic relations with Ukraine in August, in the wake of Yusov’s remarks, with a top official accusing Ukraine of violating the country’s sovereignty. Russia invaded Ukraine in 2022 and has been waging a devastating war since then. Facing isolation by Western countries because of the war, it has been seeking to gain influence in Africa by establishing political and security links, including in Mali.

Kenyan deputy president’s impeachment trial begins

NAIROBI (BBC): Kenya’s parliament has begun the final step to remove Deputy President Rigathi Gachagua from office. An overwhelming majority voted in the National Assembly last week to approve his impeachment, setting the stage for the two-day trial in the Senate that decides whether or not to oust him.

The deputy president faces 11 charges including corruption, inciting ethnic divisions and undermining government – all of which he denies. The row follows his recent fallout with President William Ruto, who has remained silent about the matter. Gachagua’s trial is being conducted before the full house of the Senate after it abandoned a process to set up an 11-member committee to investigate the charges.

The deputy president stood before the chamber for the charges to be read out to him as proceedings got under way – pleading not guilty to each one. Analysts expect the deputy president’s impeachment to be upheld as the ruling party senators are likely to be backed by those from the main opposition as happened when the the lower house voted on the case.

Later on Wednesday, evidence by the National Assembly against Gachagua, including any witnesses, will be introduced and examined for

three hours followed by another two hours of cross-examination. On Thursday, the trial will resume to deal with the evidence and witnesses from Gachagua’s side until late afternoon.

At the conclusion of the process in the evening, senators will debate the motion for about two hours and then take a vote – scheduled to happen on Thursday night from 20:30 local time. The Senate can decide to extend the process to Friday, the last day it can legally extend the matter. At least two-thirds of the 67 Senate members must approve the motion for Gachagua to be removed from office.

Should that happen and his impeachment stands, he would be barred from ever holding public office. He is expected to challenge the impeachment in the courts if it passes. The deputy president has made numerous unsuccessful attempts to stop the impeachment process, with at least 26 court cases having been filed so far. A judge ruled that the court would not interfere and said the Senate should proceed with its constitutional mandate.

And just before the process began on Wednesday, a three-judge bench also declined a similar request. Some of the grounds for Gachagua’s impeachment include accusations that he acquired assets worth 5.2bn Kenyan

shillings (\$40m; £31m) in the two years since he became deputy president – allegedly acquired through corrupt means. He has explained, including during his trial at the National Assembly, that most of the properties in question were from his late brother’s estate.

The deputy president is a wealthy businessman from the vote-rich central Mount Kenya region. In just five years, he rose from being a first-time MP to become the number two in Kenya’s leadership, after Ruto picked him as his running mate in the August 2022 election. At the time, he was battling corruption allegations in court which were later dropped after he came the deputy president.

His impeachment trial has dominated the discussions of many Kenyans and the media in recent weeks. Some see the high political drama that the matter has elicited as a distraction from the economic concerns of the majority of Kenyans struggling with the high cost of living. In June disgruntled Kenyans went to the streets in deadly protests that erupted over unpopular tax hikes, and which exposed a deep rift between Ruto and Gachagua. Gachagua now stands accused of undermining the work of the security agencies in the wake of remarks he made at the time blaming the intelligence agency.

Irregular border crossings decline as EU immigration policy stiffens

BRUSSELS: Detected irregular migration into the European Union fell by 42 percent to 166,000 in the first nine months of 2024 compared to the same period last year. The statistics suggesting a reduced flow in migration, released by the EU border agency Frontex, comes as the EU and several member states adopt harsher immigration stances amid pressure from the extreme right, which made significant headway in EU elections in the summer.

The EU experienced a significant decline in asylum seeker crossings on two major migration routes—the Central Mediterranean and the Western Balkans—in January–September, according to Frontex. The agency said nearly 17,000 individuals entered the EU through the Western Balkans, a 79 percent decrease year-on-year. Around 47,700 crossed the bloc’s border via the Central Mediterranean route, representing a 64 percent drop.

In contrast, border crossings via the Western African route doubled, with over 30,600 entries recorded in the year’s first nine months. The sharpest increase was recorded at the EU’s eastern land borders, particularly in

Poland, where nearly 13,200 crossings were detected, representing a 192 percent rise.

The drop in irregular migration comes as populist and nationalist political parties have gained ground across much of Europe, as demonstrated by their strong showings in EU elections over the summer. That is pushing many EU states to implement harsher policies. A group of 16 migrants boarded an Italian navy ship for Albania. It was the first such trip under Italian Prime Minister Giorgia Meloni’s controversial scheme to base migrants outside the EU while their asylum claims are processed.

Meloni’s right-wing government has also inked a deal with Tunisia, granting it aid in exchange for greater efforts to stop Italy-bound refugees who leave the North African country to cross the Mediterranean. Also, European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen announced plans to tighten legislation to boost the removal of those who fail to secure the right to stay in the EU.

“The EU’s migration policy can only be sustainable if those who do not have the right to stay in the EU are effectively

returned,” von der Leyen wrote in a letter sent to EU leaders. “However, only around 20 percent of third country nationals ordered to leave have actually returned,” she stated. The new law is to define obligations of returnees and streamline the return process, she wrote.

Poland and its Central European neighbour, the Czech Republic, called last week for EU restrictions that are tougher than those in the bloc’s new pact on migration and asylum, which is due to come into force in 2026. The rules, adopted in May, aim to share the responsibility for hosting asylum seekers across the 27 EU countries and to speed up the deportation of people deemed ineligible to stay.

The far-right governments of Hungary and the Netherlands have asked Brussels for an exemption from migration obligations. Poland’s centre-right government shocked many last week when it announced its plans to temporarily suspend the right to claim asylum. Warsaw said that the flow of migrants across its eastern border – which it accuses Belarus of encouraging as an element of hybrid warfare – is a security risk. — Aljazeera

Powerful Indian gangster pulling strings from behind bars

NEW DELHI (BBC): Canadian police made a sensational claim. They alleged at a press conference that agents of the Indian government were using “organised crime groups like the Bishnoi group” to target leaders of the pro-Khalistan movement, which calls for a separate Sikh homeland in India.

This was hours after both countries expelled top diplomats as tensions escalated over last year’s assassination of a Sikh separatist on Canadian soil. Delhi dismissed the allegations as “preposterous”, accusing PM Justin Trudeau of catering to Canada’s sizeable Sikh community for political gain. The Canadian police were referring to Lawrence Bishnoi, a 31-year-old gangster from India, now back in the spotlight domestically and internationally.

Indian police say his gang is allegedly linked to the killing of a prominent politician in Mumbai at the weekend – gunman shot dead 66-year-old Baba Siddique near his son’s office. Three suspects are in custody. An alleged aide of Bishnoi has posted on social media that the gang is behind the murder. Once among India’s most wanted, Bishnoi has been in prison since 2015, now held far from his native Punjab state in Gujarat.

Yet, the police believe his audacious influence endures. Bishnoi is the prime accused in the sensational murder of Sidhu Moose Wala, the popular Punjabi singer gunned down

near his village in October 2022. In 2018, Bishnoi gained notoriety for threatening Bollywood star Salman Khan, accusing him of allegedly poaching two blackbuck antelopes – a revered species for Rajasthan’s Bishnoi community to which Lawrence belongs.

When he was produced in a court in Jodhpur city, he openly told the waiting media: “Salman Khan will be killed here, in Jodhpur... Then he will come to know about our real identity.” Incidentally, Siddique, the murdered politician, was a close friend of the Bollywood star. In March last year, a news channel aired two interviews with Bishnoi from inside a Punjab jail, prompting an outraged high court to order an investigation. How a high-security inmate managed phone interviews from prison remains a mystery.

Federal investigators estimate Bishnoi continues to control a gang with 700 members across Punjab, Haryana, Rajasthan and Delhi, involved in extorting celebrities, smuggling drugs and weapons and carrying out targeted assassinations. His partner Goldy Brar, also a co-accused in the Moose Wala killing, runs the gang by remote control from Canada, say the police. Bishnoi faces more than 30 cases, with 19 currently being tried in court. “He runs his gang seamlessly from prison without needing to co-ordinate everything,” says Gurmeet Chauhan, a

senior officer in Punjab’s anti-gangster task force. “Unlike other gangsters confined to a region, he thinks big.”

Bishnoi was born into affluence. His family is among the wealthiest in their village in Punjab, living in a spacious bungalow surrounded by more than 100 acres of land. His father, a former policeman, eventually gave up his job to take care of the family land, while his mother is a homemaker. The couple raised two sons, Lawrence and Anmol – both now prime suspects in Moose Wala’s killing. Ramesh Bishnoi, a relative, told Jupinderjit Singh, a journalist and author of Who Killed Moose Wala, that Lawrence was named after a British officer Henry Montgomery Lawrence, founder of the prestigious Lawrence School in the hill town of Sanawar.

Lawrence Bishnoi himself attended a convent school, riding his own bike by the eighth grade and wearing expensive shoes – luxuries unheard of for most. Known for quietly helping local children in need, he was an introverted figure with undeniable influence, Mr Singh says. After finishing school in 2008, he moved to a college in Chandigarh, quickly immersing himself in student politics in the city. “He had money, style and guts,” a Chandigarh police officer told Mr Singh, explaining how easily Bishnoi attracted followers. He joined a student organisation, ran for

student elections and lost – a defeat he took personally.

Police records say this turning point nudged him closer to a world of violence as he mingled with some former student leaders-turned-criminals. Soon, police say, Bishnoi’s name was tied to brawls, arson and gunfire incidents on campus. Punjab, Bishnoi’s home state, is overrun with gangs that fuel drugs and weapon smuggling, extortion and the local film and music industry. A cash-driven economy, bolstered by drugs, real estate and illegal liquor sales, has fuelled this rise, creating an ecosystem that blends crime with Punjabi pop culture, many say.

Punjab’s gangsters don’t enter the underworld for wealth alone – they crave notoriety, a deep-seated desire to “be somebody”, according to Mr Singh. This twisted pursuit of fame finds roots in feudal, patriarchal culture. Social media amplifies it, with many gangsters showcasing their lives online. They flaunt their lifestyles on social media, where crime is often seen as a path to quick money and glamour. This has lured retired sportsmen and young recruits across Punjab to the dark side.

By September, police reported dismantling more than 500 gangs and arresting more than 1,400 gangsters since mid-2021. In clashes with the police, 16 gangsters had been killed and over 80 wounded, while three officers lost their lives and 26 more were injured.

Horrific Israeli bombing of Al-Aqsa Hospital

GAZA: Amani Madi still can’t believe she and her family survived the bombing that hit Al-Aqsa Martyrs Hospital in the middle of the night. In the open space where the attack on displaced people’s tents took place, the smell of smoke prevails, and burned cans and food are scattered on the ground among charred blankets and clothes.

People wander back and forth. Most of them used to live in the tents, and they are trying to find anything left behind by the blaze that destroyed their flimsy homes. The attack tore through the makeshift camp set up by displaced people in the hospital’s courtyard, killing at least four people and injuring at least 40. “It was 1:10am when a massive explosion shook everything,” Madi, a 37-year-old mother of six, recalls as she sits in the remains of her burned tent. “I looked out and saw flames devouring the tents next to ours,” Madi says. “My husband and I carried the kids and ran towards the emergency building.

“At the entrance, I saw

my five-year-old son, who was screaming, was bleeding. I took him to the doctors to discover that he had shrapnel in his stomach.” The doctors were able to bandage Ahmed up but had to leave the shrapnel where it had hit him, explaining to Madi that it would require delicate surgery to remove, a surgery that is not possible given the badly damaged Gaza medical sector.

Many Palestinians displaced multiple times end up at schools and hospitals, setting up tents again and again, using whatever materials they can find, clustering close together due to a lack of space. Israel’s bombs spread fire through the crowded tents within minutes as Civil Defence workers struggled to put it out with what limited capabilities they had. “People – women, men and children – were running away from the spreading fire, screaming,” Madi says. “Some of them were still burning, their bodies on fire as they ran. Terrifying, horrific, ... unbelievable.

“Where are we supposed to go? It’s nearly winter. Is

there no one to stop this holocaust against us?” Madi’s tent was next to Jamalati Wadi’s tent, which was practically at the centre of the bombing. Wadi, 43, says: “It was a miracle we survived, me and my seven daughters.” “I woke them up, screaming, as our flaming tent was falling on our heads.

“My neighbour, her son and her husband were burned to death. No one could save them,” she says, crying bitterly. Like many others, Wadi has been forced to flee numerous times, starting in Shujayea, then to Rafah, Nuseirat and Khan Younis before seeking refuge at Al-Aqsa Hospital. “Now we’re in the streets again, but I won’t stay here after this. There’s nowhere safe. “Hospitals and schools are at the forefront of Israeli targeting. What have we done to deserve this?”

Maha Al-Sarsak, 17, lives in a tent adjacent to the ones that burned. Her family’s tent was not affected, but she witnessed the first moments of the explosion and fire. Al-Sarsak walks through the carnage

left behind by the bombing, crying. She has been displaced at Al-Aqsa with her family for nine months. After the hospital grounds were targeted numerous times, she says, she stopped sleeping at night for fear of another Israeli bombing.

“I was awake. What I feared happened ... for the seventh time. I heard the strike from the direction of the tents opposite us. I screamed for my mother and my [eight] siblings, and we ran out towards the hospital building.” “I saw our neighbour Umm Shaaban [Alaa Al-Dalu, 37] completely burned and her body charred along with her son [Shaaban, 20]. “When they were moving the victims from there, I saw a leg fall to the ground,” Al-Sarsak adds as she cries. “They said the south is safe, but there is no safety. People were burned alive, and we spent a very terrifying night. Every time the hospital is targeted, we’re terrified,” Al-Sarsak says. “But last night was the most terrifying. The fire ate the tents and people’s bodies in moments. Oh, God, have mercy.” — Aljazeera

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A vision for health tech that is available to all

TECHNICAL innovation and human health have – sometimes literally – been in lockstep for millennia. An impressive example can be found in Cairo's National Museum of Egyptian Civilisation. There, visitors can see one of the world's oldest prosthetics – a wooden toe dated back as far as 950BC that archaeologists believe helped an ancient noblewoman get around. Far from being a primitive aid, the hardwood toe's advanced craftsmanship shows it was made to be robust, practical and comfortable.

