

IHC adjourns hearing

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Islamabad High Court (IHC) on Wednesday adjourned the hearing of petitions of PTI founder and his spouse Bushra Bibi for acquittal in the 190 million pounds scam case. The bench comprising Chief Justice Aamer Farooq and Justice Mian Gul Hasan Aurangzeb accepted the request NAB for adjournment till October 10.



@thefrontierpost

First national English daily published from Peshawar, Islamabad, Lahore, Quetta, Karachi and Washington D.C

www.thefrontierpost.com

Vol. XXXIXI

No. 249

Regd. No. 241

RABI-UL-AWWAL 28 1446 -- THURSDAY, OCTOBER 03 2024

PESHAWAR EDITION

12 PAGES

PRICE. 30

Malaysian PM arrives to a red carpet welcome



F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif on Wednesday warmly received Malaysian Prime Minister Dato' Seri Anwar Ibrahim who is undertaking a three-day official visit to Pakistan.

Upon his arrival at the airport, children clad in traditional attire presented bouquets to the Malaysian Premier. He was also given a static guard of honour while 21-guns boomed in the background as gesture

of warm welcome.

Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Mohammad Ishaq Dar and members of the federal cabinet were also present to welcome the visiting dignitary.

The Malaysian prime minister is accompanied by a high level delegation. During his stay, he will hold meetings with the leadership of Pakistan.

Premier Anwar Ibrahim is undertaking the official visit at the invitation of Prime Minister Sharif.

The two sides will dis-

cuss a wide-ranging agenda to further strengthen Pakistan-Malaysia ties in diverse fields including trade, connectivity, energy, agriculture, halal industry, tourism, cultural exchanges and people-to-people contacts.

They will also discuss regional and global developments.

"Pakistan and Malaysia enjoy strong bilateral ties anchored in history, culture and faith. This visit provides an important opportunity to further strengthen Pakistan-Malaysia relations," Foreign Office said in an earlier press release.

PM Shehbaz lauds Dr Zakir for global Islamic outreach efforts

Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif on Wednesday lauded eminent scholar Dr Zakir Naik's exceptional efforts in spreading the true essence of Holy Quran and Hadith, besides promoting Islamic values worldwide.

The prime minister warmly welcomed Dr Zakir, expressing his admiration for his scholarly work.

He said the entire Ummah was proud of him for projecting the real image of Islam across the world. It was heartening to note that a vast majority of youth listened to his lectures.

PM Shehbaz said that he had personally benefited from Dr Zakir's lectures, enriching himself from the valuable teachings of Islam.

He said that the people of Pakistan fully admired the great personality of Dr Naik and were happy over his presence in the country.

The PM noted that Dr Zakir was in good health. He was happy to know that his (Dr Zakir's) son was also following his footsteps and serving Islam.

He also recalled his year meeting with Dr Zakir Naik in 2006.

Dr Zakir Naik, in his remarks, said that Pakistan was the only country in the world which was founded on Islamic principles.

He said that Islam was the religion which offered comprehensive guidance to the entire humanity encompassing every aspect of their lives.

He reiterated his commitment for continuing efforts to spread the message of Islam globally, saying "the success lies in following the Islamic teachings".

Recalling that he had last visited Pakistan in 1991, he said he still had the fond memories of that tour.

Dr Naik said that he would also visit Karachi and Lahore.



ISLAMABAD: Renowned Islamic Scholar Dr. Zakir Naik calls on Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif.

Eight Israeli soldiers killed in clashes with Hezbollah

JERUSALEM/BEIRUT (Reuters): Israel said on Wednesday eight of its soldiers were killed in combat in south Lebanon as its forces thrust into its northern neighbor in a campaign against the Hezbollah armed group.

The losses were the deadliest suffered by the Israeli military on the Lebanon front in the past year of border-area clashes between Israel and its Iranian-backed Lebanese foe.

Hezbollah said its fighters were engaging Israeli forces inside Lebanon on Wednesday, reporting ground clashes for the first time since Israeli forces pushed over the border. Hezbollah said it had destroyed three Israeli Merkava tanks with rockets near the border town of Maroun El Ras.

Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, in a condolence video, said: "We are at the height of a difficult war against Iran's Axis of Evil, which wants to destroy us."

"This will not happen because we will stand together and with God's help, we will win together," he said.

The Israeli military said regular infantry and armored units were joining its ground operations in Lebanon, a day after Iran

fired more than 180 missiles into Israel, a barrage which raised concerns that the oil-producing Middle East could be caught up in a wider conflict.

Iran said on Wednesday its missile volley — its biggest ever assault on Israel — was over barring further provocation, but Israel and the United States promised to hit back hard.

A 38-year-old Palestinian from Gaza, the only known fatality in Iran's attack on Israel, was buried on Wednesday.

Sameh Khadr Hassan Al-Asali had been staying in a Palestinian security forces compound in the West Bank when he was killed by falling missile debris during Tuesday's attack, which Israel said was largely foiled by its air defense systems.

Hezbollah said it had repelled Israeli forces near several border towns and also fired rockets at military posts inside Israel.

The paramilitary group's media chief Mohammad Afif said those battles were only "the first round" and that Hezbollah had enough fighters, weapons and ammunition to push back Israel.

Israel's addition of infantry and armored troops from the 36th Division, including the Golani Brigade, the 188th

Armored Brigade and 6th Infantry Brigade, suggested that the operation might expand beyond limited commando raids.

The military has said its incursion is largely aimed at destroying tunnels and other infrastructure on the border and there were no plans for a wider operation targeting the Lebanese capital Beirut to the north or major cities in the south.

Nevertheless, it issued new evacuation orders for around two dozen towns along the southern border, instructing inhabitants to head north of the Awali River, which flows east to west some 60 km (37 miles) north of the Israeli frontier.

BORDER CLASHES
Israel renewed its bombardment early on Wednesday of Beirut's southern suburbs, where Hezbollah has its headquarters, with more than a dozen airstrikes against what it said were targets belonging to Hezbollah.

Israel also carried out an airstrike on a residential building in the Mezzah suburb in the west of Syria's capital Damascus, killing three civilians and injuring three, Syrian state media reported on Wednesday. Israel has been carrying out strikes on Iran-linked targets in Syria for years.

More than 1,900 people have been killed and over 9,000 wounded in Lebanon in almost a year of cross-border fighting, with most of the deaths occurring in the past two weeks, according to Lebanese government statistics.

Caretaker Prime Minister Najib Mikati said that about 1.2 million Lebanese had been displaced by Israeli attacks.

Malika Joumaa, from Sudan, was forced to take shelter in Saint Joseph's church in Beirut after being forced from her house near Sidon in coastal south Lebanon with her husband and two children.

"It's good that the church offered its help. We were going to stay in the streets; where would we have gone? We were (sheltering) under the bridge, it is not safe. If we go back home, it is not safe, they are striking everywhere."

Iran described Tuesday's missile assault as a response to Israeli killings of militant leaders, including Hezbollah chief Hassan Nasrallah, attacks in Lebanon against the group and Israel's war against Palestinian Hamas militants in Gaza.

The general staff of Iran's armed forces said any Israeli response would be met with "vast destruction."

Pakistan joins CERN 70 celebrations

F.P. Report

GENEVA/ISLAMABAD: Pakistan proudly joined the international scientific community in celebrating CERN 70 - the 70th anniversary of European Organization for Nuclear Research (CERN) in Geneva, marking seven decades of remarkable discoveries in the field of Particle Physics.

A special ceremony was held in Geneva, Switzerland, witnessed by the participation of 39 national delegations, including Pakistan's delegation led by the Chairman of Pakistan Atomic Energy Commission (PAEC), Dr. Raja Ali Raza Anwar.

In his engagement with various high-level representatives, Dr. Raja Ali Raza Anwar highlighted Pakistan's long-standing collaboration with CERN and reaffirmed Pakistan's commitment to furthering scientific research and technological innovation



through international partnerships.

Pakistan, as the first Associate Member State of CERN from Asia since 2015, has played a significant role in several of CERN's leading research projects and to the cutting-edge scientific infrastructure.

Leading Pakistani organizations and science and technology institutes including PAEC, HMC-3, PINSTECH, NCP, COMSATS and NUST are working in close collaboration with CERN and are taking

active part in its different experiments.

It is pertinent to mention here Pakistan also hosted four events in 2024 to celebrate CERN's 70th anniversary and to showcase Pakistan's three decades of scientific collaboration with CERN.

As Pakistan continues to make contribution to CERN's ground breaking scientific endeavors, it remains committed to further advances in Particle Physics and fostering international collaboration for the benefit of the humanity.

President directs CAA to appoint deceased employee's son

F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: President Asif Ali Zardari has directed the Pakistan Civil Aviation Authority to process the appointment of a deceased employee's son in accordance with the law within a month.

As per details, Mr Faheem Ahmed (the complainant) had complained against the Pakistan Civil Aviation Authority (PCAA) for his non-appointment against the "deceased employees" quota. He stated that his father was an employee of PCAA, and he died in the year 1999 during service due to cancer. As he was a minor at the time, he could not apply for appointment against the "deceased employees" quota. He said that when he applied for a job, his request was turned down without any justification. He approached PCAA for the redressal of his grievance but to no avail.

Feeling aggrieved, he approached the Wafaqi Mohtasib for the resolution of his complaint. The Mohtasib decided that the complainant had failed to make out any case of maladministration against PCAA as the Family Assistance Package was not applicable at the time of his application. The complainant then filed a representation with the President against the orders of the Mohtasib.

In his decision, the President observed that the complainant's father expired in 1999 during service and at that time the petitioner was only six years of age.

He noted that the petitioner applied for appointment, after coming of age, under the policy of 2005, according to which the son of a deceased employee was to be considered for appointment in the same department without undergoing the formality of advertisement.

He rejected the claim of PCAA that it adopted the Family Assistance Package Policy in 2005 and that the provisions of the said package did not merit consideration due to the factual and legal position in the instant case.

Justice Mansoor Ali Shah's bench cases delisted

ISLAMABAD (INP): Cases of Bench-II, headed by Supreme Court (SC) judge Justice Mansoor Ali Shah, were delisted on Wednesday due to the non-availability of judges.

Sources told that on Wednesday a three-member bench, headed by Justice Mansoor, had to hear the cases as per routine.

Other two judges on the bench were Justice Ayesha A. Malik and Justice Aqeel

Ahmad Abbasi.

Yesterday, Justice Mansoor had refused to attend the judges' committee meeting convened by Chief Justice of Pakistan (CJP) Justice Qazi Faez Isa to form the bench to hear the review plea filed in the case of interpretation of Article 63-A of the constitution.

At the outset of the case's hearing yesterday, the chief justice said that initially he had requested

Justice Munib Akhtar to join the bench. "But when he refused. I opted for Justice Mansoor. I requested him to join us. We waited for him. But he refused to attend the committee meeting."

"I had been left with no other option. I did not want to disturb other benches. So Justice Naeem Afghani was requested to join, which he accepted," Justice Isa elaborated.

Govt to privatize PIA, 3 Discos by end of 2024

ISLAMABAD (INP): Federal Minister for Finance, Muhammad Aurangzeb has said that the government is committed to privatize Pakistan International Airlines (PIA) and three power distribution companies (Discos) before the end of 2024.

During a recent interview with a private chan-

nel, the minister said that the incumbent government will ensure the privatization of the national carrier along with three power distribution companies (Discos) before 2024 culminates.

It should be mentioned here that privatization of PIA initially set to conclude by October 1, has been postponed to

October 31 due to low bidder interest, ongoing court cases, aging fleet issues, and civil aviation concerns.

Muhammad Aurangzeb further said that government was working on privatization of sick units, and power sector reforms and for this, all necessary steps have been taken to achieve the objectives.

Dr Zakir arrives in Karachi

KARACHI (APP): Renowned Islamic Scholar Dr Zakir Naik arrived in Karachi and visited Governor House on Wednesday evening. Sindh Governor Kamran Khan Tessori received the distinguished guest on arrival at Governor House. Kamran Tessori presented bouquet to Dr Zakir Naik, who thanked the Governor Sindh for the warm welcome.

Pakistan calls for de-escalation of hostilities, conflict resolution in ME

ISLAMABAD (APP): Pakistan on Wednesday expressed deep concern over the escalating hostilities in the Middle East, urging all parties to prioritize peace.

"In recent months, Israel has increasingly acted in violation of international law and the UN Charter resulting in grave humanitarian crisis. Israel has endangered regional peace and security with

the ongoing genocide in Gaza. The recent invasion of Lebanon has further intensified these tensions, affecting the lives of innocent civilians," Foreign Office Spokesperson said in a press statement.

The people of Palestine, Lebanon, and the wider region deserved to live free from fear and violence.

It was crucial for all sides to step back from the

brink and for the international community to take swift action to de-escalate the situation.

The prevailing culture of impunity and disregard for international law must be addressed urgently, it was stressed.

The spokesperson reiterated Pakistan's call for the UN Security Council to uphold peace and security in the region, safeguard Lebanon's sover-

eignty, and put an end to the ongoing humanitarian crisis in Gaza.

"Pakistan has consistently advocated for a two state solution as the key to enduring peace in the Middle East with a just and comprehensive solution to the Palestinian question anchored in international law and in line with relevant UN and OIC resolutions," it was further added.

Russia captures Vuhledar after two years of Ukrainian resistance

MOSCOW (Reuters): Russian troops on Wednesday took charge of the eastern Ukrainian town of Vuhledar, a bastion that had resisted intense attacks since Russia launched its full-scale assault in 2022.

The advance of Moscow's forces, which control just under a fifth of Ukraine, has underlined Russia's vast superiority in men and materiel as Ukraine pleads for more weapons from the Western allies that have been supporting it.

Ukraine's eastern military command said it had ordered a pullback from the hilltop coal mining town to avoid encirclement by Russian troops and "preserve personnel and military equipment".

The Russian defence ministry did not mention Vuhledar in its daily battlefield report.

Russian Telegram channels, however, published video of troops waving the Russian tricolour flag over shattered buildings.

The town, which had a population of over 14,000 before the war, has been devastated, with Soviet-era apartment buildings smashed apart and scarred.

The Moskovsky Komsomolets newspaper said the last Ukrainian forces from the 72nd Mechanised Brigade, a unit famous for its resistance, had abandoned the town late on Tuesday.

President Vladimir Putin has said Russia's primary tactical goal is to take the whole of the Donbas region - the provinces of Donetsk and

Luhansk - in southeastern Ukraine.

Russia controls about 80% of the Donbas, a heavy industry hub where the conflict began in 2014 when Moscow supported pro-Russian separatist forces after a pro-Russian president was toppled in Kyiv and Moscow seized Crimea from Ukraine.

Since Russia sent its army into Ukraine in February 2022, the war has largely been a story of grinding artillery and drone strikes along a heavily fortified 1,000-km (620-mile) front involving hundreds of thousands of soldiers.

But in August the battlefield became much more dynamic: Ukraine smashed through the border in Russia's Kursk region in a bid to divert

Russian forces, and Russian troops began advancing faster than before in eastern Ukraine.

Russian forces have been pushing westwards at key points along some 150 km (95 miles) of the front in the Donetsk region, with the logistics hub of Pokrovsk also a key target.

They captured Ukrainians on Sept. 17 and then began encircling Vuhledar, about 80 km (50 miles) south of Pokrovsk.

Russia has been using pincer tactics to trap and then constrict Ukrainian strongholds. Images from the area showed intense bombardment of the town with artillery and aerial glide bombs. Neither side discloses losses, and each said the other had paid a high human price for the town.



KARACHI: Sindh Chief Minister Syed Murad Ali Shah talking to media persons during his visit to Karachi Press Club. —APP Photo

MAP hosts luncheon in honor of Governor KP

KARACHI (APP): The Management Association of Pakistan (MAP) on Wednesday organized a special luncheon in Karachi to welcome the esteemed Governor of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Faisal Karim Kundi. The event saw the participation of MAP's senior officials and prominent business figures.

Notable attendees included MAP members Farukh Janidi, Muhammad Intisaruddin, Khalid Zaman, Ahmad Zaheer, Advocate Tariq Khattak, Athar Abbas, Suleman Mehdi, Rashid Siddiqui, Ali Hasan Naqvi, Sameer Hussain, Dr. Farhan Isa, Adnan Rizvi, Amjad Waheed, Zubair Qureshi, and Farukh Mazhar.

The purpose of the luncheon was to discuss business opportunities, investment prospects, and ways to enhance the business environment in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. In his address, Governor Kundi highlighted the economic development and business opportunities in the province, emphasizing its potential for investors.

MAP members shared their experiences and

offered suggestions regarding potential investments in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. Governor Kundi expressed gratitude to the attendees, stating that such events play a crucial role in fostering strong relationships between the business community and government representatives.

He assured that the Governor's House would fully support investments in the province's abundant mineral resources, tourism, agriculture, and other sectors. The discussion also covered various aspects of economic development projects and investment opportunities in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa.

At the conclusion of the event, participants reaffirmed their commitment to contributing to the province's progress and praised Governor Kundi for his efforts, wishing him success for a bright future for Khyber Pakhtunkhwa.

Meanwhile, Governor Faisal Karim Kundi, in a meeting with Muhammad Atif Hanif, President and CEO of Al-Baraka Bank, in Karachi. The discussion focused on the issues and challenges facing the banking sector in Khyber

Pakhtunkhwa.

During the meeting, Governor Kundi emphasized the importance of developing the banking sector, saying that a robust banking system is essential for the province's economic growth. Atif Hanif outlined Al-Baraka Bank's services and highlighted the bank's role in fostering economic stability in the province.

He informed the Governor about the various initiatives Al-Baraka Bank is implementing to support small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, which will further strengthen the provincial economy.

The meeting also addressed the lack of banking facilities in remote areas and the public issues related to accessibility. Governor Kundi assured that the Governor's House would provide all possible support to address these challenges. He stressed the importance of innovation and the use of digital technology in the banking sector, saying that these advancements would not only ease access for the public but also stabilize the economy.

CM stresses peace, tolerance for social development

LAHORE (APP): Punjab Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz Sharif has stressed peace and tolerance for development and welfare of society. She said genuine progress could only be attained through a commitment to understanding and harmony, rather than through force or violence.

In her message on International Day of Non-Violence being celebrated on Wednesday, she condemned violence and extremism, saying: "All forms of violence and extremism are condemnable", emphasising that the path of non-violence was the only guarantee of true success.

The CM clarified that violence was not a solution to any problem; rather, it exacerbates the situation. She expressed that the philosophy of non-violence is the greatest philosophy of humanity, asserting that it is essential for progress and stability.

The CM called for the promotion of a culture of dialogue to resolve mutual differences, stating that the Punjab government is always ready to deal with those who spread violence.

CM Maryam Nawaz expressed her commitment to building a Punjab where everyone has the right to live in peace and where the rule of law prevails. She stressed the need to promote the message of non-violence against violence, extremism, and hatred, and urged, "Let us dedicate all our efforts to a peaceful Pakistan."

Police urged to play role for crime-free society

LAHORE (APP): Capital City Police Officer Lahore Bilal Siddique Kamyana urged the police to play positive role for a crime-free society. He was presiding over a meeting at his office here on Wednesday to review the disposal of pending cases involving nominated accused and the submission of pending road certificates.

The CCPO directed the high officials to improve their performance, adding that any slackness would not be tolerated. He emphasized them to do public service with dedication and commitment.

The CCPO instructed to resolve pending cases as quickly as possible, the Divisional SPs (Investigation) assured him of timely submission of case challans. He also highlighted the significance of quality investigations, stressing that the investigation wing plays a pivotal role in delivering justice. He encouraged swift resolution of ongoing cases through coordinated efforts with line departments, noting that timely case closures would enhance the police's positive image.

Officers were also reminded to keep the investigation records updated in the POLCOM software to ensure that the justice was delivered in accordance with legal requirements. DIGs (Investigation and Organized Crime Unit), SSPs (Investigation and Operations), Divisional SPs (Investigation) and SP (AVLS), attended the meeting.

Murad directs reconstruction of 3328 schools ravaged by floods

KARACHI (APP): Sindh Chief Minister Syed Murad Ali Shah directed the education department to complete the reconstruction of 3328 schools out of 19,808 damaged by the 2022 floods during the current financial year.

He issued these directives while presiding over a review meeting of the school education department here at CM House on Wednesday. Minister P&D Syed Nasir Shah, Minister Education Syed Sardar Shah, Chairman P&D Najam Shah, Secretary Finance Fayaz Jatoti, Secretary to CM Raheem Shaikh, Secretary School Education Zahid Abbasi and others attended the meeting.

The CM was told that out of 19808 schools, reconstruction and repair of 3328 schools under different projects have either been started or in the tender process. The CM directed the minister of education to personally monitor the construction work so that these schools could be reconstructed by the end of June 2025.

During the briefing, the CM was informed that the repair of 1769 schools and the reconstruction of 1559 school buildings have been

taken up under 10 different local and foreign-assisted projects for Rs114.3 billion.

They include the SSEIP (flood-assisted) project 1026 schools will be repaired/reconstructed for Rs 62.6 billion, for which tenders have been issued. The repair and reconstruction of 31 schools under SSEIP (regular) have been taken up for Rs 4 million and work is in progress. Under the SELECT project, 166 schools will be reconstructed for which tenders have been floated.

Through the DEEP project, 111 schools are under construction for Rs 2.44 billion. In the ASPIRE project, four schools are under construction for Rs112.7 billion. China has given a grant of Rs 7.6 billion for reconstruction of 100 schools and the scheme is under approval process. Under the PSDP tenders for repair/reconstruction of 456 schools have been floated for Rs10.7 billion. JIACA has also given Rs 419.38 million for repairing and reconstructing of five schools for which bids were under evaluation. Under the ADP repair/reconstruction of 687 schools is in progress for Rs 7.89 billion.

Through Maintenance & Repair, 742 schools are being repaired for Rs 3 billion and work is in progress.

Minister Education Syed Sardar Shah told the CM that 824,008 children were enrolled in the 3328 schools damaged by the floods. The CM directed the school education department to keep visiting the schools where repair work has been started or would be taken up to review their educational activities.

The school education department has developed a Dashboard which reflects all 40,978 schools and their 5,219 784 enrollments. It also shows the 19808 damaged schools, including 7,503 completely damaged. The dashboard has also the ability to track the development works carried out on the ground and even the process of procurement, tendering stage and approval process.

The chief minister directed the P&D and the School Education Departments to complete the construction work of the 3328 school buildings by the end of the current financial year.

Meanwhile, he would arrange funds for the remaining 16480 schools so that they could also be repaired/reconstructed.

Minister meets DG LIMS, discusses farmer's problems

LAHORE (APP): Provincial Minister for Agriculture and Livestock Syed Ashiq Hussain Kirmani met Director General (DG) Land Information Management System (LIMS) Major General Shahid Nazir at Agriculture House, Lahore, on Wednesday.

The DG told the minister that the LIMS had been established under the management of the federal government and with cooperation of the Pakistan Army. It was primarily working to make uncultivated and barren areas to convert into cultivable and till now, 3 lakh acres of canal area of Punjab was being made cultivated, he added and said private sector would be encouraged to set up Solace. In this regard, project timelines were being followed closely.

Minister Ashiq Kirmani said that the Punjab government and LIMS would work together under the mutual partnership agreement, which would make it possible to achieve agricultural prosperity according to the vision of chief minister, Punjab. He said that this was a funded programme of the Punjab government.

The Punjab government was providing 26,000 agricultural implements, 5,000

super seeders, 2,000 rice straw shredders and 9,500 tractors of 50 to 85 horsepower on subsidy for the promotion of agricultural mechanisation, the minister said. The Punjab government is trying to give agricultural machinery to the farmers on subsidy which they do not already have and by using which it is possible not only to increase the agricultural production but also Environmental pollution can also be controlled, Kirmani said.

Secretary Agriculture Iftikhar Ali Sahoo said that under a business formula, LIMS and Punjab government would run the company on a profit-free basis. Iftikhar Ali further said that the location of these agricultural malls was very important. In the first phase, these centres would be established at the district level.

Special Secretary Agriculture Nabil Agha, Additional Secretary Agriculture (Planning) Punjab Captain (Rtd) Waqas Rasheed, Consultant Agriculture Department Dr. Anjum Ali and Director General Agriculture (Extension) Chaudhry Abdul Hameed were also present during the meeting.

ISLAMABAD (APP): PTI founding member Akbar S. Babar on Wednesday said that Pakistan Tehreek e Insaaf (PTI) resorted to politics of commotion and anarchy adding that such aggressive politics would cost dearly to Pakistan.

Talking to journalists outside the Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) here, he said that establishing the writ of the State was the prime responsibility of the government.

He said that PTI staged a fake drama on March 3 to hold the intra-party election.

He said that he had challenged the PTI intra-party elections in ECP on March 5. Barrister Gohar was the self-proclaimed chairman of PTI, he added.

Babar said that there was a complete fiefdom in PTI and everyone was engaged in a power struggle. He alleged that Adiyala Jail looked like a camp office of PTI adding that Imran Khan was enjoying every facility inside the jail.

Whether the other prisoners also have the same facilities inside the jail, he questioned.

Newly launched report highlights govt commitment to access and equity



F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: "The government is fully committed to enhancing healthcare access, especially for women in marginalized and underserved regions. We are working towards a system where every woman can receive the healthcare she needs, when she needs it, free from stigma or fear," stated Dr. Malik Mukhtar Ahmed Bharath, Coordinator to the Prime Minister on National Health Services. He made these remarks while addressing the launch of the report titled "Safeguarding Women's Health: Trends, Inequities, and Opportunities in Pakistan's Abortion and Post-Abortion Care Services" in Islamabad.

The event unveiled findings from a comprehensive national study by the Population Council, in partnership with the Guttacher Institute, highlighting the urgent state of women's reproductive health in Pakistan, with a focus on abortion and post-abortion care. Dr. Malik emphasized that, with maternal mortality at 186 deaths per 100,000 live births, the research underscores the need for comprehensive reforms in reproductive healthcare.

He also stressed the importance of balancing population and resources, reaffirming the government's commitment to achieving this through policies and improved access to family planning services. The government plans to implement the report's recommendations by investing in infrastructure, capacity building, and an enhanced referral system to improve emergency response capabilities, strengthening reproductive health services nationwide.

The Women's Health Study is the third in a series of national assessments following similar studies in 2002 and 2012. It comes at a pivotal time as Pakistan grapples with significant reproductive health challenges. The study reveals that 66 women of reproductive age (15-49) per 1,000 had an induced abortion annually in 2023. Moreover, between 21-30% of women who underwent an abortion still faced complications, indicating serious gaps in care and safety. While the rate of abortion-related complications has declined from 13.9 per 1,000 women in 2012 to 11.7 per 1,000 in 2023, significant inequities remain. The study found that rural poor women are more likely to suffer from complications compared to wealthier women and those living in urban areas.

The study is a major eye-opener when the country's intercensal population growth rate is recorded at 2.55% per annum, with contraceptive use stagnating. Moreover, 17.3% of women report an unmet need for family planning, contributing to high rates of unintended pregnancies, many of which result in unsafe abortions.

Dr. Zeba Sathar, Country Director Population Council, emphasized the importance of the report. "Pakistan has made strides in improving health care, but this report reminds us that there is still much work to be done, especially in ensuring women have access to family planning and safe reproductive health services". She also emphasized women empowerment through access to family planning and safe healthcare services is fundamental in achieving broader

social and economic goals, contributing to a more just and equitable society. Speaking at the event, Mr. Thomas Dahl, Deputy Head of Mission, Royal Norwegian Embassy Islamabad, expressed Norway's support for the initiative, stating, "This is an issue that impacts not just the health of women, but the overall well-being and development of society. Norway is proud to support efforts that improve access to reproductive health services in Pakistan."

The event featured an expert panel discussion on "Safeguarding Women's Health in Pakistan" moderated by Dr. Luay Shabaneh, Country Representative of UNFPA. The panelists included Prof. Dr. Azra Ahsan, President of Association for Mothers and Newborns (AMAN); Dr. Yasmeen Sabeh Qazi, CEO, QZ Catalyst; Prof. Naila Israr, former Executive Director FG Polyclinic Islamabad and Prof. Dr. Ghazala Mahmud, Patron in Chief, Society of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists of Pakistan (SOGP), Islamabad. They discussed critical issues affecting women's health in Pakistan, including the barriers to accessing reproductive healthcare and the stigma surrounding abortion. The panel emphasized the importance of education, healthcare reform, and policy advocacy to create a safer and healthier environment for women across the country.

A special session on "Unintended Pregnancies and Abortion Care", included a presentation by Dr. Susheela Singh, Vice President for Global Science and Policy Integration, Guttacher Institute. She provided valuable insights into the global context of unintended pregnancies and the need for comprehensive reproductive health services to reduce the incidence of unsafe abortions in Pakistan. This was followed by a panel representing provincial Departments of Health and Population Welfare from KP, Punjab, AJK and GB, moderated by Director General Health, Ministry of Health, Islamabad. During the panel discussion, Imad Ali Lohani, Secretary of Population Welfare in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, emphasized the role of women's empowerment.

Alkhidmat Foundation holds mass marriages

PESHAWAR: The Alkhidmat Foundation organized mass weddings for 20 poor and deserving couples in Peshawar. The event was attended by more than 1,000 guests, including family and friends.

Vice Ameer Jamaat-e-Islami Pakistan, Liaquat Baloch, was the chief guest at the ceremony, which was presided over by Provincial Ameer Prof. Muhammad Ibrahim Khan. The event

was part of the Asan Nikah Project, which has organized and supported the marriages of 717 poor and deserving couples across Khyber Pakhtunkhwa so far.

Vice President of Alkhidmat Foundation Pakistan, Zikrullah Mujahid, Provincial President Khalid Waqas, District President Arbab Abdul Haseeb, and religious scholar Sheikh-ul-Qur'an Maulana Masih Gul Bukhari were also present on the occasion.

Each couple received household items worth 185,000 rupees, including a double bed, washing machine, fan, dressing table, sewing machine, and various kitchen sets. The costs of the ceremony were covered by local philanthropists. Prof. Muhammad Ibrahim Khan officiated the weddings, and gifts were presented to the brides at a separate venue. Alkhidmat Foundation also provided a feast for all guests, celebrating this significant occasion.



Sehat Card Program

Ihtisham for regular check on hospitals on panel

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: A meeting regarding the Sehat Card program was held under the chairmanship of Advisor to Chief Minister Khyber Pakhtunkhwa for Health Ihtesham Ali, with the participation of Dr. Riaz Tanoli, CEO of the Sehat Card program, Fayyaz Noor from State Life Insurance Company, and other relevant officials.

During the meeting, the Health Advisor commented on ongoing survey related to hospital empanelment under the Sehat Card initiative that hospitals failing to meet the required criteria should be immediately disqualified.

He stressed that continuous monitoring of empaneled hospitals is the only way to ensure access to quality healthcare.

The Health Advisor was informed that the portal for hospital empanelment under the Sehat Card was opened on July 1st, with 173 hospitals submitting online applications. So far, 90% of the hospital assessments across the province have been completed. CEO Dr. Riaz Tanoli mentioned that the

final list of empaneled hospitals will be ready by next week, pending approval by the Policy Board. Hospitals must pass through both a desk and physical assessment before being empaneled. During the desk assessment, 22 healthcare facilities have been disqualified.

It was further communicated that the application fee for secondary care hospitals has been set at PKR 100,000, while tertiary care hospitals need to pay PKR 500,000. Assessment of 15 hospitals, including those in the tribal districts of North and South Waziristan and Kurram, is still pending.

According to the available data, assessments have been completed for 43 hospitals in the Hazara region, 67 in Malakand, 64 in Mardan, 19 in the southern districts, and 45 in the central districts. A total of 253 hospitals are planned to be empaneled under the Sehat Card this year, including 151 new hospitals and 103 already existing ones under review.

Health Department Accelerates Dengue Control Efforts in Khyber

Pakhtunkhwa

The Director General of Health Services, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Dr. Muhammad Saleem, announced that the Health Department has intensified its dengue control activities at all levels, with a comprehensive Dengue Action Plan now entering its next phase. This phase sees the Health Department, in collaboration with all relevant line departments, speeding up anti-dengue operations.

Dr. Saleem emphasized that five affected districts, including Peshawar, Kohat, Nowshera, Abbottabad, and Mansehra, are being targeted with intensive efforts to limit the spread of dengue. Special teams are conducting dengue spray operations during dawn and dusk, the peak times for mosquito activity. Alongside these efforts, awareness campaigns and larvicide operations are being actively carried out to educate the public and eliminate dengue larvae.

Effective surveillance systems have been established to monitor dengue trends and identify hotspots, ensuring timely diagnosis

and control measures in hospitals.

According to Dr. Saleem, through proper planning and a coordinated strategy, the department is effectively controlling the spread of dengue in the province. Updating on the latest dengue situation, Dr. Saleem stated that there are currently only 390 active dengue cases in the province, with just 21 patients admitted to hospitals. He assured that all necessary facilities are available in hospitals, and so far, a total of 1,002 dengue cases have been reported in the province, out of which 612 patients have fully recovered. Timely treatment is being ensured to prevent any complications from the disease.

In the past 24 hours, 98 new dengue cases have been reported. So far, Peshawar has reported 286 cases, while Abbottabad has reported 121 cases. Anti-dengue operations are being rapidly conducted across the province.

The public is urged to follow preventive measures to safeguard themselves and their families.



PESHAWAR: The Advisor to the Chief Minister of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa for Tourism and Culture, Zahid Chen Zeb chairing meeting of Kaghan Development Authority.

ATC grants bail to alleged extortionist

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: Anti-Terrorism Court (ATC) Peshawar has granted bail to alleged extortionist named Shaor in a case for holding explosive material and extortion for a banned organization, on Wednesday.

The counsel Fazal Hadi advocate argued that Counter-Terrorism Department (CTD) registered a case against Shaor under Anti-Terrorism Act for possessing explosive material and extorting money from individuals in 2022. He added that CTD also placed allegation of working for banned organization commander Jan Said. Subsequently, the petitioner became nominated in various serious cases.

The counsel argued that the allegations against the petitioner were unfounded. He mentioned that Shaor had previously been granted bail in similar cases.

Police had not recovered any evidence from Shaor, nor was there any CD or data linking him to Commander Jan Said, the lawyer argued. ATC Peshawar granted bail to alleged extortionist after completion of arguments and issued orders of release.

PHC declare transfer of TEVTA official null and void

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: A two-member bench of Peshawar High Court (PHC) comprising Justice S.M. Atique Shah and Justice Sahibzada Asadullah has declared the notification of Deputy Director TEVTA's transfer as null and void, on Wednesday.

The counsel Zartaj

Anwar advocate argued that Khushal Khattak's was transferred from Deputy Director Admin Human Resource TEVTA to Principal of the institute despite being an administrative officer. The Deputy Director's charge was given to an Assistant Director who lacks the required qualifications.

The Counsel argued that the transfer was made

to favor a blue-eyed individual. However, TEVTA's lawyer stated that the petitioner can be transferred to any post. The petitioner cannot be allocated to a specific position.

PHC court declared the transfer notification null and void as well as directed the reinstatement of the petitioner as Deputy Director HR Admin.

Chanzeb for simplification of NOCs procedure

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: The Advisor to the Chief Minister of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa for Tourism and Culture, Zahid Chen Zeb has said that the influx of tourists in Kaghan presents immense opportunities for the promotion of tourism and consequently regional economic growth. He further stated that since tourism and the hotel industry are interdependent the process of obtaining NOCs for the hotel industry should be simplified.

He expressed these views while presiding over a meeting of the Board of Directors of the Kaghan Development Authority held in the conference room at the Secretary of

Tourism and Culture's office. Secretary Tourism Culture, Hazara Division, Director Kaghan Development Authority, Chairman of the Board of Directors of the Kaghan Development Authority and other members also attended the meeting.

Jamil Ahmad Chairman Board of Directors of the Kaghan Development Authority briefed the Advisor on the ongoing land zoning and demarcation, uplift programs and other projects in the region during the meeting. Zahid Chen Zeb expressed concerns about the arrangement of land zoning and demarcation stating that it should be aligned with

people's financial capabilities.

Regarding the Board of Directors' meeting with the Chief Minister Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Zahid Chen Zeb mentioned that the meeting would be possible after presenting a clear five-point agenda. He added that the KDA does not lack resources and serious steps are needed to utilize these resources for the development of the region.

The Advisor further stated that heavy machinery for completing development projects and handling emergencies in the area would soon be provided to the KDA. He emphasized that collective efforts are required to promote tourism and development in the region.

IRADA urges Pakistan to adopt Tobacco Harm Reduction strategies

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: A round table conference hosted by the Initiative on Risk-reduction & Dependable Alternatives (IRADA) in Peshawar which was attended by more than 25 participants including experts in tobacco control, public health officials, and local stakeholders. United in their goal to reduce the health impacts of tobacco use in Pakistan, the participants issued a pressing call for Pakistan to adopt effective tobacco harm reduction (THR) strategies.

These strategies could potentially save the lives of over 1.2 million people in the country. Renowned researcher and policy advisor, Dr. Muhammad Rizwan Junaid, highlighted the urgent need for THR at the "Break Thru Science" round table discussion organized by IRADA. He emphasized the potential of THR products like modern oral nicotine pouches, which offer significantly reduced risks compared to traditional cigarettes.

Global public health has set the goal to have a 'smoke free' future by 2040, where 5% or less of the adult population smoke

in any given country. Most countries fall woefully short of this target. Since the establishment of the World Health Organization (WHO) Framework Convention on Tobacco Control (WHO-FCTC) treaty 18 years ago, tobacco demand has declined, but far too slowly and, in some low- and middle-income countries (LMICs), not at all.

During the discussion, IRADA shed light on how countries like New Zealand and Sweden have demonstrated the effectiveness of THR in significantly reducing smoking rates. Nicotine pouches are popular, and together with snus, they have led to a marked reduction in the number of smokers. Sweden has the lowest proportion of smokers in the European Union (EU) and is set to become the first country in the world to be smoke free (less than 5% smokers).

The EU average is around 18%. The conference aimed to explore how these successful approaches could be adapted to Pakistan's unique context.

THR strategies offer a viable alternative for smokers seeking to reduce their exposure to harmful chemi-

cals. By providing a less harmful option, THR can help prevent millions of deaths from tobacco-related diseases. While not a substitute for comprehensive tobacco control, THR can be a valuable tool in reducing smoking rates. Implementing THR strategies aligns with the broader goal of improving public health and reducing the burden of tobacco-related diseases.

"By learning from the successes of other nations, we can tailor harm reduction strategies that are both effective and culturally relevant for Pakistan," said Mr. Junaid. "This conference is a crucial step in fostering a collaborative approach to tobacco control in Pakistan through evidence-based harm reduction."

During round table discussion, health experts urged the Government to consider adopting tobacco harm reduction strategies as part of tobacco control in public health regulatory frameworks. Regulations on the new nicotine products should be proportionate to the risk they pose to health and in ways that maximize benefits and reduce the health risk.

PHC re-issues notice to govt against curtaining LG powers

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: Peshawar High Court (PHC) has once again issued a notice to Government of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and ordered submission of reply till 23rd October, regarding the amendments made in Local Government Act, on Wednesday.

The counsel Babar Khan Yousafzai advocate argued that the provincial government has reduced the powers of local government representatives

through amendments made in Local Governments Act. He also pointed out that despite the passage of two years, the local government representatives have not received any funds, neither from the previous government nor from the current government.

The counsel further stated that the local government representatives were elected through public votes in the local body elections, yet they are being deprived of funds. Meanwhile, the provincial

government is utilizing development funds, but not allocating any fund to the local government representatives.

In response, the Additional Advocate General informed the court that the provincial government is in negotiations with the petitioners and local government representatives regarding the amendments. However, the counsel for the petitioners argued that the government is using delaying tactics.

Two-day KMC International Research Conference begins



F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: The 3rd Khyber Medical College International Research Conference was inaugurated with a grand ribbon-cutting ceremony. The esteemed Chief Guest, Prof. Dr. Rizwan Taj, President of the Pakistan Medical and Dental Council (PMDC), graced the event with his presence. Also attending were Chairman of the Board of Governors (BOG), Dr. Umar Ayub Khan, along with key members of the Organizing Committee, including Patron-in-Chief and Dean of Khyber Medical College, Prof. Dr. Mahmud Aurangzeb, Chief Organizer Prof. Dr. Basheer Ahmad, and Organizing Committee

Chairpersons Dr. Farooq Ahmad and Dr. Iqbal Haider.

The event saw the participation of renowned medical experts, researchers, and students from across Pakistan, all aiming to promote modern research trends and innovations in the field of medicine.

In the two months leading up to the research conference, more than 50 workshops were conducted in major public hospitals across Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, benefiting not only doctors but also students and other medical staff. During the conference, several pharmaceutical companies set up stalls, and city tours of Peshawar along with a gala dinner were organized for guests from other cities. The two-

day conference will conclude today.

In his address, the Chief Guest, Prof. Dr. Rizwan Taj, stated, "Research in the field of health is the foundation upon which the global medical system stands. Modern technology and scientific advancements have rapidly changed the world, and it is essential to keep pace with these changes. The promotion of research in the medical field is indispensable for improving the health of our nation. It is the need of the hour for medical institutions to focus on research to elevate healthcare standards at the global level."

Chairman of the Board of Governors, Dr. Umar Ayub Khan, emphasized, "Khyber Medical College has always been at the fore-

front of research. This conference aims not only to inform students and faculty about modern research methodologies but also to equip them to explore new horizons in the medical field. Our goal is for our researchers to develop new treatments and methodologies based on cutting-edge research so that the public can benefit from improved and quality healthcare services."

Dean of Khyber Medical College, Prof. Dr. Mahmud Aurangzeb, stated, "Progress in the health sector is impossible without research. We need to focus our efforts and hard work on research to provide services that meet global standards. KMC has always recognized the importance of research, and this conference aims to further promote a research culture."

At the conclusion of the event, the speakers praised Khyber Medical College's research achievements and congratulated the organizers for their successful efforts. They expressed confidence that this conference would serve as a strong platform for promoting research innovation, playing a crucial role not only in national but also in international research development.

KMU, Dosti Foundation organizes seminar on Genetic Disorders

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: A seminar on the critical topic of genetic disorders was held at Khyber Medical University (KMU), Peshawar, in collaboration with Dosti Foundation. The event brought together medical experts, faculty members, and a large number of students, highlighting the growing need for awareness and preventive measures against genetic disorders, especially in societies where cousin marriages are prevalent.

Special Secretary Health Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Syed Abdul Ghafoor Shah, who addressed the seminar, emphasized that cousin marriages remain a strong but outdated tradition in tribal and semi-tribal communities, contributing to the prevalence of genetic disorders. He highlighted the significant challenge of changing this deep-rooted cultural practice but stressed the need for all state institutions to work together to create a healthier society by curbing this tradition.

"We must focus more on disease prevention than treatment, and that starts with education. Genetic disorders need to be incorporated into school curricula to create early awareness," he said. The Special Secretary further added

that the Health Department is already taking steps to tackle the challenges posed by genetic disorders and assured that the seminar's recommendations would be shared with relevant stakeholders for approval.

Addressing the audience, KMU Vice Chancellor Prof. Dr. Zia Ul Haq emphasized that KMU, in collaboration with Dosti Foundation and other organizations, has been continuously advocating for medical and social awareness about genetic disorders for several years. He noted that these efforts have yielded positive results, with the provincial government

enacting legislation and public awareness gradually increasing.

Prof. Dr. Zia Ul Haq and other experts stressed that cousin marriages are a leading cause of genetic disorders, significantly increasing the risk of conditions like thalassemia in children. They called for a shift in societal attitudes and a greater focus on pre-marriage screening, which can help identify potential genetic risks even during early pregnancy stages.

"An interdisciplinary approach is required to combat genetic disorders. Laws exist, but they must be implemented effectively. Pre-marriage tests and public awareness cam-

paigns are essential steps toward addressing this issue," Dr. Zia remarked.

Experts at the seminar emphasized the importance of education and awareness campaigns to prevent genetic disorders, urging the media and religious scholars to play a proactive role in spreading the message. They stressed that addressing these issues is not only a matter of healthcare but also a social responsibility. The seminar concluded with a call to action, urging participants to serve as ambassadors of this critical message, spreading awareness and helping build a healthier future for society.

PA body discuss steps to solve problems of labors

PESHAWAR (APP): The introductory meeting of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Standing Committee on Labor was held here Wednesday wherein members were briefed by Secretary Labor about performance of the department.

The meeting was chaired by chairman of the committee, Muhammad Rishad Khan and attended by Labor Minister, Fazal Shakoor Khan, Gul Ibrahim, Ubaid-ur-Rehman, Muhammad Khurshid, Zar Alam and concerned officials. Secretary labor and officials briefed the committee about performance of labor department and future plans. Later briefing the media about meeting of standing committee, Rishad Khan said matters including child labor, performance and recruitment were discussed in the meeting.





In brief

Annual sports' competitions F.P. Report

LOWER DIR: The district education officer male Inayatullah Khan has said that annual sports' competitions among government and private high and higher secondary schools will start from Oct. 21. He was chairing a meeting of schools' heads at his office here on Wednesday. The assistant district officer sports Saeedur Rehman, district general secretary of All Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Subject Specialists Association Haroon ur Rashid, president Private Education Network (PEN) Abdul Wadood, principals and headmasters of high and higher secondary schools were in attendance. The DEO who is also president of the sports' committee, said that major games like cricket, hockey, football, volleyball, basketball, tug of war, badminton and minor games like table tennis, PT show, gymnastics and declamation contests would be held during the annual tournament that would last till Nov. 15.

Blind murder case resolved

MANSEHRA (INP): Mansehra Police successfully resolved blind murder case, traced and arrested the accused with murder weapon. According to details, Anwar Ali s/o Abdul Rehman was murdered in Dara Ghulam Nabi area of Mansehra on September 25 and body was found from his home four days later. DSP Headquarter Sajjad Khan said that a team of police headed by SHO Syed Asim Bukhari, Muharar Mazhar Shah, Shehzad Khan and Iqbal Khan started investigation in the case. The police successfully traced and arrested the culprit identified as Shakir s/o Ikhlaiq hailing from Jared area of tehsil Balakot besides recovering murder weapon. Heirs of the deceased paid tribute to Mansehra Lorry Adda Police for its performance.

Actions against private schools F.P. Report

TAKHTBHAI: The rural geography of Takhtbhai tehsil desperately needs attention, as it lags behind in educational development. It's natural for individuals, groups, organizations, or societies to have flaws and virtues. The proliferation of private educational institutions indicates the failure of education administration. Many private schools in Takhtbhai, Demand money from students for janitorial services, paper expenses, and even replacing light bulbs. Humiliate students unable to pay. Run canteens selling substandard snacks, making purchases mandatory for students. Lack proper cleanliness and sanitation. Fail to provide playgrounds for students. Violate labor laws, paying teachers with MA/MSc degrees only 7,000-10,000 rupees per month. This pathetic state of private schools in Takht Bhai remains hidden from government oversight bodies and the labor department. It's high time they take notice of these institutions' mismanagement and atrocities.

Attacker and child killed F.P. Report

TANK: A passerby child was killed when a man started firing at a police van in Wazirabad area of Tank district on Wednesday. Police said the incident occurred in Wazirabad area where area SHO and his team were on routine patrolling. A man whose identity could not be immediately ascertained, started firing at the police van.



MARDAN: KP Minister for Higher Education, Meena Khan Afridi in a group photo with participants after meeting at Women University, Mardan.

Tribal jirga demands of edu and health facilities

F.P. Report

WANA: A grand tribal Jirga convened at FC compound at Wana as per directives of the provincial government. The gathering saw the participation of a significant number of tribal elders, youth, and individuals from various sectors of society. The primary focus of the Jirga was to deliberate on pressing issues affecting the region, particularly in education, healthcare, law and order, and basic infrastructure, on Wednesday.

The Jirga was led by Member of Provincial Assembly (MPA) Ajab Gul Wazir and Deputy Commissioner South Waziristan, Nasir Khan. During the proceedings, tribal elders representing the Suleman Khel, Ahmadzai Wazir, and Dotani tribes presented a series of demands addressed to the Chief Minister of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Ali Amin Gandapur.

A key demand was the reactivation of inactive

schools, dispensaries, and Basic Health Units (BHUs) in the area, rather than focusing on the construction of new infrastructure. The elders stressed that existing facilities should be made functional to ensure better access to education and healthcare for the local population.

Concerns regarding the worsening law and order situation were also raised. The tribal leaders emphasized that without restoring peace, any form of development would be unattainable. They urged the government to take immediate and effective steps to restore security in the region.

In addition to these concerns, the restoration of several key institutions, including Agri Park Wana, Sheikh Fatima Hospital, and the District Headquarters Hospital Wana, was highlighted. The participants underscored the need for these institutions to be fully operational to benefit the local commu-

nities.

The Jirga also addressed the need for improvements in agriculture, forestry, and NADRA (National Database and Registration Authority) services, which are critical for the region's development.

Representatives from the Dotani and Suleman Khel tribes raised complaints about the lack of basic facilities in their tehsil, Toi Khula. They pointed out the absence of essential services such as roads, electricity, and mobile network coverage. Health and education centers in the area remain inactive, and the lack of a NADRA center poses a major problem for the residents.

MPA Ajab Gul Wazir and Deputy Commissioner Nasir Khan assured the participants that some of the issues would be resolved immediately, while others falling under the jurisdiction of the provincial government would be communicated to the Chief Minister for further action.

Muqam visits family of martyred child

F.P. Report

SWABI: Federal Minister for Kashmir Affairs, Gilgit-Baltistan Engineer Amir Muqam visited the bereaved family of martyred child of Swabi blast in police station last week and expressed grief and sorrow.

The Minister, flanked by the well-known politician of Pakistan Muslim League-N and former member of the Provincial Assembly, Babar Saleem offered Fatiha for the departed soul. On the occasion Amir Muqam spent some time with the bereaved family and handed over an assistance cheque of Rs 100,000 and assured to request the Prime Minister of Pakistan, Shehbaz Sharif for financial assistance from Shuhad package.

Later, the Minister along with Babar Saleem visited Swabi hospital and met the injured police personnel. He prayed for a speedy recovery of the injured persons and directed the medical superintendent and other officers to provide best medical care to them. On the occasion the parents of the child and people of the village expressed their gratitude to the federal Minister for his visit and support.

Blood donation camp held

F.P. Report

CHARSADDA: Hamza Foundation Welfare Thalassemia Center and Blood Transfusion Services in collaboration with the Government Shaheed Umer Hayat Higher Secondary school No. 1 Charsadda successfully organized one day blood donation camp, to combat the shortage of blood for thalassemia patients and those in need.

According to details, Resource Mobilization officers Attiq ur Rehman and Ibrar Ullah Jan delivered motivation speech to the students of the said institute. This initiative reflects the unwavering commitment of Hamza Foundation to saving lives and ensuring a steady supply of blood for those who rely on it.

As many as 54 healthy volunteer students blood donors donated their blood for saving precious lives of 1504 registered Thalassemia and Hemophilia patients with the help and support of Principal Bahadar Ali, Vice Principal Mushtaq Ahmed and Subject Specialist Shahid Ahmed. We extend our heartfelt gratitude to all the donors, management and participants who joined hands to make this event a success. And their generosity and support can truly be the difference between life and death.

POs among 5 suspects held

F.P. Report

CHARSADDA: The district police on Wednesday held five suspects including Proclaimed Offenders (POs) during search and strike operation in the jurisdiction of Tangi police station here.

Two facilitators of the POs were also arrested while two pistols and 250 grams of ice drug were recovered from the suspects. The operation was conducted by DSP Tangi Zardad Khan, SHO of Tangi Waris Khan.

Chinese delegation visits Takht Bhai archaeological site

F.P. Report

MARDAN: An 18-member Chinese delegation here on Wednesday visited the world famous and among the UNESCO world heritage sites, Takht Bhai archaeological site. On the directives of District Police Officer (DPO) Zahoor Babar Afridi, DSP Takhtbhai Circle, Shakeel Khan received the delegation and took them to various sites amid foolproof security arrangements.

He told them that the site was famous due to its historical and cultural importance and every year several domestic and foreign tourists visit this site in large numbers. The Chinese delegation appreciated the security arrangements of the Mardan Police and expressed their satisfaction.

Meanwhile, the officials of Directorate of Archaeology gave a detailed briefing to the delegation on the historical significance of archaeology. The delegation was

informed that now Takht Bhai ruins became a part of world heritage list and considered one of most well-structured Buddhist monasteries.

The visiting delegation took keen interest in historical sites and called Pakistan a very beautiful and peaceful country. While touring the historic site, they praised the security measures and said that they felt completely safe and in a pleasant environment.

Prof Jahan Zeb appointed as chairman BISE: The Khyber Pakhtunkhwa government has appointed Professor Jahan Zeb Khan, a grade 20 officer from Government Post Graduate College Mardan, as the new Chairman of the Mardan Education Board. According to a notification issued by the Department of Education Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, his appointment has been made under the KP Board of Intermediate and Secondary Education Act

1990. Professor Jahan Zeb officially took charge of the Position.

The handover ceremony was attended by officials of the Mardan Education Board, including former Chairman Fareed Khattak. In his first meeting with board officials, Professor Jahan Zeb emphasized that there would be no compromise on merit, and all decisions would be made with complete transparency.

He expressed his commitment to making the Mardan Education Board a model institution through the implementation of modern reforms, ensuring the highest educational standards. He further announced improvements in online services for students and parents to provide timely results and quick resolution of grievances. Professor Jahan Zeb also instructed all officials to promote teamwork in board operations and work towards making the board the top educational institution in the province.

Sialkot international airport achieves milestone

F.P. Report

SIALKOT: Sialkot International Airport Limited (SIAL) is proud to announce one of its most significant achievements in 2024: the completion of a major rehabilitation project for its runway, spanning 79,000 square feet, within a record time of just 13 days. This incredible feat was accomplished entirely with SIAL's own resources and arrangements, highlighting the airport's dedication to operational efficiency, safety, and modernization.

This milestone is proof of the teamwork and commitment of SIAL's staff, engineers, and contractors who worked around the clock to ensure the timely completion of this project. Despite the complexity and scale of the rehabilitation, the swift execution of the project ensured minimal disruption to flight operations while maintaining the highest safety standards.

"Completing such a large-scale rehabilitation project in such a short time-frame is a remarkable achievement for our team," said Chairman SIAL, Hassan Ali Bhatti. CEO SIAL, AVM (Rtd) Tanweer Ashraf Bhatti said "It demonstrates our commitment to providing world-class infrastructure that meets international aviation

standards, ensuring smooth operations for airlines and a better experience for our passengers."

The successful completion of the runway rehabilitation positions Sialkot International Airport as a key player in Pakistan's aviation sector, enabling it to cater to increasing air traffic demand while ensuring the safety and reliability of airport operations. SIAL remains dedicated to its mission of continuous improvement and development, setting new benchmarks for excellence in airport management and infrastructure development in Pakistan.

TVI holds free medical, vaccination camps

F.P. Report

ZHOB: In order to improve the vaccine's acceptability and cover missed and not available children during the anti-polio drives, the Trust for Vaccines and Immunization (TVI), in collaboration with the Aga Khan Foundation, organized over a dozen free medical and vaccination camps on mother and child health in different far-off areas of the district.

Hundreds of patients, including women and children, suffering from various seasonal diseases were examined by male and female doctors. DHO Dr Syed Muaffar Shah, Advocate Azmat Khan Mandokhail and Dr Mir Dad Kakar flanked by the TVI district coordinator Rohullah Babar and health

staff inaugurated the camps in both rural and urban parts of district Zhub.

According to the provincial coordinator, TVI Abdullah, who visited the camps, the camps have been set up in different high-risk districts of Balochistan, including Zhub. The aim of holding camps was not only to provide medical facilities to the underprivileged communities, but also to restore their trust in vaccines.

"Vaccines play a significant role in the prevention of diseases. The parents should cooperate with the health staff and get their loved one vaccinated against polio and other diseases because vaccination is the only way to protect children from the diseases", he urged. National STOP officer Dr Muhammad

Amin, ComNet coordinator Samad Hariphal, and inspector police Gulab Din Kakar also visited the camps and inspected the facilities.

TVI coordinator Rohullah Babar on the occasion said that prior to the camps, the health staff went door to door in the targeted union councils to sensitize the community members about the camps and importance of immunization, so that more people could benefit from the facilities. Those who do not have proper access to the medical consultation and medicines can benefit from the camps at their doorstep, adding, "Apart from free medical consultation and examination, needy patients were also provided with free of cost medicines", he added.

Rescue 1122, Khyber issues monthly performance report

F.P. Report

LANDI KOTAL: District Emergency Officer (DEO), Eng. Shareq Riaz Khattak on Wednesday issued a monthly performance report for September, 2024 and said that the Rescue 1122 Khyber provided services during 418 emergencies and saved precious human life and their properties.

According to the performance report the Rescue 1122 Khyber received 14375 calls among which the majority of it were fake

and non-emergency calls. The DEO said that the Rescue 1122 Khyber timely responded to 399 emergencies.

During the last month rescue services were supplied in 34 road accidents, 233 medical emergencies, 04 fire incidents, 12 firing/quarrels happens, 01 drowned and 20 other cases, he added. As per the prescriptions of the doctors 114 patients were shifted (inside and outside of the district) to health centers under the supervision of trained

crew members for necessary medical treatment, the report stated.

In the light of the directions of the Director General Dr Muhammad Ayaz Khan and supervision of the DEO, Khyber, awareness and training sessions were organized in schools, colleges, universities and other community centers to impart knowledge of fire safety and life saving techniques to the masses to decrease ratio of emergencies in the district, Rescue 1122 spokesperson informed.

DHO inaugurates immunization drive

F.P. Report

TOBA TEK SINGH: District Health Officer Toba Tek Singh Dr. Kashif Kamboh inaugurated campaign for the immunization course from birth to 2 years of age to prevent epidemic diseases. On this occasion, he said that this campaign started from October 1 and will continue till 31st October.

The Big Catch Up campaign is a global initiative to

reach children who have not completed the course of immunization against the pandemic during Covid-19 to complete the course to strengthen the immunization system. DHO said that during this campaign, 8,296 children will be vaccinated in 85 Union Councils.

In which 113 Vaccinators, 113 Assistants, 226 Total Social Mobilizers will perform their duties. While our 113 will be on duty to make

this campaign successful. Teams in every village, area, neighborhood and street of District Toba Tek Singh will go for this, kids centers will be built in every neighborhood where parents can get their children vaccinated.

Deputy Commissioner Muhammad Naem Sindhu said in his message that it is our effort that no family in Pakistan should face the death of a child due to vaccine preventable diseases.

RPO claims enhancement of security management

F.P. Report

MINGORA: Regional Police Officer (RPO) Malakand division, emphasized on the importance of maintaining peace and security in the region during a recent media briefing at his office. He stated that ensuring a secure environment for both residents and tourists in Swat is a top priority.

RPO noted the influx of tourists to Swat, a popular travel destination known for its stunning landscapes and rich culture. He highlighted that the police have intensified their efforts, implementing 24-hour patrolling to ensure safety. There is no place for armed individuals in Swat, he asserted, reaffirming the police's commitment to protecting the lives and

property of citizens.

The RPO also mentioned ongoing search and strike operations targeting armed groups in various areas, which he personally oversees. Our police force is fully equipped to handle any incidents that may arise, he stated. He urged the public to report any suspicious individuals immediately, underscoring the community's role in maintaining security.

In addition to regular patrols, RPO confirmed that all entry and exit points in the Malakand Division are under strict surveillance to deter any potential threats. We are dedicated to ensuring that no troublemakers are able to enter the Malakand Division, he concluded.

As the region experiences a surge in tourism,



the police are not only working to ensure safety but also to foster a welcoming atmosphere for visitors, including foreign nationals, who are drawn to the beauty of Swat Valley. The collaboration between law enforcement and the community is crucial for sustaining peace and promoting the region as a safe travel destination.

DC directs improvement in public services delivery

Sahibzada Afridi

KOHAT: Deputy Commissioner Kohat Abdul Akram held an important meeting to bring more improvement in the services of Service Delivery Centers (SDCs) Kohat/ Lachi on the public complaints/suggestions related to Service Delivery Centers raised in the Kuli

Katcheries, on Wednesday.

The meeting beside the Additional Deputy Commissioner (G), Additional Deputy Commissioner (F&P) and Assistant Commissioners of Kohat, Lachi and Dara Adam Khel, was also attended by the Deputy Director Database and Revenue Officers.

Deputy Director Database

and Revenue Officers briefed the meeting in detail on Land Computerization in Kohat district and the relief being provided to the people from Computerization. Deputy Commissioner Kohat strictly directed the authorities concerned that the benefits of Land Computerization should reach the people any way.



Fires taking Amazon closer to ‘point of no return’: Expert

BRASILIA (AFP): A year ago, Carlos Nobre, one of Brazil's top climate scientists, was a rare voice of optimism about the future of the planet. The 73-year-old, one of the top experts on the Amazon rainforest, was cheering the fact that "for the first time, all the leaders in the region are mobilized to find solutions for the forest" at a summit in northern Brazil.

Today, he warns that the world's biggest jungle, which is being ravaged by the worst drought-fuelled wildfires in decades, is in existential danger. The world risks "losing the Amazon," he told AFP in an interview. A record wave of wildfires, fueled by severe drought linked to climate change and deforestation, is causing havoc across South America. The worst drought in Brazil in recent memory has fanned the biggest fires in the country in more than a decade, leaving up to 80 percent of the country blanketed in smoke. While several countries, including Canada, regularly battle catastrophic wildfires, theirs are often

the product of naturally occurring lightning strikes that spread quickly through dry vegetation, Nobre said. In the Amazon, by contrast, most of the fires are illegally started by humans for agricultural purposes. "The criminals realized that satellites only detect fires when the fire spreads to 30 or 40 square meters (320 to 430 square feet). "This gives them time to leave the area before being arrested," Nobre said.

In February, Europe's climate monitor Copernicus announced that for the first time on record, Earth had endured 12 consecutive months of temperatures 1.5 degrees Celsius hotter than the pre-industrial era -- four years earlier than predicted. Experts had warned that extreme weather events would accelerate sharply at the 1.5C-warming mark. "It is not a slow, linear increase," Nobre said. "In 2024 we are already seeing how the frequency of extreme phenomena is accelerating and breaking records," he added, citing increased "heatwaves, heavy rains,

droughts, forest fires" among the extreme weather events that have become frequent in some parts of the planet. Nobre warned that the fires consuming chunks of the Amazon risked accelerating its transition into dry savannah grasslands. "If global warming continues and we do not completely stop deforestation, degradation and fires, by 2050 we will have passed the point of no return," he warned. "In 30 to 50 years, we will have lost at least 50 percent of the forest," he said.

An increase in warming to 2.5C by 2050 would trigger new tipping points, he said, including "losing the Amazon" outright. Among the measures he advocated to reduce climate warming were accelerating the transition to renewable energy and the mass planting of trees in cities to act as sponges for carbon dioxide. Trees can help lower urban temperatures by up to 4.5C and also increase humidity. "Urban sponges are a very important solution all over the world."

Russia ready for long confrontation with US

MOSCOW (Reuters): Russia must prepare for a long confrontation with the United States and has sent repeated warnings to Washington over the crisis in relations, Deputy Foreign Minister Sergei Ryabkov was quoted as saying. The 2-1/2-year-old Ukraine war has triggered the gravest confrontation between Russia and the West since the 1962 Cuban Missile Crisis - considered to be the closest the two Cold War superpowers came to intentional nuclear war.

The conflict is entering what Russian officials say is the most dangerous phase to date, Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy has been urging Kyiv's allies for months to let Ukraine fire longer-range Western missiles deep into Russia to limit Moscow's ability to launch attacks. Ryabkov, who oversees arms control and relations with Washington, said Moscow had no illusions about relations, given the "bipartisan anti-Russian consensus" in the United States. "We must prepare for a long-term confrontation with this country. We are ready for this in every sense," Ryabkov was quoted as saying by state news agency RIA.

"We are sending all the warning signals to our opponent so that it does not underestimate our determination," Ryabkov said. President Vladimir Putin warned the West last week that Russia could use nuclear weapons if it was struck with conventional missiles, and that Moscow would consider any assault on it supported by a nuclear power to be a joint attack.

Cambodia to welcome US Navy at port

WASHINGTON (Reuters): Cambodia said the US Navy would be welcome to visit its Ream Naval Base, which the Pentagon is concerned will become a Chinese outpost. Cambodian Deputy Prime Minister Sun Chanthol told a think tank event in Washington that any country's military could call at the port once the naval base is completed.

"The Ream Naval Base is not for the Chinese. The Chinese provided us with the assistance to expand the Ream Naval Base for our own national defense, not to be used by the Chinese or any military against another country," Sun told the Center for Strategic and International Studies. "When this naval base is completed, any navy can call on that port, as long as it's for humanitarian and disaster recovery, or joint military exercise," he said.

However, he advised the US Navy to bring small ships on any visit, "because the water is shallow. You might get stuck there," he said, when referring to the potential for a US Navy port call. Ties between the US and Cambodia have been strained in recent years, with Washington vocal over the government's dismantling of the political opposition and concerned about China's growing influence. Chinese warships, likely corvettes or frigates, have been rotating through Ream since December to help train the Cambodian navy. Washington has pressed Cambodia to uphold its constitution and prevent any foreign country from having exclusive access to Ream or other territory.

NATO's new chief makes Ukraine support a top priority

BRUSSELS (AP): The new head of NATO vowed to help shore up Western support for war-ravaged Ukraine and expressed confidence that he can work with whoever is elected president of the United States, the alliance's most powerful member, in November.

"There can be no lasting security in Europe without a strong, independent Ukraine," new NATO Secretary-General Mark Rutte said in his first speech on taking office, and he affirmed a commitment made by the organization's leaders in 2008 that "Ukraine's rightful place is in NATO." Russian President Vladimir Putin's forces are making advances in eastern Ukraine. Ukraine's army has a shaky hold on part of the Kursk region in Russia, which has provided a temporary morale boost, but as casualties mount it remains outnumbered and outgunned.

"The cost of supporting Ukraine is far, far lower than the cost we would face if we allow Putin to get his way," Rutte told reporters, a few hours after his predecessor Jens Stoltenberg handed the reins to him, along with a Viking gavel with which to chair future meetings. But Ukraine's NATO membership remains a distant prospect. Several member countries, led by the US and Germany, believe that Ukraine should not join while it's fighting a war. Rutte declined to speculate about what must happen before it can stand among NATO's ranks.

Rutte did single out China, and particularly Beijing's support for Putin. "China has become a decisive enabler of Russia's war in Ukraine. China cannot continue to fuel the largest conflict in Europe since the Second World War without this impacting its interests and reputation," he said. NATO's new top civilian official also underlined the importance of keeping the trans-Atlantic bond between the United States, Canada and Europe strong, with US elections just a month away.

Surveys suggest the election will be a close race. It could see the return of Donald Trump, whose bluster during his last term of office about low defense spending among European allies and Canada undermined the trust of NATO member countries. It became an existential challenge, as smaller members feared that the US under Trump would renege on NATO's security pledge that all countries must come to the rescue of any



ally in trouble, the foundation stone the alliance is built on.

But Rutte said: "I know both candidates very well." He praised Trump for pushing NATO allies to spend more and for toughening their approach toward China. He also hailed the "fantastic record" of Vice President Kamala Harris and described her as "a highly respected leader." "I will be able to work with both. Whatever is the outcome of the election," Rutte said. When pressed about Trump's commitment to the other allies, he deflected, saying only that both candidates "understand that, in the end, the trans-Atlantic relationship is crucial, not just for Europe."

Asked whether the Netherlands, which has only just reached NATO's spending of 2% of gross domestic product on its defense budget, has set a good example to other allies, Rutte shook his head and said "No. We should have done this earlier." Incumbent US President Joe Biden said in a statement that the US remains "deeply devoted" to the alliance, and expressed confidence that Rutte would "continue to build on our work to create a NATO that is stronger, larger, and more resolute than ever in its mission to create a safer world for our peoples." Earlier, Stoltenberg had welcomed Rutte to NATO headquarters in Brussels for the change of leadership.

The two men, who first sat together at NATO's table 14 years ago as the leaders of Norway and the Netherlands, greeted each other warmly, before laying a wreath to fallen military personnel, surrounded by the flags of the 32 member countries. "Mark has the perfect back-

ground to become a great secretary general," a visibly emotional Stoltenberg said as he ended a decade in office. "He has served as prime minister for 14 years and led four different coalition governments, so therefore he knows how to make compromises, create consensus, and these are skills which are very much valued here at NATO," Stoltenberg said.

Rutte said that he "cannot wait to get to work." Among his other priorities, he said, are to increase defense spending and strengthen partnerships that the alliance has established with other countries around the world, notably in Asia and the Middle East. After hundreds of NATO staffers applauded the two men as they moved inside to the great hall where North Atlantic Council meetings are held at the level of ambassadors, ministers or leaders, Stoltenberg helped his successor to get started by presenting him with a Viking gavel to use when chairing meetings. Stoltenberg, NATO's 13th secretary-general, took over in 2014, the year that "little green men" from Russia infiltrated Ukraine. Moscow annexed the Crimean Peninsula, sparking a defense spending buildup at the world's biggest security alliance that gathered pace over his term.

His tenure was surpassed only by Dutch diplomat Joseph Luns, who spent 12 years in charge of NATO. NATO secretaries-general run the HQ, drive the alliance's working agenda and speak on behalf of the 32-nation organization with one unifying voice. Continuity is usually the key word when they take up office.

Rebel group in Congo generates \$300,000 monthly in mining area

DAKAR (AP): A rebel group in Congo generates around \$300,000 a month in revenue through its control of a mining area in the east of the country, a UN official said.

In April, the M23 - a rebel group with alleged links to Rwanda - seized the Rubaya mining area in eastern Congo, which holds deposits of a key mineral used in the production of smartphones and computers. Over 15% of the world's supply of tantalum, a rare metal extracted from coltan, comes from Rubaya, Bintou Keita, head of the UN mission in Congo, told the Security Council.

"Unless international sanctions are imposed on

those benefiting from this criminal trade, peace will remain elusive and civilians will continue to suffer," Keita said. Tantalum is among the minerals that were identified earlier this year in a letter from Congo's government questioning Apple about the tech company's knowledge of "blood minerals" being smuggled in its supply chain.

The decadeslong conflict in eastern Congo has produced one of the world's worst humanitarian crises, with more than 120 armed groups fighting for power, land and valuable mineral resources while others try to defend their communities. Some armed groups

have been accused of mass killings, rapes and other human rights violations. The violence has displaced some 6 million people in the country's east. M23, or the March 23 Movement, is a rebel military group mainly made up of ethnic Tutsis that broke away from the Congolese army just over a decade ago. They staged a large offensive in 2012 and took over the provincial capital of Goma near the border with Rwanda, the same city they are threatening again.

Congo alleges that Rwanda has been involved in war crimes in the east and US and UN experts accuse it of giving military backing to M23. Rwanda

denies the claim, but in February admitted that it has troops and missile systems in eastern Congo to safeguard its security, pointing to a buildup of Congolese forces near the border. In July, UN experts estimated that between 3,000 and 4,000 Rwandan government forces are deployed in eastern Congo alongside M23, which has been making major advances. Last week, a regional court in East Africa opened proceedings in a case filed by Congo against Rwanda, accusing it of violating Congo's sovereignty and territorial integrity by sending troops to help rebels in the country's east.

Chinese military conducts patrols in parts of South China Sea

BEIJING (Reuters): The Chinese military conducted combat readiness patrols in parts of the South China Sea, Chinese state media reported, in an extension of rare military drills and exercises in the region over the weekend.

The Southern Theater Command of the Chinese People's Liberation Army (PLA) conducted combat readiness patrols in efforts to improve combat capabilities and maintain peace

and stability in the South China Sea region, according to state media reports.

China claims almost the entire South China Sea despite overlapping claims in the busy waterway by Brunei, Malaysia, the Philippines and Vietnam. In 2016 the Permanent Court of Arbitration in the Hague ruled that China's claims were not supported by international law, a decision that Beijing rejects. Chinese air and naval

forces conducted manoeuvres near the disputed Scarborough shoal after Australia and the Philippines said their militaries would hold joint maritime activities with Japan, New Zealand and the United States in the Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ) of the Philippines.

The shoal, about 200 km (124 miles) west of the main Philippine island of Luzon and within the Philippine EEZ, has long

been claimed by both Beijing and Manila. In recent talks with China's top diplomat Wang Yi in New York, US Secretary of State Antony Blinken raised China's "dangerous and destabilising actions" in the South China Sea. Blinken had previously accused Beijing of aggressive deployments in the South China Sea of its coast guard and fishing vessels suspected of being a maritime militia.

French PM vows more taxes and spending cuts

PARIS (AFP): France's new Prime Minister Michel Barnier pledged new taxes and spending cuts to reduce a "colossal" debt, in a policy address that met with a raucous reception from lawmakers who could topple his government at any time.

Barnier, a right-wing former EU Brexit negotiator, was appointed by centrist President Emmanuel Macron to bring some stability after the political chaos created by a hung parliament that resulted from snap elections this summer. But furious heckling of his first major policy speech, especially from the left, recalled that his loose coalition ranks of conservatives and centrists are outnumbered by the NFP alliance and far-right National Rally (RN).

If both joined forces, they could remove Barnier in a confidence vote. Opportunities to topple the government will abound in the coming months as ministers struggle to get a 2025 budget through parliament before year's end. He said the government aims to reduce the deficit to five percent of GDP in 2025, "on the right path" to reach the European Union limit in 2029 -- two years later than previously planned.

He called France's "colossal" debts of over 3.2 trillion euros (\$3.5 trillion) - more than 110 percent of GDP -- "the true sword of Damocles... hanging over the head of France and of

every French person". He said that two-thirds of deficit reduction would come from slashing spending from its present 57 percent of GDP -- far above the 49-percent European average. But while France has "among the highest taxes in the world," there would be "a time-limited effort that must be shared, with an insistence on tax justice" or equitably sharing the burden, Barnier added. Highly-profitable big companies and wealthy individuals would both be called on to pay more, he said. Barnier sought to throw some bones to the left.

He called out "a second sword of Damocles that is just as terrible: the environmental debt we are leaving as a legacy to our children". France would bet on both its traditional strength in nuclear power and renewables to reduce carbon emissions, he said. Barnier opened the door to tweaking last year's hugely unpopular pension reform that raised the retirement age.

And in a list of red lines, he vowed "zero tolerance for racism and anti-Semitism" and protection for "freedoms achieved over the years" including on abortion, gay marriage and in-vitro fertilisation.

Some opponents and observers have feared for migrants' rights and sexual and reproductive freedoms under a largely conservative government tolerated by the RN. Barnier's pledges

directed at far-right voters included greater "security in daily life", where "the public will be reassured by the presence of law enforcement".

He added that "France will continue to re-establish checks on its own borders for as long as necessary, as is allowed under European rules and as Germany has just done".

In talks with major countries of origin for irregular migration, France would threaten reductions in the number of visas issued for legal travel, Barnier warned. His comments on immigration follow the rape and murder of a 19-year-old Paris student where a Moroccan man due to be deported was named as the suspected attacker. MPs observed a minute of silence for the victim, named as Philippine, as the parliamentary session opened. The NFP -- an alliance of hard-left France Unbowed, Communists, Socialists and Greens -- is expected to file a confidence motion against the Barnier government in the coming days.

But the RN is biding its time for now, betting on a strategy of looking responsible to voters rather than triggering more political chaos. Eyes in the political scene are already turning towards 2027, when a new presidential election must be held at which Macron cannot stand again due to term limits.

Kremlin says we know Rutte

MOSCOW (Reuters): Russia said it did not expect any change of policy from new NATO chief Mark Rutte, the former Dutch prime minister who has replaced Norway's Jens Stoltenberg as secretary general of the alliance.

"Our expectations are that the North Atlantic alliance will continue to work in the same direction in which it has been working," Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov told

reporters, adding that President Vladimir Putin knew Rutte well from past meetings. "At one time, there were hopes for the possibility of building good pragmatic relations - at least, such a dialogue was conducted - but subsequently we know that the Netherlands took a rather irreconcilable position, a position on the complete exclusion of any contacts with our country," he said.

"Therefore, we do not

think that anything significantly new will happen in the alliance's policy," Rutte is taking on the NATO job at a critical juncture in the war in Ukraine, where Russian forces are advancing in the east of the country, and just over a month before the US presidential election. "We have to make sure that Ukraine prevails as a sovereign, independent, democratic nation," he told reporters at NATO headquarters in Brussels.

Blunt and bold - Kenya’s ‘truth speaker’ faces the sack

NAIROBI (BBC): Kenya's embattled Deputy President, Rigathi Gachagua, calls himself the "truthful man", attributing his remarkable rise to the fact that he speaks truth to power. But as he faces impeachment proceedings, he says these troubles are also a result of his outspoken nature.

Before he was elected MP in 2017, little was known about the man who would, in five short years, rise to become Kenya's second-in-command. Not many people outside Gachagua's central Kenya constituency had heard of him or his style of politics. Gachagua captured the lime-light in the run-up to the 2022 elections, when he vehemently opposed President Uhuru Kenyatta's choice of preferred successor. Kenyatta was campaigning heavily for former

Prime Minister Raila Odinga. But Gachagua allied himself with William Ruto, Kenyatta's then deputy, who was angling for the presidency that his boss did not want to bequeath to him. At political rallies and in media circles, Gachagua railed against Kenyatta, often in words that other politicians would find cringe-worthy.

"Don't kill me the way your father killed JM Kariuki," he said at a rally in July 2022, referring to an MP who was killed in 1975 during the administration of Jomo Kenyatta, the nation's first president and the father of Uhuru Kenyatta. To this day, no one has been found guilty of Kariuki's death. Before he became Kenya's deputy president, police raided Gachagua's home and arrested him

in relation to a corruption and money-laundering case. The charges were dropped after he and Ruto took power following the 2022 election. He had helped Ruto win by marshalling support in Mount Kenya - the biggest voting bloc in the country. Both Gachagua and Kenyatta came from there. Kenyatta had tried to rally Mount Kenya's voters to throw their weight behind Odinga, but he failed. Long before Kenyatta became president in 2013, Gachagua had worked closely with him, including as his personal assistant for five years. But after teaming up with Ruto, Gachagua went from being Kenyatta's "confidant" to one of his harshest critics. However, since falling out with his current boss, Gachagua has apologised to

Kenyatta, saying it was "foolish" of him to have "fought my own brother". This humility is in sharp contrast to his rhetoric as Ruto's running-mate - analyst Javass Bigamo had even described Gachagua as a "feared political bulldog that Ruto needed to be able to counter President Kenyatta in the central region". Gachagua was praised as an excellent mobiliser, who had the ear of ordinary people on the ground. Yet he was probably not the person many expected to take the deputy position, given that Gachagua had only been a politician for five years and was up against more seasoned candidates. Ruto explained he had chosen Gachagua because "he is one of those leaders who are passionate about ordinary people". Politics expert Bobby Mkangi previously told

the BBC that Gachagua's ability to negotiate his way to the top "considering other names that were fronted and were known nationally" was "quite something".

But just two years after ascending to power, that ability seems to have fizzled out - leaving Gachagua butting heads with the president and in a position where many legislators are pushing for his removal. He stands accused of corruption, money-laundering, gross misconduct, insubordination and bullying public officers and six other acts of wrongdoing.

As the motion was being tabled in parliament, the MP introducing the motion, Mwengi Mutuse, said that 291 out of 349 MPs had signed the document pushing for Gachagua's removal. The signatures of two-thirds

- or 233 - of all MPs are required to impeach him. Mkangi now says the deputy president has been "unable to consolidate the support of his base and the politicians around him".

Gachagua has always been accused of being brash and aggressive - it was one of the reasons some argued against his selection to the running mate position prior to the 2022 election. But in recent months, this criticism has increased. He denies this assessment of his character, along with assertions that he alienates his fellow politicians. He says all he does is "speak the truth", which he insists has made him unpopular within certain political factions. "I will not compromise my principles," he said over the weekend as calls for his impeachment came to a crescendo.

The Frontier Post

Rehmat Shah Afridi (Late)

Founder

Bilal Shah Afridi

Chief Executive

Jalil Afridi

Managing Editor

Printed and published by Mahmood Afridi at Moraka's Printers, 27 Abdara Road, University Town, Peshawar.

Peshawar Office: 091-5700095, 0300- 9009001

Peshawar Fax: 091-5703687, Post Box No. 573

E-mail: fppeshawar@thefrontierpost.com

Lahore Office: 0335-4026284

Email: fplahore@thefrontierpost.com

Islamabad Office: 0321-5066253

Email: mahmoodafridi@thefrontierpost.com

Karachi Office: 021-32213411, 0300-8340907

Email: fpkarachi@thefrontierpost.com

USA and Canada Toll Free Number 1-800-5905747

Israel's invasion shows its deadly lack of restraint

WITHIN days of Hamas's deadly attack on October 7, in which it killed more than 1,000 Israelis and took 230 hostages, people in Lebanon began to brace themselves for the possibility they would be pulled inexorably into the orbit of Israel's wrath. Over the past year the Israeli government has responded to the attack by laying waste to the Palestinian enclave of Gaza, killing more than 40,000 Palestinians, carrying out a series of deadly raids in the West Bank and heavily bombarding Lebanon from the air.

The nightmare scenario came to pass on Monday night, when Israeli troops launched a ground invasion of Lebanese territory.

Lebanon's Hezbollah militant group, which is also the country's most powerful political bloc, played no role in the October 7 attack, but has nonetheless backed Hamas by firing rockets regularly into northern Israel. While most Lebanese are sympathetic to the Palestinian cause, many are opposed to Hezbollah's stranglehold on Lebanon's economy and political system as well as any action that would unleash Israel's superior military might in their direction.

Hezbollah is aware of this. Although its leader Hassan Nasrallah, who was killed by Israel last week in an air raid on Beirut, was a world-class provocateur, he had spent the past year attempting to calibrate his forces' attacks on Israel to the degree where they might fall just short of triggering a full-scale war. That strategy, however, may have overestimated the Israeli leadership's level of restraint, and underestimated its commitment – contentious even within Israel – to wiping out Israel's enemies even at the cost of tens of thousands of innocent civilian lives.

In Israel's telling of events, its actions since October 7 have been entirely defensive, sophisticated and even humane. Reality paints a different picture. Its "limited" objective of freeing hostages and targeting Hamas's leadership quickly transformed into efforts to starve large numbers of civilians, as the International Criminal Court Prosecutor has alleged, and an open-ended mission to occupy much of Gaza. Israeli "surgical strikes" on Gazan schools and refugee camps have killed hundreds of civilians, as well as UN workers.

In launching its Lebanon invasion, Israel has used similar vocabulary, describing its operation as "limited" and "targeted", but Lebanese civilians are fleeing the south in droves. Israel's "precise" strikes in Beirut last week, including the strike that killed Nasrallah, resulted in hundreds of civilian casualties. More than one million people in Lebanon, in a country of fewer than six million, have been displaced since Israel's recent raids began, according to the Lebanese Prime Minister's office. In truth, any talk of precision is at best naïve or at worst dangerously dishonest.

Lebanese civilians will bear the highest cost of any continued escalation, though they will not be the only ones bearing a cost. Israel's own population has seen its military stretched thin, likely to an unsustainable degree, its economy suffer greatly and the hostages Hamas took on October 7 put in further peril. The disaster of Israel's ground invasion of Lebanon in 1982 remains fresh in many Israelis' – and Lebanese – memories.

The lesson of that war, commonly referred to as "Israel's Vietnam", was clear enough: Israel cannot fight its way to peace, and attempting to do so is more likely to breed opposite results.

Important Notice

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



What Israel has in store for Lebanon

Osama Al-Sharif

AN expressively euphoric and defiant Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu is upping the ante in his war on Lebanon, having achieved in less than two weeks what his army has been struggling to secure in Gaza for almost a year. No one could have imagined that Israel would manage to carry out a series of intelligence-backed strikes on Hezbollah culminating in last Friday's assassination of the Lebanese party's charismatic Secretary-General Hassan Nasrallah and other top generals through multiple precise and heavy blows on the group's main subterranean command center in southern Beirut.

The common belief has always been that a war between these two enemies would be brutal, lengthy and costly to both sides. However, Nasrallah's decision to strike northern Israel on Oct. 8, 2023, in support of Hamas in Gaza following the latter's stunning attack on southern Israel the day before sealed the pro-Iran leader's fate, as well as that of his heavily armed militia.

Israel had always said that it would eventually turn its attention to its northern front, as more than 60,000 of its citizens had been forced to flee under Hezbollah's daily bombardments. For almost 11 months, the two sides exchanged blows within what were termed the "rules of engagement." Nasrallah, 64, insisted that he would only agree to a ceasefire once Israel had halted its aggression on Gaza. Netanyahu, in his UN General Assembly speech on Friday, was adamant. He declared that Israel would not stop its war on both Gaza and Lebanon until it achieved "total victory."

The speed and precision

with which Israel has been able to degrade Hezbollah's command and control infrastructure, as well as the party's top leadership, has been astounding. It was based on a remarkable intelligence breakthrough that underlined Israel's ability to infiltrate Hezbollah's most secretive communications and logistics apparatus.

This breach has encouraged Netanyahu to go even further, not only to degrade and even destroy Hezbollah as a military entity, but to push for an even more ambitious objective: to break up Hezbollah's demographic incubator by destroying most of the south and displacing over a million Lebanese, mostly Shiites, from southern Lebanon.

Alongside the ground operations that began on Monday night, Israel is using its air superiority to bomb Hezbollah bases, both demographic and military, thus causing Gaza-like destruction in the south, the Bekaa, the southern coastal region and all the way to Baalbek in the east. It is hoping that tampering with demographic fault lines will revive sectarian tensions in a country that has for decades endured an asymmetrical balance of power that favors the armed Hezbollah. The party has had a strong grip on Lebanon's fragile political system, exercising a veto over the choice of president and prime minister. The political vacuum has deepened the economic situation while irking Hezbollah's main rivals, the Christian Maronites and their armed wing, represented by the Lebanese Forces.

Netanyahu is hoping that the weakening of Hezbollah will encourage its rivals to rise up against it, reopening old civil war wounds.

In reality, Lebanon is

facing an existential challenge that is no less serious than the civil war in the 1970s and the 1982 Israeli invasion. By enforcing a military blockade on Lebanon, Israel is hoping to cut off the Iranian lifeline that keeps Hezbollah alive. This is a multifronted siege of Lebanon whose goal is to spread chaos and confusion and, ultimately, dismantle the central state.

Iran can do little to help a besieged Hezbollah. The US has come out in support of Israel's aggression. The stunning Israeli intelligence infiltration of Hezbollah has also created doubts within Iran's security entities. For now, it will have to absorb the shock as it reviews its own sensitive military and security systems for fear that Israel may have managed similar breaches.

Netanyahu is playing President Joe Biden while knowing full well that a divided US Congress, in an election year, could cripple the White House and its ability to use its leverage on the Israeli premier. American analysts admit that Netanyahu is now the leader who sets the region's political agenda, not the US. All Biden can do now is lend support to Israel's wars while claiming to be seeking diplomatic solutions.

Lebanon is alone in this ordeal. Even France, its former colonial sponsor, can do little to come to its aid. President Emmanuel Macron, who says he will not allow Lebanon to become another Gaza, can do nothing to stop the Israeli attacks or intervene as a mediator.

With a ground invasion of southern Lebanon now underway, Israel will seek to push Hezbollah north of the Litani River. This could prove to be a mistake.

The ground invasion will be met with significant resistance and will unite the

Lebanese people behind Hezbollah. It could also change the US and Arab stands and undermine Israel's diplomatic stance. Moreover, Iran, while hesitant to provide overt support to its Lebanese proxy, might be forced to get involved to avert a total defeat for Hezbollah.

Netanyahu's maverick approach to both ongoing wars could prove detrimental to him and Israel. He now sees an opportunity to impose the "new Middle East" paradigm that he has proselytized: a region free from the "axis of evil" that opposes Israel's existence. Such a scenario sees Lebanon eventually partitioned into mini-states. Such a gambit will almost certainly backfire and could trigger prevalent and grassroots undercurrents across the region. Let us remember that Hamas and Hezbollah appeared on the scene following Israeli attempts to change the status quo in Palestine and Lebanon, respectively.

It is too early to pronounce Hezbollah dead, even according to Israeli pundits. The group may have been badly wounded, but it survives. It will be able to regroup despite suffering an almost fatal blow. Netanyahu may be celebrating prematurely. He will try to spread "creative chaos" in Lebanon, but his gamble may backfire. Hezbollah is still able to inflict pain on Israel. And Iran, while reluctant to enter the fray, is capable of providing its proxies with the necessary ammunition to hit Israel.

However, the political and military systems established in Lebanon after 2006 are being tested. The country's warlords must be careful as they ponder their next step. Netanyahu's endgame contravenes Lebanon's strategic interests and survival. That is what they should keep in mind today.

Israel opens Pandora's box in the Middle East

Li Yang

IRAN launched at least 180 missiles at Israeli territory on Tuesday, the latest in a series of rapidly escalating attacks between Israel and Iran along with its Arab allies that threatens to push the Middle East closer to a region wide war.

Teheran said the barrage was a retaliation for a series of devastating blows Israel has landed in recent weeks against the Iran-backed militant group, Hezbollah, in Lebanon, which has been firing rockets into Israel since the war in Gaza began. Earlier Tuesday, Israel launched what it said is a limited ground incursion in southern Lebanon.

As a matter of fact, to provoke Iran to join the war directly has been made a major objective of the Benjamin Netanyahu government of Israel since it realized that the heavy casualties of civilians and the humanitarian crisis it

serve the US' geopolitical interests. By forcing Iran to throw itself to the front, both Israel and the US can save a lot of troubles, say, moral obligations, in fighting a people's war with Teheran's various regional proxies, and by destroying the leader can the US and Israel really prompt the Iran club to collapse.

That the US has quickly deployed more forces to the region indicates Washington and Tel Aviv are expected to take advantage of Iran's attacks as an excuse to markedly upgrade the war from a conflict with small militant groups to a war with a regional power.

In doing so, the two allies, particularly the Joe Biden administration, can effectively help relieve the global and domestic pressure on it over the US' accountability in the Gaza tragedy, and erect a new enemy, Iran in replacement

Tel Avivi's purported assassination of Ismail Haniyeh during the political leader of Hamas' stay in Teheran in July should be taken as a bait on Netanyahu's fishhook intended for the Islamic Republic. While the whole world was waiting for Iran's retaliation for Haniyeh's death, Teheran had exercised tremendous composure and calmness, thanks to effective international mediating efforts, including those from China, for the sake of a Gaza cease-fire deal to be inked at an early date to end the sufferings of the Palestinians in the enclave. Then, Tel Aviv put a bigger bait on its fishhook. Israel bombed Hezbollah targets in Lebanon over the past weeks, and killed many leaders of the militant group supported by Iran.

had caused in Gaza had turned the world against Israel.

Tel Avivi's purported assassination of Ismail Haniyeh during the political leader of Hamas' stay in Teheran in July should be taken as a bait on Netanyahu's fishhook intended for the Islamic Republic.

While the whole world was waiting for Iran's retaliation for Haniyeh's death, Teheran had exercised tremendous composure and calmness, thanks to effective international mediating efforts, including those from China, for the sake of a Gaza cease-fire deal to be inked at an early date to end the sufferings of the Palestinians in the enclave.

Then, Tel Aviv put a bigger bait on its fishhook. Israel bombed Hezbollah targets in Lebanon over the past weeks, and killed many leaders of the militant group supported by Iran.

Under pressure from various sources in its circle, Teheran finally took the revenge on Tuesday, though with perceivable vigilance, while insisting that it is not its intention to fight a war with Israel.

During the whole process, the United States has been unconditionally supporting the Netanyahu government's catch-the-big-fish war plan, which Washington believes will

of the more trivial Hamas or Hezbollah, both of which will prove tremendously conducive to the Democratic Party reversing its passivity over the Middle East situations to an initiative in the US presidential election.

And with a full-scale war against Iran in sight, how many people in Israel would have cared so much about the remaining hostages still held by Hamas as before, a major source of mounting domestic pressure to Netanyahu.

Just for the sake of their personal gains in politics, Netanyahu and the US politicians are doing nothing but opening the Pandora's Box in a powder keg region. Fishing in troubled waters, Washington also intends to recover the US' alleged losses that it thinks has caused by its strategic pullout from the region after the Iraq war.

By making a mess in the Middle East, the US can also effectively derail the regional development that seems to have been kept in a promising direction during the US' absence of making the Middle East countries important players on the world stage, and more importantly, squeeze the strategic space for other major countries in the region that seek to promote peace, order and stability.

— China Daily

Racing towards resilience will help thousands

Meena Janardhan

THE state of Assam in India joined the Race to Resilience campaign through the UN RegionsAdapt programme, committing to enhance climate resilience. This will benefit 63,441 people across 43 vulnerable villages. The UN Climate Change High-Level Champions and the Marrakech Partnership are spearheading the race to a cleaner, safer, healthier and more resilient world, as their website explains. Through their campaigns, Race to Resilience and Race to Zero, they are elevating ambition and mobilizing credible climate action among cities, regions, businesses and investors.

As the programme's website explains, in the rural villages of Assam, India, where erratic weather and flooding are reshaping rural life, local communities are coming together to safeguard their futures. Assam, India, stands at the frontline of climate change, experiencing rising temperatures, erratic rainfall, and increasingly frequent extreme weather events like floods and droughts. Between 1990 and 2019, the state's mean maximum temperature increased by 0.049°C annually, while

rainfall exhibited a concerning decline. These climate shifts have triggered devastating flash floods, soil erosion, reduced agricultural productivity, and dwindling water resources, directly threatening the livelihoods of Assam's rural population, 86% of

rates, all of which heighten the region's climate risks and make building resilience more difficult. In response, the Assam government launched the Chief Minister's Climate Resilient Village

ble villages. By developing tailored, village-specific action plans, the CMCRVF tackles the root causes of vulnerability, such as weak infrastructure and limited access to resources. Importantly, the pro-

Worsening these environmental challenges, Assam is home to some of India's most climate-vulnerable districts. Of the 25 most at-risk districts in India, 15 are in Assam. Key drivers of this vulnerability include limited crop insurance, rainfed agriculture, insufficient healthcare access, and high poverty rates, all of which heighten the region's climate risks and make building resilience more difficult. In response, the Assam government launched the Chief Minister's Climate Resilient Village Fellowship Programme (CMCRVF) in 2022. This initiative engages post-graduate science and engineering students to implement climate-resilient solutions in 100 villages, targeting Assam's most pressing climate challenges at the grassroots level. The programme is focused on boosting the adaptive capacity of highly vulnerable villages. By developing tailored, village-specific action plans, the CMCRVF tackles the root causes of vulnerability, such as weak infrastructure and limited access to resources.

whom rely on agriculture. Worsening these environmental challenges, Assam is home to some of India's most climate-vulnerable districts. Of the 25 most at-risk districts in India, 15 are in Assam. Key drivers of this vulnerability include limited crop insurance, rainfed agriculture, insufficient healthcare access, and high poverty

Fellowship Programme (CMCRVF) in 2022. This initiative engages post-graduate science and engineering students to implement climate-resilient solutions in 100 villages, targeting Assam's most pressing climate challenges at the grassroots level. The programme is focused on boosting the adaptive capacity of highly vulnera-

gramme empowers communities to play an active role in decision-making, while the involvement of youth injects fresh ideas and innovative approaches to climate resilience, creating the next generation of climate leaders.

At the COP21 United Nations Climate Change Conference in Paris, governments agreed that mobi-

lizing stronger and more ambitious climate action was urgently required to achieve the goals of the Paris Agreement. To connect the work of governments with the many voluntary and collaborative actions taken by cities, regions, businesses and investors, nations decided to appoint two High-Level Champions. The UN Climate Change High-Level Champions for COP25 and COP26, Gonzalo Muñoz and Nigel Topping, established the Climate Champions Team to help deliver on their mandate to enhance ambition and strengthen the engagement of non-State actors in supporting Parties, working with the Marrakech Partnership, to deliver the goals of the Paris Agreement.

The Race to Resilience campaign aims to building the resilience of 4 billion people. It is working towards putting people and nature first in pursuit of a resilient world where they do not just survive climate shocks and stresses but thrive despite them. It is a race to catalyse a step-change in global ambition, to accelerate the investment and implementation of adaptation solutions, and to put people and nature first in the pursuit of a resilient

world. The Campaign was launched in January 2021 at the Climate Adaptation Summit, alongside the State-driven Adaptation Action Coalition. The ultimate goal is to increase the resilience of four billion people living in vulnerable communities, in collaboration with partner organisations from around the world, while developing tools to support them in their work. It prioritises the climate risks faced by urban, rural and coastal vulnerable communities and elevates the potential and actions that businesses, cities, regions, finance sector, local communities and others are already pursuing towards system transformations enhancing resilience. The convening power of the campaign is geared towards increasing the ambition loop by delivering resilience breakthroughs and mobilising and increasing financial flows for resilience. Race to Zero is a global campaign rallying non-state actors – including companies, cities, regions, financial and educational institutions – to take rigorous and immediate action to halve global emissions by 2030 and deliver a healthier, fairer zero carbon world in time.

— Gulf Today

Hard right, wrong turn: why the UK Conservatives should avoid oversteering

THIS week's UK Conservative party conference in Birmingham has raised – rather than answered – awkward questions. What is the Conservative party nowadays actually for? Who is it for? And, a lesser point, who will be the next leader?

There are only 170,000 party members and just 121 members of Parliament. That means two thirds of the 365 seats that the Conservatives won in 2019 were lost this year to other parties. It's a staggering defeat. The Birmingham gathering is that of the survivors of a political car crash, a party divided, demoralised and rulerless.

They also face a very tough decision. Should the party of Benjamin Disraeli, Winston Churchill and Margaret Thatcher veer towards the hard right? Is that necessary to see off Nigel Farage's latest political creation, the Reform UK party? Or should the Conservatives seek the middle ground where most voters are? As for most voters, they appear simply bored by the party's perpetual psychodrama.

The Tories have thrown up a succession of weak, and at times weird, leaders: Theresa May, Boris Johnson, Liz Truss and Rishi Sunak.

All of them failed to make sense of Brexit, failed on immigration, proved incompetent when confronted with the Covid-19 pandemic and now seem baffled by what being Conservative means any more, except a desire for power.

The arc of decline began with David Cameron, the Tory prime minister from 2010. Mr Cameron is smooth, affa-

ble and posh. He survived the right-wing challenge from Mr Farage's then political vehicle, the UK Independence Party. In the 2015 general election, UKIP won an astonishing 3.8 million votes. Mr Cameron recognised he had to do something.

He organised the ill-thought-out "advisory" Brexit referendum on the UK's EU membership. That 2016 referendum contained just 16 words: "Should the United Kingdom remain a member of the European Union

The arc of decline began with David Cameron, the Tory prime minister from 2010. Mr Cameron is smooth, affable and posh. He survived the right-wing challenge from Mr Farage's then political vehicle, the UK Independence Party. In the 2015 general election, UKIP won an astonishing 3.8 million votes. Mr Cameron recognised he had to do something. He organised the ill-thought-out "advisory" Brexit referendum on the UK's EU membership. That 2016 referendum contained just 16 words: "Should the United Kingdom remain a member of the European Union or leave the European Union?" Mr Cameron appeared to think he would win easily. When he lost, the problems for the whole UK were mirrored in the internal civil war that followed within the Conservative party.

Senior MPs quit or were thrown out by one of Mr Cameron's successors, Mr Johnson, who promised to "get Brexit done". He failed. It's a running sore. Last weekend, a huge rally in London in favour of rejoining the EU proved that rather than solving the problem of the hard right, Mr Cameron and Mr Johnson had merely created an even bigger problem for the whole country.

or leave the European Union?" Mr Cameron appeared to think he would win easily. When he lost, the problems for the whole UK were mirrored in the internal civil war that followed within the Conservative party.

Senior MPs quit or were thrown out by one of Mr Cameron's successors, Mr

Gavin Esler

Johnson, who promised to "get Brexit done". He failed. It's a running sore. Last weekend, a huge rally in London in favour of rejoining the EU proved that rather than solving the problem of the hard right, Mr Cameron and Mr Johnson had merely created an even bigger problem for the whole country.

You might think that this week's contenders to lead the Conservative party would have noticed that pandering to Mr

remaining candidates might lead the party, perhaps it is more interesting to consider some of those who have left it in sadness, anger or disgust. They include David Gauke and Dominic Grieve, two thoughtful mainstream former MPs who served as ministers. Then just last week, another former minister, Sayeeda Warsi, quit.

Ms Warsi is an impressive figure who repeatedly and forcefully criticised perceived Islamophobia among Conservatives. She said on X: "It is with a

hypocrisy and double standards in its treatment of different communities. A timely reminder of the issues that I raise in my book Muslims Don't Matter."

Ms Warsi's language here is important. Like other prominent Conservatives, she senses how far her party has shifted to an agenda that appals her, just as former US president Donald Trump's "Maga" grip on his party has appalled many centrist Republicans. In the UK, the big question for the next Conservative leader therefore is simply stated: which way are you going to turn?

Turning right to appease Mr Farage in the past produced the Brexit debacle. It opened up significant divisions within the party. Why would pandering to the "Little Englander" mentality work in 2024 when it failed in 2015, 2016 and subsequent years?

Conservatives might not listen to outside commentators, or even to the verdict of disenchanted voters. But they might listen to historic words from their former leader Mrs Thatcher.

Back in 1996, a few years after losing her position as prime minister, she was clear: "It is not the centre ground, but the common ground – the shared instincts and traditions of the British people – on which we should pitch our tents. That ground is solid, whereas the centre ground is as slippery as the spin doctors who have colonised it."

The ground occupied by the hard right is just as slippery. It's even more dangerous to occupy for a party that used to pride itself on common sense.

Islamic diplomacy can take a leaf out of the late Pope John Paul II's book

WEALTHY Muslim countries frequently try to help their developing counterparts through financial aid programmes. A complementary approach that may yield more lasting results is high-level visits that help raise the profile of the countries in need of assistance.

This is because such exposure can boost exports and other economic engagement with the rest of the Islamic world. Exploring this alternative is especially important given the patchy record that international development aid has in fostering economic growth.

High-level official visits serve a number of functions. One of the most important is that they act as a public indicator of how much the visiting country values its relationship with the one being visited, especially when the travelling head of state or government rarely ventures beyond their home country's shores. For example, owing to his health difficulties, former US president Franklin Roosevelt seldom travelled abroad, reinforcing the pivotal nature of exceptions such as his participation at the Yalta Conference in 1945 as the Second World War was coming to an end.

This headline purpose is complemented by a more functional one, which is that the large delegations involved in high-level official visits take the opportunity to co-ordinate intensively with their counterparts, paving the way for effective co-operation. This mechanism was on show on the sidelines of the UN General Assembly, when President Sheikh Mohamed headed a large, multisectoral delegation that explored a wide array of co-operative ventures with the US.

An alternative function that such visits can serve – one that could be used more often by Muslim nations – is elevating the profile of the country being visited. A recent paper by the European Central Bank economist Dr Alexander Popov demonstrated how effective this channel can be in the context of papal visits.

Dr Popov noted that during the 1979-2005 reign of Pope John Paul II, the Pontiff visited 129 countries, exceeding the cumulative total of all his 263 predecessors (partly a function of modern-day transportation). Notably, after a papal visit, these countries experienced a substantive increase in their exports to countries with a high share of Catholics, in turn causing a non-negligible rise in total exports.

Critically, the biggest beneficiaries were countries that occupied the lower rungs in the development ladder, and that had weaker existing trade links. Dr Popov was able to surmise that the cause of this papal dividend was the elevation in global profile that his visits conferred upon these countries, accentuating the growth in television broadcasts of the Pope's travels.

Given how recently this research was done, we do not know if visits by other popes have a similar positive effect, nor do we have any idea

Omar Al-Ubaydli

if the travels of leading figures in the Muslim world – be they heads of state and government or religious leaders – also benefit the receiving country. The challenge before an enterprising scholar will be to extend Dr Popov's work to verify its degree of generalisability.

While we await such efforts, political leaders in the Muslim world may wish to proactively use this technique as part of their broader efforts at assisting developing countries.

Muslim nations that have been blessed with larger riches regularly

markets.

In contrast, organic growth in the demand for a developing country's exports is virtually assured to be a sustainable source of rising living standards. Crucially – and in line with Islamic principles – helping a society to better stand on its own two feet is preferable to continuous financial donations, as it helps the recipients maintain their sense of self-worth and dignity. While there are many complex interventions that can help a country improve its exports, Dr Popov's research suggests that an incredibly cost-effective one would be for high-profile leaders of friendly nations to visit that coun-

An alternative function that such visits can serve – one that could be used more often by Muslim nations – is elevating the profile of the country being visited.

A recent paper by the European Central Bank economist Dr Alexander Popov demonstrated how effective this channel can be in the context of papal visits. Dr Popov noted that during the 1979-2005 reign of Pope John Paul II, the Pontiff visited 129 countries, exceeding the cumulative total of all his 263 predecessors (partly a function of modern-day transportation). Notably, after a papal visit, these countries experienced a substantive increase in their exports to countries with a high share of Catholics, in turn causing a non-negligible rise in total exports. Critically, the biggest beneficiaries were countries that occupied the lower rungs in the development ladder, and that had weaker existing trade links. Dr Popov was able to surmise that the cause of this papal dividend was the elevation in global profile that his visits conferred upon these countries, accentuated by the growth in television broadcasts of the Pope's travels. Given how recently this research was done, we do not know if visits by other popes have a similar positive effect, nor do we have any idea if the travels of leading figures in the Muslim world – be they heads of state and government or religious leaders – also benefit the receiving country. The challenge before an enterprising scholar will be to extend Dr Popov's work to verify its degree of generalisability.

The latest September turning point in Arab history

SEPTEMBER is rich with historical and political developments in our region. Over the past few decades, several major turning points have unfolded during this month, leaving major repercussions for Arab politics and the role of Arabs both as people and leaders.

On Sept. 28, 1970, President Gamal Abdel Nasser died during the war between Jordan and Palestinian guerrilla organizations that became known as Black September. Nasser's death and the Palestinian freedom fighter movements losing what had been their primary base since their inception in the late 1960s was the greatest shock to traditional Arab nationalist thought of his kind.

At the time, many assumptions and convictions that had withstood (albeit tenuously) the defeat of June 1967 collapsed.

A wounded Nasserism sought to survive through the War of Attrition (1967-1970). However, this effort collapsed with Nasser's death and was ultimately brought to an end by the "coup" of his successor and former comrade-in-arms, Anwar Sadat. Indeed, after Sadat struck those he called the "centers of power" through the Corrective Revolution in May 1971, everything that Nasserism represented — as an idea, a practice and a web of

alliances — was eradicated. Sadat led a socialist, Arabist Egypt away from the Soviet Eastern bloc toward an alliance with the West, breaking with what had been an Arab consensus and betting on a unilateral peace agreement with Israel.

The Arab world's second September turning point came on Sept. 11, 2001, when Al-Qaeda operatives launched unprecedented attacks with civilian passenger planes in New York, Washington and rural Pennsylvania, killing almost 3,000 people.

Al-Qaeda was one manifestation of militant Islamism. It developed as an alternative to a series of governance experiments in the Arab and Islamic worlds that followed the independence era (the second half of the 1940s).

In the Arab world, a group of Arab states gained independence. Some upheld the banner of Arabism, others waged struggles in the name of their Islamic identity and some bet on an enlightened modern bourgeoisie that did not see enmity with the West as inevitable within the context of a global Cold War that began with the end of the Second World War and ended with the fall of the Berlin Wall and the collapse of the Soviet Union.

In the Islamic world, the loyalties of the most prominent newly inde-

Eyad Abu Shakra

pendent states were varied. There was the non-alignment of Ahmed Sukarno in Indonesia and the Islamic passions of Pakistan, which was eager to build a distinctive religious identity in opposition to the secularism of India and then as part of the Western alliances that emerged to contain the Soviets during the 1950s. Indeed, Pakistan was a member of two such alliances: the Baghdad Pact (later the Central Treaty Organization) and the Southeast Asia Treaty Organization.

The setback of the Arab alternative following 1967 was followed by the decline of the leftist-revolutionary alternative after the events in Jordan (1970), Egypt's alignment with the West (early 1970s) and then the armed Palestinian withdrawal from Lebanon in 1982 following the Israeli invasion. All of these developments revived a third alternative: the Islamic alternative, especially after the success of Ayatollah Khomeini's revolution in Iran in 1979.

This alternative imposed itself in several Arab arenas. American support for the Afghan mujahedeen and their allies — including some Arabs — in a war aimed at trapping the Soviets in the Afghan swamp brought armed struggle back to prominence. However, as we recall,

Washington turned its back on this alternative (its Sunni manifestation at least) as soon as the communist enemy fell in Moscow.

This betrayal, as the armed forces of Sunni political Islam saw it, drove Al-Qaeda to target the US on Sept. 11, 2001. The subsequent US response began in Afghanistan, where it targeted the Taliban (the successor of the mujahedeen). It then attacked Iraq under the pretext of eliminating its destructive military capabilities that could threaten Israel, which did not exist.

In 2003, Iraq was attacked and occupied and Saddam Hussein's regime was overthrown. As a result, Iraq, the "eastern gate of the Arabs," became easy prey for the Iranian mullahs, whom Washington had long ignored. The US decided not to target them despite their political rhetoric, geopolitical expansion and development of a nuclear program.

Sept. 27, 2024, was a turning point for dealing with "political Shiism," which emerged as a result of America's silence. It seems that allowing Israel to eliminate the leadership of Hezbollah, which is the spearhead of Iran's Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps, has had extreme consequences, and more will follow.

Hezbollah, which has helped the Iranian regime build its influence in the

Arab world — from the Gulf to Syria and from Palestine to Yemen — on numerous occasions, was not just an organization allied with or subordinate to Tehran ... it was organically linked to it. It was an integral pillar of the Tehran regime's security architecture.

Many questions arose after Iran's leadership betrayed Hamas, standing idly by despite Israel's assassination of its leader, Ismail Haniyeh, in the heart of Tehran.

Some responded to these many questions by reminding those who posed them that Hamas, is, after all, a Sunni organization; Iran had supported it purely to maintain its pretense of championing the Palestinian cause and to create the impression that it was doing more than the Arabs and Muslims.

However, its alliance with Hezbollah is entirely different. Not only is it a Shiite movement, with members and leaders from families claiming to be descendants of the Prophet (Ahl Al-Bayt), but it also materially and operationally constitutes the Lebanese branch of the IRGC.

Accordingly, what happened on the evening of Sept. 27 — the third September turning point — will create an entirely new situation in Lebanon and the region. It may, in the coming weeks or months, decide the issue of a settlement on Iran's role in the Arab world.

Israel now using the Gaza genocide playbook in Lebanon

Dr. Ramzy Baroud

THE official Israeli army version of why it has targeted civilian areas during its intense and deadly bombardments in southern Lebanon is that the Lebanese are hiding long-range missile launchers in their own homes. This explanation was used to justify the killing of 492 people and the wounding of 1,645 in a single day of strikes.

This ready-to-serve explanation will accompany us throughout the Israeli war in Lebanon, however long it takes. The Israeli media is now heavily citing these claims and US and Western media outlets are following suit.

Keep this in mind as you reflect on the statement made by Israeli President

Isaac Herzog in October last year, when he argued that there are no civilians in Gaza and "there is an entire nation out there that is responsible."

Israel does this in every war it launches against an Arab nation. Instead of removing civilians and civilian infrastructure from its bank of targets, it immediately turns the civilian population into the main targets of its war. A quick glance at the number of civilians killed in the ongoing war and genocide in Gaza should be enough to demonstrate that Israel targets ordinary people as a matter of course.

According to the Palestinian Health Ministry in Gaza, children and women constitute the largest percentage of the war's vic-

tims at 69 percent. If we factor in the number of adult males who have been killed — a number that includes doctors, medics, civil defense workers and numerous other categories — it will become obvious that the vast majority of all of Gaza's victims are civilians.

Only the Israeli media and their allies in the West continue to find justifications as to why Palestinian civilians, and now Lebanese, are being killed in large numbers.

Compare the following two statements on Gaza and Lebanon by Israeli military spokesperson Daniel Hagari, both of which received much attention in the media. "Hamas systematically uses hospitals to wage war and consistently uses the people of Gaza as

human shields," Hagari said in March. Then, "Hezbollah's terror headquarters was intentionally built under residential buildings in the heart of Beirut, as part of Hezbollah's strategy of using human shields," he said on Friday.

For those who are giving Hagari the benefit of the doubt, just review what has taken place in Gaza in the last year. For example, Israel claimed that last year's Al-Ahli Baptist Hospital massacre was not its doing and that it was a Palestinian rocket that killed nearly 500 displaced refugees and wounded hundreds more. All evidence, including investigations by well-respected rights groups, concluded the oppo-

sition. However, the false Israeli claims received much media coverage.

This episode was repeated numerous times. In fact, the lies started almost immediately following the Oct. 7 attacks, with Israel making claims about decapitated babies and mass rape. Even though much of this was conclusively proven to be wrong, some in the media and some pro-Israel officials continue to speak of it as fact.

Another example was Israel's claim that a Hamas headquarters was located at Al-Shifa Hospital. Even though no command center was found there, the unsubstantiated Israeli claim continues to be repeated as if it was the truth.

The same logic is now being applied to Lebanon, where Israel claims that it does not target civilians. But when civilians are inevitably killed, it is Hezbollah that should be blamed for supposedly using them as human shields. The Gaza playbook is now the Lebanon playbook. Of course, many in the media continue to play along. They do so not because they are irrational or unable to reach proper conclusions based on the evidence, but because they are part of the Israeli narrative and not neutral storytellers or honest reporters.

Even the likes of the BBC are part of that narrative, as it uses Israeli claims as the starting point of any conversation on Palestine or Lebanon. For example,

"Israel has said it carried out a wave of preemptive strikes across southern Lebanon to thwart a large-scale rocket and drone attack by Hezbollah," the BBC reported last month.

Israel gets away with its lies pertaining to the mass killings in Gaza, and now sadly in Lebanon, because Israeli propaganda is embraced by Western officials and journalists.

Thus, when US National Security Adviser Jake Sullivan described a Sept. 20 airstrike on Lebanon as "justice served," he was indicating to the mainstream media that its coverage should remain committed to that official assessment.

Imagine the outrage if the tables were turned and thousands of Israeli civilians were slaughtered in their

own homes by Lebanese bombs. There would be no need to elaborate on the reactions of the US or Western media, as this should be obvious to anyone who is paying attention.

Lebanon is a sovereign Arab state. Gaza is an occupied territory and its people are protected under the Geneva Conventions. Lebanese and Palestinian lives are not without worth and their mass murder should not be allowed to take place for any reason, especially one that is based on utter lies communicated by an Israeli military spokesman. Perpetuating Israeli lies is dangerous, not only because truth-telling is a virtue but also because words kill and dishonest reporting can, in fact, succeed in justifying genocide.



Digitalization to drive financial services, economic development: Governor SB

F.P. Report

KARACHI: Governor of the State Bank of Pakistan, Jameel Ahmad, has stated that rapid technological change has not only enabled banks to offer innovative financial services to customers but also empowered regulators to ensure compliance effectively and efficiently through advanced data collection and processing capabilities. He delivered his keynote address at the 13th Bank of The Future Forum, focusing on the critical theme of 'The Future of Banking'. The event, organized by Systems Limited, brought together distinguished dignitaries, eminent industry leaders, and fintech experts to discuss the evolving landscape of the banking sector in Pakistan and globally.

The Governor's address covered many themes and underscored the SBP's commitment to fostering innovation and digitalization within the banking sector, paving the way for a dynamic financial sector in Pakistan. The Governor

shared the SBP's digital transformation started in 2002, when SBP implemented the Temenos Banking System, and an ERP system for non-banking transactions, as well as a data warehouse for massive data-related requirements. In 2008, SBP implemented the Real-Time Gross Settlement System called PRISM for processing wholesale, large-value, institutional payments. Recently, SBP established its state-of-the-art, Tier-3 data center, the first of its kind in Pakistan.

The Governor shared that in 2008, SBP issued regulations for branchless banking services to enable the delivery of basic banking services from retail stores and kiriyana shops. This initiative has resulted in a significant increase in the number of unique bank accounts, from 16% of the adult population in 2018 to 64% in 2024. He shared that in 2022, SBP issued the framework for establishing Digital Banks in Pakistan to further facilitate the entry of IT-enabled, non-banking entities into the financial

services industry. As a result, in-principle approvals were issued to five applicants who will shortly start pilot operations in the country.

The Governor shared that in line with international trends, SBP started working on transforming its retail payments industry by implementing the state-of-the-art ISO-20022 payment standard. Hence, Raast, our instant payment system based on the ISO 20022 standard, was launched in 2021.

In a short span of almost three years, Raast has processed around 850 million transactions valuing over PKR 19 trillion. Today, with 38 million unique Raast IDs, the system processes an average of 2.5 million transactions a day.

He shared that SBP is also working on integrating Raast with the Arab Monetary Fund's instant payment system called Buna to facilitate millions of Pakistanis living in Arab countries in sending their remittances to Pakistan with ease and convenience.

The Governor shared that as a result of SBP's efforts, today in Pakistan, we have around 59 million branchless banking wallets, 19 million mobile banking apps, another 3.7 million e-money wallets, and 12 million internet banking users. Since 2020, the overall number of retail transactions processed digitally has increased by 30%, and the share of digital payments in total retail payments by volume has risen from 76% in FY23 to 84% in FY24. The number of transactions processed using mobile and internet banking is growing at an annual rate of 70% and 30%, respectively. This is not surprising as the majority of our population is young and adept at using mobile apps.

The Governor shared that it is heartening to see the emergence of a vibrant fintech sector in Pakistan. These fintechs are striving hard to identify new markets and use cases and offer their tech-enabled services. He encouraged the IT sector to play a pivotal role in this transformation.

PSX continues with bullish trend, gains 162 more points

ISLAMABAD (APP): The 100-Index of the Pakistan Stock Exchange (PSX) continued with bullish trend on Wednesday, gaining 162.41 more points, a positive change of 0.20 percent, closing at 81,967.01 points against 81,804.59 points on the last working day.

A total of 360,987,426 shares were traded during the day as compared to 359,081,585 shares the previous trading day, whereas the price of shares stood at Rs 15.391 billion against Rs 17.160 billion on the last trading day.

As many as 448 companies transacted their shares in the stock market, 164 of them recorded gains and 221 sustained losses, whereas the share price of 63 companies remained unchanged.

The three top trading companies were Agha Steel Industries with 30,832,938

shares at Rs 10.72 per share, WorldCall Telecom with 26,473,160 shares at Rs 1.21 per share and Fauji Cement with 20,045,582 shares at Rs 27.41 per share.

Rafhan Maize Products Company Limited witnessed a maximum increase of Rs 187.57 per share price, closing at Rs 6,999.00, whereas the runner-up was Unilever Pakistan Foods Limited with Rs 28.80 rise in its per share price to Rs 17,295.80.

Hoechst Pakistan Limited witnessed a maximum decrease of Rs 48.14 per share closing at Rs 2,010.03 followed by Lucky Core Industries Limited with Rs 28.86 decline to close at Rs 1,021.90.

Rupee gains 05 paise against dollar

Pakistani rupee on Wednesday appreciated by 05 paise against the US dol-

lar in the interbank trading and closed at Rs 277.63 against the previous day's closing of Rs 277.68.

However, according to the Forex Association of Pakistan (FAP), the buying and selling rates of the dollar in the open market stood at Rs 278.50 and Rs 280 respectively.

The price of Euro decreased by Rs1.32 to close at Rs 307.31 against the last day's closing of Rs 308.63, according to the State Bank of Pakistan (SBP).

The Japanese yen remained unchanged and closed at Rs1.92, whereas a decrease of Rs 1.43 was witnessed in the exchange rate of the British Pound, which traded at Rs368.96 as compared to the last day's closing of Rs 370.39.

The exchange rates of the Emirates Dirham and

Saudi Riyal decreased by 02 paise 04 paise to close at Rs 75.58 and Rs73.97.

Gold up by Rs600 to Rs275,500 per tola

The per tola price of 24 karat gold increased by Rs.600 and was sold at Rs.275,500 on Wednesday compared to its sale at Rs. 274,900 on last trading day.

The price of 10 grams of 24 karat gold also increased by Rs 515 to Rs. 236,197 from Rs. 235,682 whereas the price of 10 gram 22 karat gold went up to Rs 216,514 from Rs. 216,042, the All Sindh Sarafa Jewellers Association reported.

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

The price of gold in the international market increased by \$6 to \$2,653 from \$2,647, the Association reported.

and make well-informed and prudent investment decisions.

"In the context of the above, PSX warns the general public not to deposit, invest, or deal with illegal and unauthorized groups and forums on social media.

PSX shall not be held responsible for any loss or damage incurred by any person due to unauthorised use of its intellectual property or misrepresentation of any person which may include viewing, subscribing, or signing up for any unauthorised social media pages, posts, web-groups or WhatsApp groups," it added.

Pakistan Stock Exchange alerts public on online trading frauds

F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: The Pakistan Stock Exchange Limited (PSX) on Wednesday alerted the investing public regarding the surge in fraudulent activities through different social media platforms.

According to PSX press release received here, some illegal social media groups and forums were using AI technology and conventional methods to entice the investing public to join in or fill in forms through WhatsApp groups, Facebook/Meta and other social media channels.

The scammers misuse the name of the registered

professionals or claim to be affiliated with a legitimate company to lure the investing public to participate in unauthorized investment schemes.

Scammers' correspondence might often look authentic as such scammers use the regulator name, logo, and images, as well as impersonate as part of top management and proprietary material which looks official.

The fraudulent groups and forums promise guaranteed fixed returns with minimal or no risk and provide exclusive access to insider tips and training on investments.

They also ask to share

personal or financial information or to send money directly to the individual or a third party.

"To avoid becoming a victim of such types of scams, the investing public is warned to be wary and alert of unsolicited investment advices from illegal social media groups and forums," it added.

Trading in shares of listed companies should only be conducted through SECP-licensed securities brokers.

The investing public is advised to regularly visit the official websites/ social media pages of SECP, PSX, CDC and NCPL in order to keep themselves updated

of Companies - a Pakistani FMCG and tourism multinational organization. Mansoor sits on the board of various companies as non-executive director and advises their respective management teams on different aspects of their businesses. Prior to his current engagements, Mansoor worked as a commercial lawyer in London for over 10 years in leading organizations, specializing in commercial law. He qualified as a lawyer from Pakistan and was invited to the Bar in England & Wales. He is an alumnus of the University of Law, London. Mansoor remained an elected Executive Committee member of Pakistan Hotel Association since 2020, and Senior Vice Chairman of Association in 2021-22.

Irshad B. Anjum - Vice Chairman North

Irshad is veteran of the hospitality industry with great ideas about the future and challenges facing the

hotel industry in Pakistan. He started his career in the early 1970s with the Intercontinental Hotel in Lahore then moved to the UAE Carlton Hotel Sharjah, West Germany for a diploma in Hospitality Management. He then ventured to the USA for a GM Course from Holiday Inn University. Irshad also served as F&B Director in California in 1985. Irshad returned to Pakistan and remained GM at Pearl Continental Hotel, Bhurban twice and received the GM of the Year Award in Hashoo Group, moving on to Pearl-Continental Hotel, Lahore, Pearl-Continental Hotel, Karachi, and also served as Director of Operations at Hashoo Group. Irshad is currently the CEO of Falettis Group, operating 9 Hotels all over Pakistan.

Haseeb Qureshi - Vice Chairman South

Haseeb Qureshi excels across the hospitality and



PESHAWAR: President Sarhad Chamber of Commerce and Industry Fazal Moqem Khan in a group photo with participants during a public hearing of Oil & Gas Regulatory Authority.

SNGPL crackdown on gas theft

F.P. Report

LAHORE: In a determined effort to combat Unaccounted for Gas (UFG) losses, the Lahore West Region has intensified operations targeting high-loss clusters.

In a recent operation, the team of Cluster 01, conducted a successful raid at 05 No. Tee, opposite Band Road, Gulshan-e-Ravi, Lahore. The raid uncovered a 1-inch diameter direct bypass installed on a 2-inch diameter feeder main, which was illegally supplying gas to a multi-story hostel building, including its canteen and mess.

The illegal connection was immediately disconnected, and the pipeline was repaired. An application for lodging an FIR has been submitted to the relevant police authorities.

Shipping activity at Port Qasim

KARACHI (APP): Shipping activity was report at the port where five ships, Maersk Kinloss, Phoenician-M, Clipper Trent, Ice Fighter and Acadia Park scheduled to load/offload Container, Rices, Fuel oil and Chemicals,berthed at Qasim International Container Terminal, Multi-Purpose Terminals, FOTCO oil Terminal and Engro Vopak Terminal respectively on Tuesday.

Meanwhile two more ships, Centurion Signifer and Al-Areesh carrying Coal and LNG are also arrived at outer anchorage port during last 24 hours.

A total of eight ships were engaged at PQA berths during the last 24 hours, out of them three ships, MSC Positano, Maersk Kinloss and Ice Fighter are expected to sail on today.

Cargo volume of 95,743 tonnes, comprising 41,664 tonnes imports cargo and 54,079 tonnes export cargo carried in 3,919 Containers (1,800 TEUs Imports& 2,119 TEUs Export) was handled at the port during last 24 hours.

There are 09 ships at Outer Anchorage of Port Qasim, out of them three ships, Khairpur, Al-Areesh and Centurion & another ship, Maersk Cabo Verde are carrying Gasoline, LNG, Coal and Containers are expected to take berths at FOTCO, PGPC, PIBT and QICT respectively on today.

digital marketing sectors. As Executive Director of Ramada Plaza & Ramada Creek Hotels by Wyndham in Karachi, he elevated luxury hospitality standards. His role as CEO of High Quality Presence, a multi-national digital agency based in New York, USA, showcases his marketing acumen across Saudi Arabia, UAE, and Pakistan. Additionally, Haseeb leads as CEO of Crown Q Hotels Management Services Pvt. Ltd., overseeing a diverse hotel brand's property portfolio. His expertise in operational management, customer satisfaction, and digital innovation drives excellence across all ventures, solidifying his reputation as a multifaceted business professional.

Following are the Executive Committee Members of PHA with active participation in enhancing Pakistan's hotel and tourism industry:

Muhammad Khurram

SCCI chief highlights difficulties of private sector gas producers

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: The Sarhad Chamber of Commerce and Industry Fazal Moqem Khan urged the government and Orga to determine the shipping tariff of gas while keeping in mind the concerns of the private sector because any increase in tariff would prove detrimental for this important sector.

He was speaking during a public hearing of Oil & Gas Regulatory Authority (OGRA) which was held in Peshawar on Wednesday.

The agenda of the hearing was to consider Sui Northern Gas Pipeline Company's (SNGPL)

request for determination of transportation tariff to be used for issuing invoices to the shippers, for using pipelines of SNGPL for transportation of their gas under Third party Access regime for FY 2024-25.

Fazal Moqem highlighted the difficulties being faced by the private sector gas producers who ship their gas through SNGPL pipelines.

He said that the private sector is barely surviving and any increase in the shipping tariff could prove to be the last nail in the coffin.

Earlier, president SCCI Fazal Moqem Khan attended the pre-board

meeting of Pak-Austria Fachhochschule Institute of Applied Sciences and Technology, Haripur (PAF-IAST) held in a local hotel today.

The entire agenda of the upcoming 7th Board of Governors Meeting Agenda was discussed and reviewed in the sitting.

Later in the day, the President SCCI Fazal Moqem attended the 7th Board of Governor's meeting of PAF-IAST, held at Governor House Peshawar.

The meeting was chaired by Governor Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and Chancellor of the University Faisal Karim Kundi.

PBA commends efforts of govt and MoF on successful negotiations

F.P. Report

KARACHI: The Pakistan Banks' Association (PBA) commends the efforts of the Government of Pakistan and the Ministry of Finance on the successful negotiations to obtain US \$7 billion, a 37-month loan from the International Monetary Fund (IMF), and the unwavering commitment of the Prime Minister of Pakistan, Mian Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif and the Federal Minister for Finance and Revenue, Senator Muhammad Aurangzeb towards the implementation of robust policies and reforms leading to improved macroeconomic indicators and sustainable growth.

PBA acknowledged with satisfaction that in his press conference following the

IMF announcement, the Federal Minister for Finance and Revenue stressed the importance of implementing much-needed fundamental structural reforms for the current arrangement with the IMF to be the last funding programme for Pakistan. The Minister also shared his optimistic view regarding Pakistan's prospective economic outlook, with the reforms bringing steady growth in export and foreign exchange reserves, reduced policy rates and enhanced investor confidence.

PBA is fully supportive of the Finance Minister's vision that this growth can only be accelerated on the back of a documented economy, and his emphasis that Pakistan should

embark on a "nuclear war" against the current cash-based economy. The Association is already working closely with the State Bank of Pakistan (SBP) to foster a transparent and cashless economy through advancing digitalisation and enhancing financial inclusion in the country as part of its implementation of priority sector initiatives.

Commenting on the development, Zafar Masud, Chairman - PBA said, "With the effective execution of the homegrown plan, the Government of Pakistan will pave the way for a resilient economic future. PBA stands ready to continue to support the government in its efforts towards achieving sustainable economic stability and driving rapid progress."

Exports increase by 14.11% to \$7.875 billion

ISLAMABAD (APP): The exports from the country increased by 14.11 percent during the first three months of the current fiscal year as compared to the corresponding months of last year, Pakistan Bureau of Statistics reported.

Exports during July-September (2024-25) were

recorded at \$7.875 billion against \$6.901 billion during July-September (2023-24), according to PBS data.

On the other hand, the imports into the country also went up by 9.86 percent by growing from \$12.115 million last year to \$13.310 million during the first three months of the current year.

Based on the figures, the trade deficit during the months under review was recorded at \$5.435 billion against the deficit of \$5.214 billion last year, showing an increase of 4.24 percent.

Meanwhile, on year-on-year basis, the exports in

September 2024 increased by13.52 percent to \$2.805 billion from \$2.471 billion in September 2023.

On the other hand, the imports also increased by 16.08 percent by going up from \$3.950 to \$4.585 percent, according to PBS data.

On a month-on-month basis, the exports from the country increased by 1.56 percent when compared to the exports of \$2.762 billion during August 2024.

The imports also witnessed increase of 1.69 percent when compared to the imports of \$4.509 billion in August 2024, PBS reported.

RCCI newly elected body sworn in

RAWALPINDI (APP): The oath-taking ceremony of the newly elected office bearers and executive members of the Rawalpindi Chamber of Commerce and Industry (RCCI) for the term 2024-2026 was held at a local hotel in which the newly elected body took oath of office.

Usman Shaukat was sworn in as the President of RCCI. Khalid Farooq Qazi assumed office as the Senior Vice President and Fahad Barlas was appointed as the Vice President. The oath was administered by Sohail Altaf, who congratulated the newly elected officials and executive members on their successful election.

Sohail Altaf, Group Leader of RCCI, appreciated the commendable efforts of the outgoing team and extended a warm welcome to the newly elected members.

He emphasized the critical role the Chamber plays in supporting the business community and expressed confidence in the new leadership's ability to take RCCI to greater heights.

The event was attended by RCCI's former presidents, members from trade associations, diplomats, friends from the media, and a large number of RCCI members.

Usman Shaukat in his address, expressed his gratitude for the trust placed in him and the executive team.



In brief

Training camp for SAFF C'ship kicks off

ISLAMABAD (APP): The training camp of Pakistan Women's National Football Team has commenced here in preparations for the SAFF Women's Championship 2024, to be held in Kathmandu, Nepal from October 17 to 30. The team will travel from Islamabad to Nepal on October 12, said a press release. The camp is led by head coach Adeel Rizki, with Ahsan Ullah overseeing the goalkeeping squad. The team's preparations are focused on achieving peak form before their challenging matches in Group A. Pakistan grouped alongside arch-rival India and Bangladesh. The host nation Nepal is placed with Bhutan, Maldives, and Sri Lanka in Group B. Pakistan is set to kick off its SAFF Championship campaign on October 17, against India. The national team will face Bangladesh on October 20 in their second group-stage encounter. Both the matches will be played at 4:45pm Pakistan time.

More matches decided in Volleyball C'ship

PESHAWAR (APP): The Deputy Commissioner Peshawar Inter-Club Volleyball Championship is going on in Qayyum Sports Complex Peshawar where several matches were played. Under the auspices of Regional Sports Office Peshawar, in the matches played on Tuesday in the Deputy Commissioner Inter Club Championship, Mahbub Club defeated Abu Bakar Club by 3-0, Sports Board Academy defeated Mujib Club by 3-0, in the third match Mehran Club defeated Mushtaq Club 25-11 and 25-15 and 25-19, Ishaq Club defeated Haji Banda Club 25-19 and 25-20, Mian Club defeated Naveed Club, while Youth Club defeated Hsainian Club by 3-1, John Club defeated Mamriz Club by 3-0 and Gul Baz Club defeated Aftab Club to reach the next round.

Szczesny out of retirement

BARCELONA (AFP): Polish goalkeeper Wojciech Szczesny has come out of retirement to sign for Spanish giants Barcelona on Wednesday. "Barcelona and the player Wojciech Szczesny have reached a deal for his signing until June 30, 2025," said the La Liga leaders in a statement. The former Arsenal and Juventus goalkeeper, 34, joins after Barca's first choice stopper Marc-Andre ter Stegen was ruled out potentially until the end of the season with a severe knee injury, sustained on September 22. Szczesny retired this summer after featuring at Euro 2024 for Poland but has now returned to the game to play in La Liga for the first time. The goalkeeper had said his "heart (was) not there any more" to play football after leaving Juventus by mutual agreement in August. Szczesny has made over 600 appearances for club and country over his career, winning three Serie A titles and three Italian cups with Juventus, as well as two FA Cups with Arsenal. Barca's reserve goalkeeper Inaki Pena started in place of the stricken Ter Stegen in recent matches.

Babar Azam steps down as white-ball captain

LAHORE (APP):Pakistan's ace batsman Babar Azam has relinquished captaincy in the white-ball formats of the game with a desire to shed workload, focus on his batting performance, and spend quality time with family. Babar Azam's second stint as captain of the T20I and ODI team lasted almost for six months and the period was unproductive for the ace batsman with an unceremonious early exit from the ICC T20 World Cup 2024 in the US and West Indies. He was yet to lead the team in an ODI after being reinstated as captain by the Chairman PCB Mohsin Naqvi. The Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB) on Wednesday confirmed that the Babar Azam tendered his resignation on Tuesday evening and it was accepted. "Dear Fans, I'm sharing some news with you today. I have decided to resign as captain of the Pakistan men's cricket team, effective as of my notification to the PCB and Team Management last month. It has been an honor to lead this team, but it's time for me to step down and focus on my playing role. Captaincy has been a rewarding experience, but it has added a significant

workload. I want to to prioritize my performance, enjoy my batting, and spend quality time with my family which brings me joy. By stepping down, I will gain clarity moving forward and focus more energy on my game and personal growth. I am grateful for your unwavering support and belief in me. Your enthusiasm has meant the world to me. I's proud to what we've achieved together and excited to continue contributing to the team as a player." Babar wrote on the social media platform X (formerly Twitter). The decision to call it quits was brewing up for over a month but it was materialized on Tuesday. Babar Azam, as it appeared at the 'Connection Camp' of the PCB, enjoyed backing from the head coach Gary Kirsten but other factors contributed to the ace batsman's decision to call it a day. The PCB has renewed its commitment to back Babar Azam in future as well and selection committee to begin the process of formulating future white-ball cricket strategies, including recommending a new captain. "Although the PCB had backed Babar Azam as the white-ball captain,

his decision to step down reflects his desire to focus more on making a greater impact as a player. "This decision is a testament to his professionalism and commitment to Pakistan cricket. He believes that dedicating himself fully to his batting will enable him to play a more decisive role in the team's success in the shorter formats. The PCB acknowledges Babar's contributions as white-ball captain, his ability to prioritize the team's needs and his unwavering dedication to Pakistan cricket. The PCB will continue to support Babar Azam, recognising he still has much to offer both as a world-class batter and a senior statesman of the team," The PCB said in its press release issued on Wednesday. "While it has been a great honour to lead Pakistan, now is the right time to shift my complete focus on batting, team's objectives during this transitional phase and back the new captain and emerging players as we prepare for a crucial season ahead, including the defense of the ICC Champions Trophy on home soil next year," Babar Azam said in a statement attributed to the former captain by the PCB.



MULTAN: Pakistan Cricket team players in training session for upcoming Test series against England Cricket team at Multan Cricket Stadium. —APP Photo

Pakistan team gear up for ICC Women's T20 World Cup 2024

ISLAMABAD (APP): The ICC Women's T20 World Cup 2024 will kick off Thursday in the UAE with 10 teams featuring in the 18-day tournament. Pakistan women's team are slotted in Group 'A' alongside Australia, India, New Zealand and Sri Lanka. Bangladesh, England, Scotland, South Africa and the West Indies are in Group 'B'. Pakistan women's team under the leadership of Fatima Sana will take on Sri Lanka in their opening match of the tournament on Thursday at the Sharjah Cricket Stadium. Pakistan will feature against arch-rivals India on October 6 at the Dubai International Cricket Stadium (DICS), said a press release. Pakistan will then be in action against defending champions Australia on October 11 at the DICS, while their last group match will be against New Zealand on October 14 at the same venue.

As per the format of the tournament, top two sides from each group will qualify for the semi-finals set to take place on 17 and 18 October, while the winner of the tournament will be decided on 20 October. The first ball of the final, to take place at the DICS, is expected to be bowled at 6pm local time. Pakistan have featured in two warm-up games against Scotland and Bangladesh prior to the start of the tournament and also took part in various practice sessions to acclimatise to the conditions. Pakistan captain Fatima Sana sounded confident about her team's preparations and expressed her belief to do well in the tournament. She said: "We have prepared well for the mega event. The series against South Africa at home helped us know our strengths and allowed our batters to show their form. "The two practice games have also helped us in

assessing the conditions here and now has provided us with clarity regarding the right combination of players in the tournament." 15-member squad for the tournament: Fatima Sana (captain), Aliya Riaz, Diana Baig, Gull Feroza, Iram Javed, Muneeba Ali (wicket-keeper), Nashra Sundhu, Nida Dar, Omaira Sohail, Sadaf Shamas, Sadia Iqbal, Sidra Amin, Syeda Aroob Shah, Tasnia Rubab and Tuba Hassan; Traveling reserve: Najiha Alvi (wicket-keeper); Non-traveling reserves: Rameen Shamim and Umm-e-Hani. Player support personnel: Hina Munawar (manager), Muhammad Wasim (head coach), Junaid Khan (assistant coach – bowling), Hanif Malik (assistant coach – fielding), Abdul Rehman (spin bowling coach), