

NA session rescheduled
F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: The National Assembly session has been rescheduled to Friday, October 25, 2024, at 11:00 a.m. The session was originally set for Thursday, October 24, 2024, at the same time. A notification regarding the change was issued by the National Assembly Secretariat. The adjustment in the schedule was made by the Speaker of the National Assembly.

SBP may slash interest rate

WASHINGTON: Finance Minister Muhammad Aurangzeb Wednesday hinted State Bank of Pakistan (SBP) might further slash interest rate in November's Monetary Policy. "SBP has cut its benchmark interest rate for three consecutive meetings by 450 basis points to 17.5 per cent from a record 22 per cent. The next meeting on Nov 4 may see the central bank reduce the policy rate, Muhammad Aurangzeb in an interview. — Agencies

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Shehbaz welcomes Palestinian students to their 'second home'

— laments international community's silence on genocide

F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif on Wednesday, while lamenting the silence of the international community to halt genocide in Gaza, assured the Palestinian students of every possible facility and quality education in their 'second home' Pakistan.

Addressing a batch of Palestinian students from the war-torn Gaza, the prime minister said that a batch of 'shining and outstanding students' have now arrived in their second home. He said the ongoing massacre of Palestinians was known to the entire world. "It is heart-wrenching to watch brutalities and atrocities committed by the Israeli occupation forces on daily basis. They have killed more than 43,000 Palestinians while thousands had been maimed and injured," he added.

The prime minister said that cities after cities had been demolished, buildings razed to the ground and the international community had yet to act, and regretted, "Speeches, resolutions and commitments are still to see the light of the day. Whether these were UNSC resolutions or ICJA' verdict at the Hague, nothing has helped in bringing ceasefire in Gaza where the world had not seen this kind of carnage in the contemporary history."

The prime minister recollected that during his participation in the United Nations General Assembly session, they heard speeches after speeches of the world leaders about the plight of the Palestinians and as to how Israeli forces had been committing genocide in this part of the world, but the blood continued to spill on the streets of

Gaza, hospitals were smashed, schools bombard and the world was mere a spectator. The prime minister referred to the international community's interference to bring about peace in different parts of the world including Sudan and Bosnia.

In Bosnia, he said, cries were finally heard after a large number of Muslim population was martyred there. The mass graves were unearthed and finally, the global community came to realization, he added. Prime Minister Sharif regretted the double standards in this world where the powerful and mighty remained untamed. He said the hope of the Palestinian people gave inspiration to the entire world who were facing challenges and where every family was suffering.

The prime minister also referred to a recent footage of two minor Palestinian sisters struggling together and said it had touched every heart but not touched those who matter—take decision and save the people of Gaza, Palestine and Lebanon. The prime minister further shared his sincere sympathies with the people of Palestine, on behalf of himself, the government and the people of Pakistan. He said that the government of Pakistan would take all possible measures to extend all kind of facilities to the students during their stay.

The prime minister said that it was not just a gathering of the students but of a family. He also thanked all the stakeholders under Gaza Health Outreach programme including Al Khidmat Foundation. The prime minister said that they would welcome other Palestinian students on their soil and in this regard, he had already

issued directives to the relevant authorities.

He reassured that the cost of their education would be borne by the government. Earlier, speaking on the occasion, PM's Coordination on Health Dr Mukhtar Ahmad Bharath said that a total of 145 students had arrived Pakistan from Gaza who were admitted to various medical and dental facilities in Islamabad and Lahore. They were being facilitated to get quality education, he added.

President Pakistan Medical and Dental Council, Dr Rizwan Taj said that after receiving directive from the prime minister on July 10, they made arrangements in collaboration with all the stakeholders to facilitate Palestinian students to get quality education in Pakistan. A total of 24 students were enrolled in Lahore and the rest 121 in Islamabad who were now getting medical education, he added. He informed that the medical institutions were not charging any kind of fee from them, adding that those universities that had offered free training deserved appreciation.

Meanwhile, the Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif expressed his deep grief over the death of the son of Mutahida Qaumi Movement's Member of National Assembly Rana Ansar in a traffic accident.

The prime minister conveyed his sympathies to MNA Rana Ansar and her family in this hour of grief. He prayed to Allah Almighty for peace for the departed soul and strength for the bereaved family to bear the loss. Prime Minister Shehbaz also prayed for the quick recovery of another youngster who sustained injuries in the accident.



ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif in a group photo with students of Palestine, who recently arrived in Pakistan to complete their medical education.

Bushra Bibi's release delayed despite court orders

F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: The release of Bushra Bibi, wife of Imran Khan, in the new Toshakhana case has faced another delay as the release order could not be issued on Wednesday.

The absence of Special Judge Central FIA, Shahrul Arjumand and the unavailability of duty judge Humayun Dilawar prevented the issuance of the order, leaving her release in limbo. The PTI lawyers made several attempts, moving from one court to another, but to no avail.

They also approached administrative judge Raja Jawad Abbasi, but he had already left the court room. The court staff informed that the session judge west was not listed. Earlier, the Islamabad High Court (IHC) drew analogy of the Qazi Faez Isa assets case with Toshakhana case against Bushra Bibi and ordered her release on bail. FIA Prosecutor Umair Majeed appeared before Justice Miangul Hassan Aurangzeb of the IHC in the bail plea filed by PTI founder Imran Khan's wife Bushra Bibi in the second case of Toshakhana gifts.

President appoints Justice Yahya as next CJ

F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: President Asif Ali Zardari on Wednesday appointed Justice Yahya Afridi, a Supreme Court judge, as the next Chief Justice of Pakistan. The president made the appointment of Justice Yahya Afridi for a period of three years with effect from October 26, 2024, according to a President House press release.

The appointment was made in exercise of the powers conferred under Articles 175 A (3), 177 and 179 of the constitution. President Zardari also approved October 26 as the date for administering the oath of office to Justice Yahya Afridi as the next Chief Justice of Pakistan.

The special parliamentary committee nominated Justice Yahya Afridi as the CJ after "thorough deliberations" until late Tuesday night. Earlier, the committee meeting was postponed till 8:30pm on Tuesday but

it went beyond the time. The committee, which held its first round of meeting, was constituted for the first time in the country's history for the appointment of the top judge.

The committee was formed following the 26th amendment and it comprised representatives from both the National Assembly and the Senate. It comprised MNAs Khawaja Asif, Ahsan Iqbal, Shaista Pervaiz Malik, Raja Pervez Ashraf, Syed Naveed Qamar, Rana Ansar, Gohar Ali Khan, Sahibzada Muhammad Hamid Raza, and Senators Farooq Hameed Naik, Azam Nazeer Tarar, Syed Ali Zafar and Kamran Murtaza.

The session took place at Room No 5 of Parliament House. The two other judges in contention were Justices Mansoor Ali Shah and Munib Akhtar. The outgoing chief justice, Qazi Faez Isa, is set to retire on Oct 25.

The 26th amendment has

brought about significant changes to the judicial appointments. For instance, under amendments to clause 3 of Article 175A, instead of the president appointing the "most senior judge" of the Supreme Court" as the CJ, the top judge will now be "appointed on the recommendation of the Special Parliamentary Committee from amongst the three most senior" SC judges.

The meeting was held without members of the PTI and Sunni Ittehad Council in attendance. The National Assembly Secretariat said that the SIC members had taken final decision not to attend the parliamentary panel's meeting. "The committee has been apprised of the SIC's decision." Law Minister Azam Nazeer Tarar said efforts would be made to woo the PTI and SIC. And, he clarified, in case of their absence again, the committee would continue its proceedings.

IHC summons Adiala Jail Superintendent

F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: The Islamabad High Court (IHC) on Wednesday summoned the Superintendent of Adiala Jail in person over a contempt of court case involving the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) founder's inability to meet his legal team in prison.

Justice Sardar Ejaz Ishaq Khan of the Islamabad High Court heard the contempt of court case related to the PTI founder's restricted access to his lawyers while in Adiala Jail. During the hearing, the petitioner's lawyer, Salman Akram Raja, informed the court that not only has the PTI founder been denied meetings with his lawyers, but jail authorities have also restricted their access to him.

The court inquired whether a local commission was involved in resolving the issue. Advocate Faisal Fareed confirmed that contact had been made with the commission, but further communication has not progressed. The court said the parties that the commission was established to prevent such complications.

Salman Akram Raja also highlighted ongoing problems in the jail, including a lack of electricity for several days, and claimed that the PTI founder is not being allowed to move freely within the jail corridors. In response, the court issued a notice to the Superintendent of Adiala Jail and instructed Salman Akram Raja to file a separate application. The Superintendent has been ordered to appear before the court in the next hearing, scheduled for Thursday.

Frontier Post questions US on democracy & HRs in Pakistan

Jalil Afridi



4 killed in terrorist attack on Turkish state aviation site

ANKARA (Reuters): Four people were killed and 14 others wounded in an attack at the Turkish Aerospace Industries' headquarters on Wednesday, the government said, and witnesses said they heard gunfire and a loud explosion at the site near Ankara.

Interior Minister Ali Yerlikaya said two attackers were killed in what he called a terrorist attack, adding three of the injured are in critical condition. TV broadcasters earlier showed footage of armed assailants entering the TUSAS building.

"Two terrorists were neutralised in the terror attack on the TUSAS Ankara Kahramankazan site. Sadly, we have 3 martyrs and 14 wounded in the attack," Yerlikaya said, referring to the Aerospace Industries, Turkish President Tayyip Erdogan, alongside Russia's Vladimir Putin at a BRICS conference in the Russian city of Kazan, also called it a terrorist attack.

The cause and perpetrators of the blast and subsequent gunfire remained unclear. No group had claimed responsibility. Prosecutors have launched an investigation, state-run Anadolu Agency reported. Some media reports claimed a suicide attack

had occurred and that there were hostages inside the building, though officials have not confirmed this.

Witnesses told Reuters that employees inside the building were taken by authorities to shelters and no one was permitted to leave for a few hours. They said the blasts they heard may have taken place at different exits as employees were leaving work for the day. Broadcasters showed images of a damaged gate and footage of an exchange of gunfire in a parking lot, as well as attackers carrying assault rifles and backpacks as they entered the building. Ambulances and helicopters later arrived.

TUSAS is Turkey's largest aerospace manufacturer, currently producing a training craft, combat and civilian helicopters, as well as developing the country's first indigenous fighter jet, KAAN. Owned by the Turkish Armed Forces Foundation and government, it employs more than 10,000 people. NATO Secretary General Mark Rutte condemned the attack and said the military alliance would stand with its ally Turkey. The European Union delegation in Turkey also condemned the attack.

Meanwhile, Pakistan President Asif Ali Zardari

and Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif strongly condemned the terrorist attack and expressed solidarity with the government and people of Turkey. In a statement, Zardari said Pakistan stood in full solidarity with the Turkish people. "We extend our deepest condolences to the families of those who have lost their lives in this cowardly attack, and we pray for the swift recovery of the injured," he added.

He said that terrorism in all its forms and manifestations was a global menace and Pakistan, having endured the scourge of terrorism, understood the pain and suffering caused by such brutal acts. He emphasised that terrorists were enemies of peace and humanity, reiterating the need for united efforts by the international community to eradicate the scourge of terrorism and ensure a secure future for all nations.

Taking to X, PM Shehbaz Sharif also echoed the same views. "My heartfelt condolences go out to my dear brother President Recep Tayyip Erdogan & the people of Turkey. Pakistan stands in complete solidarity with our Turkish brothers," the prime minister posted on X handle.

NAB amend case: Justice Rizvi issues extra note

F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: Justice Syed Hasan Azhar Rizvi of Supreme Court of Pakistan on Wednesday issued extra note in case pertaining to NAB amendments.

In a 22-page note, Justice Rizvi wrote, "Although I agree with the conclusion he reached, I regretfully find myself unable to endorse the reasoning. The majority judgment did not provide sufficient justification for the issues at hand. More importantly, unreasonable remarks were made about the Hon'ble former judges of this Court, whose judgment we are reviewing on appeal. In my humble opinion, judicial comity requires that, even when we disagree with the decisions of other judges, we do so with

respect and constructiveness. Criticism should focus on legal principles rather than disparaging those who authored the original decision."

It said, "Generally, an intra court appeal (ICA) is a legal mechanism that allows for an appeal within the same court, to a larger or more senior bench, rather than to a higher court.

The purpose of the ICA is to provide a remedy for reconsideration when a party is dissatisfied with the decision of a single judge or a smaller bench, without requiring escalation to another tier of the judicial hierarchy. This ensures that errors or inconsistencies in legal judgments are reviewed within the same court, promoting fairness and thoroughness in judicial

decision-making." He stated, "Mr. Imran Ahmad Khan Niazi (the respondent) filed a petition under Article 184(3) of the Constitution challenging the validity of the National Accountability 2022 Amendments' on the touchstone of the Fundamental rights.

The petition was fixed before a three-member bench of this Court. During the hearing, the Original Bench, in paragraph 24 of the impugned majority judgment, limited the scope of the case by observing that although the respondent sought the nullification of nearly all the 2022 amendments, it was not convinced that every section of those amendments violated the Fundamental Rights of the people of Pakistan.

Israel issues travel warning to Sri Lanka

JERUSALEM/COLOMBO (Reuters): Israel's national security council called on Israelis on Wednesday to immediately leave some tourist areas in southern Sri Lanka over the threat of a possible terrorist attack.

The agency said the warning pertained to the area of Arugam Bay and beaches in the south and west of Sri Lanka, and stemmed from "current information about a terrorist threat focused on tourist areas and beaches." The security council did not specify the exact nature of the threat and called on Israelis in the rest of Sri Lanka to be cautious and refrain from holding large gatherings in public areas.

"The Israeli security establishment ... is in close contact with the security authorities in Sri Lanka and is following the developments," it said. The US embassy in Sri Lanka also released a security alert stating it had received "credible information warning of an attack targeting popular tourist locations in the Arugam Bay area."

"US citizens are strongly urged to avoid the Arugam Bay area until further notice," it added but did not give details. Germany's Foreign Ministry also urged travelers to avoid the area or to leave it as soon as possible, citing "indications of possible attacks on tourist destinations."

Police security has been beefed up in the area and officials are on high alert, police spokesperson Nihal Thaldawa said in a video statement released in Colombo. "This area is a popular spot for surfing and this has attracted a large number of Israeli tourists. We are working to ensure they remain safe," Thaldawa said.

Sri Lanka, famed for its pristine beaches, tea plantations and historic temples, is seeing a resurgence in tourists as the island nation recovers from a severe financial crisis.

UK rejects Trump team claims of interference

LONDON (AFP): The government in London on Wednesday played down claims of meddling in the US Election, after Donald Trump's team charged that having members of Britain's ruling Labour Party work for his opponent Kamala Harris's campaign was "blatant foreign interference".

Trump's legal team filed an official complaint to the US Federal Election Commission, alleging that the "British Labour Party made, and the (Kamala) Harris campaign accepted, illegal foreign national contributions". The submission cited media reports that Labour officials, including the prime minister's new chief of staff Morgan McSweeney, travelled to the United States to advise the Democratic party campaign.

They also included a now-deleted LinkedIn post by Labour Director of Operations Sofia Patel calling for volunteers to travel to North Carolina, and offering to "sort out your housing".

Foreign nationals are allowed to volunteer in US elections but may not be compensated. The claim from Trump's team claim blew up as Starmer jetted to a Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting (CHOGM) on the Pacific island of Samoa, prompting a mid-air rebuttal. Starmer insisted it was normal for volunteers to campaign and that he had established "a good relationship" with Trump, whom he

met for dinner over two hours at his Trump Tower residence in New York last month. "The Labour Party has volunteers who have gone over (to the United States) pretty much every election," he told reporters travelling with him. "They're doing it in their spare time, they're doing it as volunteers, they're staying. I think, with other volunteers over there."

"That's what they've done in previous elections, that's what they're doing in this election and that's really straightforward." Starmer also denied suggestions that it could damage relations with the UK's most important ally should Republican party candidate Trump beat Harris and secure a return to the White House after next month's vote. Other senior Labour ministers tried to smooth over any cracks. Defence Secy John Healey also insisted that any Labour members were helping in a personal capacity and that had no bearing on formal bilateral ties.

"We will work with whoever the American people elects," he told a joint news conference with his German counterpart Boris Pistorius in London. However, Healey — an MP for more than 25 years — indicated that Trump's team was playing politics. "This (the filing to the FEC) is in the middle of an election campaign," he noted. How Starmer's centre-left government will deal with a second Trump presidency has long been a source

of speculation in the UK, given the party's vocal criticisms of him when Labour was in opposition.

David Lammy, who is now Foreign Secretary, called Trump a "woman-hating neo-Nazi sympathising sociopath" in a 2018 article for Time magazine but since his appointment in July has trod a more diplomatic line. Both Boris Johnson and his predecessor as prime minister for the previous right-wing Conservative administrations have been critical of Trump, only to temper their views when he came to power. Trump himself waded into the British election campaign in 2019 by launching a stinging attack on Starmer's predecessor as Labour leader, the veteran socialist Jeremy Corbyn, saying he would be "bad" for the country.

He also urged Johnson to unite with his friend, the eurosceptic hardliner Nigel Farage, to deliver Britain's departure from the European Union, prompting Corbyn to accuse him of interference. In the event, Corbyn lost spectacularly and Johnson won, in part after Farage agreed not to run candidates from his Brexit Party in key seats needed by the Tories. Adding to the latest row is Trump supporter Elon Musk, who wrote on his X site on Tuesday "This is war" after the Centre for Countering Digital Hate campaign group suggested one of its objectives was "to kill Musk's Twitter" — X's former name.

Hezbollah confirms Israel killed Nasrallah's successor

BEIRUT (AFP): Hezbollah confirmed on Wednesday that Israel killed Hashem Safieddine, the apparent successor of its slain leader Hassan Nasrallah, in a strike, without saying when or where it happened.

The announcement came a day after Israel said he was killed along with other Hezbollah leaders in an air strike in Beirut's southern suburbs three weeks ago. "We mourn ... the head of the Executive Council of Hezbollah, his eminence the scholar Sayyed Hashem Safieddine," the group said

in a statement, adding he was killed by "a criminal and aggressive Zionist raid" alongside other Hezbollah fighters.

The deeply religious Safieddine, a cleric with family ties to Nasrallah, had been widely viewed as the most likely candidate for the party's top job after the assassination of Nasrallah on September 27 in a huge Israeli air strike on Beirut's southern suburbs.

Safieddine, a member of the group's governing Shura Council, had strong

ties to Iran after undergoing religious studies in Iran's holy city of Qom. The United States and Saudi Arabia had put him on their respective lists of designated "terrorists" in 2017.

Last week, Israel claimed to have killed Hamas chief Yahya Sinwar in Gaza. Sinwar was tracked by an Israeli mini drone as he lay dying in the ruins of a building in southern Gaza, which filmed him slumped in a chair covered in dust, according to a video released by Israeli authorities.



Health dept takes action on vehicle records

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: In a significant development, hundreds of vehicles previously reported missing from the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Health Department have been accounted for following the directive of Health Advisor Ihtisham Ali. The registration of government vehicles in the HRMIS system has commenced, increasing the recorded number from 80 to 671. Health Advisor Ihtisham Ali has set a deadline of October 31 for all Directors General, Project Directors, and District Health Officers to submit the details of the vehicles under their super-

vision online. Strict actions, including immediate transfers, will be taken against any authorized officer who fails to ensure proper entry. According to Special Secretary Health Habibullah, 671 vehicles' digital details have already been uploaded to the portal, including 40 vehicles from the Independent Monitoring Unit. Entries for vehicles from various District Health Officers, Medical Superintendents, and other health centers are ongoing. However, the Tuberculosis Control Program has so far been unsuccessful in entering the details of its vehicles, with most records still missing.

The Health Department has requested details of vehicles that were purchased, donated, or acquired through projects. Additionally, measures are being taken to halt budgets for repairs and fuel for vehicles without entries, instructing the Excise Department to take necessary actions and issuing directives to the DG Audit for recording audits against these vehicles. **Launch of Online Posting and Transfer System in Health Department** The IT Cell of the Health Department has successfully completed training for staff capacity building in online posting and transfers

at the Directorate General of Health Services (DGHS). Following this training, the first online order has been issued by the DGHS. Health Advisor Ihtisham Ali praised the IT Cell, emphasizing the necessity of digitization in the 21st century. He stated, "I will not rest until all health services are fully online." On this occasion, Director General of Health Services, Dr. Muhammad Saleem, announced the commencement of the digital era in his office. He confirmed that all manual orders will be abolished, and from today onwards, all orders will be processed digitally.



PESHAWAR: Advisor to Chief Minister Nek Muhammad Khan talking to officials during his visit to Rescue 1122 headquarters.

Public offices to be made transparent

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: Aiming to promote citizen's participation in governance and to make the public institutions more transparent through citizen participation, the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Information Commission (KPIC) in collaboration with non-governmental organizations namely Centre for Peace and Development Initiatives and Centre for Governance and Public

Accountability arranged a consultative session titled 'Reflecting on the Achievements and Shaping the Future', here at Peshawar. Chief Information Commissioner KPIC, Mrs. Farah Hamid Khan along with Ex-Commissioners of KPIC, Commissioner RTS, Public Information Officers (PIOs) of various government departments, members of civil society organizations, journalists, and students in a large number par-

icipated in the said consultative session. Taking recommendations and suggestions from the participants was the main objective of the session. The highlight of the ceremony was the presentation of RTI Awards in various categories to acknowledge outstanding efforts to individuals who have championed the cause of transparency and public interest through the practice of Right to Information (RTI) laws.

Abdul Rahim Asif defends PhD thesis

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: Mr. Abdul Rahim Asif has successfully defended his PhD thesis here at the National Centre of Excellence in Geology University of Peshawar. According to Press release issued on Wednesday his thesis titled as "Geotechnical and Mineralogical Assessment of Granitic Rocks from Northwestern Regions of Pakistan." His defense took place under the supervision of Dr. Muhammad Sajid, Assistant Professor in the Department of Geology, and co-supervision by Dr. Waqas Ahmed, Associate Professor at the Centre. Mr. Asif's research represents a significant contribution to the field of applied geology, effectively linking geological assessments with practical applications in the construction industry. His innovative approach utilized advanced geotechnical tools and methodologies to evaluate the properties of granitic rocks, providing valuable insights for infrastructure development in the region.

KP to hold roadshows for investment in energy sector

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: The Government of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa has decided to organize roadshows in major cities across Pakistan to attract investment in the energy sector. According to Mazmmil Aslam, Advisor to the Chief Minister KP for Finance, the proposed roadshows will be held in Karachi, Lahore, Islamabad, and Peshawar. With the approval of Finance Advisor Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Secretary Finance issued the notification of the technical committee for holding road shows. The main objective of the roadshows to showcase investment opportunities in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa's

energy sector and provide necessary data to investors for further investment opportunities in the province. As per notification Additional Secretary Finance II is the Chairman of the said committee while Chief Executive Officer Pakhtunkhwa Energy Development Organization (PEDO), Chief Executive Officer Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Oil and Gas Company, Chief Executive Officer Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Economic Zones, Chief Executive Officer Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Transmission and Grade Company, Senior Chief Planning Officer Energy Department, PFM Advisor SNG II, Team Lead DMU Finance and SEED Project Representative are among its members.

As per notification of technical committee the Terms of Reference (ToRs) for the Technical Working Group are to finalize the roadshow dates, session structure, speakers, and participant list, and securing necessary approvals. The committee also select and finalize potential energy and power projects along with the provision of essential projects and to review and finalize all related concept notes and presentations regarding the events. The notified technical committee also engage with investors and address their queries if any during and after the roadshows, and finalize the report about "Invest in KP: Affordable Energy. A Bright Future".

Two more matches decided in MCL

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: Two more matches have been decided in the Media Cricket League organized by the Peshawar Press Club in collaboration with DHA Peshawar and RMI Due to rain the matches scheduled at the Gymkhana Cricket Ground could not take place while two matches were held at the karnal Sher Khan Stadium In the first match PPC Qalandars defeated PPC Sultans and in the second PPC Stars triumphed over PPC Darvesh. Deputy Commissioner Peshawar Sarmad Saleem Akram was the chief guest on the occasion. He distributed kits to all participating teams in the league.

Peshawar Press Club President Arshad Aziz Malik, General Secretary Irfan Musa Zai, and Chairman Sports Committee Abid Khan were also present. In the first match PPC Sultans batted first and scored 89 runs for the loss of five wickets in the allotted overs. Hassan Ali played a remarkable inning of 45 runs which included six boundaries and a six. Shiraz scored 23 runs. Zeeshan, Asghar, and Waqas each took one wicket. In response PPC Qalandars chased the target successfully in 7.5 overs losing only one wicket. Zeeshan Kakakhel who scored 40 runs with four

boundaries was declared the man of the match. In the second match PPC Darvesh won the toss and opted to bat first posting 72 runs for the loss of five wickets in the allotted overs. Wisal Yousafzai scored 33 runs with three boundaries and a six while Shakeel Ghalib added 24 runs. Zeeshan Liaqat took two wickets while Waheed ur Rehman and Khurram claimed one wicket each. PPC Stars won this thrilling match on the third ball of the final over. Bilawal played a match-winning knock of 42 runs including four boundaries and two sixes earning him the man of the match title. Zahid and Wisal took one wicket each.



In addition to his successful defense, Mr. Asif has published his research in his reputable international journal and presented it at various national conferences, further establishing his expertise and commitment to advancing geological research in Pakistan. The National Centre of Excellence in Geology congratulates Mr. Asif on this remarkable achievement and looks forward to his future contributions to the field. This success not only reflects the quality of research being conducted at the Centre but also underscores the importance of geology in supporting sustainable development in the region.

Workshop on Clubfoot treatment concludes

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: The Paraplegic Center Peshawar successfully conducted two-day training workshop for staff of Clubfoot Center of Azad Kashmir aimed at equipping medical professionals with modern and effective skills for treating children affected by clubfoot. Dr. Syed Mohammad Ilyas, head of PCP, gave away certificates to the outgoing participants during a simple but impressive ceremony and entrusted them with the important task of providing complete treatment and recovery facilities to children at the newly established clubfoot clinic there. This clinic has been set up in Azad Jammu and Kashmir in collaboration with MiracleFeet and Helping Hand for Relief and Development (HHRD), with the goal of expanding this critical medical service across the country. Senior physiotherapists and orthopedic surgeons from Azad Kashmir and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa participated in the workshop. The training focused

specifically on teaching the "Ponseti" method, a proven and effective technique for treating clubfoot. Clubfoot is a congenital condition that affects one or two out of every thousand live births, making this workshop crucial for addressing the chronic disorder. This training workshop is part of a broader effort to ensure free access to clubfoot treatment across Pakistan. The clubfoot clinic established in Muzafarabad is located at the Helping Hand Rehabilitation Center, where treatment is provided entirely free of charge. The primary objective of this clinic is to restore the health, mobility, and dignity of children suffering from clubfoot, thereby reducing the challenges faced by both the children and their families. The workshop was led by senior physiotherapist Dr. Khakula Imtiaz and orthopedic surgeon Dr. Fahad Jamil, who provided hands-on training to the

participants. It is worth mentioning that the treatment of clubfoot in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa began in 2014 through a partnership between the Paraplegic Center Peshawar and the ICRC, which was later taken over by MiracleFeet USA. To date, more than 4,000 children have been treated free of charge at centers established in various cities across Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Islamabad and AJK under this program.



AI turns human-wildlife conflict into 'human-wildlife coexistence' in northern Pakistan



PESHAWAR (AA) Artificial intelligence (AI) technology has reduced the human-wildlife conflict in recent years, which was one of the key reasons for a gradual decline in the population of endangered snow leopards in northern Pakistan. The World Wide Fund for Nature (WWF)-Pakistan installed AI-based trail cameras in 2022 at strategic locations in the Gilgit-Baltistan (GB) region, which bor-

ders neighboring China and is home to the rare leopard species, which has turned the human-wildlife conflict into "human-wildlife coexistence." This recent technology has significantly reduced snow leopard (Panthera uncia) attacks on livestock, a key factor behind human-leopard conflict, at the targeted sites, the WWF said on the occasion of the World Snow Leopard Day on Wednesday.

The development coincided with the saving of a herd of about 60 elephants crossing the railway tracks in northeastern Assam state of India last week through AI. The AI-based intrusion detection system (IDS) alerted the loco pilots of the train about the herd of elephants crossing the tracks, propelling them to apply the brakes. In the past, several snow leopards have been killed by local commu-



ties in retaliation for their attacks on the livestock. In addition to this threat, poaching, illegal hunting, and habitat loss resulting from adverse climate change impacts, also endanger the snow leopard population across its habitat range in Central and South Asia, according to the WWF. In collaboration with the Lahore University of Management Sciences (LUMS), the WWF developed and installed five AI-

based camera traps at strategic locations where snow leopard depredations were reported by the representatives of the local communities. These cameras detect the presence of snow leopards in the surroundings, transfer the data to a centralized system, and generate alerts for members of local communities about the predator. AI and symbiotic relationship As a result, local com-

munities safeguard their livestock either grazing in the fields or being kept in the household. The technology has significantly reduced the attacks of snow leopards on livestock turning human-snow leopard conflicts into a symbiotic relationship. Livestock depredation by snow leopards is a major cause of human-wildlife conflict in various valleys in three landscapes such as Karakoram-Pamir,

and conservation of threatened wildlife such as snow leopards in the region. The study pointed out that the linear infrastructure development, which cuts through the landscape such as roads and railways, has fragmented the snow leopard habitat. It found that although linear infrastructure improves national and regional economies, it restricts wildlife movement and poses threats to snow leopards and their prey species such as ungulates. Various studies indicate that snow leopard is an elusive animal, hence it is difficult to record its exact population in the distribution range across Central and South Asia. However, WWF research indicates that fewer than 7,000 snow leopards live in the world, of which approximately 200 to 420 individuals inhabit the northern mountain ranges of Pakistan, including the GB region, northwestern Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province, and Pakistan-administered Kashmir.



In brief

Motorway Police take action

BAHAWALPUR (INP): The Motorway Police have launched an anti-smog campaign by taking action against smoke-emitting vehicles. DSP Motorway Police Akram Khokhar told the media here on Wednesday that following directions of Inspector General Motorway Police Salman Chaudhry and DIG Motorway Police Masroor Alam Kolachi, anti-smog campaign had been launched in Bahawalpur like in other parts of the region. "The IGP ordered for raising awareness among drivers not to bring smoke-emitting vehicles on roads," he said. He said due to start of winter season, smog and fog level had increased in air which affected traffic on highways. He added that pamphlets narrating dangers of smog had been distributed among citizens. He urged them to carefully drive whenever they drive on roads in smoggy weather.

Open Kachery in full swing

SUKKUR (INP): On the special instructions of the Ministry of Power Division, a series of open Kachery are in full swing in the SEPCO region with the aim of solving problems faced by the consumers in electricity bills and other matters immediately. Chief Executive Engineer Manzoor Hussain Soomro on Wednesday has said that public/customers hearings are being conducted in all circles of SEPCO. The public is also being informed about this in advance through the media. All the SDOs along with their teams are ensuring regular holding of open kachery in their sub-divisions on a daily basis. Superintending Engineers (SEs) and Executive Engineers (XENs) are reviewing these public hearings. A number of complaints of various types were received in the open kachery held on Wednesday out of which 732 complaints were addressed on the spot. It mentioned over here that CEO, SEPCO Saeed Ahmed Dawach himself is also making a surprise visit to the open kachery along with his team. The customers hoped that SEPCO will continue to make all possible efforts for the convenience of the customers in the future.

Green Tractor process reviewed

SARGODHA (INP): A meeting regarding Green Tractor registration scheme was held at Deputy Commissioner's Office in Mianwali with Deputy Commissioner Khalid Javed Goraya in the chair. The meeting was attended by Assistant Commissioner Mianwali Murad Hussain Naikokara, Assistant Commissioner Piplan Ejaz Abdul Kareem, Deputy Director Agriculture Extension and other officials. The meeting attendees told DC that 3,446 applications had been received for 230 tractors under the given quota whereas 179 applications have been rejected for failing to meet criteria. He was also informed that distribution process of Kisan card was successfully under way and 19,000 farmers had been registered under the umbrella. He was also informed that 10,000 farmers have received Kisan cards so far. The DC said that the Punjab government, after following the revolutionary initiative of Chief Minister Punjab Maryam Nawaz, was striving to uplift farmers by launching Green Tractor scheme.

Skilled youth are nation's valuable asset: Abdul Karim

F.P. Report

HARIPUR: Special Assistant to the Chief Minister of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa for Industries, Commerce, and Technical Education, Abdul Karim Tordher, has stated that skilled youth are Pakistan's most valuable



asset, and the provincial government is focusing on creating employment opportunities for them, enabling them to become self-sufficient and contribute to national development.

He expressed these views while addressing the "Build for Skill Internship" program, organized by GIZ at the Government Polytechnic Institute in Haripur. He emphasized that in light of the growing importance of technical education, the Pakistan

Tehreek-e-Insaf government is not only working towards industrial development in the province but is also taking significant steps to improve technical institutions and provide skill development opportunities

for the youth.

The event was attended by Provincial Parliamentary Leader and Chairman of DDAC Akbar Ayub Khan, senior PTI leader Yousaf Ayub Khan, MPA Malik Adeel Iqbal, MD KP TEVTA Mansoor Qaiser, and Principal of Government Polytechnic Institute Mushtaq Ahmed Khan, among other distinguished guests.

During the event, Special Assistant Abdul Karim Tordher distributed laptops and mechanical kits to students who completed their internships. He also mentioned that the government has allocated billions of rupees to enhance technical education, ensuring that youth can learn valuable skills and achieve economic stability. "Our goal is to empower the youth to stand on their own feet, secure respectable employment, and play a positive role in the country's development," he added.

Anti-Corruption Day commemorated

F.P. Report

GHAZI: In a significant effort to raise awareness about the detrimental impact of corruption on society, Government Degree College (GDC) Ghazi held an Anti-Corruption Day event. The program addressed the far-reaching effects of corruption, such as unemployment, rising inflation, and the widening gap between legal income and extravagant lifestyles, all of which fuel unethical practices and greed.

Presiding over the event, Principal Professor Sadiqur Rehman delivered an insightful address, emphasizing how corruption has infiltrated every level of society. He urged students and citizens alike to take a stand against corrupt practices that have become deeply entrenched in the nation, affecting not only the youth but the broader fabric of the community.

The ceremony began with a recitation from the Holy Quran by Sawera Naz, a first-semester BS

student, followed by a moving rendition of Naat Sharif by Professor Asim. These spiritual performances set the stage for a reflective and meaningful session.

Students from various semesters contributed actively, presenting heartfelt speeches on the topic of corruption in both Urdu and English. Gandapur, a passionate First-Year Arts student, captivated the audience by incorporating the powerful verses of renowned poet Habib Jalib into his speech, drawing attention to the pressing need for societal reform.

The keynote speaker, Professor Muhammad Farooq Shah, delivered a stirring address, stating: "Corruption is a cancer eating away at the core of our society.

Integrity, transparency, and accountability are essential to protect our nation's future." He called for a collective effort to uphold these values and restore trust in public and private institutions.

Further reinforcing the message, Head of the English Department, Professor Zahoore Ahmed, along with Professors Roshan Khan and Rizwan Alam, spoke on the importance of maintaining ethical behavior, discipline, and respect for the law. They emphasized that corruption not only diminishes the nation's reputation on the global stage but also stifles its progress. They appealed to everyone present to join in the fight against this social evil at all levels, highlighting that individual actions can lead to collective change.

The event was meticulously organized by Professor Bakht Zameen and Naseer Muhammad Awan, who ensured a well-coordinated and smooth event, with uninterrupted power and flawless arrangements. A large number of students, faculty members, and staff were present, all of whom benefited from the insightful discussions and motivational speeches.



HYDERABAD: Dengue patients being treated at a hospital.

WSSCB kicks off cleanliness drive in Fatima Khel

F.P. Report

BANNU: After 15 years, the cleaning of Fatima Khel Weyal has been formally started, the debris of years has been removed through heavy machinery, from which the water supply has started, on Wednesday.

WSSCB Bannu Chief Executive Muhammad Imran Khan Under the leadership of WSSCB Bannu, Manager Operation and Engineering Services Jawadullah Kund, Managers Shahzeb Khan, Shab Niaz Khan, Bakht Niaz Khan along with UNICEF staff started a cleaning campaign with heavy machinery at Bannu Cantt Fatima Khel Weyal.

Meanwhile, the employees cleaned the canal from all kinds of dirt and moved the debris to the Karam river through machinery. A grand operation has been started in which UC Fatima Khel Weyal near

Bannu city, which had turned into a pile of dirt due to lack of cleanliness for the past fifteen years, but the mountain-like dirt of years has been removed by starting the work, he said. He said that WSSCB is providing its services in Bannu city as well as adjacent areas so that the problems of the people here can be solved at their doorsteps.

LG employees demanded immediate payment of arrears: Local Government Employees Union Khyber Pakhtunkhwa in case of immediate non-payment of arrears of more than 12 crore rupees in the form of salary, pension and shares of hundreds of employees of TMA Bannu for the last three months to Cantonment Executive Bannu. The decision to block Bannu Dera Road, Bannu Kohat Road and Miranshah Road as a protest threatening to stage a sit-in at PO Chowk.

Yahya Sinwar martyrdom symbol of resistance: JI

F.P. Report

SAKHAKOT: Jammata-Islami (JI) general secretary women wing Dr. Humaira Tariq and provincial Nazima Ayesha Syed termed martyrdom of Hamas Chief Yahya Sinwar as symbol of resistance for liberation organization across the globe.

This they claimed in a press statement and claimed that martyrdom of Yahya Sinwar has heavy loss not only for the Hamas but for whole of Muslim ummah. They added that every Muslim will propagate Yahya Sinwar mission against Zionist atrocities against Palestinians. Yahya Sinwar had sacrificed his life for the holy cause of liberating the holy land of Palestine from Zionist regime established on the blood of innocent people.



KOHAT: KP Minister for Higher Education, Meena Khan Afridi sapling a plant during his visit to Kohat University of Science and Technology.

DPO visits Koto hydel power project

F.P. Report

TIMERGARA: District Police Officer (DPO) Lower Dir visited Koto Hydel Power Project and ordered to further tighten security arrangements. DPO conducted a detailed review of the security arrangements to ensure the safety of foreign engineers and other staff working on the project.

On this occasion, he issued instructions to the DSP Security and other concerned officers to make the security measures more effective and stringent. DPO Saleem Abbas Kalachi made it clear that there will be no compromise on the security of foreign engineers, and the police will take every possible step to provide a safe environment for the experts and staff working on the project.

The DSP Security and other concerned officers were instructed to continuously monitor the security situation and, using all available resources, create a foolproof security plan.

Nawabzada Ilyas obtains Barrister at Law: Barrister Nawabzada Muhammad Ilyas Khan was declared a thoughtful and serious student at the Law Department of Lincoln University UK, London. The university's rector awarded him a certificate of appreciation in a grand ceremony.

It is worth mentioning that Barrister Nawabzada Muhammad Ilyas Khan is the son of Nawabzada Azhar Sultan Tipu Khan of Timergara. The General Secretary of the District Press Club Timergara, Rahmatullah Swati, congratulated Barrister Nawabzada Muhammad Ilyas Khan and his family on this remarkable achievement.

Sunni Tehreek hold protests

F.P. Report

LARKANA: Last night, unknown culprits broke the locks of the house of divisional leader of Sunni Tehreek Haji Ghulam Hussain Jatoi and took 50,000 cash, 3 tola gold and other household goods in the premises of Allahabad police station.

The victim speaking to the media on that occasion, the divisional leader of the affected Sunni movement protested and said that the robbery incident has been reported at the Allahabad police station, but the police is doing the usual slow work, on the other hand, the Sunni movement is against the behavior of the police.

Provincial Vice President Sheikh Hafiz Bashir Ahmed Hussaini protested against the behavior of the police along with his workers and said that the Larkana police has completely failed to restore law and order because the Larkana city is ruled by criminals and at the mercy of urban criminals. They demanded from the Chief Minister of Sindh, IG Police Sindh and DIG Police Larkana to return the stolen goods from the house of the divisional leader of the Sunni Tehreek and to take action against the criminals involved, otherwise the scope of the protest will be extended.

Checkpoints set up in Abbottabad

F.P. Report

ABBOTTABAD: The Traffic Police of Abbottabad Wednesday established checkpoints at various locations within the Mandia area to enhance safety of public transport. This initiative aims to monitor vehicles operating from Abbottabad to Mansehra, Balakot and surrounding areas.

The inspection process includes a thorough physical check of vehicles, with particular attention given to CNG cylinders, pressure horns, fire extinguishers and other safety equipment. Under the direction of SSP Traffic Tariq Mahmood Khan, DSP Mandian Mahtab Nazir, along with

Senior Motor Vehicle Examiner Anwar Khan and the traffic staff, have implemented these checkpoints in Mandia, Kala Pul, and other key areas.

During the operation, officials conducted comprehensive checks on public transport and local loading vehicles, ensuring compliance with safety regulations. This initiative underscores the Traffic Police's commitment to ensuring the safety and security of commuters in the region. This initiative aims to monitor vehicles operating from Abbottabad to Mansehra, Balakot and surrounding areas.

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particular attention given to CNG cylinders, pressure horns, fire extinguishers and other safety equipment. Under the direction of SSP Traffic Tariq Mahmood Khan, DSP Mandian Mahtab Nazir, along with Senior Motor Vehicle Examiner Anwar Khan and the traffic staff, have implemented these checkpoints in Mandia, Kala Pul, and other key areas.

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Sports' competition among schools begins

F.P. Report

LOWER DIR: The annual sports' competitions among government and private high and higher secondary schools began on different grounds here on Wednesday. The Lower Dir district education officer Inayatullah along with other officials formally inaugurated the event during a colourful function at the government high school Shamshi Khan Talash by cutting a ribbon. Schools' heads, retired school officers, area elders, teachers and basketball players attended the function.

In the opening basketball match, the government high school Shamshi Khan Talash won its first match against GHHS Manial Maidan, while GHS Mian Banda Timergara beat GHS Hajiabad. A large number of students and locals watched these thrilling matches.

Speaking on the occasion the DEO said that sports had equal importance in child growth and development. He directed the schools' heads to make the event a success by fully participating in grounds. He said the Lower Dir youth had great potential in sports as several players represented the country on the national level. The official asked teachers, games' in-charges and players to remain peaceful and friendly throughout the event. He said that disciplinary actions would be taken

against teachers involved in creating disturbance or misleading students during the tournament.

Different major and minor games including cricket, hockey, football, volleyball, basketball, badminton, tennis, tug of war, gymnastics, athletics and declamation contests among schools' students would be held on different grounds. The district had been divided into zones. In the first phase, schools would compete each other in zones while the zonal winner would meet in the inter-zonal competitions in the second phase. The tournament would continue till Nov 4.

Anti-narcotics drive: In a significant development in the fight against narcotics, a drug dealer on Wednesday publicly renounced his involvement in drug trafficking. The individual made the declaration in the presence of DSP Naeem Khan and SHO Samarbagh. The drug dealer swore an oath on the Holy Quran, promising to cease all illegal activities related to drug sales moving forward.

The man whose identity was withheld, expressed his desire to lead a life free from criminal activities. He acknowledged the destructive impact that drug peddling has on individuals, families, and society as a whole. He also emphasized that his decision to seek forgiveness and turn away from this harmful trade

came after serious reflection on the legal and moral consequences.

DSP Naeem Khan lauded the individual's decision, noting that the police force has been actively working to dismantle the drug networks in the area and prevent the spread of narcotics. "The police department is committed to rooting out this menace from our communities. We encourage others involved in such activities to follow this example, or face the full weight of the law," said DSP Khan.

The police department has adopted a multifaceted approach to combat drug trafficking, including community engagement, public awareness campaigns, and stringent law enforcement measures. This act of repentance is seen as a positive outcome of these efforts.

Meanwhile, district police officer Salim Abbas Kulachi along with other police officers visited the site of Koto Hydro Power station and reviewed security arrangements for the Chinese engineers working on the project. He directed the DSP concerned and other officials guarding the Chinese to tighten their security. The DPO said the 'State' was committed not to compromise the security of the foreigners. He said that police would provide adequate security to Chinese engineers so that the project could be completed soon.

Prolong closure of Parachinar-Thall Road puts locals in distress

F.P. Report

PARACHINAR: The 12th consecutive day of the lone Parachinar-Thall highway has badly affected the life routine in Kurram district where an acute shortage of essential daily use items has put life to an almost standstill condition.

As per details received from the district on Wednesday, residents of Parachinar and Kurram were unable to travel to their destinations and bring daily use essentials for their families due to an acute shortage of edibles, LPG and even medicines

after closure of the lone and main highway for the last 12 days.

Local police said after an attack on a convoy of passenger vehicles on 12th October, the road was closed for all kinds of vehicular traffic, owing to security concerns.

The head of All Teachers' Association said students' attendance at schools has fallen to a minimum level due to nonavailability of fuel for vehicles to pick and drop the students for their schools. He said some of the schools have even been closed due to the situation.

The Kharlachi Border authorities said that the closure of the main highway has also badly affected the trade activities at the border. According to the Pak-Afghan Trade Union fruits and vegetables loaded on 70 heavy vehicles, stranded at the border, have become rotten and discarded inflicting heavy financial losses on the traders.

For the last two weeks, they said trade activity at the border suffered a very negative impact, adding that especially the traders of tomato, turnips and other vegetables were faced with financial loss.



It could take 350 years for Gaza to rebuild: UN report

NEW YORK (AP): United Nations agencies have long warned that it could take decades to rebuild Gaza after Israel's offensive against Hamas, one of the deadliest and most destructive military campaigns since World War II. Now, more than a year into the war, a new report speaks in terms of centuries.

The UN Conference on Trade and Development said in a report released that if the war ends tomorrow and Gaza returns to the status quo before Hamas' Oct. 7, 2023, attack on Israel, it could take 350 years for its battered economy to return to its precarious prewar level. Before the war, Gaza was under an Israeli and Egyptian blockade imposed after Hamas seized power in 2007. Four previous wars and divisions between Hamas and the Western-backed Palestinian Authority in the West Bank also took a toll on Gaza's economy. The current war has caused staggering destruction across the territory, with entire neighborhoods obliterated and roads and critical infrastructure in ruins. Mountains of rubble laced with decomposing bodies and unexploded ordnance would have to be cleared before rebuilding could begin.

"Once a ceasefire is reached, a return to the pre-October 2023 status quo would not put Gaza on the path needed for recovery and sustainable development," the report said. "If the 2007-2022 growth trend returns, with an average growth rate of 0.4 percent, it will take Gaza 350 years just to restore the GDP levels of 2022." Even then, GDP per capita would decline "continuously and precipitously" as the population grows, it said. Israel says the blockade is needed to prevent Hamas from importing arms and

blames the militant group for Gaza's plight. "There is no future for the people of Gaza as long as their people continue to be occupied by Hamas," Israel's ambassador to the UN, Danny Danon, said in response to the report. 350 years is more of a calculation than a prediction.

Three hundred and fifty years is a long time. It would be as though England and the Netherlands were only now recovering from the wars they fought against each other in the late 1600s. Rami Alalazeh, author of the report, said he based the calculation on the decimation of the economy during the first seven months of the war, and how long it would take to restore it at the GDP growth rate Gaza averaged from 2007 until 2022. Gross domestic product, or GDP, is the sum total of all goods and services produced in a country or territory. "The message is the recovery in Gaza depends on the conditions in which the recovery would happen," he said. "We're not saying that it will take Gaza 350 years to recover because that means that Gaza will never recover." At the end of January, the World Bank estimated \$18.5 billion of damage - nearly the combined economic output of the West Bank and Gaza in 2022. That was before some intensely destructive Israeli ground operations, including in the southern border city of Rafah.

A UN assessment in September based on satellite footage found roughly a quarter of all structures in Gaza had been destroyed or severely damaged. It said around 66% of structures, including more than 227,000 housing units, had sustained at least some damage. The Shelter Cluster, an international coalition of aid

providers led by the Norwegian Refugee Council, calculated how long it would take to rebuild all the destroyed homes under what was known as the Gaza Reconstruction Mechanism. That process was established after the 2014 war to facilitate some reconstruction under heavy Israeli surveillance. It found that under that setup, it would take 40 years to rebuild all the homes. Even in best-case circumstances, recovery could take decades. The report says that even under the most optimistic scenario, with a projected growth rate of 10%, Gaza's recovery would still take decades. "Assuming no military operation, and freedom of movement of goods and people and a significant level of investment, and population growth of 2.8 percent per year, UNCTAD estimates that Gaza's GDP per capita will return to its 2022 level by 2050," it said. A separate report released by the UN Development Program said that with major investment and the lifting of economic restrictions, the Palestinian economy as a whole, including the West Bank, could be back on track by 2034. In the absence of both, its predictions align with those of UNCTAD. The more positive scenarios appear unlikely.

Hamas-led militants killed some 1,200 people, mostly civilians, and abducted another 250 when they stormed into southern Israel on Oct. 7, 2023. Around 100 hostages are still inside Gaza, a third of whom are believed to be dead. Israel's offensive has killed over 42,000 Palestinians, according to local health officials, who don't distinguish combatants from civilians but say more than half the dead are women and children.

Ukraine FM calls for support to stop Russian strikes

KYIV (Reuters): Ukrainian Foreign Minister Andrii Sybiha said he and Turkish President Tayyip Erdogan had discussed safe navigation for shipping in the Black Sea. "I conveyed Ukraine's interest in further developing cooperation between Ukraine and Türkiye, especially in defense area," Sybiha wrote on the social platform X.

"I also underscored the importance of ensuring freedom of navigation in the Black Sea. We also discussed ways to a comprehensive, just, and lasting peace." Sybiha had earlier called for support to stop intensified Russian strikes on Ukrainian Black Sea port infrastructure, in comments made while on a visit to Turkey. He said such strikes in recent weeks had damaged four civilian vessels. Turkey has offered to act as an intermediary to end the more than 2-1/2-year old war sparked by the Kremlin's invasion of Ukraine and has endeavored to maintain good ties with both Moscow and Kyiv. "We see benefit in once again discussing initiatives that could serve peace, like the Black Sea grain initiative," Turkish Foreign Minister Hakan Fidan said, referring to the deal Turkey helped broker to allow Black Sea exports from Ukraine's ports. "I discussed this with my counterpart as well, we admire Ukraine's positive stance on this." The Black Sea grain initiative remained in force for about a year until Russia backed out of the accord in July 2023, saying provisions of the agreement were not being fulfilled.

Palestinians face grim olive harvest

WEST BANK (Reuters): Palestinian olive farmer Khatim Najjar dreams of just one season where she can gather the harvest in peace. But it's not this year. As she and her son approached their olive groves near the village of Burin in the occupied West Bank last week, Israeli soldiers stopped them, telling them they weren't allowed to harvest in that part of the valley, she said.

"This is our land. I came with my son alone, we came to harvest. If we cannot harvest our own olives from our lands, where should we go?" Najjar said. In more violent incidents since the beginning of the harvest this month, armed Israeli settlers have assaulted Palestinian farmers, cut down trees and set fire to olive groves. The latest spate of attacks by settlers and blockages by the army is part of a trend that, rights groups say, is worsening as the Gaza war rages on, with settlers appearing emboldened by some far-right Israeli government ministers who seek to annex the West Bank. The Israeli military did not immediately comment when asked by Reuters about accusations that soldiers bar olive farmers from accessing their land.

The military says it tries to ensure Palestinians can harvest while avoiding clashes with settlers, and says the war in Gaza has raised tension in the West Bank, causing a security situation that is harder to manage. Many Palestinians, as well as Israeli human rights groups, believe the army has abetted settler attacks. "Since the start of the (Gaza) war, the army has prevented farmers access to their lands here. They say it's a closed military zone and for security reasons. Now, when I pick olives from the trees in front of my house, it feels like I'm having to steal them," said Musab Sufan, another Burin resident.

The Gaza Strip, a separate coastal territory around 100 km (65 miles) from the landlocked West Bank, has been largely razed by Israel's year-old war against Palestinian militant group Hamas. But the West Bank has in parallel suffered its worst violence for years. Hundreds of Palestinians - including armed militants, stone-throwing youths and civilian bystanders - have been killed in clashes with Israeli security forces. Dozens of Israelis have also been killed in Palestinian street attacks over the past year.

Friendship with Russia will endure, Xi tells Putin

KAZAN, Russia (Reuters): Chinese President Xi Jinping told Russia's Vladimir Putin that the international situation was gripped by chaos but that Beijing's strategic partnership with Moscow was a force for stability amid the most significant changes seen in a century.

Xi and Putin in May pledged a "new era" of partnership between the two most powerful rivals of the United States, which they cast as an aggressive Cold War hegemon sowing chaos across the world. "At present, the world is going through changes unseen in a hundred years, the international situation is intertwined with chaos," Xi told Putin in the Russian city of Kazan at the opening of the BRICS summit.

"But I firmly believe that the friendship between China and Russia will continue for generations, and great countries' responsibility to their people will not change." Russia, waging war against NATO-supplied Ukrainian forces, and China, under pressure from a concerted US effort to counter its growing military and



economic strength, increasingly have found common geopolitical cause. Russia and China, pushing back against perceived humiliations of the 1991 Soviet collapse and centuries of European colonial dominance of China, have sought to portray the West as decadent and in decline. The United States casts China as its

biggest competitor and Russia as its biggest nation-state threat, and President Joe Biden has said the democracies face a challenge from autocracies such as China and Russia. Biden has referred to Xi as a "dictator" and has said Putin is a "killer" and even a "crazy SOB". Beijing and Moscow have scolded Biden for the comments.

Putin called Xi "dear friend" and said the partnership with China was a force for stability in the world. "Russian-Chinese cooperation in world affairs is one of the main stabilising factors on the world stage," Putin said. "We intend to further enhance coordination on all multilateral platforms in order to ensure global security and a just world order."

Xi said cooperation in the BRICS group was "the most important platform for solidarity and cooperation between emerging market countries and developing countries in the world today." He said it was "a mainstay force in promoting the realization of equal and orderly global multipolarity, as well as inclusive and tolerant economic globalisation."

Ukraine's prosecutor general resigns amid draft-dodging scandal

KYIV (Reuters): Ukraine's Prosecutor General Andriy Kostin said he had resigned to take responsibility for a scandal in which dozens of officials are alleged to have abused their position to receive disability status and avoid military service. Kostin's resignation followed a meeting of the National Security and Defence Council, where officials discussed how to crack down on corruption and on loopholes being used to get draft deferrals.

It was not immediately clear whether Kostin's resignation would have an impact on Ukraine's efforts to hold Russia accountable for its invasion and the subsequent war crimes of which Kyiv, its allies and the International Criminal Court accuse Moscow. Kostin's office has recently been rocked by allegations that dozens of local officials, including prosecutors, allegedly misused their positions to obtain disability status. "The

Prosecutor General must take political responsibility for the situation in the prosecution bodies of Ukraine," President Volodymyr Zelenskyy wrote in a strongly worded statement published on social media after the council meeting. Kostin's resignation statement followed minutes later. The prosecutor called the situation around the false disability diagnoses "clearly amoral" and agreed with Zelenskyy about the need for personal responsibility.

"In this situation, I believe it is right to announce my resignation from the position of Prosecutor General." The prosecutor's office faced the brunt of public ire from the scandal after a Ukrainian journalist published a story last week saying 50 prosecutors in the western region of Khmelnytskyi had been registered as disabled. Kostin subsequently ordered an investigation,

which he said had discovered the number of prosecutors in the region with disabilities was 61, and that 50 of them had been registered disabled before the war. "It is very important to establish why they were granted disability status, because the share of such employees in Khmelnytskyi region is very high," he said. The chief prosecutor's resignation still needs to be approved by parliament, where Zelenskyy's party holds a majority. After the president's call for responsibility, it appeared overwhelmingly likely that parliament would approve it. "It is not only prosecutors, by the way. There are hundreds of cases of obviously unjustified disability (statuses) among customs and tax officials, in the Pension Fund system, and in local administrations," Zelenskyy said in his evening address. "All this must be dealt with carefully and promptly." Zelenskyy ordered his cabi-

net to urgently draft a law reforming the disability assessment system so that the existing medical commissions would be dissolved by the end of 2024. An executive order published on Zelenskyy's website after meeting stipulated that the commissions' decisions must be checked within three months by a newly established working group. Within hours of the meeting of the National Security and Defence Council, Prime Minister Denys Shmyhal announced top-level dismissals: the management of the central commission overseeing fitness for service and senior officials in the Health Ministry coordinating local commissions' activities. Ukraine's domestic security service, the SBU, said that 64 members of medical commissions had been named as suspects in criminal investigations in 2024, and nine more had been tried and found guilty.

Russians feared dead after plane shot down in Sudan

DARFUR (BBC): Russia's embassy in Sudan has said it is investigating reports that a cargo plane with Russian crew was shot down in Darfur, a key battle ground in the civil war between the army and the paramilitary Rapid Support Forces (RSF).

The aircraft, identified as a Russian-made Ilyushin Il-76, was on a mission to deliver equipment and medicine to the army-held city of el-Fasher, military sources told Sudanese media. The RSF said it had downed a Russian-made plane flown by the Egyptian military that it accused of bombing civilians - though it was identified as an Antonov.

Egypt denies accusations that it has been providing military support to Sudan's army during the 18-month conflict. The vicious struggle for power between the army and RSF began in April 2023, leading to what the UN has called one of the world's worst humanitarian crises. Some estimates suggest up to 150,000 people have been killed since the war began last year, according to comments made in May by US special envoy for Sudan Tom Perriello. The UN estimates it has also forced more than 10 million people - about a fifth of the population - from their homes.

Details about the crash and its mission are murky. The Russian embassy in the capital, Khartoum, said it was co-ordinating with the Sudanese military-led government to gather more information about the crash and those who were onboard. According to the Sudan Tribune news website, all members of the crew - including three Sudan nationals and two Russians - were killed in the crash. It quotes military sources as saying it came down in the Malha area, near the border with Chad, en route to the besieged city of el-Fasher. This has not been independently verified. El-Fasher is the only city still under army control in the western Darfur region - and has been under attack from the RSF since April.

The RSF says it has the plane's black box and seized documents related to the plane and its mission. Viral footage from the alleged scene of the crash shows RSF soldiers with what appears to be identification documents next to the plane wreckage. According to BBC Verify, the documents - including a Russian passport, a job identification card from Manas airport in Kyrgyzstan and two South African driving licences (with different expiry dates) - all relate to one

individual. Preliminary research suggests he may have graduated from a Russian military academy and may have been a resident in South Africa. One video posted by the RSF also shows a fighter holding up 50-rouble (\$0.50; £0.40) Russian currency note - however the way it is filmed makes it hard to tell conclusively that the footage was shot near the crash site. Some reports suggest a technical fault may have been responsible for the crash - but both the army and RSF are saying it was shot down.

Others indicate it may have mistakenly been targeted. This is because some documents seen in circulating video footage suggest the aircraft was affiliated with an airline previously linked to the United Arab Emirates (UAE). The Middle Eastern country denies allegations that it has been arming the RSF - though the UN says there is credible evidence. Fresh diplomatic attempts to negotiate a cessation of hostilities between the rival forces in Sudan have failed to make progress. Fierce fighting has recently escalated around Khartoum, which is largely controlled by the RSF, with the military intensifying airstrikes in the city's centre and southern belt.

Mexico announces food and agriculture plan

MEXICO CITY (AP): Mexico's new president announced an agriculture plan that could make the country's food production and distribution look a lot more like it did in the 1980s, when meals in Mexico were dominated by tortillas, beans, instant coffee and cheap hot chocolate. Four decades ago, the ingredients for those meals were often bought at government stores that stocked a few basic goods.

President Claudia Sheinbaum pledged to revive those often shabby, limited government stores and continue efforts to achieve "food sovereignty." "It is about producing what we eat," Sheinbaum said of her policy, whose main focus will be on increasing bean and corn production. Sheinbaum appears to have a deep interest in boosting beans. She said, "It is much better to eat a bean taco than a bag of potato chips." Agriculture Secretary Julio Berdegué said the focus would be on guaranteeing prices for farmers who grow corn used for tortillas and lowering tortilla prices by 10% after prices jumped a couple of years ago.

The government aims to boost bean production by about 30% in six years to replace imports of beans, and will set up research centers to supply higher-yielding bean seeds. "Self-

sufficiency in beans is a goal the president has set for us," Berdegué said. The government will also focus on supporting coffee production, but mainly for instant coffee, which it claims is used by 84% of Mexican households. The plan will also seek to support cocoa production, but mainly for powdered baking and hot chocolate, not fine chocolate bars. The policies appear to run counter to market trends and what Mexican food sales look like today, when consumption of most of the old basics has fallen. Most Mexicans today shop at modern grocery stores, and consumption of fresh ground coffee, not instant, has increased enormously, accompanied by a boom in specialized coffee chains and shops. Meanwhile, bean consumption has been dropping precipitously for decades in Mexico.

According to the government's "2024 Agricultural Panorama" report, Mexicans consume only about 17 pounds (7.7 kilograms) of beans annually. That's less than half of the 35.2 pounds (16 kilograms) consumed per year in 1980. A combination of factors, including the time it takes to cook dried beans, may be behind this. Amanda Gálvez, a researcher at Mexico's National Autonomous

University, wrote that "we look down at beans because it is considered 'the food of the poor,' and we are making a serious mistake," because beans are a good source of protein.

However, the health benefits aren't clear: The most common bean recipe in Mexico - refried beans - often contains a considerable dose of lard. Tortilla consumption has also fallen from nearly 220 pounds (100 kilograms) per capita annually in 2000 to about 165 pounds (75 kilograms) in 2024. Consumers have increasingly taken to buying bread and other bakery products instead of tortillas. Apart from the challenge of trying to change consumer habits, the policy also runs counter to market trends. While some countries are trying to encourage high-value varieties and specialized chocolate strains, Mexico is focusing on the cheapest products.

While chocolate was first exported to the rest of the world from Mexico, Mexico's own production has fallen dramatically because of plant diseases and a lack of investment. It dropped from almost 50,000 tons in 2003 to about 28,000 tons in 2022. And while most Mexican homes may have a jar of instant coffee in their cupboards, that's not where the tendency - or consumer

spending - is headed. According to a Technavio industry report, instant products accounted for only about 37% of the sales value of coffee in Mexico. Sheinbaum's focus on self-sufficiency in oil, energy and foodstuffs is a holdover from her predecessor and political mentor, former President Andrés Manuel López Obrador, who left office on Sept. 30.

López Obrador also appears to have passed on his nostalgia for a 1970s-style Mexico - including passenger rail service, state-owned industries, tight-knit families and small corner stores - to Sheinbaum. The agriculture plan comes one day after Sheinbaum announced a complete "junk food" ban on salty, fried, processed snacks or sweetened beverages and soft drinks in schools, starting within six months. But the government's track record in actually changing consumer behavior is poor, columnist Javier Tejedo wrote in the newspaper El Universal. He reminded readers that the government banned junk food advertisements aimed at children in 2014. "The result after ten years of prohibitions?" Tejedo wrote. "Things are worse than when they started in 2014; Mexicans have decided to keep consuming things they like."

Kim visits missile bases, cites US nuclear threat

SEOUL (Reuters): North Korean leader Kim Jong Un has visited missile bases to examine their readiness to undertake actions of "strategic deterrence", while calling US nuclear capabilities a growing threat to the country, state media reported on Wednesday. The US strategic nuclear arsenal poses an "ever-increasing threat" to North Korea's security environment, which demands that Pyongyang maintain a strict counteraction posture of its nuclear forces, he was quoted as saying by KCNA. North Korea has been stepping up its development of ballistic missiles and a

nuclear arsenal, drawing international sanctions, and forming close military relations with Russia.

Kim's visit to the bases comes amid growing tensions with South Korea and its allies. This has included concerns over what Seoul says is a dispatch of North Korean troops to Russia to fight in Ukraine, a claim that has been denied by Pyongyang. South Korea's National Security Adviser Shin Won-sik and Jacek Siewiera, the head of the Polish National Security Bureau, expressed concern over Pyongyang's military cooperation with Moscow during a meeting in Seoul.

The two also agreed to cooperate closely with the international community on the issue, according to a statement released by South Korea's presidential office. In the KCNA report, Kim also called for the modernization of the armed forces by giving priority to strategic missiles in the future, calling it "an important principle of the strategy for building national defence." He was accompanied on his visit by Kim Yo Jong, his powerful sister, and Kim Jong Sik, the first vice department director of the Central Committee of the ruling Workers' Party of Korea, KCNA reported.

Police in Haiti battle a gang coalition trying to seize control of capital

PORT-AU-PRINCE, Haiti (AP): Police clashed with gunmen trying to take over one of the few communities in Haiti's capital, Port-au-Prince, that is not controlled by gangs. Solino has been under attack since Thursday, with residents calling radio stations pleading for help as they fled their homes. Officers seized control of several areas as they keep pursuing gang members, Haiti's National Police said in a statement.

In a video posted on

social media, gang members hoisted automatic weapons in the air and cheered as they claimed control over parts of Solino, warning that all those who are not part of a gang coalition known as "Viv Ansanm" will be "burned to ashes." Prime Minister Garry Conille held an emergency meeting to talk about the attacks in Solino and other neighborhoods. He announced the immediate recall of several hundred police officers and soldiers from elite units pro-

tecting high-ranking officials so they could be redeployed to neighborhoods under assault. "We will not cede strategic neighborhoods such as Solino and other recently liberated areas. The security of our citizens is non-negotiable," he wrote on social platform X. The gang coalition has raided other neighborhoods, including Tabarre 27, with the attacks forcing more than 4,200 people to flee, according to a report the UN's International

Organization for Migration released. More than 60% of those left homeless moved into already crowded makeshift shelters hosting others who lost their homes in recent years to gang violence. Others sought refuge at a school, a church and a health center, according to the report. Gangs that control 80% of Port-au-Prince also have threatened journalists covering the most recent attacks, calling them out by name and ordering that they be killed.

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Egypt makes malaria history, but there's no room for complacency

AS an unwanted companion on humanity's journey through the ages, malaria stands out for its sheer persistence. The mosquito-borne parasite can list prehistoric tribes, kings and queens, peasants and paupers among its victims. Even the disease's English-language name is taken from antiquity – *malus aer*, Latin for “bad air”.

It is not surprising therefore that malaria also wreaked havoc among the ancient peoples of the Middle East. Cuneiform tablets found in the Iraqi province of Nineveh refer to malaria-like fevers that sickened civilisations in Mesopotamia. Even the pharaohs of Egypt were not immune to what some called “Roman fever” – genetic evidence of the disease has been found in the mummies of famous rulers such as Tutankhamun.

Malaria's resilience is what makes this week's news that the World Health Organisation has declared Egypt to be free of the disease such an important step forward, not just for one country but for humanity. Almost a century of hard work by the Egyptian people to banish a disease that has plagued the nation from ancient times is no mean feat. However, there is no room for complacency.

According to last year's World Malaria Report, of the 249 million cases recorded in 2022, about 94 per cent were in the WHO's African Region and the estimated number of global malaria cases in 2022 exceeded pre-Covid-19 levels. That year, well over half a million people died from the disease. Research published by the London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine in 2021 has revealed that malaria can leave victims with long-term consequences, such as increased susceptibility to bacterial infection and cognitive impairment. In addition, given that pregnant women, infants and young children as well as refugees and migrants are disproportionately affected by malaria, it is clear that the momentum generated by Egypt's achievement should be built on.

There are realistic grounds to believe that malaria may, like smallpox, one day exist only in laboratories for medical study. The tools and strategies available in earlier times can now be replaced or complemented by increasingly advanced science and technology. In the UAE – a country that itself was declared malaria-free in 2007 after years of hard work – artificial intelligence forecasting tools are being developed that can help health authorities detect malaria outbreaks.

The Emirates' success in curbing the disease at home goes hand in hand with its support for eradication efforts in other nations. The Reaching the Last Mile initiative – a 10-year, \$100 million fund launched by President Sheikh Mohamed in 2017 with support from the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation has achieved much. Such initiatives help humanity move beyond fatalistic assumptions that malaria is just a fact of life that poorer, vulnerable people must put up with.

Such innovation and financial support are needed more than ever. In April, the WHO said progress towards meeting targets on case incidence and mortality reduction “is seriously off track”. The organisation added that if current trends persist, its 2030 target for reducing cases will be missed by 89 per cent, while the target for reducing mortality will be missed by 88 per cent. So, while Egypt's new status as a malaria-free country is undoubtedly good news for its 115 million people, it should also inspire redoubled efforts to consign this illness to the history books forever.

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How GCC, EU could partner to bring peace to Middle East

Dr. Abdel Aziz Aluwaisheg

AT last week's EU-Gulf Cooperation Council summit, the leaders present spent much of their time discussing how to hone their newly founded strategic partnership to stop the Middle East's conflicts, especially those in Gaza, the West Bank and Lebanon, as well as the wider Israel-Iran cycle of violence.

The two blocs have an unprecedented opportunity to lead in light of the US' political paralysis, Russia's war preoccupations and China's reluctance to lead.

However, despite its considerable weight, a lack of unity has so far hampered the EU's ability to play an effective role beyond providing aid and regular pronouncements. Despite being the world's third-largest economy after the US and China, it has chosen not to turn that power into an effective diplomatic initiative. It has preferred to act in the US' shadow, deferring to the leadership of a clearly paralyzed government. The transitional nature of the EU's current leadership has added to this reluctance, waiting for the new leadership to take office over the coming weeks and months.

Nevertheless, there was a consensus in Brussels on the parameters for a resolution of the conflict. On Gaza, both support UN Security Council resolutions, especially 2735, which calls for an immediate, full and complete ceasefire, the release of hostages and the exchange of Palestinian prisoners, as well as immediate and unimpeded humanitarian access to the civilian population and the safe and effective distribution of humanitarian assistance at scale throughout the Gaza Strip, where famine is looming. They also support UNRWA and other UN agencies in Gaza and the West Bank.

On the underlying Israel-Palestine issue, the two blocs agree on resolving it according to UN resolutions and the Arab Peace Initiative, meaning the establishment of an independent and viable Palestinian state on the 1967 borders. Both condemn settler violence in the West Bank and Israel's unilateral actions to alter the historical status quo there.

The EU last month joined Saudi Arabia in launching the Global Alliance for the Implementation of the Two-State Solution in New York. It also joined Saudi Arabia's September 2023 initiative to revive the peace process and the Arab Peace Initiative. Achieving anything of significance on this issue requires US involvement, but it is not likely that the Biden administration will put enough pressure on Israel to agree to a ceasefire, let alone the settlement of the underlying conflict, before the Nov. 5 election.

However, there is a window of opportunity after the election, regardless of who wins. There are 75 crucial days between Election Day and Jan. 20, Biden's last day in office. Previous administrations were able to use that period to make important decisions on peace in the Middle East. Biden could use it to advance US interests and help his own legacy, which has been tarnished by this conflict. During the remaining days leading up to Nov. 5, the GCC and EU could prepare the ground, through closer EU-GCC coordination, by building on the consensus reached last week in Brussels. They need to put together a comprehensive plan, not only for a ceasefire and humanitarian aid, but to address the root causes of the conflict. To secure international support, the plan has to build on the global consensus demon-

strated by UN resolutions.

The plan should be a regional one, taking consideration of all the relevant stakeholders. It has to address the concerns of both sides, including Israel's security concerns and full enfranchisement of the Palestinians, according to all relevant UN resolutions.

Strengthening the Palestinian Authority is essential to enable it to carry out the duties of the state and provide basic services. Introducing economic and political reforms is also essential for the smooth functioning of the state and to encourage donors and investors to help the Palestinian economy.

There needs to be international support for this plan throughout, to provide the incentives and the discipline, or carrots and sticks, which are needed to make the plan work.

The promise of shared prosperity between the countries of the region is already implied in the Arab Peace Initiative. The full potential of that promise could be explained for the benefit of all stakeholders, especially ordinary men and women whose core interests should be at the heart of this process.

After the initial stocktaking and persuasion of key players, an international conference is needed to rally support globally and, equally important, work out the details of the guarantees and incentives needed during the different stages of implementation of the solution. The Global Alliance for the Implementation of the Two-State Solution provides the first step toward this goal. The GCC and the EU joined hands in launching this initiative and then expressed support for it last week in Brussels.

There will, of course, be obstacles and even potential spoilers. The Israeli govern-

ment, currently populated by some of the most extreme elements of Israeli politics, may not be easily persuaded. Iran also may see a resolution of the Palestine question as sidelining Tehran or even being at its expense. It may see Arab-Israeli normalization as strengthening Israel, its regional arch-rival.

The US should be able to persuade Israel of the value of reaching a deal, with a promise of peace and normalization with countries of the region and beyond. Strengthening the peace camp in Israel is also necessary. This can be done by providing Israelis with a credible alternative to the current endless cycle of violence. GCC-Iran diplomatic engagement could assuage Iran's fears regarding the deal. In addition to the long-standing bilateral diplomatic channels between Iran and the GCC countries, a new channel was started earlier this month. On Oct. 4, the foreign ministers of Iran and the six GCC countries met for the first time in Doha. Through these channels, the two sides could discuss Iran's concerns.

The GCC Regional Security Vision, issued in March, contains the promise of normalization with both Iran and Israel. The parameters for normalization with Israel have already been spelled out in the Arab Peace Initiative. The parameters for normalization with Iran have also been spelled out by the GCC in official correspondence with Tehran and in the meetings held with it over recent years.

Peace between Palestine and Israel could have the potential to defuse tensions in the region, including between Israel and Iran. Normalization with the GCC could help Iran focus its tremendous energies internally and help Iranian citizens and businesses to participate fully in the region's economic boom.

Sporting events face climate change issues

DRAWING attention to the second edition of Climate Cup, a football tournament in Ladakh, a recent Mongabay-India (MI) report highlights that this tournament aims to increase awareness about the environment and impacts of climate change on lives, livelihoods, and on sports. Over 11,000 feet above sea level and enveloped by mountains, six teams competed in the tournament to showcase that with increasing temperatures and extreme weather events, sporting events face challenges. Many professional football teams that participated were from states that also face climate impacts such as erratic rainfall, heat waves and sea level rise.

With increasing temperatures and extreme weather events becoming more frequent and intense, sporting events and sportspersons are facing challenges such as event cancellations or delays, damage to infrastructure, risks of accidents, and health risks such as heat stroke or erythema. The MI report also points out that sporting organisations around the world are tackling these challenges by altering the sports schedules. Some marathons are being

scheduled at night and in the early morning hours when it is cooler to protect the health of runners. The recent Paris Olympic Games also adopted flexibility in event schedules to avoid exposure to daily heat peaks, installed innovative cooling and shade areas and accurately monitored the temperature and humidity constantly, to ensure optimal performance for the athletes. The Climate Cup 2024 also avoided scheduling matches during the heat peak hours.

The MI report quotes Suhel Nair, the head coach of Assam-based professional football club, Northeast United Football Club saying that the global reach of football has increased, and the players are expected to perform wherever there are fans.

However, with that reach, comes the need for athletes to adapt quickly to climate impacts. Nair also added that it was becoming noticeably hotter to play during regular game hours. Most football matches are scheduled in the mornings and afternoons and take place under peak sunshine. To adapt to this, new rules have been introduced. While football is typically played in two halves of 45 minutes, in India, additional cooling breaks have been introduced to cope with

the heat. These breaks are scheduled around the 30th and 70th minutes, apart from the mandatory break at the 45th minute. Nair pointed out that the game was evolving, and so are the players, as they try to keep up with these climate-related changes while maintaining performance.

The MI report further states that several studies around the globe have highlighted the threat to sporting venues and infrastructure with the increase in global temperatures and extreme weather events.

Winter sports are already in trouble and as snow conditions turn unpredictable, several destinations are using artificial snow which is extremely expensive. Quoting a 2020 report titled ‘Playing against the clock’ by David Goldblatt, long-time sportswriter and researcher, the MI report points out that impacts of heat waves, drought, fires and air pollution, storms, sea-level rise, erosion, flooding and more, on big sporting events, and calls for urgent mitigation and adaptation measures. In his Introduction, Goldblatt issues a warning. Climate change is touching every aspect of human life and global sport is no exception: in 2019, the Rugby World

Cup was disrupted by unprecedented Pacific typhoons; in early 2020, the Australian Tennis Open was disrupted by the smoke from devastating bush fires. The Tokyo 2020 Olympics were forced to move long-distance running events north as the city's sweltering summer weather made it impossible to run.

As races, marathons, and triathlons get cancelled and rescheduled and stadiums get damaged due to extreme weather, researchers say that mitigation measures are nowhere close. While sporting events are impacted by climate change, sports also contribute to a significant portion of emissions. The travel by athletes and teams, travel by spectators, the energy needed to power the venue, catering and other purchases at the venue and their transport, and waste disposal, are some of the major contributors of emissions at big sporting events. Experts say that organisations and teams have also been slow to commit to the latest targets of the Sports for Climate Action Framework, created by the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change to halve GHG emissions by 2030 and reach net-zero GHG emissions by 2040.

How Harris and Trump compare on space policy

Dr. Amal Mudallali

TWO historic space events took place last week: SpaceX made history by successfully catching its returning Starship booster and NASA launched its Europa Clipper, the first mission to Jupiter's moon Europa, where it will look for signs of life. However, space policy has been missing from the policy debates in the 2024 presidential election.

It has been a remarkable year for space, with the entry of the private sector to space exploration and robust growth in the space economy. But there has been silence on the campaign trail about these developments. A tweet from NASA administrator Bill Nelson and an article he wrote for Newsweek are the only signs that the Biden administration is paying attention.

Aside from Nelson's announcement of the launch of Europa Clipper, there was no statement from the Harris campaign, but J.D. Vance, Donald Trump's vice-presidential candidate, tweeted about it. The only reminder of space in the last two weeks has been Elon Musk's campaigning for Trump.

This silence leaves space exploration advocates and the sector speculating about how each candidate plans to handle the issue if elected. Will space exploration, space security and the space economy be high on their agenda? Space is becoming an integral part of defense and security planning for many powers around the world, as it is designated by a number of countries as a war-fighting domain. It is also an arena for competition over access and resources.

Hence, space will inevitably be a pressing concern in any US presidential administration. Great and emerging power competition in space has ramped up due to the increasing number of powers going to space and landing on the moon, advancements in launch capabilities, the plummeting cost of launches and the growth of the space economy, which was valued at \$570 billion in 2023 by the Space Foundation. For the US, China's rapid rise has been the primary challenge. The two candidates for the Nov. 5 election both have a space background.

Vice President Kamala Harris is the head of the National Space Council and former President Trump had a vigorous space record during his first term. The space policy community emphasizes that space is a bipartisan issue. Both parties have committed to maintaining American superiority in space and addressing the growing threat posed by China. Despite this, space has rarely played a significant role in US elections or been high on the voters' agenda, even though public support for space exploration is strong.

The Republican Party platform offers a bullish agenda for space, promising a robust space economy, exploration and emphasizing partnerships. It promises a “manufacturing industry in Near Earth Orbit, sending American astronauts back to the moon, and onward to Mars, and enhancing partnerships” with the commercial space sector.

The Democratic platform focuses on supporting NASA and multilateral efforts, including the American presence on the International Space Station, and sending Americans back to the moon and to Mars. At the Democratic National Convention, Harris vowed to ensure that America leads “the world into the future on space and artificial intelligence,” outpacing China.

Republicans and Democrats differ on space priorities. One space expert who spoke on condition of anonymity told me that “the sense that Democrats are for Mars and the Republicans are for the moon is true.” He explained that

Republicans “tend to prioritize human space flight and moon exploration as a prestige project, while Democrats focus on Mars and environmental issues.”

There is more certainty on continuity in space policy during this election compared to 2020, when people were unsure “if President Biden would keep the Artemis program,” said Justin Park, a space industry entrepreneur. But to everybody's relief Biden kept the program intact, especially Artemis.

Each candidate is hailed by a different constituency. Nelson recently described Harris as a “space aficionado.” Some space luminaries, including former astronauts, established the “Space Cadets for Harris” group under the banner “To boldly go where no woman has gone before.”

However, others have criticized her limited engagement in the issue as head of the National Space Council. One space expert noted that the council now has a diminished role, with the National Security Council and the Office of Science and Technology Policy filling the gap. He said they “sat at the status quo and held few meetings.” This sentiment has been echoed in media reports, with Defense One quoting an anonymous industry executive as claiming that the National Security Council and not the National Space Council was setting military space policy.

The Biden-Harris administration has prioritized multilateral work on space, grown the Artemis program and spearheaded a UN resolution for a moratorium on anti-satellite weapons testing. Internationally, Harris is viewed positively by Europeans on key space issues. European diplomats I have spoken with expect her to “prioritize clear legal norms, promote stability and foster global partnerships.”

Trump, on the other hand, has a standout space record from his first term, including reinvigorating the National Space Council, establishing the Space Force and, most importantly, creating the Artemis program. With his close ties to Musk, some predict that a second Trump term would see a stronger push toward Mars, with significant influence from the SpaceX boss regarding future American space policy and goals.

At the UN, the international community is concerned that former President Trump might scale down, if not abandon, any collaboration on space, although his team was positively engaged in negotiations in all UN space processes.

Space policy expert Greg Autry, a professor at Central Florida University, predicted that the “US will continue to unilaterally interpret the Outer Space Treaty and the existing norms,” saying “we need a new treaty.”

The Europeans are concerned about a second Trump administration, fearing it may lead to a more unilateral approach in space policy. Challenges include fighting for NASA's budget, prioritizing its programs, overseeing the future of the International Space Station and managing a new era of the space economy with the help of the private sector.

There is a consensus that China is the major threat in space. Experts believe that countering Beijing and preserving American superiority is a bipartisan issue that will be at the top of the national security agenda of whoever wins the presidency. They do not expect major differences between them, except maybe on language.

But unlike Washington, the Europeans believe it is crucial to find a way to balance competition and cooperation with China. Finding balance in space policy will be a challenge to future US presidents and the world.

Any other CEO would have been fired for what Elon Musk just said

PART of the deal with being CEO is that you get a big paycheck in exchange for being the public face of a company. For most people, at most companies, that means, at minimum, trying not to make an ass of yourself in public.

Tweeting a Holocaust joke, for example, might very well get you booted. Punching down at marginalized communities? Also a bad look.

But the same rules don't apply if you're the richest person on the planet, running companies stacked with cronies.

ICYMI: On Monday, Elon Musk invoked the names of two German Nazis in a tweet while simultaneously disparaging modern pronoun conventions — attempting, as he so often does, to make a joke. (I'm not repeating the text here — not because it's profane, but mostly because it's just not funny.)

For context, Musk was responding to a post about a Der Spiegel article that compared him to a media mogul who helped Hitler

climb to power.

It was hardly Musk's first, and certainly not his most offensive, statement involving the Third Reich or their White supremacist progeny. Just last month, Musk promoted Tucker Carlson's widely condemned interview with a Nazi apologist who said the murder of Jews in concentration camps was "humane" and that Winston Churchill was the "chief villain" of World War II. Musk later deleted his X post that called the interview "very interesting" and "worth watching," per the Independent.

Representatives for X and Tesla didn't respond to CNN's request for comment.

Musk rarely deletes his social media posts, no matter how inflammatory. Also not deleted: the one where he reposted the "interesting observation" that women are incapable of independent thought and that only "alpha males" should make policy decisions.

And while he once apologized for his post endorsing an antisemitic conspir-

acy theory — the one that sparked an exodus of advertisers from X — he never deleted it, either.

The point is: Any other CEO of a major company could expect to be shown the door after airing any one these ideas. Or at least that was the case as recently as 2018, when more CEOs were forced out for "ethical lapses" than poor financial performance, according to a PwC study.

So why is Musk special?

It's partly because of the way he's structured his wealth and his companies.

Musk is the single biggest individual shareholder at Tesla, the only publicly traded business he owns. The second-largest individual shareholder is his brother, Kimbal Musk, who sits on the board. In fact, the entire Tesla board of directors is stacked with Musk allies who lack sufficient independence, according to a Delaware judge who in 2023 overturned Musk's \$55 billion pay package.

In other words, the only

folks with a fiduciary duty to keep Musk in line are, according to Judge Kathaleen McCormick, not exactly disinterested parties.

But even bullish Tesla investors are starting to get nervous about Musk's rhetoric online and his "dark MAGA" turn, which could lead to some awkward moments on Wednesday's earnings call. "The Musk/Trump dynamic has added to the agita of Tesla investors and it's not helping the demand issues in the US," Dan Ives, managing director at Wedbush Securities, told me. "Musk becoming more political is not bullish for the Tesla brand."

The other major source of Musk's wealth is SpaceX, a rocket manufacturer that's been tapped by NASA to resupply the International Space Station.

There are no public shareholders to worry about there, as SpaceX is a private company with virtually zero competition in the market. (Technically, it competes for space contracts with Boeing. But

given Boeing's disastrous last five-ish years, SpaceX probably isn't sweating the competition too much — especially after NASA called on SpaceX to return two Boeing astronauts from the space station after their space ship broke down.)

Litigation is a key part of the Musk playbook when it comes to any person or group challenging him or his businesses. Angry at advertisers for leaving his Nazi-tolerating social media site, Musk sued a nonprofit ad group out of existence. In fact, Musk and his companies have filed at least 23 lawsuits in federal courts alone since July of 2023, according to Fortune, targeting "competitors, startups, law firms, watchdog groups, individuals, the state of California, federal agencies, and pop star Grimes, who is the mother of three of his children."

Bottom line: When you have virtually unlimited money, you have practically unlimited power to play offense — in court, in the boardroom or on social media.

Trump, the EU and the appeal of Orbancracy

ON October 9, Hungarian Prime Minister Viktor Orbán addressed the European Parliament, outlining the priorities for the Hungarian presidency of the European Union Council. His speech was met with applause from one section of the parliament and a lot of boos from the rest; some MEPs even walked out before he started speaking.

Orbán has undoubtedly become a bete noire for Brussels's political mainstream, not least because of his unapologetic embrace of Vladimir Putin's Russia as well as China. Yet, over the years, he has also gathered a cult following in Eastern Europe and elsewhere.

The freshest example comes from North Macedonia. On September 26, the Hungarian leader received a hero's welcome as he met Hristijan Mickoski, his Macedonian counterpart, in the historic town of Ohrid. He brought a valuable gift to the hosts at the joint session of the two countries' cabinets: a loan

Macedonia. Now Orbán, the EU's longest-serving leader, claims he could right the wrong done to Skopje, using the weight of his experience and connections.

It is said that Russia's aggression against Ukraine revived EU enlargement. But right now, Putin's best friend in the Western club is, paradoxically, also the most vocal advocate for opening the gates of Europe for new countries to enter.

The likes of Mickoski, Serbia's President Aleksandar Vucic and Bidzina Ivanishvili, the "puppet master" of Georgia's political scene, see Orbán not just as a friendly figure inside the EU but also as a conduit to former US president and current presidential hopeful Donald Trump.

The Republican candidate makes no secret of his fondness for the Hungarian leader. He name-checked Orbán in last month's TV debate with the Democrat presidential nominee Kamala Harris. "Let me just

say about world leaders, Viktor Orbán, one of the most respected men, they call him a strong man. He's a tough person, smart prime minister of Hungary," Trump quipped.

And Trump is not alone. Many Republicans are thrilled about Orbán, a fellow warrior against "woke" elites and "uncontrolled" migration, and tend to overlook his ties to China and Russia. Orbán has been a steady presence at the high-profile Conservative Political Action Conference (CPAC). Its European edition has been held in Budapest. So many Eastern European politicians who are eager to have Trump on their side have Orbán as a port of call.

Orbán has positioned himself as an intermediary with China and Russia as well. Earlier this year, Chinese President Xi Jinping chose Hungary as one of the countries to visit during his European tour. And according to the investigative outlet VSquare, the Macedonian loan comes from Beijing, with Budapest being just a facilitator.

As Brussels seeks to "derisk" from China, Chinese firms — including battery makers which play a critical role in electric vehicles (EV) manufacturing — have been investing heavily in what they see as a Central European backdoor to the EU market.

In July, Orbán travelled to Moscow, claiming to be on a peace mission on

behalf of the 27-strong bloc. The Russian visit elicited strong criticism from member states and led to boycotts of ministerial meetings held by the Hungarian presidency. Despite the backlash, Orbán continues to tout a peace plan for Ukraine, which he maintains is a joint endeavour with China and Brazil.

The Hungarian prime minister's international ambitions have not been confined to Eastern Europe. Last month, his government announced the deployment of a military mission to Chad, ostensibly with the goal of stemming undocumented migration from sub-Saharan Africa to Europe.

Orbán may be boasting quite a few foreign policy feats, but his appeal has less to do with geopolitics and more to do with the governance model he personifies. Eastern Europeans of a conservative bent admire the fact that he was able to pick and choose from aspects of the post-1989 order according to his likes and dislikes.

Free trade, investment and generous subsidies from

Half of the money has been earmarked for local governments. Given that North Macedonia is to hold municipal elections in a year's time, this is a welcome electoral boost for Mickoski's VMRO-DPMNE. The right-wing, nationalist party won the national elections in May after a long hiatus. It hopes to hold on to power long-term with a helping hand from Orbán. The Hungarian prime minister used the trip to snipe at the EU, accusing it of hurting North Macedonia's "national pride" in reaction to the news that the country had been "decoupled" from neighbouring Albania in the process of joining the bloc. Orbán also pointed out that the Western Balkan state should have long been a member of the EU, a hint at the political hurdles Skopje has faced for three decades due to disputes with its neighbours. He offered his services as a mediator with Bulgaria, which has replaced Greece as the main naysayer to Macedonian EU membership. It was VMRO-DPMNE's opposition to amendments to insert a reference to Bulgarians as one of the communities in the country into the Macedonian constitution — an EU precondition for proceeding with accession — that resulted in Albania leapingfrogging North Macedonia. Now Orbán, the EU's longest-serving leader, claims he could right the wrong done to Skopje, using the weight of his experience and connections. It is said that Russia's aggression against Ukraine revived EU enlargement. But right now, Putin's best friend in the Western club is, paradoxically, also the most vocal advocate for opening the gates of Europe for new countries to enter.

say about world leaders, Viktor Orbán, one of the most respected men, they call him a strong man. He's a tough person, smart prime minister of Hungary," Trump quipped.

And Trump is not alone. Many Republicans are thrilled about Orbán, a fellow warrior against "woke" elites and "uncontrolled" migration, and tend to overlook his ties to China and Russia. Orbán has been a steady presence at the high-profile Conservative Political Action Conference (CPAC). Its European edition has been held in Budapest. So many Eastern European politicians who are eager to have Trump on their side have Orbán as a port of call.

Orbán has positioned himself as an intermediary with China and Russia as well. Earlier this year, Chinese President Xi Jinping chose Hungary as one of the countries to visit during his European tour. And according to the investigative outlet VSquare, the Macedonian loan comes from Beijing, with Budapest being just a facilitator.

As Brussels seeks to "derisk" from China, Chinese firms — including battery makers which play a critical role in electric vehicles (EV) manufacturing — have been investing heavily in what they see as a Central European backdoor to the EU market.

In July, Orbán travelled to Moscow, claiming to be on a peace mission on

Brussels — yes. LGBTQ rights or solidarity in dealing with migration — no. Having a say in EU institutions and the ability to veto common decisions and policies — yes. Transparency, the rule of law and the institutional checks on executive power which Brussels is pushing for — no. "Liberalism" out, state capture with a populist strongman at the helm — definitely in.

Serbia, Georgia, North Macedonia, Republika Srpska in Bosnia and Herzegovina — Team Orbán, in other words — have nothing against being part of the EU. They just want to be members that pick and choose, just like Orbán's Hungary.

Yet, at home, Orbancracy appears to be past its prime. The rest of the EU has tightened the screws, cutting billions in financial aid to Hungary. Orbán is facing a tough challenge by Peter Magyar, a former mayor, whose Respect and Freedom (Tiszsa) party is chipping away at Orbán's conservative electorate and now is running neck and neck in the opinion polls with the governing Fidesz. It is too early to predict what will happen in the next national elections in 2026, but Orbán will surely face stiff competition.

For now, though, he appears as strong as ever on the international stage. Lake Ohrid would be happy to have him back, no doubt.

Indonesia's new leader is the right man to awaken the 'sleeping giant'

THE US presidential election is understandably commanding enormous attention, but this week marks a significant new chapter in the world's third-largest democracy and fourth-most populous country, Indonesia, where the presidency of Prabowo Subianto was inaugurated on Sunday. We may soon be hearing rather more of his country.

Mr Prabowo will probably sit comfortably in office. A former special forces general during the 30-year-rule of his then father-in-law, Suharto, Mr Prabowo stood for the vice presidency once and the presidency twice before winning election in January this year. He served as defence minister since 2019 as part of the cabinet of his erstwhile opponent, Joko Widodo, who was considered to have implicitly endorsed his successor during the presidential contest, not least because Mr Joko's elder son was Mr Prabowo's running mate.

When I saw him being interviewed on stage in Doha in May, Mr Prabowo already had the air and confidence of a seasoned leader. And it was apt that it should have been in an international setting, for as his new Minister of Cultural Affairs, Fadli Zon, says: "Prabowo will be a foreign policy president and have a hands-on approach in dealing with foreign policy matters." Mr Prabowo's predecessor-but-one, Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono, made a similar prediction in June, posting on X in Indonesian: "Pak Prabowo, 'you are on the right track' and have become a 'foreign policy president'."

Good luck and carry on!" He praised Mr Prabowo's speech at the Shangri-La Dialogue, Asia's pre-eminent dialogue conference, as "strong and also beautiful".

Mr Joko never attended the UN General Assembly, and mostly left diplomacy to his foreign minister, Retno Marsudi. By contrast, Mr Prabowo has visited more than 20 countries since being elected this year, meeting leaders including President Sheikh Mohamed, China's Xi Jinping, Russia's Vladimir Putin, France's Emmanuel Macron and the heads of five governments within the Association of South-East Asian Nations.

It's natural that Mr Prabowo

feels at ease abroad: for most of his childhood, his family were living overseas, and he speaks French, German, English and Dutch. But wearing the mantle of an international statesman also appears to be second nature to him.

In June last year, he surprised his own government when he put forward a four-point proposal to end the war in Ukraine. He did so, he explained in an interview in January, because "the Global South is suffering disproportionately from the effects of this war even

Pointing out that his country had been one of the founders of the Non-Aligned Movement in 1961, Mr Prabowo said "advocating in favour of the Global South and developing nations, advocating for a world system that does not favour the developed North at the expense of the Global South, is in the DNA of our foreign policy". That may well be true. The change is that with Mr Prabowo, Indonesia may not have had a leader who is so ready to take a place on the world stage since its founding president, Sukarno. Earlier this year, he said: "It is only natural that as Indonesia develops, as it grows, it must assume the new responsibilities that come with its position as an emerging power." This, I would argue, is something that should be welcomed. Indonesia has a population of nearly 300 million people, it is the world's largest Muslim state, it is already the world's eighth-largest economy in terms of purchasing power parity, and many consider it to be on the cusp of a remarkable economic transformation. It's a plural, vibrant, multi-ethnic society, with a wealth of culture and a long tradition of moderation. Maybe it is time for Indonesia to take a more prominent role in international affairs. If so, cometh the hour, cometh the man?"

though it has nothing to do with it, and can in no way change what is happening". Indonesia, he said, needed "to play a more assertive role in shaping geopolitical events". Pointing out that his country had been one of the founders of the Non-Aligned Movement in 1961, Mr Prabowo said "advocating in favour of the Global South and developing nations, advocating for a world system that does not favour the developed North at the expense of the Global South, is in the DNA of our foreign policy". That may well be true. The

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Maybe it is time for Indonesia to take a more prominent role in international affairs. If so, cometh the hour, cometh the man?

I would say so. For Mr Prabowo's plan for Ukraine dealt with the reality of what appears to be a terrible, intractable stalemate.

He is firm about the need for the Israeli occupation of Palestinian lands to end. He is equally firm that Indonesia wants to continue to have "excellent relations" and maintain "important partnerships" with both China and the US.

"What I will not do as president is align Indonesia to one or the other. Indonesia is too big to be aligned to any other country. Indonesia can only be aligned to Indonesia's best interest," he said. There are many countries that would like to do and say exactly the same. They will be pleased if Indonesia, as a more assertive middle power under Mr Prabowo, provides them with a lead to follow.

There will be plenty of challenges at home, not least fulfilling Mr Prabowo's aim of reaching annual growth of 8 per cent. But the self-styled "continuity" candidate has reassured markets by retaining many of his predecessor's ministers, most notably Sri Mulyani Indrawati, the country's highly regarded finance minister.

And in reference to the allegations of human rights abuses relating to his time in the military — which organisations such as the BBC never stop claiming "have dogged him for decades" — Mr Prabowo has apologised to two former democracy activists from the late 1990s. He has also appointed one of them, Budiman Sujatmiko, to a key role as head of the Poverty Alleviation Acceleration Agency.

"We have both moved to the middle," said the one-time fiery radical, Mr Budiman. He also dismissed western sniping at Mr Prabowo. "Developed countries don't like leaders from developing countries who are brave, firm and strategic." I remember meeting Mr Budiman, and the new culture minister, Mr Fadli, in Jakarta 15 years ago. Who would have thought then that their time would come together, with the elevation of Mr Prabowo — who many then considered to be a tempestuous former general — to the presidency?

Perhaps the new leader has been following the saying he is fond of quoting: "A thousand friends are too few, one enemy is too many." If Mr Prabowo can manage to keep to that, both at home and abroad, many may be glad if the "sleeping giant" of South-East Asia is beginning to awaken.

The Rohingya caught in the crossfire of Myanmar's civil war

THE ongoing civil war in Myanmar has spiralled into a complex quagmire, with the Rohingya people, who have historically been marginalized and targeted for violence, now being dragged into a bloody conflict that poses a significant risk to their already precarious existence.

Ironically, some Rohingya groups, such as the Arakan Rohingya Salvation Army and the Rohingya Solidarity Organization, are aligning themselves with the junta against the Arakan Army, further complicating an already dire situation. This alignment could have devastating consequences for the Rohingya community, which has largely stayed out of the conflict until now.

Historically, the

Rohingya have been victims of ethnic cleansing, forced from their homes in Rakhine State into refugee camps and neighboring countries. In recent years, many have sought to avoid engaging in the violent struggles that define Myanmar's landscape. However, the emergence of the Arakan Army — a powerful ethnic armed group fighting for autonomy in Rakhine — has changed the dynamics on the ground. Faced with the potential threat posed by the Arakan Army to their already vulnerable position, some Rohingya groups have made the fateful decision to ally with the military regime, perceiving it as a lesser evil.

This decision is fraught with peril. The junta, which has committed egregious human rights violations against various

ethnic groups, is not a reliable ally. By siding with the military, the Rohingya risk further alienation from other ethnic groups and heightening hostilities, which could backfire catastrophically. The Arakan Army, which has significant support among the Rakhine people, is unlikely to forgive or forget this betrayal. The Rohingya's historical victimization has not erased the deep-seated animosities that persist in the region and siding with the junta could very well deepen the rift between the Rohingya and other ethnic communities.

The motivations behind these alliances are complex. The Rohingya groups' decision to engage in combat is driven by fear of the Arakan Army, which has been gaining ground in

Rakhine State. It has been accused of violence against civilians and has even targeted Rohingya communities, exacerbating the fragile state of affairs for the Rohingya people. In this context, the junta appears to offer a pragmatic, if morally questionable, solution for some Rohingya leaders. However, this is a dangerously shortsighted strategy that overlooks the broader implications of aligning with a military regime that has systematically oppressed the Rohingya for decades.

The irony of the situation is striking. The Rohingya, long considered one of the most persecuted minorities in the world, are now finding themselves in an adversarial position against

other ethnic groups in Myanmar. The junta is leveraging this situation to further its own ends, playing the Rohingya and the Arakan Army off against each other while continuing its brutal campaign against both. In doing so, it risks deepening the already significant ethnic divides in Myanmar, a country that has long been characterized by its complex and often violent interethnic relationships.

The Rohingya people's involvement in the conflict does not merely risk their own safety; it threatens to exacerbate the humanitarian crisis in Myanmar. Many Rohingya communities are already living in dire conditions, with limited access to basic necessities

like food, healthcare and shelter. By engaging in conflict, these groups could further jeopardize humanitarian efforts, drawing international attention away from the plight of the Rohingya and shifting it toward the broader conflict between the junta and various ethnic armed groups.

Furthermore, this strategy could isolate the Rohingya from the growing international support that has emerged for their cause. Human rights organizations and various governments have condemned the junta's actions against the Rohingya, but by aligning with the military these groups risk losing that critical support. The international community is unlikely to look favorably upon a group that chooses to side with an oppressive regime, no

matter the circumstances.

In essence, the Rohingya's involvement in Myanmar's civil war is a tragic example of how desperation can lead to catastrophic decisions. The groups that choose to align with the junta may believe they are securing a form of protection against the Arakan Army, but they are in fact trading one form of oppression for another. The consequences of such a choice could reverberate through the community for generations, as they find themselves trapped in a cycle of violence and retaliation.

The plight of the Rohingya should serve as a warning for all stakeholders in Myanmar. The complexity of ethnic relations, the consequences of aligning with oppressive regimes and the importance of maintaining a

focus on humanitarian needs cannot be overstated. As the conflict in Myanmar continues to evolve, it is imperative that the international community pays close attention to the dynamics at play, working to ensure that the Rohingya are not further marginalized in a conflict they never asked to be a part of.

The Rohingya deserve better than to be caught in the crossfire of a conflict that threatens to consume them. As history has shown, alliances built on fear and desperation often lead to further suffering. Instead, the Rohingya need support in their quest for recognition, dignity and a future free from violence — an outcome that can only be achieved through dialogue, understanding and a commitment to peace.

Dr. Azeem Ibrahim



Pakistan's textiles, leather industries to emerge stronger, resilient, more competitive: Minister

KARACHI (APP): Federal Minister for Commerce on Wednesday said that we are confident that Pakistan's textiles and leather industries will emerge stronger, resilient, and more competitive, through coordinated efforts between the public and private sectors.

He expressed these views while addressing as chief guest in the inaugural ceremony of the fifth edition of International Textiles and Leather Flagship Exhibition (TEXPO) of Pakistan being held from October 23 to 25 at the Expo Center Karachi.

On the occasion, the Federal Commerce Minister Jam Kamal Khan along with Sindh chief minister Syed Murad Ali Shah, Governor Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Faisal Kareem Kundi, and Chairman Trade Development Authority of Pakistan (TDAP) Zubair Motiwala performed the digital inauguration of the Texpo 2024.

Jam Kamal Khan said this exhibition is an excellent opportunity to strengthen the existing relationships and forge new partnerships, ensuring mutual growth and success for all stakeholders.

He said that we are working closely with the private sector to promote value addition and product diversification, particularly in non-cotton apparel, performance/active wears, technical textiles, sports and high fashion shoes, leather accessories, while promoting the concepts of circular economy and use of smart and sustainable materials.

He said that we are also focusing on enhancing our design capabilities (replacing the physical samples to 3D prototypes) and creating high-end products that command premium quality in international markets.

The Federal Commerce Minister said that Ministry of Commerce, through its Export Development Fund (EDF), is also financially supporting businesses in terms of trade promotion, marketing, image building, infrastructure development, skill development and improving ESG compliances.

He said that in this transformative journey, the Government of Pakistan stands as a firm partner to the industry. We are focused on creating a conducive business environment that fosters investments in new technologies and infrastructure, encourage product diversification, support sustainable manufacturing, and ensure that our exporters have support needed to access new markets and enhance economy of scales, he added.

He said that we are also scaling up the efforts in skills development, ensuring that our workforce is equipped with the expertise necessary to handle emerging technologies and future needs.

He expressed confidence that the future of Pakistan's textiles and leather sectors is bright. Sustainability, innovation, and digitization are at the heart of this future, he said.

He said that with the adoption of eco-friendly techniques, embracing circular economy principles, and driving investments in latest technologies, Pakistan is positioning itself for sustainable and value-added textiles and leather production.

He said that Pakistan is at the forefront of embracing trends like digital transformation in supply chains and e-commerce, which are unlocking new opportunities for growth. We envision Pakistan in setting benchmark for environmentally responsible manufacturing and ethical labor practice, he added.

The Federal Minister welcomed the foreign delegates in the TEXPO and said, that we are honored to host over 52 countries, which is not only a testament to Pakistan's vital role in the global textiles, apparel and leather industries but also a commitment to advancing these sectors towards a brighter and sustainable future. The contributions and ideas exchanged over the next few days will undoubtedly shape the future of our industries, improving the lives of millions around the world, he said.

He said that over the next three days, the delegates will have the unique opportunity to witness cutting-edge innovations and explore Pakistan's world-class products. Engage with industry experts and leaders who are at the forefront of these dynamic sectors, and uncover new business opportunities and partnerships.

He said that the textile and leather industries play a vital role in Pakistan's economy, contributing more than 60 percent to our national exports. The strong position of textiles and leather manufacturing in Pakistan has historically been driven by availability of skilled workforce and local supply of major input materials which underpin the sector's comparative advantage, he said.

He said that the sector has had a unique distinction of consistently building intensive backward and forward linkages which translate into a vertically integrated industrial value chain.

He said that Pakistan has made significant strides in diversifying its product base. It has over time built on its strengths leading to higher value-added product-mix, besides enhanced export volumes and labor absorption. Over the past decade, there has been a consistent increase in exports of apparel and home textiles from Pakistan, he said.

He said that we now offer a vast array of products, including high-quality apparel, technical textiles, home textiles, and specialized fabrics, which are contributing substantially to our exports. However, there is more room for further enhancement and expansion.

He said that Pakistan's strength is not limited to value-added goods produced from cotton fiber alone. With advancements in technology and infrastructure, Pakistan domestically produces a wide range of synthetic, blended and functional raw materials, intermediates, and finished products in manmade fiber segment, he said.

Jam Kamal Khan said that Pakistan foresees much expansion in this segment supported by strength of international demand.

He said that Pakistan's exporters have, in the recent years, demonstrated a strong and significant commitment to Environment, Social and Governance practices.

The sector is undergoing a profound transformation and is positioning itself for robust export growth, he said.

He said that individual companies are adopting traceability technologies to consciously champion supply chain transparency in alignment with global requirements. Under Net Zero Pakistan initiative, the leading companies are committed to accelerating transition to sustainability and delivering the Net Zero goal by 2050, he said.

He said that in tandem with the leading manufacturers, SMEs are stepping up to adapt and align their manufacturing facilities and processes with global standards.

He said that the Government's commitment to ESG principles emphasizes, inter alia, cleaner production, green energy and water-saving technologies. National level frameworks and collaborations are in place which mandate compliance with specific effluent and emission standards and emphasize greenhouse gas reporting for industries like textiles and leather, he added.

He said that the Government of Pakistan, in collaboration with international partners (like ILO, GIZ, IFC, Better Cotton, GIZ, UNIDO, UNEF, etc.) also spearheads ESG initiatives as a responsible player in the global arena.

Further, Pakistan is also strengthening its compliance mechanisms and has established National Compliance Center (NCC) to facilitate stakeholders to embrace compliances at par with international and national standards, he said.

He said that we are fully aware that textiles and leather sector faces significant challenges. The global

economic uncertainty, shifting consumer demands, rising costs of raw materials, and fluctuating energy prices have created headwinds for our industry. However, technological advancements and evolving standards in sustainability and compliance have raised the bar for global competitiveness, he said.

He said that in 2022, climate change-induced floods devastated vast cotton-growing areas and disrupted supply of local inputs in Pakistan. The textiles and leather sector today are on a robust path to recovery and regaining their lost ground in the aftermath of strong external and internal shocks, he

said. He said that the current IMF financial agreement, improvement in international rating, inflation and interest rates going down and stock exchange are reaching new heights.

He expressed gratitude to all the foreign delegates who have traveled from around the world to join the Texpo-2024 and said their presence is a powerful symbol of our shared commitment to the future of these industries.

He also appreciated all the exhibitors, organizers, and committees who have worked tirelessly to make TEXPO 2024 a success.

Earlier, the Chairman TDAP Zubair Motiwala in

his address, welcomed the foreign delegates in the event.

He said that we are supplier to all the brands in the world and we produce quality goods.

He said that the delegates who are participating in the event are now like of ambassadors of Pakistan and called upon them to share their experiences in the Pakistan globally.

The CM Sindh Syed Murad Ali Shah said the Texpo provides opportunities to our craftsmen to show their talents to the world.

He said that the main destinations of the leader and textile products are Europe and United States

and both are friendly with Pakistan.

Governor Khyber-Pakhtunkhwa, Faisal Kareem Kundi in his address expressed confidence that the delegates participating in the event will also promote the soft image of Pakistan to the world.

On the occasion, Chairman TDAP Zubair Motiwala presented souvenirs to the Federal Commerce Minister, Jam Kamal Khan and Sindh CM Syed Murad Ali Shah.

Later, Federal Commerce Minister, Jam Kamal Khan and Sindh CM Syed Murad Ali Shah and others visited the stalls set up in various halls at Karachi Expo Center.



KARACHI: Federal Minister for Commerce and Industry Jam Kamal Khan, Sindh Chief Minister Syed Murad Ali Shah, Governor KP Faisal Kareem Kundi and Chairman TDAP Zubair Motiwala performing digital inaugural of Fifth International Textile and Leather Exhibition Texpo 2024 at Expo center.

Passenger thanks airport management

F.P. Report

KARACHI: The lady passenger arrived at Quetta International Airport QIAP from Dubai on flight FZ 345. After her exit from the airport, an unattended trolley bag was discovered at the customs search machine in the International Arrival Lounge.

The Acting Terminal Manager, accompanied by officials from customs, Anti-Narcotics Force (ANF), and Airport Security Force (ASF), took immediate possession of the bag. A detailed inventory was compiled, revealing the bag contained valuable items including 2 sets of gold jewelry, 2 gold earrings, various pieces of artificial jewelry, 1 ladies' suit and other personal items.

The airport management contacted the passenger via a cell phone number traced through the airline, ensuring a quick resolution to the matter.

Subsequently, upon returning to the airport, the terminal manager returned all items, along with the bag, to the passenger.

The passenger and her relatives expressed their heartfelt gratitude to the airport management, commending the efficiency and professionalism demonstrated by officials during the incident.

PFC team to attend Paris Expo

LAHORE (APP): The Pakistan Furniture Council (PFC) delegation will participate in the three-day Paris Expo, commencing from November 5. The event provides an international platform for showcasing Pakistan's high-quality furniture and craftsmanship.

According to spokesperson, led by CEO Mian Kashif Ashfaq, aims to explore business opportunities, establish international partnerships, and promote the country's furniture industry on the global stage.

The expo will feature various exhibitors from around the world, offering PFC members a chance to network, exchange knowledge, and showcase innovative designs, contributing to the growth and recognition of Pakistan's furniture sector globally.

Pakistan earns US \$111m from travel services' export in July-August

ISLAMABAD (APP): Pakistan earned US \$111.313 million by providing different travel services in various countries during the two months of the fiscal year 2024-25.

This shows an increase of 4.99 per cent as compared to the US \$106.020 million worth same services provided during the corresponding months of the last fiscal year 2023-24, the Pakistan Bureau of Statistics (PBS) reported.

During the months under review, personal travel

services increased by 4.82 per cent, from US \$104.380 million last year to US \$109.411 million during July-August 2024-25.

Among these personal services, the exports of health-related expenditure rose by 4.82 per cent while the education-related expenditure increased by 61.37 per cent.

In addition, the other personal services witnessed a surge of 2.34 per cent.

Meanwhile, the exports of business services grew by 16 per cent, from US\$

1.640 million to US\$ 1.902 million, the PBS data revealed.

It is pertinent to mention here that the exports of services during July-August 2024-25 were recorded at US\$ 1.252 billion against the exports of US\$ 1.250 billion in July-August 2023-24, showing an increase of 0.13 per cent.

The imports of the country decreased by 0.45 per cent, declining from US\$ 1.732 billion last year to US\$ 1.724 billion during the months under review.

SMEDA organizes awareness session

LAHORE (APP): The Small and Medium Enterprises Development Authority (SMEDA) conducted the 'Industry 4.0' training session for apparel and textile sector at the Pakistan Readymade Garments Manufacturers & Exporters Association (PRGMEA) premises, here on Wednesday.

The session was attended by a large number of participants, including PRGMEA leadership and industry experts.

Presentations were delivered by Mubeen Abid

from the Industry Support Cell, SMEDA, and Abdul Moiz from WIMETRIX, covering crucial insights into Industry 4.0 technologies and their application in the textile industry. The session generated strong interest from the participants, reflecting the sector's readiness for digital transformation.

The event was graced by Mukesh Kumar, Provincial Chief of SMEDA Sindh, who appreciated Mr. Mubeen's excellent work. Shaikh Shafiq Jhokwala, Patron-in-Chief PRGMEA,

presented an Appreciation Crest to the SMEDA team leader Mr. Mukesh Kumar in recognition of SMEDA's contributions. Amir Amin Kothawala, Chairman Central PRGMEA, and Aamir Chottani, Chairman South Zone PRGMEA, also commended the efforts of the SMEDA team.

The workshop is a part of SMEDA's ongoing commitment to advancing Industry 4.0 adoption and supporting Pakistan's manufacturing sector in embracing digital transformation.

Pakistan Stock Exchange reaches historic level of 87,194.54 points

ISLAMABAD (APP): Positive sentiments prevail over the 100-Index of the Pakistan Stock Exchange (PSX) for third consecutive day on Wednesday and continued with bullish trend, gaining 727.96 more points, a positive change of 0.84 percent, reaching all time high level of 87,194.54 points against 86,466.58 points on the last trading day.

A total of 699,294,030 shares were traded during the day as compared to 722,209,194 shares the previous trading day, whereas the price of shares stood at Rs26.824 billion against Rs25.024 billion on the last trading day.

As many as 447 companies transacted their shares in the stock market, 214 of them recorded gains and 173 sustained losses, whereas the share price of 60 companies remained unchanged.

The three top trading

companies were K-Electric Limited with 207,635,816 shares at Rs4.67 per share, WorldCall Telecom with 42,917,587 shares at Rs1.29 per share and Pak International Bulk with 33,969,303 shares at Rs5.96 per share.

Unilever Pakistan foods Limited witnessed a maximum increase of Rs96.84 per share price, closing at Rs18,263.67, whereas the runner-up was Siemens (Pakistan) Engineering with Rs92.57 rise in its per share price to Rs1,018.23.

Rafhan Maize Products Company Limited witnessed a maximum decrease of Rs61.88 per share closing at Rs7,300.00 followed by Pakistan Engineering Company Limited with Rs28.60 decline to close at Rs896.39.

Rupee gains 01 paisa against dollar
Pakistanian rupee on Wednesday gained 01 paisa against the US dollar in the

interbank trading and closed at Rs277.72 against the previous day's closing of Rs277.73.

However, according to the Forex Association of Pakistan (FAP), the buying and selling rates of the dollar in the open market stood at Rs277.30 and Rs278.80 respectively.

The price of Euro decreased by Rs1.44 to close at Rs299.46 against the last day's closing of Rs300.90, according to the State Bank of Pakistan (SBP).

The Japanese yen came down by 02 paisa and closed at Rs1.82, whereas a decrease of Rs 1.07 was witnessed in the exchange rate of the British Pound, which traded at Rs360.07 as compared to the last day's closing of Rs361.14.

The exchange rate of the Emirates Dirham remained unchanged and closed at Rs 75.61 and the Saudi Riyal increased by 01 paisa to

close at Rs73.96.

Gold prices up by Rs2,000 to Rs285,400 per tola

The price of 24 karat per tola gold increased further by Rs2,000 and was sold at highest-ever rate at Rs285,400 on Wednesday compared to its sale at Rs283,400 on last trading day.

The price of 10 grams of 24 karat gold also increased by Rs1,714 to Rs244,684 from Rs242,970 whereas the price of 10 gram 22 karat gold went up to Rs224,294 from Rs222,722, the All Sindh Sarafa Jewellers Association reported.

The price of per tola silver increased by Rs200 to Rs3,350 whereas that of ten gram silver went up by Rs171.46 to Rs2,872.08.

The price of gold in the international market increased by \$20 to \$2,757 from \$2,737, the Association reported.

Aurangzeb hails China's positive response on debt re-profile

ISLAMABAD (APP): Federal Minister for Finance and Revenue, Senator Muhammad Aurangzeb hailed China's positive response on Pakistan's request to extend debt repayment periods for projects under the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI).

In an interview with Bloomberg, on the sidelines of the annual meetings of the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and World Bank, Aurangzeb said that the South Asian nation was looking to increase the maturities for debt taken for power plants to "create enough space" to lower electricity prices.

"We have just started that discussion and the response is encouraging,"

Aurangzeb said. "These are early days in terms of those negotiations."

The former JP Morgan Chase & Co. banker discussed debt with Chinese officials during a July visit to China.

Aurangzeb emphasized the need for Pakistan to maintain fiscal discipline and increase the tax-to-GDP ratio from below 10% to 13.5%.

Pakistan has been a regular borrower, having engaged in 25 programs with the IMF. Ideally, the government plans to initiate discussions on obtaining additional financing from the IMF through its climate resiliency fund during the Pakistani delegation's time at the meetings in Washington, he said.

To reach its goal, Pakistan will target sectors such as retail and agriculture, which have previously opposed taxation. The provinces will move forward with legislation related to agriculture by January, aiming to start tax collection by July, he added.

Pakistan has been a flagship destination for China's Belt and Road Initiative, which has provided lending to developing countries and helped the nation overcome decades-long electricity blackout issues.

It is now seeking to extend the maturity of debt for nine power plants built by Chinese companies under the multibillion-dollar economic corridor. Pakistan's period of sta-

bility has seen consumer price increases decelerate to their lowest level in almost four years. The country's short-term local government bonds are set for their first annual inflow from foreign investors in five years, buoyed by high yields and a stable rupee.

The benchmark stock index has risen 70% in the past 12 months, making it the world's best performer. Additionally, Pakistan's central bank has cut its benchmark interest rate for three consecutive meetings by 450 basis points, reducing it to 17.5% from a record 22%.

Aurangzeb indicated that the next meeting on November 4th may see the central bank further reduce the policy rate.

Shipping activity at Port Qasim

KARACHI (APP): Shipping activity was reported at the port where five ships, MSC Mundra-VIII, Atlantic Ibis, Rasha, Alea and Mariman scheduled to load/offload Container, Cement, Rice and Coalberthed at Qasim International Container Terminal, Multi-Purpose Terminal, Grain Terminal and Pakistan International Bulk Terminal respectively.

A total of twelve ships were engaged at POA berths during the last 24 hours, out of them a containership 'Atlantic Ibis' left the port on today morning while five more ships, Maersk Sentosa, MSC Mundra-VIII, Cl-Huaiyang, Orange Victoria and Ellan Manx are expected to sail on today.

Cargo volume of 123,725 tonnes, comprising 90,308 tonnes imports and 33,417 tonnes export cargo carried in 2,087 Containers (666 TEUs Imports & 1,421 TEUs Export) was handled at the port during last 24 hours.

There are 11 ships at Outer Anchorage of Port Qasim, out of them two ships, Madha Silver and Bam Bam & two more ships, MSC Positano and Maersk Cape Town carrying Palm oil, Gas oil and Container are expected to take berths at LCT, FOTCO and QICT respectively on today, while two more container ships, Torrente and San Diego Bridge are due to arrive at port on Thursday.

Court Notice

In the Court of Jauhar Ali Safi Civil Judge I. Alaqa Qazi Buner at Daggar, Suit No.198/1.Institution 22/5/2024. Date of hearing, 16/11/2024. Peer Malak Shah VS Gul Dad Shah.Notice to No.2/2.Mian Ladad Shah.5.Abdullah s/o Bughdad Shah. 9.Ali Dad Shah.11.Yusaf Amen resident of Ashezo Mera district Buner.Whereas in the above mentioned case the mentioned defendants can not be served in the ordinary way, it is, therefore, proclaimed that if the said defendants will/shall not appear personally or through dually authorized agent or pleader in the court at 8.00 am dated 16/11/2024 the proceeding will be taken ex parte. Given under my hand and seal of this Court.



In brief

Blind cricket tourney starts in Bahawalpur

BAHAWALPUR (APP): Under the auspices of the Pakistan Blind Cricket Council, Blind Cricket Super League has started at here Dring Stadium Bahawalpur. President Bahawalpur Cricket Club For the Blind Usman Saeed told the media here that they were thankful to the Punjab government for extending cooperation in organizing blind cricket tournament here in Bahawalpur. "The participants of Blind Cricket Super League appreciate the provincial government for playing remarkable role in organising a tournament for blind cricketers here in Bahawalpur," he said. He said that cricket teams from other provinces including Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Balochistan and Sindh had also been participating in the tournament, adding that cricket teams from other regions of Punjab province would also participate in the Blind Cricket Super League. He revealed that Presidential Award Winner Cricketer, Masood Jaan would play his role as Coach. He added that final of the tournament would be played on October 28.

Pakistan name squad for Test

ISLAMABAD (APP): Pakistan have confirmed their Playing XI for the third Test against England, set to take place at Rawalpindi Cricket Stadium from Thursday. The squad includes Playing XI for the Third Test: Saim Ayub, Abdullah Shafique, Shan Masood (C), Kamran Ghulam, Saud Shakeel (VC), Mohammad Rizwan (WK), Salman Ali Agha, Aamir Jamal, Noman Ali, Sajid Khan and Zahid Mehmood. Meanwhile, the toss will take place at 9:30am on Thursday, with the first ball to be bowled at 10am. The series is poised at 1-1, following two thrilling Tests in Multan. England dominated the first Test, securing a convincing innings and 47-run victory. Pakistan bounced back strongly in the second Test, winning by 152 runs.

Pakistan Scrabble on the rise: Tariq

ISLAMABAD (APP): Pakistan Scrabble Association (PSA) Director Tariq Pervez has expressed his enthusiasm for the game's remarkable growth in Pakistan, driven by a significant surge in participation and outstanding performances in global competitions. "Scrabble is spreading like wildfire in Pakistan, with our major tournaments attracting a multiplying number of participants each year," Pervez told APP. "We've seen a remarkable response in our inter-school championship in Karachi, with over 1,500-2,000 players participating regularly. We now have regular scrabble tournaments in Lahore, Islamabad, Peshawar, Quetta, Badin and other cities. Pakistan was the host for the world Championship and World Youth Championship played online during the COVID years," he said. Pervez highlighted Pakistan's impressive record in youth scrabble, winning multiple World Youth Championships and Junior World Championships, as well as other prestigious titles like the Princess Cup and Causeway Challenge. Adult players have also made their mark, with Waseem Khatri, Moiz Baig, and Hammad Hadi securing international titles in recent years. To further boost the game's growth, Pervez emphasized the need for higher authorities to take interest and establish scrabble activities at the grassroots level.

Shaheens crush UAE to reach Emerging Asia Cup semi-final

AL AMERAT (Monitoring Desk): Mohammad Haris' blistering 71-run knock, followed by Shah Nawaz Dahani's five-wicket haul steered Pakistan Shaheens to a crushing 114-run victory against United Arab Emirates (UAE) in the ACC Men's T20 Emerging Teams Asia Cup 2024 here on Wednesday.

After opting to bat first, Shaheens racked up 179-4 in the allotted 20 overs as Haris notched an unbeaten 71 off 49 balls. Opening batters Omair Bin Yousuf (21, 11b, 2x4s, 2x6s) and Yasir Khan (25, 13b, 3x4s, 2x6s) departed inside the Powerplay where Shaheens amassed 49 runs for the loss of two wickets.

Mohammad Haris, who walked into bat after two overs, kept the Shaheens innings intact as he put on 62 runs for the third wicket with Qasim Akram (23, 28b, 1x6).

UAE's Muhammad Farooq produced a double blow in the 14th over when he dismissed Qasim and Abdul Samad to leave Shaheens 112-4.

Haris was then joined by Haider Ali as the duo accounted for an unbeaten 67-run fifth-wicket partnership.

Haris hit six fours and three sixes while Haider slammed as many sixes and one four in his 17-ball 32 not out.

For UAE, Farooq was the only successful bowler as he returned for 3-27 in his four overs. In reply, UAE lost wickets at regular intervals as they only managed 28-3 in the first six overs as Dahani struck thrice.

Skipper Rahul Chopra, batting at No. 5, top-scored for his team with 20 off 18 balls hitting three fours while Tanish Suri (15, 15b, 3x4s) and Syed Haider (12, 16b, 1x6) were the only other batters to reach double figures.

Dahani registered his career-best T20 bowling figures when he dismissed Akif Raja in the 15th over, finishing with 5-12 in four overs including two maidens.

Sufiyan Moqim picked up two wickets while Ahmed Daniyal, Mohammad Abbas Afridi and Arafat Minhas dismissed one batter each. The commanding triumph over UAE, sealed Pakistan Shaheens' spot in the semi-finals of the ACC Men's T20 Emerging Teams Asia Cup 2024, set to take place on Friday, 25 October.

Multan Football Stadium set for 396 million upgrade on ancient mound

MULTAN (APP): The old football stadium that rests on the historical Qasim Fort mound in the heart of city with centuries old monuments around, is undergoing up-gradation and modernization under a Rs 396 million project and officials believe the investment would reshape the facility like a new one once it is completed October 2025.

Deputy commissioner Waseem Hamid Sindhu visited the football stadium on Wednesday to oversee rehabilitation related construction work and was informed that the stadium would be ready to host matches once it is completed in October next. The stadium would have a modern pavilion with additional seating arrangements for 250-300 more spectators above it, district sports officer Feroq Latif told APP. The DC visited under construction pavilion, parking area, and floodlights installation. He said that work on pavilion, shops around the stadium, floodlights was in progress while the new water supply scheme, drainage system and public toilets has been completed.

Waseem Hamid Sindhu said that Punjab government was paying special attention to promoting sports in and executing development projects in various parts of the province to provide healthy recreational facilities to youth. It would help facilitate raw football talent to come forward and serve the country, he added. The seating arrangements is being repaired and decorated with colors, however, its overall capacity of 15000 spectators would increase marginally by a few hundred more seats. Earlier, there used to be four rooms in the name of pavilion which were demolished some time back to pave the way for remodeling. The football stadium had also hosted international cricket matches many years ago including the one involving a tragic incident during a Test match between Pakistan and West Indies in 1980 when speedster Sylvester Clarke had thrown a brick towards the crowd that had hit a student Shafiq (22) after the fast bowler had faced small stones.

Security 2000, MP/Sheikhoo, Newage, TN dominate day 3 of Smart City Polo

LAHORE (Monitoring Desk): Security 2000, Master Paints/Sheikhoo Steel, Newage Cables and Total Nutrition dominated the third day of the Lahore Smart City Polo in Pink Tournament, organized by Lahore Polo Club.

Present at the event were officials from Lahore Smart City, Pink Ribbon Pakistan, families, Lahore Polo Club President Malik Azam Hayat Noon, executive committee members, and others. In the first match of the day, Security 2000 defeated Rijas/Barry's team 7-4½. For Security 2000, Muhammad Ali emerged as top scorer with a contribution of a fabulous five goals, while Mir Huzaifa Ahmed, playing in place of Farhad Shaikh, thrashed in two goals. For Rijas/Barry's, Mohib Faisal Shehzad converted two goals, while Muntaz Abbas and Nafees Barry struck one goal each.

The second match saw Master Paints/Sheikhoo Steel triumph over Crew Logix Technologies with a score of 9-5. For Master Paints, Raja Temur Nadeem and Maria Candelaria each hammered a hat-trick of goals while Sufi Haroon banged in a brace and Osman Aziz Anwar scored one goal. From Crew Logix Technologies, Malik Ali Kuli Khan, Haris Haroon Malik, and Mahnum Faisal each scored a goal, while they had a two-goal handicap advantage.

In another exciting match of the day, Newage Cables overpowered Olympia 9-4. For Newage Cables, Raja Samiullah smashed in superb six goals, and Alman Jaleel Azam, Adnan Jaleel Azam, and Jade Wheeler contributed with one goal each.

The day's last match proved a high-scoring affair, where Total Nutrition outpaced Nurpur Bandobast by a good margin of 13-8½. From the winning team, Saqib Khan Khakwani emerged as top scorer as he fired in five fabulous goals while Eesha Haye and Usman Haye thrashed in three goals each, and Ahmed Zubair Butt banged in a brace. From the losing side, the major contribution came from Taimur Hayat Noon with a contribution of five goals while his teammate Gussey banged in a brace.

Four important matches are scheduled for Thursday (October 23, 2024). At 12:30 PM, Lahore Smart City will face One Degree. At 1:30 PM, FG/Din Polo will compete against SQ Seagold. At 2:30 PM, Black Horse Paints will play against Diamond Paints, and at 3:30 PM, Guard Group/Zaki Farms will take on Platinum Homes.

Gillespie confident of Pakistan's chances in series decider



Pakistan Head Coach Jason Gillespie is holding a press conference.

ISLAMABAD (APP): Pakistan men's red-ball Head Coach Jason Gillespie has exuded confidence in his team's preparation ahead of the third and final Test against England at Rawalpindi Cricket Stadium, beginning Thursday. "We maintain open communication with our players, discussing their games and strategies for improvement. Our support staff has fostered strong relationships, creating a conducive environment for growth," Gillespie said in a press conference on Wednesday at Rawalpindi Cricket Stadium ahead of the third Test match. Regarding Abrar Ahmed's health, Gillespie said, "There's still

no update but I've been in touch with him, and he's recovering well."

Gillespie acknowledged Pakistan's recent Test cricket struggles but expressed pride in the team's progress. "Any win is significant, and we're doing well as a support staff, focusing on key areas."

Following the first Test defeat in Multan, Gillespie noted that it was decided that a new selection panel will come in and make decisions. "As head coach, my focus remains on the players and let the selectors do their job. We'll concentrate on playing our best cricket."

Gillespie outlined Pakistan's strategy to combat England's spinners. "England have got young spinners in early stages of their career and then they have got Jack Leach who is a must more experienced bowler, so they have got good options. Our batters are very clear what their plans. Hopefully we can put England bowlers under pressure and post some really good total in this Test match," he said.

He praised England's Harry Brook, saying, "He's a fine player, but we managed to dismiss him in both innings. Every day, we play Test cricket, is an opportunity to learn and improve." Meanwhile, England Skipper Ben Stokes shared his thoughts on the Pindi



England captain Ben Stokes is holding a press conference.

Stadium pitch and his team's preparation ahead of the third and final Test against Pakistan.

"The wicket looks good for batting, but it might change as the game progresses. The longer we play, the more spin will come into play," he said. Stokes described the team's last training session

as an opportunity to "mix things up and create positive vibes" after a long tour. To a question, Stokes replied, "Scoring 800 runs on any wicket would be wonderful, but we'll assess the pitch's conditions and adjust our strategy accordingly. We need to see how the bowlers fare and take the game from there."

Zimbabwe's 344 for 4 breaks the record for highest T20 total

NAIROBI (Agencies): Zimbabwe shattered the record for the highest total in T20 cricket on Wednesday when they ran up 344 for 4 against Gambia in the men's T20 World Cup Africa sub-regional qualifier tournament. Sikandar Raza spearheaded the effort with a century - Zimbabwe's first one ever in the format - off just 33 balls.

He eventually finished unbeaten on 133, with 15 sixes. His team-mates hit 12 more to set that record as well. Until now, Nepal had been the holders of the highest total (314) and the most sixes hit in an innings (26). Gambia in return were bundled out for 54 as Zimbabwe also posted the biggest-ever win (in terms of runs) in T20s.

The Ruaraka Sports Club Ground in Nairobi witnessed history on Wednesday with Zimbabwe showing great intent right from the first ball they faced. They brought up fifty in 3.2 overs. Tadiwanashe Marumani brought his up quicker, in just 13 balls. The team hundred was up before the powerplay was done and from there on it was an exercise of how



Sikandar Raza hit a century off 33 balls.

far they could send the ball into the stands. There were 57 boundaries in the innings overall - which is also a T20 record - with four

Zimbabwe batters contributing fifty-plus scores - another record. Brian Bennett made 50 of 26 and Clive Mandande got to 53 off 17

by hitting the final ball of the innings for six.

Raza, though, was the star of the show. He came into bat at the end of the seventh over, after the fielding restrictions had been relaxed, but it made no difference. He struck the third ball he faced for six and went on a run-scoring spree that made him the owner of the second-fastest century in T20I cricket. His 33-ball effort equalled Jan Nicol Loftie-Eaton's, for Namibia against Nepal in February 2024.

Gambia, which is the smallest country in continental Africa, located to the west, could do very little to stop the run flow. Musa Jorbateh conceded the most runs by a bowler in a T20, his four overs going for 93. He was one of five bowlers to go for over 50 runs or more in their spell. The team is still looking for its first win in the Africa sub-regional qualifier so far, having given walkovers to their opponents Rwanda and Seychelles in the first two games, while Zimbabwe have already picked up four from four.

Mourinho says Manchester United 'will succeed sooner or later'

ISTANBUL (AFP): Jose Mourinho says struggling Manchester United "will succeed sooner or later" as the Fenerbahce boss prepares to take on his former club in the Europa League on Thursday. United manager Erik ten Hag is under pressure after a poor start to the season, which has included draws in their first two European matches -- against Twente and Porto.

But Mourinho, who has also managed a string of other high-profile clubs including Chelsea, Real Madrid and Tottenham, said United had potential and he wants them to succeed. "Maybe you English guys think I'm bluffing, think I am playing mind games," he said at his pre-match press conference on Wednesday. "I'm not playing anything -- they have a better team than the results are showing. I studied them the maximum I could with my staff and my analysts. We watched everything in the Premier League, we watched everything in the two matches, Twente and Porto -- there is work there. They will succeed sooner or later. Hopefully sooner and hopefully before one day I go back to the Premier League and they become my opponents. At this moment they are just my opponents for one match."

Mourinho, who managed United between 2016 and 2018, winning the League Cup and Europa League, was asked why his former club had struggled over the past decade. "Honestly, I didn't lose one minute thinking about it," he said. "I wish the best to Man Utd since the moment I left. I left with a good feeling for the club, with a good feeling for the fans and I want the best for them, so if things are not going amazingly well for them it's not something that makes me happy, but at the same time I have no time." The 61-year-old suggested that during his own reign at Old Trafford, the United hierarchy had

not had the same patience they were showing towards Ten Hag. "What happened for sure, because it's very objective, is that they kept faith with the coach, they support the coach, who is staying season after season and that means stability, means trust and they are giving him conditions to keep developing his job," he said. "That was a difference in relation to me because as you know we won the Europa League, we finished second in the Premier League." Mourinho, who was named as the new Fenerbahce coach in June following his sacking by Roma, said United would be at "maximum strength" for the match in Istanbul.

by hitting the final ball of the innings for six.



LAHORE: Players fiercely struggle to gain control of the ball during the polo match between Newage Cables and Olympia Polo Team in the Polo in Pink Cup 2024 at Lahore Polo Club. —APP Photo

Raducanu out of Hong Kong Open

HONG KONG (Agencies): World number 55 Emma Raducanu says she is making "good progress" in her recovery from a foot injury, despite pulling out of another tournament. The 21-year-old Briton announced on Wednesday that she would not feature at the Hong Kong Open, which is set to start on 28 October. Raducanu has not played since spraining ligaments in her foot during a Korea Open quarter-final against Daria Kasatkina on 21 September. The former US Open champion has now pulled out of five tournaments in a row and has played in only two events since July. "Whilst my foot is making good progress, I need a little more time before I am match fit," she said.



In brief

IRSA releases 100,200 cusecs water

ISLAMABAD (APP): Indus River System Authority (IRSA) on Wednesday released 100,200 cusecs water from various rim stations with inflow of 65,300 cusecs. According to the data released by IRSA, water level in River Indus at Tarbela Dam was 1534.57 feet and was 136.57 feet higher than its dead level of 1,398 feet. Water inflow and outflow in the dam was recorded as 32,800 cusecs and 42,000 cusecs respectively. The water level in River Jhelum at Mangla Dam was 1195.65 feet, which was 145.65 feet higher than its dead level of 1,050 feet. The inflow and outflow of water was recorded 6,300 cusecs and 32,000 cusecs respectively. The release of water at Kalabagh, Taunsa, Guddu and Sukkur was recorded as 45,600, 49,000, 44,300 and 13,500 cusecs respectively. Similarly, from River Kabul, a total of 15,100 cusecs of water released at Nowshera and 4,500 cusecs released from River Chenab at Marala.

115 new Dengue cases reported

RAWALPINDI (APP): As many as 115 more Dengue patients have been reported during the last 24 hours. The variation continues with up and down numbers on a daily basis. According to the data released by District Health Authority on Wednesday, 219 patients are under treatment in allied hospitals. Since January this year 3735 patients have been diagnosed with dengue fever, still less than those were in the year 2023. The report shows 59 patients belonging to Peri Urban areas of Pothohar Town were reported during the last 24 hours, whereas 19 people were diagnosed with dengue syndrome from RCB areas. The report shows 8 Dengue fatalities including 1 from Murree district. The District Health Authority, Rawalpindi has urged the citizens to follow Dengue SOPs by exercising self responsibilities.

Police arrest suspect in abuse case

ISLAMABAD (APP): Islamabad Capital Territory (ICT) Police have apprehended an individual accused of abusing a woman on Wednesday, obtaining his remand from the relevant court to advance the investigation. A public relation officer told APP that on October 20, Shahzad Town police received a report from the victim, identified as "N," who alleged that she had been abusing by the accused. Following the complaint, Shahzad Town police registered First Information Report (FIR) Case No. 1246 under Section 376 of the Pakistan Penal Code (PPC). He said senior police officials immediately took notice of the case and directed the prompt arrest of the suspect. A specialized investigation team, led by the Senior Superintendent of Police (SSP) Investigation, was formed to apprehend the accused. The Shahzad Town police, in collaboration with the Special Services Organized Investigation Unit (SSOIU), utilized all available scientific and technical resources to track down and arrest the accused, identified as Bilal, he added. He said the police secured a physical remand of the suspect for further questioning, and the investigation is going on. Deputy Inspector General (DIG) Syed Ali Raza stated that the suspect would be charged in court with solid evidence to ensure he receives the appropriate punishment. DIG emphasized that women and children are a "red line" for the police and that those involved in crimes of violence or abuse will not escape the law.

NA Speaker takes notice of delay in cancer treatment project

ISLAMABAD (APP): Speaker, National Assembly, Sardar Ayaz Sadiq on Wednesday took serious notice of delay in the free cancer treatment project to be developed with the assistance of an international company extending Rs 2 billion funding.

The Speaker was expressing his views during the question hour session underway amid seventh meeting of the 10th National Assembly session that commenced four minutes late against its scheduled time of 1100 hours here after observing the response on a query of Member National Assembly (MNA), Syed Rafiullah.

Speaker, Sardar Ayaz Sadiq said the project was intended to provide lifesaving treatment for cancer patients which should not be halted for the next budget but rather it should be

taken up on priority basis to manage the funding from other sources with a proper solution.

He vowed to personally request the Secretary Planning Division and the Minister for Planning to manage funding for the project. The Speaker directed the Parliamentary Secretary for Planning to seek a proper response from the Health Ministry in writing on delay in the project. The Health Ministry should be held accountable on the matter as this project was crucial importance that can help save human lives, he added.

Parliamentary Secretary for Planning and Development, Wajiha Qamar informed the House that the project was highly significant and it was for the Islamabad Capital Territory (ICT), Azad Jammu and Kashmir (AJK) and Gilgit Baltistan (GB).

"Rs2 billion will be contributed by Rosch and Rs 789 million by the federal government for lung cancer, breast cancer and hepatocellular cancer," she said.

Qamar underlined that the fulfillment of the codal formalities was important to ensure transparency. However, the PC-I for this project had reached Planning Commission on September 18, 2024 and as per PFM rules it was not to be added in that PSDP as it duration was lapsing in March, 2025.

She added that since it was not a development project then it could be issued recurring budget by the finance division in the form of grant of Rs789 million to be covered in five years. In case of its status to be considered as a development project, the funding could only be sanctioned in the next financial budget, she said.

Govt committed to tackling tax fraud: Ali Pervaiz

ISLAMABAD (APP): Minister of State for Finance, Revenue, and Power, Ali Pervaiz Malik, informed the National Assembly on Wednesday that the government is taking serious steps to address tax fraud and evasion.

Responding to a calling attention notice regarding large-scale evasion and misappropriation in the collection of General Sales Tax (GST), the minister said that, in addition to legislative measures, efforts are underway to strengthen the Federal Board of Revenue (FBR) through enhanced technology and

human resource capacity.

He said that the government collected Rs 3.5 trillion in sales tax during the fiscal year 2024. He said that robust measures are being implemented to curb tax evasion, with new laws aimed at preventing fraud in the collection of sales and other taxes.

He reaffirmed the government's commitment to addressing sales and income tax challenges seriously. Sharing details of ongoing efforts to combat tax fraud, he said, that Rs 701 billion in fraudulent activities had been detected as of July 2023.

The government successfully blocked fraudulent claims of Rs 606 billion in input tax. Additionally, Rs 4 billion has been recovered, while cases worth Rs 95 billion are currently being tried in courts.

In response to a question, he acknowledged the burden of indirect taxes on the public and stressed the need to transition toward direct taxation to reduce the financial strain on low-income citizens. He further highlighted that the previous fiscal year was historically significant, marking the first time the country achieved a primary surplus.

Gilani pays tribute to Begum Nusrat Bhutto

ISLAMABAD (APP): Chairman Senate, Syed Yousaf Raza Gilani, on Wednesday paid tribute to Begum Nusrat Bhutto on her death anniversary, recognizing her significant political and social contributions.

In his message, he said that the nation will forever remember Begum Nusrat Bhutto's efforts in promoting democracy and social

justice in Pakistan.

Describing her as a fearless woman, Gilani said that her sacrifices for the strengthening of democracy are unforgettable. For her services, the nation bestowed upon her the title of "Mother of Democracy."

He highlighted her courage during the difficult period of martial law, stating that history offers

no parallel to her bravery in confronting that era. He added that Begum Nusrat Bhutto's life is a testament to the power of determination and resilience in overcoming even the most challenging circumstances.

Gilani further noted that her life serves as a guiding light for the women of Pakistan, inspiring them to remain steadfast in the face of adversity.

Govt unveils comprehensive support for investment in country

ISLAMABAD (APP): Ministry of Overseas Pakistanis and Human Resource Development (OP&HRD) was taking various measures to provide all possible facilities to Overseas Pakistan across the globe to invest for the prosperity and development of the country.

According to an official source, the government was committed to facilitate all business community of Pakistanis those are living abroad to invest in the homeland to boost the national economy.

The Government of Pakistan attaches high priority to the overseas Pakistanis and is keen to promote, nurture and sustain a mutually beneficial and symbiotic relationship between Pakistan and Overseas Pakistanis.

Overseas Pakistanis can contribute much more than making foreign exchange remittances.

Their role in image building, transfer of technology, and investment growth is important and with sustained efforts Overseas Pakistanis can produce tangible results.

Today, in Pakistan, there are substantial investment opportunities with an active privatization initiative, large infrastructure-related investment projects (especially under the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor), growth in local consumption and a largely untapped export potential.

With a massive diaspora of highly qualified Pakistani executives and a large reserve of domestic talent, capital

investing in Pakistan is entering a sustained and rewarding phase. The growth and return potential in Pakistan has yet to be unlocked by domestic and international investors.

To facilitate Overseas Pakistanis for investment in Pakistan, an Investment & Facilitation Centre for Overseas Pakistanis has been established at OPF, Head Office, Islamabad.

The IFC is mandated to respond to queries on all investment related opportunities, regulatory framework and incentives offered in Pakistan.

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'Rawal Institute of Health Sciences' inaugurate public health card scheme

ISLAMABAD (APP): Rawal Institute of Health Sciences (RIHS) here on Wednesday introduced Public Health Card for each family on nominal price of Rs. 12,500 on yearly basis in collaboration with State Life Insurance.

Launching ceremony was held here at a local hotel, with signing of a document between RIHS and State Life Insurance.

Currently, the Institute is running a 500-bed teaching hospital along with a well-equipped medical college.

Elaborating the Health Card Scheme, Chairman RIHS Khaqan Waheed Khawaja said the patients at hospital will receive dedicated in and out-

door treatment, besides surgery and dental services. Required medicines will also be provided under the Health Card insurance.

The scheme was especially launched for poor and deserving people. In first phase, 5000 families will be registered for the treatment for patients of Rawalpindi and Islamabad. The facility will be gradually extended to the people of entire Pakistan and AJK.

The Rawal Hospital carried diversified faculty and staff, involved in a wide range of activities including medical student education, patient care, teaching, research, and community service.

Besides, the RIHS motivate, inspire, and enable students to become exceptional and compassionate physicians, surgeons, researchers, and leaders to change the world.

Waheed Khawaja added, "Our mission is to create an equal opportunity for all students for their intellectual, spiritual, emotional, cultural & physical development, in order to grow up as the best of medical and dental practitioners."

We are committed to deliver compassionate, cost-effective and excellent medical care to our patients."

The Rawal General and Dental Hospital was estab-



ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Federal Education and Professional Training Dr. Khalid Maqbool Siddiqui in a group photo at the "2nd Annual Conference 2024 of Inter Boards Coordination Commission (IBCC) at Zaki Auditorium Allama Iqbal Open University. —APP Photo

KSrelief to build 1,000 permanent houses in KP, Punjab

ISLAMABAD (APP): The King Salman Humanitarian Aid and Relief Center (KSrelief) has announced a major initiative to build 1,000 permanent houses for families in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP) and Punjab who were displaced by the devastating 2022 floods.

This project is part of a broader series of public facilitation initiatives announced by KSrelief, aimed at rebuilding communities and fostering resilience across Pakistan.

The announcement came during an event held on October 8, 2024. Engineer Ahmed Ali Al-Baiz, Assistant Supervisor General of Operations at KSrelief, formalized the initiative by signing cooperation programs with Pakistan's National Disaster Management Authority (NDMA).

The 1,000 houses, each comprising two rooms, a kitchen, and a washroom, are expected to provide safe, permanent housing for approximately 7,000 individuals focuses on the flood-hit regions of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and Punjab, with 590 houses in Dera Ismail Khan (KP) and 410 in Rajanpur and Dera Ghazi Khan (Punjab).

By providing secure, resilient housing, this KSrelief initiative will help support the recovery process and enhance the long-term well-being of affected communities.

ANF seizes over 100 kg drugs

RAWALPINDI (APP): Anti-Narcotics Force (ANF) while conducting five operations across the country managed to recover over 100 kg drugs worth over Rs 10 million and arrested seven accused, said an ANF Headquarters spokesman here on Wednesday.

He informed that in an operation, 50 kg hashish was recovered from a vehicle intercepted on Kali Umar Road in Quetta and an accused was arrested. 12 kg opium and 18 kg hashish were recovered from a vehicle on M-2 Lahore and four accused were arrested during the operation. 9.6 kg hashish was recovered from a vehicle checked at T-Chowk in Islamabad. The spokesman further informed that 9.6 kg hashish was recovered from the possession of two suspects arrested near Faizabad in Islamabad.

Muqam extends full support to people of Kashmir

ISLAMABAD (APP): Federal Minister for Kashmir Affairs, Gilgit-Baltistan and State & Frontier Regions (SAFRON) Engineer Amir Muqam, in his special message on the occasion of 77th Foundation Day of Azad Jammu and Kashmir (AJK), said that October 24 is the day to renew the pledge to continue Kashmir freedom struggle till it reaches to the logical end.

"On this day, we have to renew the pledge that we will not sit until the people of occupied Kashmir get their right to self-determination," he said. The minister said that today, despite the presence of more than 800,000 Indian troops, the brave Kashmiri youth are expressing their affection

with Pakistan with great courage and determination and hoisting the Pakistani flag on the streets and squares of Indian Illegally Occupied Jammu & Kashmir (IIOJ&K), said a press release issued here on Wednesday. He said that the youth of occupied Kashmir are even more determined than their ancestors that they will get their right to self-determination at all costs.

Engineer Amir Muqam said that now the time has come, the international community has to play its active role in ensuring the right to self-determination for Kashmiris and take steps to prevent the atrocities being perpetrated by the occupation forces in the held territory. He said Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif,

in his address to the UN General Assembly, had discussed the Kashmir issue in detail and adopted an unequivocal position that Kashmiris should be given the right to self-determination in accordance with the UN resolutions.

The federal minister also reaffirmed that the government and people of Pakistan will continue to extend political, diplomatic and moral support to Kashmiri people till they achieve their inalienable right to self-determination as enshrined in the United Nations Security Council resolutions. He said sacrifices of the Kashmiris will never go in vein and the day will come very soon when Kashmiris will celebrate their independence.

Kiyani criticizes PTI's response to 26th constitutional amendment

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Convener of the National Parliamentary Task Force (NPT) on Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) Bilal Azhar Kiyani, on Wednesday criticized Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf's (PTI) apolitical and incoherent response to the 26th constitutional amendment.

Talking to a private news channel, he said that

the amendment was the result of extensive consultation and dialogue, leading to a consensus draft that was passed without controversy.

"The final draft was uncontroversial and even accepted by the PTI," he added.

He said that PTI proved that its conduct was non-political and non-parliamentary, throughout the

course of time.

They were absent from the All Parties Conference (APC) on the Palestine issue, because that was not an important issue for them.

He emphasized, "When the nation requires solidarity to overcome its challenges, PTI remains focused on advancing its political interests rather than prioritizing the welfare of the public."



RAWALPINDI: RDA staffer busy in cutting extra tree branches near Rawalpindi cricket stadium. —INP Photo

Building shortage

URUZGAN (TOLOnews): 60 health centers in Uruzgan are operating in rented houses. After the return of IEA to power, with the help of aid organizations, new buildings have been constructed for 17 health centers, but other centers still need new facilities. Fatah Mohammad Sahtmand, Deputy Director of Uruzgan's Public Health Department, said: "Even now, 60 clinics are operating in rented houses, where services cannot be provided properly."

The Frontier Post

AFGHANISTAN

Rabi-us-Sanni 20 1446 — Thursday, October 24, 2024

Minister to attend summit

KABUL (Ariana News): Afghanistan's Acting Minister of Industry and Commerce Nouruddin Azizi says a delegation from Afghanistan may participate in this year's BRICS Summit in Kazan, Russia or attend the next event. Speaking to Russia's TASS news agency, Azizi said: "We have actually composed a letter [requesting participation in the BRICS Summit in Kazan] and sent it, now it is under consideration by BRICS officials."

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

Over 34,000 work permits issued

KABUL (TOLOnews): The Ministry of Labor and Social Affairs has announced that over 34,000 work permits were issued in the second quarter of this year. According to the ministry, this figure indicates a 65% increase in the issuance of work permits compared to the first quarter of the year. Officials from the Ministry of Labor and Social Affairs add that 247,067 men and 871 women have been employed in governmental institutions. Additionally, more than 6,000 men and 1,600 women have been employed in the private sector, along with 1,122 foreign nationals in various sectors. Samiullah Ebrahimi, the spokesperson for the

Ministry of Labor and Social Affairs, said: "In the second quarter of 1403 solar year, the Ministry of Labor and Social Affairs distributed more than 34,000 work permits to citizens and foreign nationals. These individuals have been officially employed in governmental and private sector institutions."

Meanwhile, a number of economic experts urge the Islamic Emirate to create sustainable job opportunities to prevent rising unemployment and worsening economic problems.

Shams Rahman Ahmadi, an economic expert, said: "Afghans should be provided with work opportunities in professional and technical fields in line with their expertise, and we should

integrate them into a system where they can perform effectively."

Mir Shakeeb Mir, another economic expert, added: "Issuing work permits does not necessarily mean job creation; for real employment generation, Afghanistan's obstacles to economic development and growth must be identified and addressed."

According to the Ministry of Labor and Social Affairs, in the first quarter of this year, 22,427 work permits were also distributed.

This comes as unemployment in Afghanistan, due to economic crises and the lack of sustainable job opportunities, has become one of the country's most pressing social issues.

Illegal migration of Afghans to Iran continued

NIMROZ (TOLOnews): Despite the increasing deportation of Afghan migrants from Iran, hundreds of Afghan citizens continue to illegally cross the Nimroz border into Iran every day. These individuals cite a lack of job opportunities, poverty, and destitution as the main reasons that compel them to undertake this perilous journey.

Abdul Salam, a 38-year-old resident of Badakhshan, bears the responsibility of supporting a family of seven. He has decided to travel to Iran illegally, through human smuggling, to cover the living expenses of his family.

The lack of work and poverty have compelled Abdul Salam to undertake this dangerous and illegal journey to Iran.

Abdul Salam said, "I am responsible for supporting a family of seven, and I have decided to go to Iran illegally to provide for my family. The lack of work and destitution have forced me to take this difficult and perilous illegal journey to Iran."

Faridun, a resident of Badakhshan, said in this regard: "Since there are no job opportunities for me in the country, I am forced to migrate to Iran or elsewhere. If I could find work in the country, I would never travel abroad."

Mohammadullah, a resident of Farah, said: "I have been engaged for three years and haven't been able to gather the money for the dowry. I am forced to travel to Iran. Although I have traveled many times before, the road is extremely difficult, filled with numerous challenges. On this path, there is killing, and there is also thirst and hunger."

However, the governor of Nimroz urges these citizens to refrain from illegal travels to neighboring countries.

Mohammad Qassim Khalid, the governor of Nimroz, said: "I ask the citizens of the country to avoid illegal travels to neighboring countries. The government has made it easier to obtain passports, and every individual can get a passport and legally leave the country."

The arrest and deportation of illegal Afghan migrants in Iran have intensified, and every day, hundreds of families or other Afghan migrant who had gone to Iran to work and support their families are forcibly returned to Afghanistan.

UNAMA Chief announces loan program to boost growth of small businesses

KABUL (Ariana News): The Secretary General's Special Representative for Afghanistan and Head of UNAMA, Roza Otunbayeva announced the organization will soon launch a loan program to support the growth of small businesses in Afghanistan.

In a meeting with Deputy Prime Minister Mawlawi Abdul Kabir, Otunbayeva also said that during her recent trip abroad, she discussed securing aid for Afghanistan with donor countries and organizations.

She further stated that UNAMA has received part of the assistance needed for the upcoming winter.

On Afghanistan's border issues, she stated that the closure of crossing with neighboring countries "adversely affects Afghan farmers' ability to export their agricultural products".

She called on the Islamic Emirate to communicate with the relevant countries while UNAMA also works to address these issues.

Otunbayeva raised the topic of trade exhibitions in



Kabul and said these events are important for promoting Afghan products.

In addition, she expressed a commitment to collaborate with the Islamic Emirate on drug eradication, finding alternative crops for former poppy farmers, and on drug addiction treatment.

She did however praise the Islamic Emirate for their move to establish a commission to tackle drug

and alcohol issues. She said this was "a positive step".

Kabir in turn emphasized that the Islamic Emirate values UNAMA's mission in Afghanistan.

He stated that the operational framework for the High Commission for Combating Drugs and Alcohol is being developed and will be finalized soon.

He stated that the Islamic Emirate operates in accordance with Islamic

principles and is willing to discuss any concerns that may arise. He also emphasized that UNAMA should handle certain matters with a sense of responsibility.

Kabir added that in the coming days, the High Commission for Combating Drugs and Alcohol, together with UNAMA, will convene a joint meeting with foreign embassies in Kabul to address several key issues.

Religious leaders stress unity and joint efforts



KABUL (TOLOnews): A delegation comprised of religious scholars and tribal elders from the northern provinces of the country, who have traveled to the southern region, state that the development of the country is a shared responsibility of all ethnic groups.

Meanwhile, the tribal elders of Zabul consider the steps taken by the religious scholars and tribal elders from Kunduz, Takhar, Baghlan, and Badakhshan as valuable efforts to strengthen national unity.

Abdul Qadir, a tribal elder from Zabul, said: "We are very happy to welcome our brothers from the northern provinces today, and they have come to this part of their home. Such occasions will be very beneficial in strengthening public

unity." Sayed Mohammad, a tribal elder from Zabul, said: "The exchange of visits between the residents of Afghanistan's provinces will prevent divisions and eliminate any form of prejudice and mistrust."

Members of the delegation of religious scholars and tribal elders from the northern provinces emphasize that all ethnic groups of the country, as a single nation, share a common religion and national values.

According to them, Afghanistan is the common home of all Afghans, and all ethnic groups share the responsibility of its development and prosperity.

Abdul Qayum, a religious scholar from the northern provinces, said: "We, the Uzbeks, Tajiks,

Hazaras, and Pashtuns, are brothers, and none is superior to the other. Therefore, we will further strengthen our unity and work towards the development of our homeland."

Habibullah, a tribal elder from the northern provinces, said: "We are very happy and feel good here. After this visit, we would also like to invite the great people of Kandahar to visit the north."

The delegation of religious scholars and tribal elders from the northern provinces also added that during this trip, in addition to Zabul, they will meet with local officials and residents of Kandahar, Uruzgan, and Helmand provinces, and invite them to visit the northern part of the country as well.

Deputy Minister Azizi tours Agha Khan institute

KABUL (BNA): Mawlawi Atiqullah Azizi, the Deputy Minister of Arts and Culture from the Ministry of Information and Culture, paid an official visit to the Agha Khan Cultural Organization's Institute for Cultural and Vocational Studies on Wednesday, where he toured various sections and classrooms.

During the visit, Engineer Ajmal Maiwand, the Director of the Institute,

provided an overview of the institute's ongoing academic activities and achievements.

He highlighted that each year, hundreds of students receive technical training at the institute, gaining valuable skills in cultural and artistic fields such as stone carving, woodworking, handicrafts, miniature painting, and tile making.

These skills are then

applied to serve the broader community.

Deputy Minister Azizi commended the efforts of the Agha Khan Institute, praising its crucial role in preserving and promoting Afghanistan's rich cultural heritage.

He emphasized the importance of such institutions in keeping the country's traditional arts and crafts alive.

Additionally, Deputy

Minister Azizi encouraged the institute's officials to share their experiences and expertise with the Ministry's Art Institute Directorate, which operates in similar fields.

He suggested establishing a dedicated department for artistic and vocational training within the Directorate to further enhance cooperation and promote Afghanistan's cultural legacy.

Swiss couple drives through Afghanistan in private car



KUNDUZ (TOLOnews): A Swiss tourist couple has traveled to Afghanistan in their private car, entering the country through the Sher Khan Bandar crossing with the aim of exploring various regions.

The couple stated that they covered approximately 6,000 kilometers from Tajikistan to Afghanistan and plan to visit different parts of the country, taking

advantage of the stable security situation.

Susanna, 83, and Karl, 76, who are visiting Afghanistan for the first time, expressed their happiness with their tour of Kunduz and the warm hospitality they received from local residents. Susanna told TOLOnews: "We understood that the Taliban have control over the situation, and it's okay, because in the

West, people are still afraid of Afghanistan the stay former ideals and hold when there was war. They're afraid to come. But I think if we can make advertisements for your country, more tourists will come."

Karl said: "We spoke with many friendly people who, despite not knowing our language, they helped us. We plan to visit Kabul, then Kandahar, and from there, Herat." Several residents of Kunduz view the arrival of tourists and the growth of tourism as beneficial for boosting government revenue and strengthening the local economy.

Shamsullah Afghan, a resident of Kunduz, said: "The arrival of tourists to Afghanistan is beneficial. It increases government income and, in some cases, creates job opportunities for people." Officials at the

Kunduz Foreign Affairs Directorate have reported a rise in the number of foreign tourists, noting that significant facilities have been provided for them.

Obaidullah Abidi, Consular Affairs Officer at the Kunduz Foreign Affairs Directorate, said: "Security has been ensured across Afghanistan, which has led to an increase in foreign tourists. When they see the current situation compared to what they had heard, they find it fascinating. We have provided numerous facilities for tourists at the border and within the city of Kunduz."

According to statistics from the Kunduz Foreign Affairs Directorate, since the start of the current solar year, over 600 foreign tourists have entered the country through the Sher Khan port, which borders Tajikistan.

Free treatment provided to 800 eye patients

KABUL (TOLOnews): The Afghan Red Crescent Society, in collaboration with the Mohammed bin Salman Foundation and the Al-Basar International Foundation, has provided free eye treatment services for patients in Kabul.

Shahabuddin Delawar, the acting head of the Afghan Red Crescent, said that during this six-day campaign, more than 8,000 patients were diagnosed, and 800 of them underwent free surgeries.

Shahabuddin Delawar, the acting head of the

Afghan Red Crescent, stated: "A very large and effective program will be launched at the central hospital of the Afghan Red Crescent, where about eight thousand patients will be examined."

At the same time, an official from the Al-Basar International Foundation said that they plan to hold this program in other provinces as well and will also provide training to doctors in this field.

Rizwan Ahmed Baluch, the head of the Al-Basar International Charity Found-

ation in Afghanistan, said: "We also train some doctors, they will (God willing) do these camps in the other area, just like we in the last - in 2023, we (did) a camp in Kandahar, and in the beginning of this January and February we do a camp in Herat so our planning is this, we cover all Afghanistan."

Patients who have come to this hospital for treatment have expressed satisfaction with the establishment of such medical camps and urged the Ministry of Health and the Afghan Red Crescent to

provide more free medical services for them.

M. Ishaq, a patient, said: "We thank the government and the charity organization that is treating us."

Sardar, another patient, said: "My vision is weak. I heard that doctors from the Red Crescent are here, so I came from Kunduz for treatment."

It should be noted that last solar year, this charity foundation also established eye treatment camps in Kabul, Herat, Nangarhar, and some other provinces for eye-related illnesses.

Investors explore opportunities to reactivate cold storage

PARWAN (BNA): A group of foreign investors met with the Head of Industry and Commerce in Parwan province, expressing their interest in investing in the reactivation of cold storage facilities in the region.

During the visit, the foreign investors conducted an inspection of various sections of the cold storage facility operated by the industrial and agricultural company Bostan e Sabz. They promised to consider comprehensive evaluations before committing to the investment necessary to revive these facilities.

The Head of Industry and Commerce in Parwan assured the investors of the province's favorable industrial and commercial environment. He also emphasized the provincial administration's commitment to facilitating business opportunities for both foreign and domestic investors.

It is noteworthy that the large cold storage facility of Bostan e Sabz, located in Barik Ab of Parwan, has the capacity to store 40,000 tons of fruits and vegetables. The Ministry of Industry and Commerce is actively working towards its reactivation.

Health service agreement signed for journalists



KABUL (TOLOnews): The Afghan Independent Journalists Association (AIJA), said: "In this agreement, we defined the term 'family' broadly to include father, mother, brother, sister, wife, and children."

Under this agreement, all journalists and their families will receive health-care services at a 50 to 70 percent discount for three years.

Hujatullah Mujadidi, head of the Afghan Independent Journalists Association (AIJA), said: "In this agreement, we defined the term 'family' broadly to include father, mother, brother, sister, wife, and children."

Abdullah Yousafzai, executive director of the hospital, said: "Special discounts are provided in diagnostic areas, including general surgery, internal medicine, and other departments like orthopedics, and we will proceed according to the agreement."

At the same time, some journalists, expressing satisfaction with the agreement, said that journalists currently face many economic challenges, and such agreements are helpful in addressing them.

Zaki Rahman, a journal-

ist, said: "Journalists face numerous challenges daily. Such initiatives can be very effective. Currently, the only challenge journalists are facing is economic difficulties."

Ahmad Shah, another journalist, said: "If hospitals sign agreements with journalists, they should also take necessary practical steps in implementation."

Previously, several journalists had complained about poor economic conditions, while others faced unemployment due to the closure of some media outlets.

Ministry of Refugees signs MoUs to improve services for IDPs

KABUL (BNA): The Ministry of Refugees and Repatriation today signed three cooperation agreements, valued at a total of 2,498,063 USD, with two organizations to support over 10 sectors.

According to the Ministry's statement, under these agreements, the Women for Women Organization will allocate 1,261,878 USD to support

logistical needs for the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), oversee and provide legal protection for internally displaced persons (IDPs), collect and analyze data on the status of IDPs and returnees to present to donors, and offer awareness campaigns, needs identification, and psychological counseling to 10,550 individuals

across Balkh, Samangan, Jawzjan, Faryab, Baghlan, Takhar, Kunduz, Badakhshan, and Sar-e Pol provinces. Additionally, the ACTED organization will invest 873,065 USD to provide shelter and sanitation services in Kunar and Laghman provinces, benefiting 1,296 families. The Organization for Health Administration and

Development will also contribute 363,120 USD to implement awareness programs and distribute professional packages to 940 families.

These agreements were signed by Molavi Abdul Rahman Rashid, the Deputy Minister of Technical Affairs at the Ministry, alongside representatives from the respective organizations.

Judges can't pick up guns for protection: PHC CJ

Humayun Khan

PESHAWAR: Chief Justice Peshawar High Court (PHC) Justice Ishtiaq Ibrahim remarked that the government must take judges' security seriously. "Judges cannot pick up guns for their own protection." He expressed concern over the increasing incidents of violence in the premises courts and observed that another incident occurs after every previous one, on Wednesday.

The Chief Justice made these remarks during the hearing of a petition filed by the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Bar Council (KPBC) regarding security concerns for judicial complexes, judges, and bar rooms. A two-member bench comprising Chief Justice Ishtiaq Ibrahim and Justice Waqar Ahmed heard the case.

Vice Chairman KPBC Sadiq Ali Mohmand represented the petitioner, while Advocate General Shah Faisal Atmanzai represented the provincial government and Additional Attorney General represented the federal government.

During the hearing, Sadiq Ali Mohmand advocate informed the court that the petition was filed due to the deteriorating law and order situa-

tion in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and its impact on judicial complexes, bar rooms, and judges' security. He stated that previously, PHC's two-member bench had asked the provincial government to respond to six questions regarding security measures for judicial complexes, judges, and bar rooms, safety of judges' residences, provision of modern equipment to police, implementation of Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) for security.

The lawyer highlighted the frequent incidents of firing within court premises and the killing of individuals in police custody, leaving lawyers, judges, and court staff feeling insecure. Advocate General Khyber Pakhtunkhwa requested for provision of more time to submit detailed responses to the court's queries.

PHC's divisional bench comprising of Chief Justice Ishtiaq Ibrahim and Justice Waqar Ahmad directed the provincial and federal governments to take the matter seriously and submit comprehensive responses while adjourned further hearing till 30th October.

Court orders submission of written against LG Act amendments: A

divisional bench of Peshawar High Court (PHC) comprising Justice Ijaz Anwar and Justice Syed Arshad Ali has sought written arguments from the provincial government and petitioners regarding amendments to the Local Government Act.

The petitioners' lawyers Qazi Jawad and Babar Khan Yousafzai informed the court that the provincial government made amendments to the LG Act after the local government elections. These amendments reduced the powers of LG representatives in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa.

The amendments should have been made before the elections, but the previous PTI government made them after the polls. Making amendments after the elections is unconstitutional and illegal, the lawyers argued.

The caretaker government had submitted its response, but the current government had not. Advocate General Shah Faisal assured the court that they would submit their response today (on Friday). The petitioners' lawyers stated that they had prepared their response and would also submit it. The court ordered both parties to submit written arguments and adjourned further hearing until next week.

Saudi crown prince, Blinken discuss Gaza ceasefire

RIYADH: Saudi Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman received US Secretary of State Antony Blinken in Riyadh on Wednesday, Saudi Press Agency reported. Blinken arrived in Saudi Arabia after wrapping up a visit to Israel where he urged leaders to end the war in Gaza created by the death of Hamas leader Yahya Sinwar and the destruction of much of the group's capacity during more than a year of conflict.

During the reception, the two officials reviewed Saudi-American relations and areas of joint cooperation. They also discussed the latest regional and international developments including developments in Gaza and Lebanon, and efforts made to stop military operations and deal with their security and humanitarian repercussions. Blinken will also travel to London later this week after visiting the Middle East, State Department spokesperson Matthew Miller said on Wednesday.

The top US diplomat will hold meetings with Arab leaders in the British capital after talks Thursday in Qatar, Miller said. Blinken said Israel had succeeded in ensuring there could be no repeat of Oct. 7, 2023 and it should be looking to bring home the remaining 101 Israeli and foreign hostages and end the fighting. "Now is the time to turn those successes into an enduring strategic success," he told reporters as he prepared to leave for Riyadh on the next stage of his visit to the Middle East.

"The focus needs to be on getting the hostages home, ending this war and having a clear plan for what follows," he said. Israel's assault has devastated Gaza and forced most of the enclave's population out of their homes into temporary shelters. Blinken said Israel needed to do more to ensure that adequate humanitarian supplies reached people living in dire conditions.

Blinken is making his first big push for ceasefires in Gaza and Lebanon since Israel killed the leader of Hamas last week - and his last before a presidential election that could upend US policy in the region. Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's government has not formulated any clear vision for Gaza following the war beyond stating that Palestinian militant group Hamas' military and governing capacity needed to be dismantled completely.

There has been wide concern among Palestinians that Israel intends to force Palestinians from large stretches of the Gaza Strip to enable greater Israeli control of the area and potentially allow Jewish settlers to return following their withdrawal in 2005. Blinken repeated that the United States rejected any Israeli occupation of Gaza and said he had been assured by Netanyahu that Israel had no such plans, despite pressure from many in his own party to allow settlers to return. — Arab News

Peshawar Police appoint martyrs' children as ASIs

Syed Adnan

PESHAWAR: In a significant gesture to honor the ultimate sacrifices made by police martyrs, the Capital City Police Peshawar has taken an exemplary step by recruiting the children of fallen heroes into the police force. Following the orders of Inspector General of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Police, Akhtar Hayat Khan, Capital City Police Officer (CCPO) Qasim Ali Khan issued appointment letters to 29 individuals, all children of police officers who were martyred during acts of terrorism, appointing them as Assistant Sub-Inspectors (ASIs). The formal appointment ceremony took place at Malik Saad Shaheed Police Lines in Peshawar, where the new recruits were welcomed into the department.

In his address during the ceremony, CCPO Qasim Ali Khan paid glowing tributes to the sacrifices made by the martyrs of the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Police, highlighting their courage and commitment. He expressed that the bravery of these martyrs, who laid down their lives in the line of duty to protect the nation and its people, would forever be etched in the annals of history. "The stories of our martyrs' courage and valor will be written in golden words. Their sacrifices have elevated the honor and dignity of the police force to new heights," CCPO Qasim Khan said.

He also stressed the importance of the role that these newly recruited ASIs will play in carrying forward the proud legacy of their predecessors. "You are the heirs to a legacy of bravery, and like your ancestors, you are expected to step forward in the fight against crime and to serve as a bulwark against the societal evils that threaten the peace and security of our community. I have no doubt that you will uphold the values of duty and integrity that your predecessors fought for," he added.

CCPO Qasim Ali Khan further emphasized that the police martyrs' sacrifices have not only protected the nation but have also enhanced the respect and prestige of the police department. He expressed confidence that the newly appointed officers, being the children of such honorable individuals, will contribute

to further enhancing the department's name through their hard work and dedication.

Addressing the recruits directly, the CCPO encouraged them to carry on the legacy of their forefathers by ensuring the protection of the lives and property of citizens. He also called upon them to work with full dedication and uphold the honor of the police force by continuing to protect the rights of the people and maintaining law and order across the region.

"The police martyrs have made the ultimate sacrifice for the safety and security of our homeland. Their blood has enriched the values of this department, and I expect nothing less from you as you step into this noble profession," CCPO Qasim said.

The newly appointed ASIs, moved by the solemnity of the occasion, pledged to follow in the footsteps of their ancestors, promising to serve the police force and the nation with the same courage and determination that defined their parents' service. They vowed to dedicate themselves fully to upholding the rule of law and protecting the people of Pakistan, regardless of the challenges they may face.

The ceremony marks an important moment in the ongoing efforts to recognize the sacrifices of police martyrs and to provide meaningful opportunities for their families. The recruitment of martyrs' children into the police force is not only a gesture of gratitude but also a way to ensure that the legacy of bravery, honor, and service continues to live on through the next generation. These 29 new recruits now carry the torch of their forefathers and are entrusted with the responsibility of maintaining peace, fighting crime, and contributing to the safety and security of the community.

This initiative by the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Police, under the leadership of IGP Akhtar Hayat Khan and CCPO Qasim Ali Khan, is a testament to the department's commitment to honoring its fallen heroes and supporting their families. It stands as a reminder of the deep bond between the police force and the people they protect, and the lengths to which the department will go to ensure that the sacrifices of its officers are never forgotten.

Putin scores BRICS win with rare Xi Modi show of harmony

KAZAN (Reuters): Chinese President Xi Jinping and Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi used a BRICS summit in Russia on Wednesday to showcase ambitions for a more harmonious relationship between the world's two most populous countries after years of animosity.

The meeting between Xi and Modi, who have not held formal talks for five years, was one highlight of a summit which President Vladimir Putin sought to use to show that the West had failed to isolate Russia over the Ukraine war. A final communique listed a number of projects aimed at facilitating trade between BRICS nations — including an alternative payment system to the dollar — but did not include details or timelines.

Just two days after New Delhi announced that it had reached a deal with Beijing to resolve a four-year military stand-off on their disputed Himalayan frontier, Xi told Modi that they should enhance communication and cooperation and effectively manage differences. "It is in the fundamental interests of the two countries and peoples for China and India to correctly grasp the trend of history and the direction of development of their relations," Xi said, according to Chinese state broadcaster CCTV.

In response, Modi told Xi that maintaining peace and stability on their frontier should be a priority, and that mutual trust, respect

and sensitivity should be the basis of the relationship. "We welcome the agreement on the issues that had come up over the last four years," Modi told Xi in comments that were aired on India's state broadcaster Doordarshan.

BRICS — an idea thought up inside Goldman Sachs two decades ago to describe the growing economic clout of China and other major emerging markets — is now a group that accounts for 45% of the world's population and 35% of the global economy. The BRICS summit clashes with the International Monetary Fund and World Bank annual meetings in Washington.

Former Goldman economist Jim O'Neill, who coined the BRIC term in 2001, told Reuters that he had little optimism for the club as long as China and India remained so divided. "It seems to me basically to be a symbolic annual gathering where important emerging countries, particularly noisy ones like Russia, but also China, can basically get together and highlight how good it is to be part of something that doesn't involve the US and that global governance isn't good enough," O'Neill told Reuters.

Putin, who dismisses Western claims that he is a war criminal for Russia's actions in Ukraine, hosted more than 20 leaders at the summit in the city of Kazan on the banks of the Volga, including Tayyip Erdogan,

who leads NATO member Turkey, and Iranian President Masoud Pezeshkian. Modi told Putin in public that he wanted peace in Ukraine. Xi discussed the war in the Ukraine behind closed doors with the Kremlin chief, as did United Arab Emirates President Sheikh Mohammed bin Zayed Al Nahyan who has sought to mediate.

The 43-page final communique from the summit ranged from geopolitics and narcotics to artificial intelligence and even the preservation of big cats, but lacked detail on some major issues. It mentioned Ukraine just once. "We note with appreciation relevant proposals of mediation and good offices, aimed at a peaceful resolution of the conflict through dialogue and diplomacy," the Kazan declaration said.

On alternative payment systems, there was little detail, though BRICS leaders expressed an interest in developing them and ordered central bankers to report back under the next presidency. "The trend for the BRICS' leading role in the global economy will only strengthen," Putin said, citing population growth, urbanisation, capital accumulation, and productivity growth as key factors. China and India buy about 90% of Russia's oil — Moscow's biggest foreign currency earner. Russia is the world's second largest oil exporter.



MANILA: Residents looking at a car buried by volcanic ash which cascaded into a village triggered by heavy rains brought about by Tropical Storm Trami in Guinobatan, Albay province in Philippines.

Thousands flee homes as storm batters Philippines

F.P. Report

MANILA: The Philippines braced itself on Wednesday for the impact of Tropical Storm Trami, with thousands of people evacuated from their homes as authorities warned of an unprecedented volume of rainfall and flooding in the coming days.

The 11th cyclone to hit the country this year, Trami — locally known as Kristine — is affecting nearly all the Luzon and Visayas islands, as well as parts of Mindanao. It has caused severe flooding and landslides in the country's east even before making landfall, which is forecast to take place on Wednesday evening and early Thursday morning.

"The worst is yet to come, I'm afraid ... The volumes of water are unprecedented," President Ferdinand Marcos Jr. said in a briefing with disaster management authorities and the military. "I'm feeling a little helpless here ... All we can do is sit tight, wait, hope, pray that there's not too much damage, that there are no casualties. And then go in as soon and as quickly as possible with as much as we can to alleviate the effects, especially first to the population. And then, afterwards, we will take care of all the other infrastructure: the power, the roads."

Government offices and schools across Luzon, the country's largest island, have been temporarily shut down, and four provinces — Quezon and three in neighboring Bicol Region — have declared a state of calamity. In Bicol alone, more than 47,500 people had to leave their homes and were evacuated to safety. At least two people have been reported dead and five missing.

"Because of the 24 hours of almost non-stop rains, we had 12,226 families or 47,583 people evacuated here in the Bicol region. So far, what has been reported to us are two dead," Office of Civil Defense in Bicol spokesperson Gremil Naz said in a radio broadcast. "We also have one reported injured and five reported missing fishermen."

The Philippines is the country most at risk from natural disasters, according to the 2024 World Risk Report. Every year millions of people are affected by storms and typhoons, which have lately been more unpredictable and extreme due to the changing climate. Last month, more than a dozen people were killed when Typhoon Yagi hit the country's east. — Arab News

Court upholds arrest warrants issued for KP CM

F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: A district and sessions court here on Wednesday upheld the arrest warrants issued for Chief Minister (CM) Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP) Ali Amin Khan Gandapur, in a case pertaining to the recovery of illegal arms and liquor.

Senior Civil Judge, Mubashir Hassan Chishti, presided over the hearing. He directed the SSP Operations Islamabad to ensure the implementation of the arrest warrants. During the course of hearing, despite the issuance of non-bailable arrest warrants, Ali Amin Gandapur failed to appear before the court.

KP CM briefed on strengthening of cops

PESHAWAR: The Chief Minister Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Sardar Ali Amin Khan Gandapur chaired an important meeting to review the progress on his key decisions and directives aimed at strengthening the police in the province.

The concerned authorities briefed the Chief Minister on various initiatives such as the creation of new positions, recruitment process, procurement of vehicles, and other relevant matters to strengthen the police. It was informed that keeping in view the current law and order situation, 1356 new posts of various ranks in police department have been created for the southern districts of the province.

Among these, the recruitment process for 1,200 constables is in its final stages, and appointment letters will be issued soon. Moreover, recruitment on the positions of sub-inspector, assistant sub-inspector, and head constables is being carried out as per the standard procedures. The authorities further informed that as per the special directives of the chief minister, the quota for the children of police martyrs (Shuhada) has been increased from 5% to 12.5% for recruitment as Assistant Sub-Inspectors (ASI), adding that under this new quota, 246 appointments have been made so far.

Region-wise, 85 ASIs have been recruited in Peshawar, 51 in Mardan, 24 in Dera Ismail Khan, 25 in Kohat, 35 in Malakand, and 26 in Bannu. Moreover, additional 72 ASIs will be recruited in these regions in the next few days. The meeting was also informed that a case for the recruitment on 1,153 posts under the in-service quota has been submitted to the Public Service Commission. Similarly, the case for recruitment on 631 ASIs under the 25% quota has also been forwarded to the Commission.

Furthermore, the procurement process for police vehicles with estimated cost of Rs 802 million is in progress, under which,

34 double cabins, 15 single cabins, 30 other single cabin vehicles, and 15 motorcycles have been purchased so far. The bulletproofing of 79 single cabin 4x4 vehicles, costing Rs. 760 million, is also in progress.

Chief Minister Ali Amin Gandapur directed the relevant quarters to complete the recruitment and vehicle procurement processes in the shortest possible time. He emphasized that the recruitment of police personnel through the Public Service Commission should be completed on priority. "Maintaining law and order in the province is among the top priorities of the provincial government," he said and added that all necessary resources will be provided on a priority basis to enable the police to address the current challenges effectively. The police must adopt unconventional approaches to cope with the situation," he added. The meeting was attended by the Chief Secretary Nadeem Aslam Chaudhry, Additional Chief Secretary Home, Abid Majeed, Acting Inspector General of Police, and other senior officials.

Meanwhile, a significant meeting was held on Wednesday under the chairmanship of Chief Minister Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Sardar Ali Amin Khan Gandapur, at the Chief Minister's Secretariat in Peshawar. The meeting reviewed the progress on the launch of various welfare programs, including the Ehsaas Youth Employment Scheme, Ehsaas Skills Program, Ehsaas Apana Ghar Scheme, and Ehsaas Employment Program.

A deadline of December 1, 2024, was set for the official launch of these programs. The Chief Minister directed that all necessary preparations and requirements for these programs be completed as soon as possible, emphasizing that these are public welfare initiatives aimed at providing employment opportunities and empowering the youth. He stressed that there is no room for delay in their implementation.

North Korea troops in Russia for Ukraine war: US

WASHINGTON (Reuters): The United States said for the first time on Wednesday that it had seen evidence of North Korean troops in Russia, while South Korean lawmakers said about 3,000 soldiers had been sent to support the Kremlin's war in Ukraine with more to follow.

US Defence Secretary Lloyd Austin, speaking in Rome, said it would be "very, very serious" if the North Koreans were preparing to fight alongside Russia in Ukraine, as Kyiv has alleged, though he said it remained to be seen what they would be doing there. "There is evidence that there are DPRK troops in Russia," Austin told reporters, using North Korea's formal name, the Democratic People's Republic of Korea.

In Seoul, South Korean lawmakers said that North Korea has sent 3,000 troops to Russia and thousands more were expected to follow. Pyongyang had promised to provide a total of about 10,000 troops, whose deployment was expected to be completed by December, the lawmakers told reporters after being briefed by South Korea's national intelligence agency. The figure of 3,000 is twice the previous estimate of the number of troops already in Russia.

"Signs of troops being trained inside North Korea were detected in September and October," Park Sun-won, a member of a parliamentary intelligence committee, said after the briefing. "It appears that the troops have now been dispersed to multiple training facilities in Russia and are adapting to the local environment."

The Ukraine conflict broke out when Russia invaded its neighbour in February 2022 and has since developed into a war of attrition largely fought along front lines in eastern Ukraine, with huge numbers of casualties on both

sides. Austin said the alleged North Korean deployment could be further evidence that the Russian military was having problems with manpower. The Kremlin has previously dismissed Seoul's claims about the North's troop deployment as "fake news" and a North Korean representative to the United Nations in New York called it "groundless rumours" at a meeting on Monday.

Both Moscow and Pyongyang have also denied weapons transfers, but they have pledged to boost military ties and signed a mutual defence treaty at a summit in June. The latest numbers came after Seoul's National Intelligence Service said on Friday the North had sent some 1,500 special forces personnel to Russia by ship and they were likely to be deployed for combat in the war in Ukraine after training and acclimatization.

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Israeli raids destroy neighborhoods in Tyre

BEIRUT: Intense Israeli raids targeted the southern coastal city of Tyre on Wednesday following evacuation warnings by the Israeli army. Although the number of people in the city had decreased, panic gripped the remaining residents, prompting them to flee.

Half an hour after the warnings by Israeli army spokesperson Avichay Adraee, the city was targeted, with plumes of black smoke filling the sky. The raids destroyed several neighborhoods, including hotels, restaurants and commercial institutions. Tyre often hosts UN peacekeepers on their first break from deployments along the bor-

der region. It comprises rich Phoenician, Byzantine and Roman remains recorded on the World Heritage List 1984. A portion of the city, formerly known as "the onshore Tyre," also includes Qana, Sarafand and the surroundings of Naqoura. Maha Al-Khalil Chalabi, chief of the International Association to Save Tyre, described what was happening as "brutal."

The destructive Israeli bombing, she said, besieged Tyre and the old town specifically. UNESCO has warned of the need to take immediate measures to protect Tyre and Baalbek from the dangers of bombing and destruction to protect its

population. The Israeli army says that it is targeting Hezbollah's infrastructure, while simultaneously invading several border villages to bulldoze them after bombing houses and facilities. These villages include Aita Al-Shaab, notably the old town, as well as other villages in Bint Jbeil, which was subject to artillery shelling. Israeli raids also targeted more than 20 villages, including Khiam, Taybeh, Chakra, Ainata, Sarbin, Mayfadoun, Habboush, Maarakeh, Kfarisir, Aaichiyeh, Jibchit, Harouf, Blat, Kfar Reman, Arab Salim and Yohmor Kheif, killing and injuring dozens of people. — Arab News