Many of the 6,500 exhibitors from over 180 countries who are in Dubai for this year's Gitex – the Middle East's longest-running technology show – are walking much the same path, developing cutting-edge science that has the potential to improve millions of people's quality of life.

Korean engineers at tech company LetinAR are exhibiting glasses that can deliver real-time patient information to help with complicated surgery. Another Korean firm, Mandro, has developed an exoskeleton glove that can restore grip strength for those who may have lost the use of their hands through chronic arthritis. Dubai-based Xpanceo's smart lenses can detect early signs of glaucoma, resolve colour blindness and myopia, and monitor important health indicators, such as blood pressure.

The ingenuity on display is impressive, but a perennial issue with such health technology remains: how can we ensure that as many people as possible have access to such devices? It is in companies' interest to have their product reach as many customers as possible – Xpanceo says a year's supply of its smart lenses is expected to cost about as much as an iPhone – but many in middle and lower-income countries would still struggle to afford such health solutions.

Certainly, there are ways to incentivise companies and manufacturers into reducing costs for healthcare providers and individuals. Direct subsidies and tax incentives for businesses that develop or implement affordable health technologies is one way for governments to play their part.

Public-private partnerships between public and private sectors can be an efficient way of funding research and development into affordable technologies.

Indeed, the UAE has a considerable track record of supporting innovative healthcare ideas.

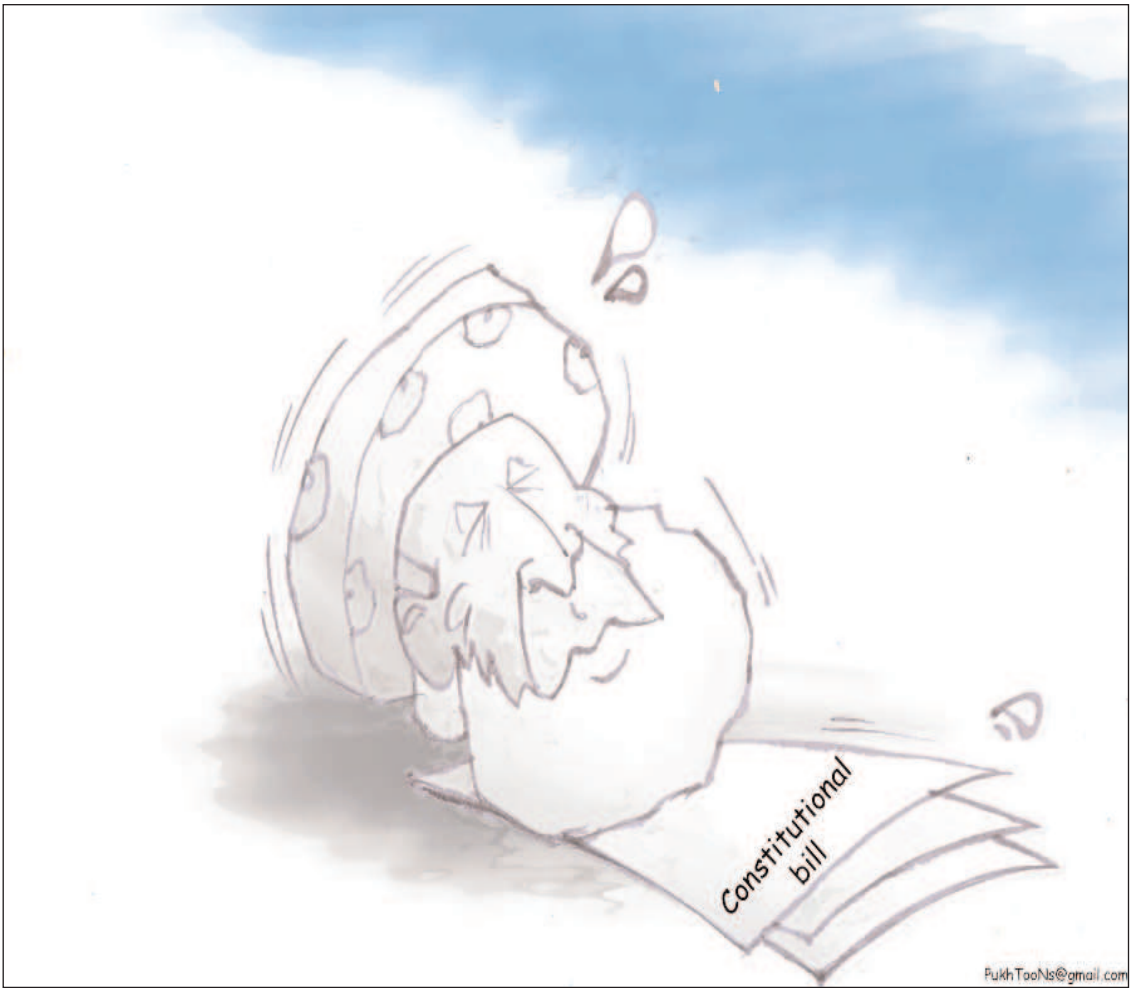
But there is a vast reservoir of smart, accessible and affordable health solutions coming from a different part of the tech market: the developing world. One approach has been called frugal innovation. This is when device designs and materials are re-engineered to be simpler and sustainable, often making use of locally available materials to make them cheaper to buy and operate.

From using cheap mosquito net mesh for hernia repairs or special drill covers that allow ordinary power tools to be used safely for surgery, there is no shortage of solutions that are both ingenious and affordable. The Tata Swach water purifier developed in India uses processed rice husk to provide clean water without the need for electricity. Even some manufacturers in the developed world have got in on the act – a good example is GE's MAC 400, a handheld ECG machine that costs about \$800 and has dramatically cut the cost of ECG scans in developing nations.

Such ingenuity and entrepreneurship, coupled with more generic technologies, open-source health tech platforms and meaningful business co-operation can not only complement even the most cutting-edge technology on display at Gitex, it could bring life-changing health solutions to more people than ever. As Gitex brings together the most innovative elements of technology, improving people's lives remains a top priority.

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Genocide rages on, but it's business as usual at the neoliberal university

Somdeep Sen

ISRAEL'S genocide in Gaza continues without an end in sight. Settler violence and frequent military raids have left Palestinian communities in the occupied West Bank fearing a similar fate. Meanwhile, Lebanon has become a new battleground where dozens of civilians are killed each day.

As a result, with the beginning of a new academic year, protests in support of Palestinians and against Israeli aggression across the region have returned to university campuses in the United States.

Once again, student protesters are calling for a ceasefire and an end to occupation, and to achieve these goals, they are asking their institutions to urgently divest from Israel.

In the spring, university leaders made it clear that they would not negotiate with Palestine solidarity activists. Rather than listening to their students, they invited the police on campus to violently dismantle their encampments. Dozens of students faced censure, suspension and even criminal charges for demanding that their institutions end their complicity in Israel's war crimes and illegal occupation of Palestinian territory.

When protests returned to campus in September, it became apparent that there has not been a change in the position of university leaders over the summer.

Rather than reflecting on their actions that objectively harmed students and stifled their right to free speech and assembly, most of them seem to have spent the summer devising new strategies and campus policies to better suppress protests and minimise their impact on the everyday function of their institutions.

Take New York City's Columbia University.

After President Minouche Shafik's resignation in mid-August over her dismal handling of the Gaza solidarity encampments, the university appears to be determined to put a lid on things this fall.

Access to campus is now limited to individuals with university IDs and prearranged visitors. There are extra private security officers standing guard at various entry points. Green spaces on campus have been fenced off, and encampments are prohibited.

The university's protest guidelines have also been revised. They now require that the university receive prior notification "of any scheduled protests". The guidelines also prohibit any protests that "pose a genuine threat of harassment" or "substantially inhibit the primary purposes" of university space.

The Columbia University-affiliated Barnard College, meanwhile, put out new guide-

lines that prohibit faculty from putting up signs on their office doors "supporting a geopolitical viewpoint or perspective". They are also required to speak about the opposing perspective (ie both sides) if they choose to publicly express support for a particular political perspective.

As it would be expected in light of these new policies and guidelines, the fall semester began with New York City police officers arresting two Columbia student protesters who were at a campus demonstration calling for the university to divest from companies that have ties to Israel. The students were "held on suspicion of misdemeanours", and they received tickets "ordering their appearance to court". On the eve of the first anniversary of the October 7, 2023 attacks on Israel and the start of the war in Gaza, Columbia Law School administrators sent an email to faculty instructing them to call campus police on students if they try to disrupt classes.

Another New York City institution, New York University (NYU), took similar steps to curb campus activism. In a clear move to stifle pro-Palestinian speech, for example, it announced that it now considers "Zionist" a protected identity, like race, national origin or gender identity. This means that activists who criticise Zionism may be considered to be in violation of NYU's nondiscrimination and antiharassment policy.

Across the country, the leaders of the University of California (UC) system have required that chancellors of all UC schools strictly enforce a "zero tolerance" policy against "encampments, protests that block pathways and masking that shields identities".

The California State University (CSU) system has implemented new campus policies seemingly geared towards curbing on-campus activism. Disruption of someone's speech, camping, overnight demonstrations, building of temporary structures, barricades and barriers, concealment of identity, and occupation of a building or facility are now prohibited at CSU schools.

In mid-September, 10 people, including two University of California-Irvine professors and four students, received the misdemeanour charge of "failing to disperse" for their participation in a Palestine solidarity protest on campus in the spring.

The Council of University of California Faculty Associations said UC administrators – in violation of state labour law – have threatened faculty "for teaching about the history of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict and launched disci-

plinary proceedings against faculty for supporting on-campus student encampments as well as backing a strike by student academic workers this spring".

Yale University has similarly updated its "free expression policies" over the summer. Now all outdoor events have to end by 11pm, and it is prohibited to sleep outdoors or hold events on the Cross Campus quad. Those found to be in violation of these charges could face "dispersal, disciplinary action or criminal charges".

For the 2024-2025 academic year, the University of Pennsylvania has also published a set of "Temporary Standards and Procedures for Campus Events and Demonstrations". This includes restrictions on amplified sound (including "bullhorns, musical instruments, and amplified speakers"). Overnight encampments and demonstrations are not permitted. "Structures, walls, barriers, sculptures, or other objects on University property" built without permission from the vice provost of university life are to be removed immediately. It is also prohibited to climb on university statues and sculptures or cover them "with any material".

At the University of Michigan, 45 protesters held a "die-in" demonstration in late August. They were sitting on the ground holding Palestinian flags and signs with pictures of Palestinians killed by the Israeli military. The police dispersed the protest so violently that two people had to be hospitalised.

Recently, Maura Finkelstein, who had been working as a professor of anthropology at Muhlenberg College in Pennsylvania for nine years, became the first tenured professor to be fired for her pro-Palestine stance. Specifically, her employment was terminated for sharing a post by Palestinian poet Remi Kanazi "calling for the shunning of Zionist ideology and its supporters".

Of course, nontenured professors and students have been the ones who are most vulnerable to this latest round of crackdowns on pro-Palestine speech at US universities.

Cornell University doctoral student Momodou Taal, a Gambia-born citizen of the United Kingdom, for example, was threatened with academic suspension and deportation for participating in a demonstration calling for the university to divest from companies selling weapons to Israel. After significant pressure, the university eventually allowed Taal to remain an enrolled student, albeit with some restrictions, allowing him to keep his visa and submit his dissertation.

These new policies and regulations designed to curb pro-Palestinian speech, however, were not developed entirely organically by university leaders.

Wealthy alumni and donors have long been pressuring university administrators to take steps to silence Palestinian solidarity activism on campus for good. Lawmakers have also threatened to revoke accreditation and pull federal funding from US universities who allow Palestine solidarity protests.

University leaders' unwillingness to engage with the substantive demands of campus activists is not just about the finances of these institutions. It is also a reflection of the type of leaders that tend to run the neoliberal university. They are hired, not to be educators, but managers. And they believe their job is to ensure that the commodity (ie higher education) is supplied to the paying clients (ie students). They have little interest in the other equality, if not more crucial, functions of these institutions, such as their role as vectors of social change and progress.

So, from their perspective, the demands from students and faculty that their institutions divest from a rogue state committing genocide are just a disruption to what the neoliberal university is meant to do. Their immediate instinct is to find a way to manage away this disruption.

But with more than 42,000 Palestinians killed and civilian infrastructure reduced to rubble in Gaza, the Palestinians in the West Bank facing increasing violence at the hands of the Israeli military and settlers alike, war now raging across Lebanon, and the "liberal democratic" West's global standing in tatters in light of its insistence on funding and defending this carnage, it cannot be business as usual at the neoliberal university.

Students and faculty will continue to demand change and to insist that this change starts within their own institutions. The demands for justice in Palestine and an end to Western universities' complicity in Israel's crimes cannot be erased with policies aimed at stifling free speech and protest on campuses. University leaders must recognise that higher education institutions have always been crucibles of social change, and act accordingly.

They must ensure that the institutions they represent take a moral stand against the ongoing genocide.

Their refusal to do so may save their jobs and funding in the short term, but in the long term, it will put them on the wrong side of history and further strengthen the disastrous perception that US higher education today is nothing but a money-making business.

The Gulf states' role in shaping Middle Eastern stability

Dr. Turki Faisal Al-Rasheed

THE Middle East, characterized by a rich mosaic of cultures, religions and historical narratives, stands at a pivotal crossroads. The rising crises and complex conflicts have underscored the region's nuanced landscape of peace and warfare. As tensions ebb and flow, the Gulf states are at the forefront, grappling with the repercussions of regional instability while striving for sustainable solutions.

For more than 80 years, the Middle East has been shaped by the influence of the American government, state corporations and special interest groups, primarily focused on fostering conflict through various means. These efforts include direct military interventions, weaponizing food and manipulating financial instruments to ensnare nations in debt. The consequences of these actions are evident today.

One notable historical moment is the March 1949 coup in Syria, orchestrated by Army chief Husni Al-Za'im, which marked the first military coup in the country's modern history. This coup received support from the US government after the previous administration refused to sign a truce with Israel or endorse a pipeline agreement advantageous to the Saudi-American company, Aramco.

The Middle East has long been a battleground influenced by both internal strife and external pressures, often resulting in the entrenchment of corrupt military regimes. This situation has facilitated the rise of extremist groups and drawn global powers into the fray, complicating the prospect of peace. The overarching challenge remains the inability to meet the basic human needs of the populace.

In this environment, Gulf nations such as Saudi Arabia, the UAE and Qatar must navigate a delicate balance between their national interests and regional dynamics. Ongoing tensions with Iran, the humanitarian crisis in Yemen and the aftermath of the so-called Arab Spring compel these countries to reassess their foreign policies and security strategies, prioritizing domestic sustainability over alignment with American agendas.

Historical events, such as the US-backed overthrow of Iranian Prime Minister Mohammed Mosaddegh and the military coup against King Farouk of Egypt, exemplify the documented external involvement that has shaped the current state of the Middle East.

Despite the prevailing challenges, the potential for peace persists, partly due to the influence of special interest groups and the far-right Netanyahu government in Israel. Recent diplomatic efforts by Saudi Arabia, including outreach to Iran and mediation in regional conflicts, indicate a possible shift toward collaboration. Additionally, Gulf countries are increasingly focusing on economic diversification and technological innovation, which could serve as a foundation for stability.

By fostering economic interdependence, these nations can diminish incentives for conflict and nurture an environment conducive to peace. Establishing regional frameworks to tackle shared challenges, such as climate change and economic development, can further enhance cooperation.

Nevertheless, the threat of war looms large. The risk of existing conflicts escalating is significant, particularly if key players like Israel and Iran persist in their proxy confrontations.

Heightened military posturing and aggressive rhetoric among various factions raise concerns about potential miscalculations leading to broader conflicts.

Should tensions continue to rise, the Gulf countries may find themselves embroiled in larger confrontations, jeopardizing their security and economic stability.

The repercussions of such scenarios would

extend beyond the region, potentially impacting global oil markets and international relations. The role of external powers, notably the US and Russia, will be critical in determining whether these conflicts can be contained or spiral out of control.

The international community plays a vital role in shaping the future of the Middle East. Organizations like the UN and regional bodies must actively engage in diplomatic efforts to mediate conflicts and facilitate dialogue. International law, particularly concerning human rights and humanitarian issues, should guide interventions and support sustainable resolutions.

However, the effectiveness of the international community has often come under scrutiny. The lack of decisive action in response to humanitarian crises and the failure to hold violators of international law accountable raise concerns about existing frameworks. Moving forward, it is imperative to strengthen these mechanisms to effectively address the region's complexities.

Saudi Arabia's ongoing commitment to fostering stability in the Middle East is commendable. As a regional power, it has proactively sought to mitigate conflicts and encourage dialogue among rival factions. The Kingdom's Vision 2030 initiative reflects its dedication to economic diversification and social reform, presenting a potential model for other nations in the region.

Moreover, Saudi Arabia's leadership in initiatives such as the Gulf Cooperation Council and its involvement in regional dialogues underscore its commitment to a peaceful Middle East. By championing diplomacy and collaboration, the Kingdom can help guide the region away from war and toward a more cooperative future.

Looking ahead, the fate of the Middle East hinges on the ability of regional and international actors to navigate the fragile balance between peace and war. While the opportunities for peace are promising, they are accompanied by significant challenges. The threat of war remains a pressing concern, exacerbated by ongoing conflicts and external influences.

To cultivate a stable environment, it is crucial for Gulf countries to persist in their diplomatic efforts, economic cooperation and conflict resolution initiatives. The international community must also play an active role in supporting these endeavors, ensuring that actions align with the principles of international law.

Understanding the roots of conflict necessitates examining the financial motivations behind them. The enduring Arab-Israeli conflict has largely benefited those profiting from warfare and disaster, particularly the American military-industrial complex – a sentiment echoed by President Dwight Eisenhower. Analyzing who gains financially from these conflicts is essential to comprehending their complexities.

Furthermore, the detrimental effects of cutthroat capitalism and corporate interests extend beyond Western nations, impacting the global landscape. While many endure the hardships resulting from these policies, a select few continue to amass wealth and power. Unfortunately, the focus often remains on the symptoms of conflict rather than addressing their root causes.

In conclusion, the Middle East is a region of profound contradictions, where the potential for peace coexists with the persistent threat of war. The Gulf countries, as pivotal players in this dynamic, have a unique opportunity to lead the way toward a more stable and peaceful future. By embracing dialogue, cooperation and sustainable development, they can shift the region's narrative from one of conflict to one of hope and resilience. The choice between war and peace lies within their reach, and the time to act is now.

— Arab News

Trump embraces the ‘weave,’ while Harris heads to Fox

DONALD Trump is trying to bob and weave his way back to power while Kamala Harris is finally daring to ditch the script as Democrats fret about her campaign.

The Republican and Democratic nominees on Tuesday offered voters an unusually self-reflective glimpse into their characters as they pursued dwindling bands of undecided voters in their neck-and-neck race that's coming down to the wire.

Trump, fresh off a bizarre half-hour at a town hall on Monday when he dined on stage to his campaign soundtrack, made a clumsy attempt to repair his damaged standing among female voters. "I'm the father of IVF," said the former president whose conservative Supreme Court majority unleashed chaos in reproductive health care.

And in a testy appearance at the Economic Club of Chicago, he made a virtue of his frequent incoherence, styling it as a sophisticated "weave" of multiple ideas that only a political genius would attempt. And he tried a fresh reinvention of history over his attempt to steal the 2020 election, declaring that his crowd in Washington on January 6, 2021, was infused with "love and peace."

Harris faces some tough questions

Harris also sought a second chance among a key voting bloc that is cool on her campaign. As she seeks to become the first Black woman president, she courted Black male voters who were last week rebuked by former President Barack Obama for flirting with Trump. In an interview with radio host Charlamagne Tha God, the vice president further sharpened her attacks

on her rival, branding him as "weak" because he cozies up to dictators and agreeing with the host that his political creed equated to "fascism."

While Trump flaunted his rambling rhetorical style, Harris rejected suggestions she's too scripted. "That would be called discipline," Harris said in the radio interview.

But as Democrats panic about Trump's possible return to the White House, Harris is starting to embrace more spontaneous events.

She took the rare step of answering questions in the town-hall style radio program — and got some tough ones about her commitment to the Black church and Black voters' economic problems. On Wednesday, Harris will venture into the lion's den on Fox News hoping to reach another important group of voters. The appearance on the pro-Trump network is part of her attempt to give Republicans disaffected with the ex-president a reason to vote Democrat.

With Trump trying to repair his deficit among women and Harris belatedly trying to shore up support among Black men, the battle for the world's most powerful political job is looking less like a test of strength than a struggle between two candidates who know mitigating their weaknesses may be the key to victory.

With swing-state polls deadlocked, the election could come down to a few thousand votes in a handful of battlegrounds, leaving both Harris and Trump trawling for people who agree with them but who often don't vote.

Stunning scenes in Georgia

This election has been a tale of unexpected events, featuring a convicted felon

Stephen Collinson

who survived two assassination attempts, an aging president who ditched his bid for a second term a few months before Election Day, and a vice president handed an 11th hour mission to save the White House from a rival who Democrats see as a wannabe tyrant.

But the extraordinary stakes of what lies ahead — and the power of democracy — were laid bare on Tuesday in the most emphatic way as over 300,000 voters in the key battleground of Georgia showed up on the first day of early voting and broke a record. In recent races in the Peach State, heavy turnout would be a good sign for Democrats. But despite Trump's insistence that all voting should take place on Election Day, the GOP has been pleading with its voters to turn up early, so it's too soon to draw any conclusions about who is showing up.

Gabriel Sterling — the chief operating officer for Georgia's secretary of state, who played a key role in debunking Trump's election falsehoods four years ago — argued that democracy was alive and well in his state. "For those that claimed Georgia election laws were Jim Crow 2.0 and those that say democracy is dying...the voters of Georgia would like to have a word," he said.

In Chicago, Trump demonstrated exactly what he would bring to the Oval Office in a second term, promising an aggressive program to punish countries and companies with a draconian regime of tariffs.

He also offered a reminder of his wild years as president. He was imperious to facts, routinely ignored economic logic, and

showed himself to be steeped in personal grievances and conspiracy theories.

But Trump also showed why he is so compelling to so many voters who believe they have been left behind by an economy run by corporate elites for their own benefit. He posed as a proud populist and made his interviewer, John Micklethwait, the top editor of Bloomberg News, into an avatar of the elite economic establishment. When the British-born journalist said it was "simple mathematics" that tariffs would increase costs for companies and consumers, Trump went on the attack, saying, "You've been wrong all your life on this stuff."

Trump also again refused to disown Russian President Vladimir Putin, to whom he often deferred in office. Asked about Bob Woodward's reporting that he'd spoken to the autocrat multiple times since leaving the White House, Trump said, "I don't comment on that. But I will tell you that if I did it's a smart thing."

The interview was a classic example of how Trump makes a mockery of truth and has shattered traditional election conventions.

He piled up a torrent of falsehoods and digressions that made him impossible to pin down, effectively escaping any kind of accountability.

Later, Trump recorded a Fox News town hall with female voters that will air in full on Wednesday. "I'm the father of IVF, so I want to hear this question," Trump said during the event taped in Georgia. He added: "We really are the party for IVF. We want fertilization, and it's all the way, and the Democrats tried to attack us on it, and we're out there on IVF, even more than them."

So, we're totally in favor."

Trump has previously proposed making the government or insurance companies pay for IVF treatments — without specifying how. But Harris and the Democrats have been warning that a GOP victory next month would threaten IVF treatments and other reproductive rights in the wake of the Supreme Court's overturning of the constitutional right to an abortion.

Trump trails Harris among female voters in most polls and badly needs to narrow that gender gap with 20 days to go.

Harris makes belated bid to win Black men

The vice president faces similar challenges among Black men. While this is a cohort that has generally voted for Democrats, there have been signs of erosion in recent cycles — a trend Trump has been working to advance.

But Harris hit back on Charlamagne Tha God's "The Breakfast Club," saying that Black voters need to think carefully about the future.

"By voting in this election, you have two choices, or you don't vote, but you have two choices if you do and it's two very different visions for our nation," Harris said, warning as she often does that another Trump presidency would "take us backward."

And she went further than she has before in categorizing the threat she sees personified by the ex-president, who over the weekend suggested turning the military against "enemies from within." The show's host said that one choice represented by Trump is "fascism," adding, "Why can't we just say it?"

Harris replied: "Yes, we can say that."

— CNN

A blueprint for survival

HUMANITY is facing an unprecedented ecological crisis driven by climate change. Record rise in temperatures in recent years has led to oceans warming, rising sea levels and extreme weather events. Nearly 1 million species are at risk of extinction, while land degradation and food system failures are contributing to widespread hunger and forced migration.

As the ecological crisis intensifies, its impacts are felt most sharply by developing countries, which bear the brunt of environmental degradation, food insecurity and mass displacement, yet have fewer resources to adapt. Equitable solutions are essential for a fair ecological transition, and China — standing as the world's largest developing nation and a key actor in global governance — offers a compelling model with its vision of "ecological civilization".

This vision seeks harmony between humans and nature, emphasizing a development model that prioritizes environmental protection and sustainable growth. China's vision of ecological civilization is not merely an environmental agenda but a whole civilizational transformation grounded in collective well-being, social justice and environmental stewardship.

China's journey toward ecological civilization comprises at least four core, interlinked pillars: a clean energy revolution, a sustainable land management revolution, a green urban revolution, and stronger leadership in global environmental governance. These elements not only illustrate China's approach to addressing its ecological challenges but also underscore the potential of State-led interventions in driving impactful environmental outcomes, considering that the global ecological crisis is mainly a consequence of unrestrained capitalism and unchecked markets. China's clean energy revolution, launched with the 2005 Renewable Energy Law and accelerated through its ambitious five-year plans, has transformed it into a global leader in renewable energy. By 2009, China had already become the top investor in sustainable energy technology, and by 2015, it was the world's largest producer of solar, wind, and hydroelectric power. This leadership has drastically driven down global costs, with solar panel prices halving in 2024 alone. Today, China's installed renewable capacity stands unmatched at 1,453 gigawatts, as compared with the US capacity of 388 gigawatts as the second leading country.

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by 2015, it was the world's largest producer of solar, wind, and hydroelectric power. This leadership has drastically driven down global costs, with solar panel prices halving in 2024 alone. Today, China's installed renewable capacity stands unmatched at 1,453 gigawatts, as compared with the US capacity of 388 gigawatts as the second leading country. Moreover, China has achieved substantial efficiency gains, cutting energy and carbon intensity significantly.

China is ramping up its focus on green agriculture and conservation, positioning itself as a leader in sustainable land management. Beyond agriculture, China's commitment to reforestation and parkland expansion is notable. Forest cover rose from 16.7 percent in 1990 to 23.6 percent in 2021, marking the world's largest net gain, and parkland has expanded dramatically to 673,000 hectares by 2022 as part of the country's "Beautiful China" initiative.

China's vision of ecological civilization

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China has launched the Green Silk Road Envoys Program to foster global sustainability, and expanded its green vision globally, advocating for biodiversity protection and climate resilience.

The Second Belt and Road Forum for International Cooperation held in 2019 in Beijing established green investment principles and members were invited to join the initiatives such as the International Green Development Coalition, the Sustainable Cities Alliance, the South-South Cooperation Initiative on Climate Change, the Environmental Technology Exchange and Transfer Center, the Environmental Big Data Platform and the Green Investment Fund. Also central to the Green Belt and Road Initiative is green finance, with China becoming a global leader in green bonds and credits. The Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank, launched in 2016, funds these efforts, promoting balanced development and environmental sustainability.

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Starmer should be courageous despite bumpy first 100 days

SATURDAY was the 100th day since the UK Labour Party, under the leadership of Keir Starmer, entered 10 Downing Street to end 14 years of chaotic Conservative Party rule that had eroded the country's reputation and the standing of its political class and its institutions around the world.

Yet, even before Labour under Starmer won a landslide election victory in July, shadows of doubt were beginning to encircle everything that it touched or could touch in an attempt to stabilize the country and usher in a new vision. It sought to reboot an austerity-hit state, compounded by a poorly thought through Brexit, which severed Britain's economic, social and political ties from the EU. It was like the country had suddenly woken up to find itself on the margins and out in the cold under a dysfunctional Conservative Party that was lurching further and further to the right, entrenching a "me-first" approach to running the country and its relationships with its neighbors.

Even outside the UK, the vibes on social and traditional media were skeptical. Once, during an interview with a Middle Eastern channel, I nearly got convinced by the journalist's

line of questioning that Starmer's government would fall before the end of its first year in power, or even before the end of its first 100 days.

Inside Britain, instead of rejoicing at the new government and the prospect of hitting the restart button, many people have maintained a nonchalant air of skepticism, even a malaise about what Labour can potentially achieve and whether or not it will drive the change that the country has craved for years.

The dilemma faced by the new prime minister is an age-old one. It is also faced by most Western democracies, whether they are led by the left, the center, the right, the populists or the extreme right. You cannot keep on shrinking the state and believing that a self-regulating private sector will deliver unsupervised, accountable leadership that meets the complex web of society's expectations and demands.

In a world that is more in transition than ever, the appeal of the welfare state in Western society has never been clearer. Yet, no citizen on the left or the right believes in paying more taxes to cater for those needs in a climate of scarcity and economic uncertainty.

Labour wanted to hit the ground running. It hoped to

Mohamed Chebaro

present in government a project that could deliver high investment and a growing economy, coupled with high productivity and certainty that could limit inequality and social division, while increasing security and safety. It also aimed to provide housing, access to transport, education, health and social care, as well as a ladder to climb the stairs of personal prosperity through more training and employment.

Instead, while trying to explain the conditions of the state it inherited, the new government has indirectly hurt itself with its often gloomy but realistic rhetoric about the dire state of the economy and public services. And just as it was positioning itself to unveil its reform projects, Starmer's government was hit by the summer riots that were fueled by racism and divisions and which bore all the hallmarks of the extreme right.

Just as the government then tried to catch its breath, stories about freebies and cronyism piled up. These added to some unpopular announcements, such as the scrapping of the winter fuel allowance for pensioners and the abandonment of a planned cap on social care bills, as well as voting to retain the two-

child limit on social benefit payments, all as a means to balance the books.

Many voters in Britain, and I am one of them, believe that Starmer and the Labour Party were elected because the country needed fresh thinking and more plausible ideas. Away from the right-wing narratives that cannot be missed in today's UK, most people want Labour to succeed, as the country cannot afford five more wasted years. The new government has a license to be innovative and bold, especially as it is backed by a large majority in Parliament.

Starmer and his government are right to be frank and open about the dilapidated state of the country they inherited, but equally they should be courageous in revealing their vision without fearing being labeled as "lefties," "socialists" or "pro-Europe." The biggest harm that plagues political discourses today — and maybe stunts many policy ideas before they even become policies — are the near-immediate court martials they get subjected to in the social media realm. The political philosophies, ethics and values that could and should underpin any legislation or policy rarely stand the test of focus groups or political chat shows.

In this world plagued by

misinformation, fake news and "multiple truths," have we become superficial consumers of whatever opinion is expressed in often sensationalist soundbites at the expense of a deeper, multilayered approach to what is right and what is wrong? This has been eroding trust in politicians, institutions and any actor that might espouse an idea that some of us might deem alien, just because it has earned no traction in terms of the number of "thumbs up" on our social media feeds.

Despite its bumpy start, Starmer's new government should worry less about being attacked for raising taxes if raising taxes is the way to serve society and meet its aspirations of law and order, improved healthcare and education, economic growth and prosperity. A state that retains its empathy and fights poverty and dispossession will not cancel out its commitment to opening new horizons for investment, development and growth.

Starmer is likely to remain in Downing Street for at least five years and he must not tire of persuading both the converted and the skeptics about his true mettle and what his government stands for: the country and its people, despite all the adversities and challenges it inherited.

Mariam Al Mheiri

of climate, food and agriculture. The Cop28 Declaration on Sustainable Agriculture, Resilient Food Systems and Climate Action was endorsed by 160 nations, representing more than 80 per cent of the global agricultural gross domestic product, 70 per cent of the world's farmers, and 80 per cent of agriculture-related emissions.

The UAE, recognising the urgency of addressing food security, has formed key global partnerships aimed at driving sustainable agricultural practices. One such collaboration, launched at Cop28 with the Gates Foundation and CGIAR, seeks to make farmers more resilient to climate shocks and contribute to global food security. This partnership, a \$200 million initiative over four years, uses innovative

technologies — such as AI and desert farming techniques — to help smallholder farmers adapt to climate change, with a focus on regions in the Global South where the need is most critical.

Through this partnership, the UAE will tackle critical challenges such as pest migration and infestations, which are expected to become more frequent due to climate change. The initiative will also focus on developing and testing innovative farming techniques that maximise productivity and nutritional output in arid environments.

By harnessing the power of AI, the UAE aims to provide actionable solutions to both food and climate challenges, helping farmers make better decisions and optimise opportunities. Additionally, the partner-

ship will provide support to countries in implementing their own food and climate goals, ensuring that national aspirations are met with practical and scalable solutions.

These collaborations also promote agricultural innovation, enabling farmers to adopt climate-smart practices such as drought-resistant crops and precision agriculture. The UAE's National Food Security Strategy 2051 underscores its commitment to building sustainable food systems through technology, innovation and international co-operation.

This leadership exemplifies the country's dedication to addressing the twin challenges of climate change and food security.

Historically, food security has been underfunded, but this can no longer be ignored. The food system contributes more than

one-third of global greenhouse gas emissions, making it crucial for both climate action and economic stability. Yet philanthropic funding for food systems is a mere fraction of overall climate financing, which itself falls short of addressing the scale of the crisis.

The UAE's partnerships with global organizations highlight how targeted investments can foster change, safeguarding global food supplies while promoting economic resilience.

Investing in food security not only feeds people but transforms communities and economies. Thriving farmers lead to thriving local economies, creating jobs and fostering social stability. Agricultural innovations — such as smart irrigation systems and climate-resilient crops — are already making a difference, helping farmers

adapt to changing weather patterns and secure their futures.

If we fail to act now, what will our food systems look like in 10 or 20 years? Without serious investment, staple crops such as wheat, rice and corn could become scarce, expensive, or both. Rising food prices will hit the poorest the hardest, leading to widespread hunger and potential social unrest. The time to act is now. By prioritising sustainable food systems, we can prevent this future, ensuring our tables remain full, our communities prosper, and our farmers are empowered to feed the world.

On this World Food Day, let's unite in our commitment to placing food security at the forefront of the global agenda. Our planet's future — and the future of our dinner tables — depends on the actions we take today.

If rice and wheat become scarce, what would we do?

WITH 2024 projected to be the hottest year on record, the impact of climate change on global food systems is more urgent than ever. Climate change is affecting every region of the world, but its most immediate and profound effects are being felt in our food systems. Rising temperatures increasingly jeopardise our ability to feed a growing global population.

We need swift and transformative action to ensure our food systems are resilient, inclusive and sustainable. These systems must reduce emissions while safeguarding the millions of smallholder farmers who are on the frontlines of climate change.

On this World Food Day, it's crucial to acknowledge that global food systems are ill-pre-

pared for the future. Farmers are the cornerstone of global food production, yet they are among the most vulnerable to climate-related disruptions. Without immediate, substantial investment in food security, the consequences could be dire, affecting millions of lives and destabilising economies worldwide. We must invest in solutions that help farmers adapt, securing their livelihoods while creating a food system that can meet both present and future demands.

Extreme weather events — floods, droughts and heatwaves — are already wreaking havoc on crop yields. These

SASE architecture in branch security transformation. To address this challenge, Huawei's Xinghe Intelligent SASE Solution offers cutting-edge integrated protection capabilities across the cloud, network, edge, and endpoints. By leveraging AI-driven intelligence, it significantly enhances security performance and delivers converged network security solutions tailored to meet the needs of enterprise branches worldwide.



In brief

Ashes series schedule unveiled

MELBOURNE (Web Desk): The schedule for the Ashes series between Australia and England has been announced. Cricket Australia revealed the fixtures a year in advance for the series taking place in the 2025-26 cricket season. The first Test will be held in Perth on November 21, 2025. The second day-night Test is scheduled for Brisbane starting December 4, followed by the third Test in Adelaide on December 17, 2025. The Boxing Day Test will take place in Melbourne on December 26, and the New Year Test is set for January 3, 2026, in Sydney.

IUB wins opening match

B A H A W A L P U R (APP): The Inter-varsity Cricket Zonal Championship 2024-2025 has started at the Islamia University of Bahawalpur under the auspices of the Directorate of Sports the Islamia University of Bahawalpur, in collaboration with the Higher Education Commission (HEC) and Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB). The Islamia University of Bahawalpur, Cholistan University of Veterinary and Animal Sciences Bahawalpur, Khawaja Farid University of Engineering and Information Technology Rahim Yar Khan and Emerson University Multan are participating in this five-day championship. The opening match was played between the Islamia University of Bahawalpur and Khawaja Farid University of Engineering and Information Technology Rahim Yar Khan, which the former won by 333 runs. The final match will be played between the Islamia University of Bahawalpur and Cholistan University of Veterinary and Animal Sciences Bahawalpur.

Real Madrid back Mbappe

MADRID (AFP): Real Madrid have, for the moment at least, given their support to star forward Kylian Mbappe since the Swedish media reported that he is being investigated for an alleged rape during a visit to Stockholm. The reigning European champions, who have not commented publicly on the reports, do not appear to be overly concerned about the reports about the player who joined this summer from Paris Saint-Germain. An internal club source, who spoke to AFP on condition of their identity not being revealed, described the accusations as "the biggest fake in the history of sport". On Tuesday, Real were accused of deleting 25-year-old Mbappe from photos it published in a promotional campaign with its jersey manufacturer Adidas. Real told journalists the reason was simply because Mbappe's boot sponsor is Adidas's bitter rivals Nike. That explanation was questioned on social media though, with many people pointing out that several players in the photos are also under contract with Nike, like Mbappe's French international teammate Eduardo Camavinga. In the midst of the media storm -- and on the day his lawyer spoke to AFP and other French media to insist her client was "shocked" to be linked to a rape investigation -- Mbappe trained with his teammates in Madrid on Tuesday.



MULTAN: Pakistani bowler Sajid Khan celebrates after taking wicket of England batsman Ollie Pope during 2nd day of the Second Test Match between Pakistan and England at Multan Cricket Stadium. —APP Photo

Lionel Messi hits hat-trick as Argentina beat Bolivia 6-0

BUENOS AIRES (Agencies): Lionel Messi scored his 10th international hat-trick as Argentina thrashed Bolivia 6-0 in World Cup qualifying. The 37-year-old Inter Miami forward, who also set up two goals at Monumental Stadium in Buenos Aires, moved level with Portugal's Cristiano Ronaldo for the most hat-tricks in men's international football. Argentina are three points clear of Colombia at the top of the South American qualifying group for the 2026 World Cup, despite losing to Colombia in September and drawing with Venezuela last week. "It's really nice to come here, to feel the affection of the people. It moves me how they shout my name," Messi said. "This drives me - enjoying being happy where I am. Despite my age, when I'm here, I feel

like a kid because I'm comfortable with this team. As long as I feel good and can keep performing the way I want, I'll keep enjoying it." Messi, making only his second appearance for Argentina since suffering an injury at the Copa America in July, capitalised on a defensive error to put them ahead after 19 minutes. He set up Lautaro Martinez and then Julian Alvarez before substitute Thiago Almada made it 4-0. Messi struck twice in two minutes late on, beating two defenders to fire in his second and completing his hat-trick by finding the bottom corner. Messi has scored 112 goals in 189 games for Argentina - second only to Ronaldo, who has 133, in men's internationals. Raphinha scored twice as struggling Brazil made it back-to-back victories with a 4-0 win over Peru

in Brasilia. Brazil, record five-time World Cup winners, had lost four of their past five qualifiers before defeating Chile on Thursday. Dorival Junior's side are fourth in the table - six points behind Argentina - after 10 games. The top six teams qualify automatically for the 2026 World Cup in the United States, Mexico and Canada. Raphinha converted a penalty in each half before late goals from Fulham's Andreas Pereira and Luiz Henrique. "We needed this. It was really important winning both games to get back on track," Raphinha told TV Globo. In-form Aston Villa striker Jhon Duran scored his seventh goal of the season in all competitions as Colombia beat Chile 4-0. Davinson Sanchez, Liverpool's Luis Diaz and Bournemouth's Luis Sinisterra also scored in Barranquilla.



HEC Intervarsity Taekwondo C'ship opening ceremony held

LAHORE (APP): The opening ceremony of the All Pakistan Intervarsity Taekwondo Championship was held at the University of Central Punjab (UCP) gymnasium, here on Wednesday. As many as 16 taekwondo teams from various universities across Pakistan will participate in the event, which is being held under the auspices of the Higher Education Commission (HEC). In-charge Sports HEC Javed Ali Memon was the chief guest on the occasion while director sports of various universities and officials of the Pakistan Taekwondo Federation attended the opening ceremony.

The championship is being commenced under the supervision and guidance of technical officials including referees from Pakistan Taekwondo Federation so that the matches be conducted as per National and International standards. Further, the players have been given an equal opportunity of competition and an environment as of National or International championships, where failure to follow rules may lead to disqualification. The championship is being held with an aim of promoting sportsmanship, teamwork, and physical fitness among university students, besides provid-

ing a platform for talented athletes to showcase their skills and mettle in their favorite game. Javed Ali Memon emphasized the importance of sports in fostering unity, discipline, and healthy competition among youth. "We believe that sports play a vital role in shaping the minds and bodies of our future leaders," he added.

The Taekwondo Intervarsity Championship will feature exciting matches in various weight categories. The top performers of this Championship will be selected for participation in forthcoming National Taekwondo Championship under Pakistan Taekwondo Federation.

Team confident to extend the innings: Duckett

MULTAN (APP): England's opener Ben Duckett said that England was still in a good spot and the game will shift further in the second innings as the team would try to extend the innings.

Talking to journalists he said that he was delight after scoring a century on a challenging pitch in the second Test against Pakistan. Duckett acknowledged that the conditions became difficult as the ball began to turn significantly, which led to the team losing wickets in the third session.

Speaking about the game-changing moment, Duckett praised Pakistan for their efforts, saying, "In the third session, Pakistan really turned the game around." He also noted that the increased turn might have been due to the newer ball. "It seems like the new ball caused more turns, and that made batting tougher for us", he added.

Reflecting on his own performance, he mentioned his strategy of playing natural, attacking shots. "I played a lot of sweep shots today, just like I did when I last played against Pakistan. I have not changed my game as I stick to my natural style." Despite the challenges from the turning ball, Duckett was confident that England will push to extend their innings. "We will try to take the innings as deep as possible tomorrow," he concluded.

Shahzeb bag gold medal in Taekwondo C'ship

ISLAMABAD (APP): Pakistan's Shahzeb Khan won the gold medal by defeating Calamba of Philippines in the final of the -54 kg weight category at the Asia Open Khyurogi Taekwondo Championship at Indonesia. In the first round, Calamba scored 11 points against Shahzeb's 6, said a press release. In the second round, Shahzeb played brilliantly and won by 10-3 and then won the third round 18-0 to win Pakistan's first gold medal in the event.

Earlier, Shahzeb Khan qualified for the final by defeating Hidayat Tomakaka of Indonesia 12-14, 16-14 and 22-0 in the semi-final. In the +87 kg weight category final, Kablan of Kazakhstan won the gold medal by defeating Hamz Saeed of Pakistan by a margin of 5-1 and 4-4 points. Pakistan Taekwondo Federation President Col. (R) Waseem Janjua and CEO Omar Saeed congratulated Shahzeb and Hamza for winning gold and silver medals, respectively.

Sajid's late blows put pressure on England after Duckett's century

MULTAN (Monitoring Desk): Sajid Khan's four wickets, including three late in the day, helped Pakistan finish the day two of the second Multan Test on a strong note as England reached 239-6 in 53 overs, trailing by 127 runs, on Wednesday at the Multan Cricket Stadium.

In reply to Pakistan's first innings total of 366 all out, England's charge with the bat was led by Ben Duckett, who struck his fourth Test hundred (114, 129b, 16x4s), before England lost four quick wickets for just 14 runs in the final hour of the last session.

After Zak Crawley (27, 36b, 3x4s) and Duckett put on a 73-run opening stand, Noman Ali drew the first blood removing the former caught behind in the 13th over.

Ollie Pope, who departed for 29 off 37 balls with the help of four fours in the 24th over, was Sajid's first prey as a sharp turning delivery castled his stumps bringing an end to the 52-run second-wicket partnership.

Joe Root (34, 54b, 2x4s) and Duckett stitched a fluent 86-run third-wick-

et stand off 108 balls as England marched on while the latter also brought up his century off 120 balls. Pakistan struck back with four wickets within 18 balls to leave 225-6 as Sajid and Noman landed regular blows.

Sajid, who was brought on for his third spell at the end of 39th over of innings, bowled Root, who dragged the ball onto his stumps. An over later, in the 44th over of the innings, Duckett handed the ball to Salman Ali Agha at first slip off Sajid, while on the last ball of the same over, Harry Brook (9, 9b, 2x4s) was stunned as a turning ball crashed into his stumps.

Ben Stokes' five-ball stay on the crease was cut short by Noman as Abdullah Shafique grabbed the catch at short leg. Jamie Smith (12 not out, 33b, 2x4s) and Brydon Carse (2 not out, 19b) carefully saw off the remaining 52 balls in the day as their team finished with 239-6 in 53 overs.

Earlier, Pakistan added 107 runs for five wickets to their overnight score of 259-5, off 33.3 overs as Mohammad Rizwan (41, 97b, 5x4s) departed in the

third over of the morning. Valuable contributions from Aamir Jamal (37, 69b, 4x4s), Noman Ali (32, 61b, 5x4s) and Salman Ali Agha (31, 53b, 5x4s) as Pakistan went past the 350-run mark.

Jamal also put on 38 runs for seventh-wicket with Salman and 49 runs for the ninth wicket with Noman to frustrate England's bowlers before they wrapped up Pakistan's first innings in 123.3 overs.

Jack Leach was the pick of the bowlers as he bagged four wickets while Brydon Carse picked up three wickets. Matthew Potts and Shoaib Bashir had two and one wicket to their names respectively.

Scores in brief: Second Test – Day 2 of 5 Pakistan 366 all out, (Kamran Ghulam 118, Saim Ayub 77, Mohammad Rizwan 41, Aamir Jamal 37, Noman Ali 32, Salman Ali Agha 31; Jack Leach 4-114, Brydon Carse 3-50, Matthew Potts 2-66)

England 239-6, 53 overs (Ben Duckett 114, Joe Root 34, Ollie Pope 29, Zak Crawley 27, Jamie Smith 12 not out; Sajid Khan 4-86, Noman Ali 2-75)

Boxer Mohammad Wasim receives heroic welcome

QUETTA (APP): Balochistan boxer Mohammad Wasim receives heroic welcome after a triumphant victory in Georgia, Balochistan boxer Mohammad Wasim received a heroic welcome on his arrival here at Quetta Airport on Wednesday.

Mohammad Wasim, had defeated Georgia's boxer, Jaba in a ranking fight contested in Malta on October

04. Balochistan Sports Advisor Meena Majeed, Secretary Sports Tariq Qamar, DG Sport Yasir Khan Bazai were prominent among others who received the international athlete.

"After Shahzaib Rind, Minister said Mohammad Wasim is the second athlete from Balochistan who brought Pakistan in lime-light. She hailed the talent in Balochistan as saying

there is great potential in the youth of the province. Government is committed to support the youth of the province who are ambitious to play for Pakistan.

Mohammad Wasim while talking to media thanked Balochistan government for providing him warmed welcome upon his return. "With government and nation support, I would bring world title to Pakistan, he vowed.

GB win twice to cut NZ lead in America's Cup

BARCELONA (Agencies): Great Britain cut New Zealand's lead in the America's Cup to 4-2 by winning both races on Wednesday.

Ben Ainslie's Ineos Britannia team fell 4-0 behind on Monday in the best-of-13 series in Barcelona. Britain took advantage of a poor start by Emirates Team New Zealand in race five to establish a 1.3km gap and win by one minute 18 seconds. In race six they steadily built a lead and held on despite a New Zealand comeback. "We're back in it, that's huge," said Britannia skipper Ainslie. "Solid effort from the team. Still a long way to go but the comeback's on. Every day we're getting better at driving this boat. "It's a good win for us. Tricky on the start, we trained for those situations, we managed to make it stick and get them off the foil - it was pretty tough for them from then on." New Zealand helmsman Peter Burling said: "It's a bit of a shame we couldn't get across them and dropped off the foils. "It's obviously frustrating to be off the foils, we made a little error being a tiny bit too late but it was a bit unlucky. "That's sport and I'm looking forward to the next one."

New Zealand's Nathan Outeridge said: "We didn't really execute the best day ourselves today, we let ourselves down, we'll go and review that and come back next time in better shape." Races seven and eight take place on Friday, with race 13 scheduled for Monday. New Zealand have won the past two America's Cups, while Britain have never won the competition in its 173-year history.



Champions Trophy without India not an option: ECB chiefs

LONDON (Cricinfo) : The ECB's senior leadership have conceded that cricket's need to "protect broadcast rights" will see no changes to participating teams at next year's Champions Trophy regardless of whether India decide to travel to Pakistan. The tournament is due to be staged in Lahore, Karachi and Rawalpindi but India have not played an international match in Pakistan since 2008.

Richard Gould and Richard Thompson, the ECB's chief executive and chair, said on Wednesday that there are "lots of different alternatives and contingencies available" in the event that India do not travel to Pakistan, raising the possibility of a hybrid model being used. But they clarified that the Champions Trophy going

ahead without India's involvement is not an option.

The BCCI did not send a team to Pakistan last year for the Asia Cup due to strained relations between the two countries and their governments, prompting the tournament to be shifted to a hybrid model with India's matches staged in Sri Lanka. Last year, Pakistan travelled to India and participated fully in the 2023 World Cup, where they narrowly missed out on the semi-finals.

Pakistan has not hosted a major ICC event since co-hosting the men's 50-over World Cup in 1996 and the PCB have said they are "fully committed" to staging a "world-class" event. The final decision over whether or not India travel to Pakistan will rest on whether or not the

Indian government grants the team permission to do so.

"It would not be in cricket's interests for India not to be playing in the Champions Trophy," Thompson said. "It's interesting, with Jay Shah - the former secretary of the BCCI and now chair of the ICC - [who] is going to have a big role to play in that. There's geopolitics, and then there's cricketing geopolitics. I think they'll find a way. They have to find a way.

"There are always security concerns in this part of the world when those two countries play each other. That will probably drive the key decisions. But I know relationships between the two countries are as amicable as they can be at the moment: we saw it play out at the [men's T20] World Cup in New York."

Gould and Thompson are in Pakistan ahead of upcoming ICC meetings in Dubai, and have been meeting PCB officials in Multan during England's second Test match. Gould said that cricket's dependence on broadcast rights as a revenue stream ensured both India and Pakistan would feature. "If you play the Champions Trophy without India, or Pakistan, the broadcast rights aren't there, and we need to protect them," he said. "They [Pakistan] are the host nation. We've seen the developments going on, and we're all waiting to understand whether India are going to travel. That's the key. We think there are some discussions and relationships where they need to be. I know Pakistan are expecting India to travel. There are lots of different

alternatives and contingencies available if that doesn't happen.

"There are a variety of different options available if those circumstances come along. But also, when was the last time Pakistan hosted any kind of ICC trophy? This is a big moment for the country, and hopefully we can have the fullest possible competition in Pakistan. If that's not possible, we know there are options available."

Thompson predicted that the exact nature of India's participation would "go to the wire". He said: "That's between India and Pakistan, and I think they will find a way where India will participate in the Champions Trophy... These things tend to go to the wire, as history has shown us, so I think that in those [last] six months,

they'll find a way."

The PCB's position remains unchanged, with a board official telling ESPNcricinfo they wish to see the entirety of the tournament played in Pakistan. Fixtures for the Champions Trophy have not been published, but the PCB have submitted a draft schedule to the ICC, which would see the tournament run from February 19 to March 9, with India playing all of their matches in Lahore.

The Champions Trophy will feature eight teams, with two groups of four followed by semi-finals and a final. The competing teams are: Afghanistan, Australia, Bangladesh, England, India, New Zealand, Pakistan and South Africa.

The ICC was contacted for comment.

**In brief****IRSA releases 99,300 cusecs water**

ISLAMABAD (APP): Indus River System Authority (IRSA) on Wednesday released 99,300 cusecs water from various rim stations with inflow of 72,400 cusecs. According to the data released by IRSA, water level in River Indus at Tarbela Dam was 1535.71 feet and was 137.71 feet higher than its dead level of 1,398 feet. Water inflow and outflow in the dam was recorded as 38,100 cusecs and 37,000 cusecs respectively. The water level in River Jhelum at Mangla Dam was 1201.70 feet, which was 151.70 feet higher than its dead level of 1,050 feet. The inflow and outflow of water was recorded 7,000 cusecs and 35,000 cusecs respectively. The release of water at Kalabagh, Taunsa, Guddu and Sukkur was recorded as 45,500, 66,900, 52,800 and 17,100 cusecs respectively. Similarly, from River Kabul, a total of 15,600 cusecs of water released at Nowshera and 4,800 cusecs released from River Chenab at Marala.

Three drug dealers held

RAWALPINDI (APP): Police have arrested three drug dealers and recovered around 2 kg drugs from their possession during crackdown here on Wednesday. According to police spokesman, Gujjar Khan police held drug dealer namely Nageeb and recovered 1.26 kg of drugs from his possession. Similarly, Airport Police apprehended two drug dealers identified as Bilal and Faisal. Bilal was found with 350 grams of Charas while 330 grams Charas was recovered from Faisal. Police have registered separate cases against all of them and further investigation was in progress. SSP operations appreciated the performance of police teams swift action stated that the crackdown on drug dealers will be continued. He made it clear that such businesses and criminal gangs operating in the city would be dealt with iron hand.

Five outlaws arrested

ISLAMABAD (APP): Islamabad Capital Territory (ICT) Police apprehended five criminals involved in different criminal activities, including drug peddling and possessing illegal weapons recovered drugs and weapons with ammunition from their possession. A public relation officer told APP under the special directives of the Inspector General of Police (IG) police Syed Ali Nasir Rizvi, the search and combing operations are being conducted in different areas of the city, to ensure the safety and security of the Islamabad citizens. In this regard, the Islamabad Police Margalla, Sumbal and Bani Gala police station teams took legal action against accused involved in drug peddling and possessing illegal weapons and arrested five accused, he said. Police teams also recovered 820 gram heroin, one rifle and three pistols from their possession, he added. DIG Syed Ali Raza, said that the ICT Police is actively working to ensure the safety of citizens' lives and property in the federal capital, emphasizing that no elements will be allowed to disrupt citizens' peace. Citizens are urged to report any suspicious activities to the relevant police station, emergency helpline "Pukar-15," or the "ICT 15" app to help make the city crime-free through cooperation between the police and the public.



ISLAMABAD: Tajikistan's Prime Minister, Kokhir Rasulzoda, has wrapped up his visit to Pakistan after attending the 23rd Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) conference. Minister of State for Information Technology and Telecommunication, Shaza Fatima Khawaja, bid him farewell at Islamabad Int'l Airport.

Media delegates laud arrangements at Media Facilitation Center

ISLAMABAD (APP): The foreign media correspondents arrived here to cover 23rd meeting of the Council of the Head of Governments (CHG) of the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO) on Wednesday lauded the arrangements made for international journalists at the SCO Media Facilitation Center.

The media correspondents while requesting anonymity said the themat-

ic setting, digital library, high speed internet facility, computers and printing facilities with multiple TV screens providing live news coverage of different news channels from the member states of the SCO were all well planned to ensure all out coverage arrangements at Pak China Friendship Center.

The SMDs and digital media screens projecting banners of member states with their national monu-

ments extended a warm gesture of solidarity by the host country, said a foreign media scribe.

She added that the clock wall with time zones of different member states was also another attraction to give on spot time zone information to foreign journalists.

Another journalist commented that the studio and podcast cabin was really a great facility on the site as many of them had record-

ed podcasts and live inter-

views on the SCO updates. The foreign journalists expressed their great admiration for the musical night on the inaugural day where the qawwali night hosted left all the participants spell bound.

A running cafeteria was also established to provide finger food and refreshments to the participants which was availed by local and international journalists.

HEC earns citizens about increasing scam calls

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Higher Education Commission (HEC) has issued a public warning about increasing incidents of fraudulent activities involving scam calls and fake social media pages falsely claiming affiliation with the commission.

In a public alert, the HEC stated that some imposters, claiming affiliation with the HEC, are defrauding the public by making scam calls to extract personal information for degree attestation or re-verification of already attested documents.

Some individuals, posing as HEC Attestation Agents, are offering serv-

ices for degree attestation, demanding excessive fees for services, far beyond the prescribed charges.

Fake social media pages are also being used to deceive the public by promoting unauthorized degree verification services.

The HEC has clarified that it does not employ any agents or representatives for attestation purposes and does not make unsolicited calls or contact individuals regarding these services.

The public is urged to use only the official HEC website (www.hec.gov.pk) or the HEC attestation portal (eservices.hec.gov.pk) for

any degree-related verifications.

The individuals are encouraged to refrain from responding to any such calls or invitations and not to trust any person or social media page claiming to provide HEC attestation services.

They must report scam calls at the helpline of their telecom providers for blocking the fraudulent number or register complaint at PTA website www.pta.gov.pk or toll-free number 0800-550555.

If financial fraud has occurred, the individuals must contact the State Bank of Pakistan at cpd.helpdesk@sbp.org.pk.

Gilani calls for raising awareness for reducing food waste

ISLAMABAD (APP): Chairman Senate Syed Yousaf Raza Gilani, on Wednesday, called for raising awareness about reducing food waste and advocated for policies that encourage innovation in food production and distribution.

In his message on World Food Day, Gilani highlighted the critical importance of food security and the need for sustainable practices to ensure every individual has access to sufficient and nutritious food. He said that the day serves as a reminder of the shared responsibility to combat hunger and malnutrition within communities.

Climate-resilient farming critical for global food security: Romina

ISLAMABAD (APP): Coordinator to the Prime Minister on Climate Change, Romina Khurshid Alam emphasized the necessity of sustainable agricultural practices to combat climate change, which is vital for global food security and the well-being of populations.

In her World Food Day message, PM's aide highlighted that climate change adversely affects food security and sustainable agriculture through interconnected mechanisms. Increased temperatures, altered rainfall patterns, and extreme weather events jeopardize agricultural productivity, leading to higher food prices and increased vulnerability for low-income communities. Projections indicate that millions more could face hunger by 2050 due to these impacts.

Emphasizing the critical need for climate-resilient farming, she high-

lighted that Pakistan, being one of the most climate-vulnerable countries, faces severe impacts from extreme weather events like floods and heatwaves, which threaten agricultural productivity and food security.

Khurshid Alam noted that rising agricultural demands intensify competition for resources, necessitating a transformation in farming practices to support a growing population while addressing climate challenges.

She advocated for adaptation strategies, such as crop rotation and drought-resistant varieties, which enhance resilience against climate variability and contribute to carbon sequestration and stressed the importance of community engagement, asserting that empowering local communities through education on sustainable practices strengthens local food systems and reduces depend-

ence on external markets.

Ms Alam also pointed out that climate change affects nutritional quality and food availability, particularly in vulnerable regions, exacerbating malnutrition and poverty levels and stressed urgent action to create sustainable food systems that can withstand climate impacts while ensuring nutritional adequacy for all populations.

"The effects of climate change disproportionately impact marginalized groups, including women and low-income farmers," she stated, emphasizing the need to address these disparities for improved food security and community resilience.

She concluded that diverse cropping systems can enhance ecological performance, soil health, and biodiversity, ultimately playing a critical role in achieving food security amidst climate change challenges.



ISLAMABAD: A vendor busy roasting grams for customers at Peshawar Mor. —APP Photo

'SCO provides unique opportunity for peaceful dialogue among nations': Bilal

ISLAMABAD (APP): PML-N leader & Convener of the National Parliamentary Task-force on Sustainable Development Goals Bilal Azhar Kayani Wednesday emphasized the vital role of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) in promoting international dialogue to shape regional policies.

Talking to a Private news channel, he said the SCO indeed provides a unique platform for countries to engage in dialogue and cooperation, shaping regional policies and addressing common challenges.

By engaging in dialogue and cooperation, the SCO aims to create a more stable and prosperous region, with its member states working together to address shared challenges

and interests, he mentioned.

Kayani noted, the SCO provides a valuable opportunity for nations including India and Pakistan to come together and find peaceful solutions to regional issues.

He said regional countries, including China, Russia, and Iran are set new convene and exploring ways to tackle challenges and bolster cooperation across various sectors including climate change and economy. He said this collaborative effort aims to foster economic growth, security and cultural exchange among participating nations.

Pakistan's involvement with the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) presents a significant opportunity for the country to strengthen its

relationships with participating nations, he mentioned.

This includes fostering closer ties with Russia, China, and Iran, among others. By collaborating on regional security, economic development and cultural exchange initiatives, Pakistan can enhance its diplomatic and economic standing within the region, he further explained.

Responding a query, he said Pakistan's friendly gesture towards India presents a prime opportunity for dialogue and cooperation on pressing issues such as climate change and the longstanding Kashmir conflict.

By engaging in peaceful discussions, both nations can work towards mutually beneficial solutions, he stressed.

ANF recovers 212 kg drugs in nine operations

RAWALPINDI (APP): Anti-Narcotics Force (ANF) while conducting nine operations across the country managed to recover 212 kg drugs worth over Rs 25 million and arrested 11 suspects, said an ANF Headquarters spokesman here on Wednesday.

He informed that 141.6 kg hashish was recovered from an area near a university in Shikarpur, Sukkur and an accused was arrested.

100 grams hashish and 35 intoxicated tablets were recovered from the possession of an accused rounded

up near a university in Islamabad.

The arrested accused confessed to selling drugs to students of educational institutions.

The spokesman said that the force is making all-out efforts for drug-free educational institutions.

He further said that three operations were conducted at courier office in Sukkur and 42 kg hashish was recovered from three parcels while three accused were also arrested.

In another operation at Lahore Airport, 2.450 kg ice was recovered from two Dubai bound passen-

gers.

28 capsules filled with ice were recovered from the stomach of a passenger going to Saudi Arabia at Lahore Airport.

20,400 kg ice was recovered near Noor Masjid in Kasur and an accused was arrested during the operation.

5 kg opium was recovered from two suspects rounded up in Thokar Niaz Baig, Lahore.

Cases under the Anti-Narcotics Act have been registered against the arrested accused and further investigations are under process.

Zubair sees bright economic prospects for Pakistan

ISLAMABAD (APP): Former governor Sindh Mohammad Zubair Wednesday expressed optimism about Pakistan's economic future, hoping that China's leadership will play a significant role in making Pakistan's economy brighter and believes that Pak-Russia relations will also provide better opportunities for the country's economic growth.

Talking to a Private news channel, he highlighted the benefits of the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) which is a flagship project of China's Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) and how it will connect Pakistan with the entire world.

Zubair also elaborated on the enduring friendship between Pakistan and China, describing it as a shining example of cooperation and mutual respect.

He highlighted the multifaceted relationship between the two nations, which has grown from strength to strength over the years.

Zubair emphasized that China's unwavering support for Pakistan on regional and international platforms has been a source of strength for the country.

He also noted that the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) has been a game-changer for Pakistan's economy, creating new opportunities for growth and development.

The former governor expressed his optimism that the Pakistan-China friendship will continue to flourish in the years to come, bringing prosperity and progress to both nations.

Responding a query, he said that we are aware that certain countries seek

to undermine China's stability and jeopardize the thriving economic relationship between Pakistan and China, however, we are committed to thwarting their attempts and safeguarding our partnership.

Zubair noted that CPEC will not only link Pakistan with China but also connect the country with Central Asia, Europe and other parts of the world through a network of roads, railways and sea routes.

He added that CPEC will boost trade, commerce and investment in Pakistan, creating new opportunities for economic growth and development.

By connecting Pakistan with the global economy, CPEC will help the country become a hub of trade and commerce, promoting regional prosperity and stability, he added.

RCCI delegation calls on Deputy Commissioner

RAWALPINDI (APP): A delegation led by RCCI President Usman Shaukat on Wednesday called on Deputy Commissioner Rawalpindi, Hassan Waqar Cheema, and discussed progress on various key projects and civic concerns in the city.

Senior Vice President Khalid Farooq Qazi, Vice President Fahad Barlas, Former President Saqib Rafiq, and members of the RCCI Executive Committee were also present.

The meeting focused on several critical issues, including the ongoing Ring Road project and the development of economic zones around it.

The delegation discussed in detail the potential benefits of these zones for the city's economy and emphasized the need to expedite their construction.

Deputy Commissioner assured the RCCI that the Ring Road project would be completed by June

2025. He said that a Central Business District (CBD) was also being established which would increase commercial activity.

He appreciated the Chamber's proposals regarding the establishment of economic zones around the Ring Road, acknowledging their importance in boosting local commerce and infrastructure.

During the discussion, President Usman Shaukat reiterated RCCI's full support for the Dengue Prevention Campaign, affirming the Chamber's commitment to launching a special awareness drive among the business community.

However, he raised concerns about the strict measures being taken under anti-dengue regulations, including the sealing of business centers and FIRs against businessmen. He stressed that such extreme measures cause unnecessary fear in

the business community, and urged for a more balanced approach.

The delegation also addressed the pressing issues of encroachments and parking problems in various commercial areas of Rawalpindi, such as Sadar Cantt, Tench Bhatta, Commercial Market, and Raja Bazaar. President Usman Shaukat highlighted the need for a comprehensive plan to eliminate encroachments and alleviate parking challenges, which are hindering smooth business operations.

The Deputy Commissioner assured that the administration would take the Chamber's suggestions into consideration and work towards a sustainable solution.

The meeting concluded with a mutual agreement to continue close collaboration between the RCCI and local authorities to resolve civic issues and promote business-friendly initiatives.

Police hand over 102 coins

ZABUL (BNA): The Zabol Provincial Command has transferred 102 historical coins to the Information and Culture Department following their discovery in the Shajoy district. This significant find was made by local police in the Tazi Rabat area, where they also arrested three individuals in connection with the case. Abdul Wali Basharmal, the head of Culture and Tourism at the Information and Culture Department, confirmed the handover to a reporter from the BNA.

Tariffs on exports waived

BEIJING (Amu TV): China has waived customs tariffs on Afghanistan's exports, according to a statement from the Taliban-run embassy in Beijing. Liu Jinsong, DG of Asian Affairs Department of China's Foreign Ministry, shared the news during a meeting with Bilal Karimi, the Taliban-appointed ambassador to China. The statement added that Afghanistan is among 40 countries benefiting from China's recent tariff exemption on imports, as Beijing seeks to strengthen its trade relationships.

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

ATRA announces activation of telecommunication sites

KABUL (TOLONews): The Afghanistan Telecom Regulatory Authority (ATRA) has announced that 8,000 telecommunication sites are currently active across the country.

Officials from the authority added that the installation of telecommunication sites in remote areas of the country is still ongoing.

According to Jalaluddin Shams, the spokesperson for ATRA, the quality and pricing of telecommunication services in different provinces are being reviewed by the authority.

He also mentioned that by analyzing the revenues of telecommunication net-

works, they plan to reduce the cost of telecommunication services.

Shams stated: "In terms of pricing, ATRA has made significant reductions, and based on the revenue analysis of the networks, a ceiling was set, which has led to market competition. Currently, the revenues of the networks are being analyzed, and in the very near future, new prices will be determined, leading to further reductions."

Low service quality and high prices for telecommunication and internet services have been consistently criticized by citizens in various provinces.

Some experts believe

that the expansion of telecommunication services is essential for improving economic activities and facilitating education and higher education.

Idris Mohammadi Zazi, a political expert, said: "Universities, colleges, and schools that are connected to the internet have been more positive and effective compared to those that are not."

It is worth noting that previously, the price for one minute of phone calls within the same network was set at 1.85 Afghanis, and from one network to another at 2.2 Afghanis, while the cost of one gigabyte of internet was set at 110 Afghanis.

AFJC reports suspension of National TV broadcasts

TAKHAR (Khaama Press): The Afghanistan Journalists Center (AFJC) announced that the National Television broadcasting under Taliban control in Takhar has been halted.

During a meeting with journalists and local media officials, officials from the Department of Promotion of Virtue in Takhar banned photography and the broadcast of images.

The Afghanistan Journalists Center reported that National Television in Takhar ceased operations yesterday after receiving orders from the head of the Promotion of Virtue and Prevention of the Vice Department in Takhar.

The department opposed the broadcast of images of living creatures on television, citing it as being against the orders of the Taliban leader and the new regulations of the Promotion of Virtue.

However, the Takhar television transmitters continue broadcasting National Television programs from Kabul. Yesterday, the Taliban's Ministry of Promotion of Virtue told Agence France-Presse (AFP) that the ban on broadcasting images would gradually begin in the provinces.

Takhar is the second province, after Kandahar, where the image ban has been enforced, leading to the shutdown of television activities.

National Television Takhar was the last active media outlet in the province. Before the Taliban's rise to power, several other television stations, including Mehr, Mah No, Berlik, Noorin, Omid Farda, and Reyhan, were operating in Takhar. These stations have since been shut down due to censorship and restrictions imposed by the Taliban.

The closure of media outlets in provinces like Takhar reflects the growing media suppression in Afghanistan, severely limiting press freedom and the ability of local journalists to operate. This continued clampdown on media and freedom of expression further isolates society, leaving communities without access to independent news and information sources in the country.

Maarif Foundation continues operations



KABUL (Khaama Press): The head of the Turkish Maarif Foundation stated that the foundation continues its operations in Afghanistan with approximately 4,500 students and 1,000 staff members.

Ahmet Tokur, the head of the Turkish Maarif Foundation in Afghanistan, mentioned during a press conference held on Tuesday, October 15, that the foundation provides educational services through 46 institutions across eight provinces in Afghanistan.

The head of the Turkish

Maarif Foundation expressed his satisfaction with the foundation's presence in Afghanistan, adding, "These schools belong to both nations and both governments, and they are considered one of the strongest bonds of brotherhood and friendship between Turkey and Afghanistan."

He stated, "Last year, out of 531 Turkish students who participated in the university entrance exams from our schools and educational centers, 511 were admitted to various universities."

Mr. Tokur also clarified

that the diplomas from Afghan-Turkish schools in Afghanistan are equivalent to high school diplomas in Turkey, and students can earn the opportunity to study at universities in Turkey by participating in the "university entrance exams," which are held at least twice a year.

The Turkish Maarif Foundation, established in 2016, currently operates in 54 countries worldwide and is active in eight provinces of Afghanistan, including the capital.

This comes amid the

ongoing restriction on education for girls in Afghanistan beyond the sixth grade since the Taliban took power in the country, despite widespread criticism.

The Turkish Maarif Foundation's ongoing presence in Afghanistan highlights the foundation's commitment to providing quality education despite challenging circumstances.

This collaboration strengthens the educational sector and deepens the cultural ties between Turkey and Afghanistan, fostering mutual growth and cooperation.

‘Killing of migrants by Iranian guards a crime’

KABUL (Khaama Press): The former Attorney General of Afghanistan has condemned the "deliberate killing" of Afghan migrants by Iranian border guards, calling it a "crime against humanity." Reports indicate that dozens of Afghan migrants attempting to enter Iran were shot and killed by Iranian border forces.

Mohammad Farid Hamidi, the former Attorney General, has called on the United Nations and international human rights organizations to hold the perpetrators of this incident accountable.

On Wednesday, October 16, Hamidi wrote on his X account: "The deliberate attack and killing of defenceless and vulnerable migrants and refugees constitute a crime against humanity, a severe and inhumane crime."

Earlier, Halvash News Agency reported that Iranian border forces in the Kalgan Saravan region opened fire on Afghan migrants trying to enter Iran. According to the agency, out of approximately 300 Afghan migrants and refugees, only

60 or 70 survived, with the rest either killed or wounded.

Hamidi stated that these refugees had embarked on this dangerous journey in search of "a safe haven, fleeing life-threatening dangers", and, according to international law, human ethics, and Islamic teachings, they deserved protection and support.

The former Afghan Attorney General also criticized the Taliban, stating that the group is neither capable of defending the rights of its citizens abroad nor does it show any sense of responsibility in such matters.

He added, "The United Nations, the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), the UN Human Rights Council, the International Criminal Court, and other relevant institutions must take serious action and bring the perpetrators of this crime to justice."

Reports indicate the incident occurred on Sunday evening, and exact casualty figures are still unclear. Some eyewitnesses, whose audio recordings, said that

around 300 Afghan migrants were targeted by Iranian military forces, with more than 200 reportedly killed.

The Kalgan Saravan region is located in Iran's Sistan and Baluchestan province, bordering the Panjgur district of Pakistan's Balochistan province. The Afghan migrants were reportedly trying to enter Iran through Pakistan.

This is not the first time Iranian forces have opened fire on Afghan refugees at the border. Amnesty International has previously reported that Afghan migrants attempting to cross into safe countries via Iran and Turkey have been targeted by border forces from both countries.

The recurring violence against Afghan refugees at the borders of Iran raises serious concerns about the treatment of vulnerable individuals seeking safety. Despite international condemnation, such incidents continue, highlighting the urgent need for greater accountability and protection for refugees in the region.

Afghanistan to participate in Istanbul Int’l Exhibition



KABUL (TOLONews): The Ministry of Industry and Commerce has announced that Afghanistan will participate in the Istanbul International Exhibition, scheduled to take place in Turkey in one and a half months.

Akhundzada Abdul Salam Jawad, the ministry's spokesperson, added that the Istanbul Halal Exhibition is considered the third largest exhibition globally. He further stated that on the sidelines of this exhibition, business conferences, networking events, and other economic programs will also be held.

The spokesperson of the Ministry of Industry and Commerce elaborated:

"This exhibition, which will be held from November 27 to 30, 2024, in Istanbul, Turkey, has officially invited for the first time the leadership of the Ministry of Industry and Commerce of the Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan and members of the country's private sector to participate and showcase their products."

Meanwhile, the Chamber of Commerce and Investment views Afghanistan's participation in the Istanbul International Halal Exhibition as a valuable opportunity to expand trade and introduce the country's products to global markets.

Mirzaman Popal, Acting Administrative and Finan-

cial Director of the Chamber of Commerce and Investment, said: "For Afghanistan's export products, especially dried and fresh fruits, medicinal plants, carpets, handicrafts, and other locally produced goods, this is an opportunity to introduce Afghanistan's exports to European markets."

On the other hand, the Afghan Carpet Manufacturers and Exporters Union announced that a special carpet exhibition is set to take place on January 7, 2025, in Turkey, where Afghan carpet traders will also participate.

Noor Ahmad Noori, President of the Carpet Manufacturers and Exporters Union, stated: "The exhibition scheduled for January 7 in Istanbul is exclusively focused on carpets and is very important. The Turkish Carpet Association is also very keen for Afghanistan's carpet sector and Afghan carpet manufacturing companies to participate in this event."

The Istanbul International Halal Exhibition will take place from November 27 to 30, 2024, in Istanbul, Turkey.

Last year, representatives from 125 countries, including 60 ministers of trade, as well as traders, industrialists, and investors, participated in this exhibition held in Istanbul.

Taliban continue public floggings

KABUL (Amu TV): Taliban have publicly flogged six men and four women across Kabul, Khost and Laghman provinces as part of an ongoing series of corporal punishments.

The public floggings come amid mounting international condemnation of the Taliban's practices.

In Kabul, a Taliban-run court in District 4 sentenced two men and two women to lashes for allegedly engaging in illicit relationships, according to a Taliban statement.

Two of the individuals received 30 lashes each and were sentenced to two years in prison, while the remaining two were lashed 35 times and sentenced to one and a half years in prison.

In Laghman Province, four individuals, including two women, were publicly flogged on charges of theft, "immoral relations," and running away from home. One woman was lashed 39 times and sentenced to three years in prison; the other received the same number of lashes but was given a six-month prison term. The two men were also flogged, with one receiving 39 lashes and a three-year sentence, while the other was lashed 30 times and sentenced to two years in prison.

In Khost Province, Taliban stated that two men were flogged on charges of "sodomy," with each receiving 39 lashes. One man was sentenced to three years in prison, and the other to four years.

In the past three weeks, Taliban have publicly flogged over 35 people on various charges across several provinces, according to Taliban reports.

Ministry urges UN to fund water transfer project to Kabul

KABUL (Khaama Press): The Ministry of Energy and Water of Afghanistan has announced that its acting minister held discussions with the head of the United Nations Development Program (UNDP) regarding expanding cooperation on water and energy projects in the country.

On Wednesday, October 16, the ministry released a statement detailing the meeting between Abdul Latif Mansour, the Taliban Minister of Energy and Water, and the head of UNDP in Afghanistan.

So far, the United

Nations Development Program (UNDP) has not released any official statement regarding the discussions on expanding water and energy projects in Afghanistan.

According to the statement, "In the current situation, implementing water management and energy development projects are among the most critical needs of the people of Afghanistan."

The statement emphasized the importance of international organizations' cooperation in developing and implementing water

supply projects, stressing that the Kabul-Panjshir water project is of "vital importance" for Kabul's residents.

Previously, the Ministry of Energy and Water officials had indicated that the survey for the Kabul-Panjshir water project was nearing completion.

Reports suggest that this project will have the capacity to transfer two cubic meters of water, which would provide drinking water to approximately two million Kabul residents.

This development comes amid increasing concerns

over the shortage of drinking water in Afghanistan, a problem exacerbated by the ongoing drought and the severe impacts of climate change.

The lack of access to potable water, especially in Kabul, further highlights the urgency of sustainable water projects to address the country's growing environmental and humanitarian crises.

These challenges underscore the need for robust international support and swift action to secure water resources for Afghanistan's future.

OCHA to construct 100 homes for flood victims

FEROZKOH (Pajhwok): The United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (UN-OCHA) will build 100 residential houses for flood-affected families in western Ghor province, an official said on Wednesday.

Governor's spokesman Maulvi Abdul Wahid Hamas said OCHA representative met with Governor Maulvi Hayatullah Mubarak. In this meeting, OCHA's representative promised to build 100 residential houses for flood-affected families in Poshta Gamorak.

According to Hamas, the UN agency also contributed first aid including food and cash to the flood victims.

Most people need emergency aid due to impassable roads and long winter. Mubarak added.

Mubarak asked OCHA's representative to work honestly in attracting help and addressing people's problems.

Earlier, the UN had announced it would construct 100 houses for flood victims of Ghor.

cal artifacts must be increased, and they should be deployed in every province and port linked to Afghanistan to prevent the smuggling of these artifacts."

Additionally, it is reported that 102 historical coins were discovered in Zabol today. Zabihullah Johar, spokesperson for the Zabol Police Command, told TOLONews that these coins were found in the Shah Joy district with three individuals, and investigations are ongoing.

Afghan blind community calls for jobs amid ongoing challenges

KABUL (TOLONews): World White Cane Day, dedicated to the blind, was commemorated in Kabul.

The event organizers highlighted that the blind face numerous challenges in today's society.

In this ceremony, held by a blind services organization, economic hardships, social discrimination, and a lack of job opportunities for the blind were identified as their main challenges.

Najibullah Mohammadi, the Deputy Director of the Blind Services Organization, said during the event: "Another challenge faced by our blind people is the cultural challenge, which starts from the family and extends into society. Using offensive terms like 'disabled' for our beloved blind individuals is common. I want to

emphasize that there is a significant difference between 'disabled' and 'impaired'."

Abdul Samad Amiri, the Director of the Blind Services Organization, added: "Visual disability refers to when a person loses their vision completely or partially due to natural causes, accidents, or illnesses."

Meanwhile, the head of the Disability Social Center at the event stated that wars, traditions, the lack of attention from disability support organizations, and government negligence have led to an increase in the number of disabled people in society.

Ahmad Shah Azeemi, the Head of the Disability Social Center, said: "Traditions, customs, and some practices that prevent vaccination or treatment,



along with environmental negligence, increase the number of disabled individuals."

Several blind individuals on this occasion criticized the inappropriate behavior of people in society and called on the interim government officials to create job opportunities for the blind.

Abdul Jalil, a blind man,

told TOLONews: "The main problem facing the blind is the lack of job opportunities. Many of us are educated, but we don't have suitable jobs."

Previously, the blind community in Afghanistan had repeatedly complained about the challenges they face and the lack of attention from the government and institutions.



ISLAMABAD: Deputy Chairman of the Cabinet of Ministers/Minister of Foreign Affairs of Turkmenistan, Rashid Meredov, called on President Asif Ali Zardari, at Aiwan-e-Sadr.

President underlines coop with Turkmenistan

F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: President Asif Ali Zardari on Wednesday underlined the importance of increasing economic cooperation and business-to-business relations between Pakistan and Turkmenistan for the mutual benefit of the two countries.

He also called for greater linkages between the stock exchanges of the two brotherly countries to improve economic cooperation. The president expressed these views while talking to Deputy Chairman of the Cabinet of Ministers/Minister of Foreign Affairs of Turkmenistan, Rashid Meredov, who along with

Ambassador of Turkmenistan to Pakistan Atadjan Movlamov, called on him, at Aiwan-e-Sadr, President Secretariat Press Wing said in a press release.

Welcoming the delegation, the president said that Pakistan attached great importance to its ties with Turkmenistan, which were based on common values, religion and culture. He called for working together for the shared prosperity and stability in the region and the betterment of the people of Pakistan and Turkmenistan.

The president also affirmed Pakistan's commitment to the early completion of the TAPI Gas pipeline project, adding

that the project would greatly help in the economic development of the two countries. Rashid Meredov thanked the president for participation in the International Forum on the 300th birth anniversary celebrations of Magtymguli Faragi in Ashgabat, saying that it was a great gesture of respect for the Turkmen people.

He also conveyed the special greetings of President of Turkmenistan, Serdar Berdimuhamedov, and National Leader of the Turkmen People and Chairman of the People's Council of Turkmenistan, Gurbanguly Berdimuhamedov, to President Asif Ali Zardari.

India acknowledges Pakistan

F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: India has recognised Pakistan for successfully hosting the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) summit. Indian Foreign Minister Subrahmanyam Jaishankar congratulated Pakistan during his address at the SCO meeting. He stated that India provided its full support to make the presidency a success.

He noted that the summit comes at a time when global conditions are complex, with ongoing major wars impacting the world significantly. Jaishankar emphasised that the COVID-19 pandemic devastated developing countries, while climate change has adversely affected economies.

He pointed out that the burden of debt posed a serious challenge to achieving Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Furthermore, Jaishankar referred to the SCO Charter's Article 1 that stressed on strengthening mutual trust, promoting friendship, and acting as good neighbors. He stressed the need for an honest dialogue by saying "If there is a lack of trust and cooperation, it is essential to address those issues."

Russia to host next SCO CHG summit

F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: The 23rd meeting of the Council of Heads of Government (CHG) of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) concluded on Wednesday, marking a significant milestone in fostering closer collaboration among member states.

In his closing remarks, Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif announced the transfer of the CHG chairmanship to the Russian Federation and expressed his gratitude to Russian Prime Minister Mikhail Mishustin for assuming the role. He noted that the next meeting of the SCO Council of Heads of Government would be held in 2025 in Russia. "The council congratulates Prime Minister Mikhail Mishustin and expresses its full support for the Russian chairmanship," he added.

Prime Minister Shehbaz reaffirmed Pakistan's unwavering commitment to the shared goals and objectives of the SCO, emphasizing the importance of prioritizing collaboration over political differences. "Let us focus on cooperation rather than political divisions, build on our successes, address common challenges, and work together to ensure that the SCO remains a beacon of stability, development, and mutual benefit for all our peoples," he said.

Condemning Israeli aggression in Gaza, the prime minister stated, "We cannot overlook the ongoing genocide in Gaza. The international community bears the responsibility to demand an immediate and unconditional ceasefire, leading to the establishment of the state of Palestine based on the pre-1967 borders, with Al-Quds as its capital." The heads of government of SCO member states signed a series of documents, including the joint communique and decisions aimed at advancing economic and trade cooperation, as well as ensuring the effective functioning of the SCO's permanent bodies.

The prime minister also extended his heartfelt thanks and congratulations to all national coordinators, experts, and staff of the SCO Secretariat for their tireless efforts in finalizing the meeting's documents.

KP CM inaugurates residential apartments at Nowshera

Syed Waliullah Shah

NOWSHERA: Chief Minister Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Sardar Ali Amin Khan Gandapur, on Wednesday, visited Jalojai in District Nowshera, where he inaugurated the low-cost housing scheme (residential apartments) under the Naya Pakistan Housing Program (NPHP).

This housing scheme, covering an area of 150 kanals, has been implemented at an estimated cost of Rs 3.3 billion. The scheme would have a total of 1,320 apartments, each with a covered area of 780 square feet. The scheme is specifically designed for people with a monthly income of less than Rs 50,000.

The eligibility criteria (monthly income) is verified by NADRA and the Naya Pakistan Housing Authority. Under the scheme, each apartment received a subsidy of Rs. 300,000 from the federal government and 400,000 rupees from the provincial government with the purpose to provide affordable housing facilities to the middle and lower-income segments of the society. In the first phase of the scheme, 116 apartments have been allotted, whereas work on remaining apartments is in progress.

On this occasion, the Chief Minister also inaugurated a sports complex in the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Housing Scheme, Jalojai, which has been completed at estimated cost of Rs 17 million. The complex includes a squash court, futsal ground, artificial tennis and basketball courts, as well as a 500-meter long jogging track. The central park covers a total area of 42 kanals, with 8 kanals allocated for sports facilities. Provincial cabinet members Mian Khaliq-ur-Rehman, Barrister Muhammad Ali Saif, Dr. Amjad Ali, MPA Mian Umar Kakakhel, Commissioner Peshawar and others were also present.

Kokikhel tribe ends 75 days long sit on Torkham Road: A Jirga of elders from the Kuki Khel tribe of District Khyber called on Chief Minister Khyber Pakhtunkhwa,



Sardar Ali Amin Khan Gandapur, at the Chief Minister's House and held extensive consultations on the issue of repatriation of temporary displaced people of Kuki Khel tribe to their native areas.

MNA Iqbal Afridi, MPAs Sohail Afridi and Abdul Ghani Afridi, Commissioner Peshawar, Secretary Relief, Deputy Commissioner Khyber and others were also present on the occasion. It was agreed in the meeting to immediately initiate the registration process for the return of residents to areas which have been cleared whereas for the remaining displaced families, it was decided to hold a meeting with the relevant institutions next week to develop a timeline and action plan for their repatriation.

Following the Chief Minister's assurance, the Jirga announced the cancellation of a proposed march towards Tirah and ended their sit-in on the Torkham Road, which had been staged for the last 75 days. The Jirga expressed full confidence in the Chief Minister's commitment for the repatriation of the displaced persons and lauded his leading role in resolving the issue of October 11, peacefully.

"The Chief Minister's wisdom and

able leadership prevented bloodshed and resolved the issue in peaceful manner" they remarked and expressed profound appreciation for his crucial role in this regard and said "As the Chief Minister had successfully resolved the October 11 and Bannu issues, we trust that he will also address our concerns", they remarked. Chief Minister Ali Amin Gandapur appreciated the Kuki Khel elders for reposing trust to resolve the issue and assured them that he would make every possible efforts to live up to their expectations. He stated that a meeting with relevant stakeholders would be held next week to finalize a plan for the repatriation and rehabilitation of the displaced people.

The Chief Minister said that the tribal people have made tremendous sacrifices in the war against terrorism, leaving their homes and enduring hardships for the sake of peace in the country. He reassured them that the return and resettlement of these people is a priority of his government. On the occasion, the Chief Minister directed the relevant authorities to commence the process for procurement of necessary items for the return and resettlement of the displaced families.

Four policemen injured in Buner explosion

F.P. Report

BUNER: Almost four policemen including Assistant Sub Inspector injured in Improvised Explosive Device (IED) blast targeting police-mobile at Kankowai chowk in brought daylight in the premises of Nawagai police station, on Wednesday.

According to details, ASI Shahid, Driver Constable Noor Muhammad and two Constables named Altaf Ahmed and Ifthikhar Khan were injured while police mobile vehicle damaged in a planted IED attack on Buner Police Ambela Chowki mobile at Kankoi Chowk around 10 am. The injured have been shifted to DHQ Hospital Daggar by Rescue 1122 and Al-Khidmat Ambulances.

However, Orthopedic Surgeon has referred ASI to

Peshawar for treatment after first aid, while the other three injured and sent for bed rest at home. Deputy Commissioner Kashif Qayyum Khan and DPO Shah Hasan Khan visited DHQ Hospital Daggar and also supervised the first aid services.

Deputy Commissioner and DPO also visited the site of the blast with BDS and CTD teams. The security agencies have collected the remains of bomb blast and sent it for laboratory tests. However, while providing preliminary information. It is stated that the blast was done by remote control of a pre-installed IED and the explosive material was planted in it of high value and so fast that it caused at the site.

According to a source in the police, the blast was carried out when ASI, the

driver and two gunners, were on their way to testify in the court of AC Mandnar, about which the miscreants had received information in advance and planned and targeted the police mobile.

It is worthy to mention that it is second planted explosion in Mandanr tehsil in this week. Earlier, Deputy Superintendent of Police (DSP) personal's residence was targeted with IED blast in Monday midnight. The law and order situation in Buner created uncertainty among residents about efficiency law enforcement agencies, because the district is cordoned by police check posts since its accession in Pakistan on 4th July 1969. The residents argued for accountability for negligence in protection of public safety as well as law and order situation.

Shehbaz, Mishustin agree to pursue robust dialogue

F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif and Prime Minister of Russian Federation Mikhail Mishustin on Wednesday agreed to pursue robust dialogue and cooperation in the areas of trade, industry, energy, connectivity, science, technology and education.

During a cordial and substantive meeting at the Prime Minister's House on the margins of the 23rd SCO-CHG meeting, both prime ministers discussed the entire spectrum of bilateral cooperation and noted the positive momentum in Pakistan-Russia relations over the last two decades. PM Office Media Wing said in a press release. Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif fondly recalled his first foreign visit to Moscow, expressing a desire to transform these warm memories into a lasting friendship with Russia.

He reaffirmed Pakistan's commitment to strengthening political, economic, and defense ties with the Russian Federation. Both sides agreed to enhance cooperation at multilateral forums, including the United Nations and the Shanghai Cooperation Organization. He also thanked Russia for supporting Pakistan's BRICS membership bid, marking a step toward deeper collaboration on the global stage.

The prime minister recalled his productive meeting with President Vladimir Putin in July this year in Astana during the course of which they had agreed to meaningful enhancement of relations between the two countries. He also emphasized on the need of direct flights between Russia and Pakistan for enhanced connectivity between the two countries.

The Russian prime minister appreciated the remarkable arrangements done by Pakistan for the 23rd SCO Council of Heads of Government meeting. Furthermore, he thanked the Government and the people of Pakistan for warm welcome and exemplary hospitality extended to him and the Russian delegation.

He expressed his desire to further bolster the existing cooperation between Russia and Pakistan to next level. The two prime ministers agreed to maintain close cooperation on all areas of mutual interest. Both leaders also agreed on lingual exchanges between the two countries to enhance people to people relations and an increased cooperation among the banking sectors of the two countries to facilitate trade and investment.

Iran warns of 'decisive' response if Israel strikes

TEHRAN (AFP): Iran's top diplomat has warned UN chief Antonio Guterres that Tehran is ready for a "decisive and regretful" response if Israel attacks his country in retaliation for a missile attack.

The Islamic republic fired about 200 missiles at Israel on October 1 in revenge for the killing of two of its closest allies, Hamas leader Ismail Haniyeh and Hezbollah leader Hassan Nasrallah, as well as an Iranian general. Israeli Defense Minister Yoav Gallant vowed last week that his country's retaliatory measure would be "deadly, precise and surprising."

"Iran, while making all-out efforts to protect the peace and security of the region, is fully prepared for a decisive and regretful response to any adventures" by Israel, Iran's Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi said during a phone call with Guterres, according to a statement from his office on Wednesday.

During the call, Araghchi also appealed to the United Nations to use its resources "to stop the crimes and aggressions of the Israeli

regime and to send humanitarian aid to Lebanon and Gaza." Over the past week, the Iranian foreign minister has visited Lebanon, Syria, Saudi Arabia, Qatar, Iraq and Oman in an effort to ease tensions.

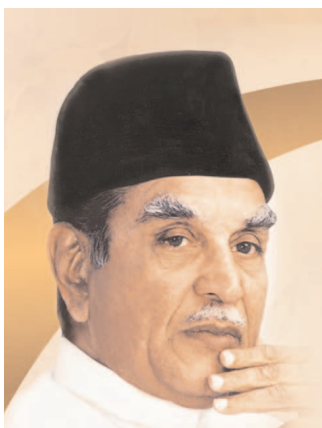
Araghchi arrived in Jordan on Wednesday before traveling to Egypt and Türkiye, Iranian foreign ministry spokesman Esmail Baghaei said in a post on social media platform X. The developments come against the backdrop of a war between Israel and Iran-allied Palestinian militant group Hamas that has been raging for more than a year and has expanded to include Lebanon in recent weeks.

Meanwhile, the Biden administration believes it has won assurances from Israel that it will not hit Iranian nuclear or oil sites as it looks to strike back following Iran's missile barrage earlier this month, two US officials said. The administration also believes that sending a US Terminal High Altitude Area Defense battery to Israel and roughly 100 soldiers to operate it has eased some of Israel's concerns about possi-

ble Iranian retaliation and general security issues.

The Pentagon on Sunday announced the THAAD deployment to help bolster Israel's air defenses following Iran's ballistic missile attacks on Israel in April and October, saying it was authorized at the direction of President Joe Biden. However, the US officials, who spoke on condition of anonymity to discuss private diplomatic discussions, cautioned that Israel's assurances are not ironclad and that circumstances could change.

The officials also noted that Israel's track record on fulfilling pledges in the past is mixed and has often reflected domestic Israeli politics that have upended Washington's expectations. The most recent example of that was last month, when US officials were told by their Israeli counterparts that Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu would welcome a US- and French-led temporary ceasefire initiative in Lebanon only to see Israel launch a massive airstrike that killed Hezbollah chief Hassan Nasrallah two days later.



Hakim Mohammed Said

9 January 1920 — 17 October 1998

Did you have life easy?
No. But you made it your mission
To make it a little easier for others.

Orphaned at two,
You opened your heart to all children,
Giving them respect, education, care,
Making sure their little voices didn't go unheard.

As an adult, you had to start life twice:
Once in your birthplace, once in your land of choice.
You wore holes in your shoes,
But your spirit of service stayed intact.

Two rented rooms, pieces of rented furniture:
You started small, but your heart was big.
Your God-given gifts, you used in God's name,
And He blessed you hundredfold.

Many men's pride is swelled with success;
Yours increased your humility.
So you turned your institution over to Allah -
Its profits to profit the poor.

All men have dreams - a thing apart from life.
You said Why not? and worked to make them real.
Free clinics and dispensaries on wheels,
Hospitals, schools, colleges, even a university!

You married modern science to ancient medicine,
And bred respect for hikmat in doubting hearts.
Journals, books, societies, and conferences,
Assemblies, think-tank - all bear witness to your drive.

You spoke the truth, unwavering, unafraid.
One morning a gun spoke, to silence you forever.
O, vain attempt! Your words, your works live on.
The gun but gave you a martyr's immortality!

- A tribute from Khaula Yasmin Qureshi.

Hamdard Laboratories (Waqf) Pakistan • Hamdard Foundation Pakistan • Hamdard University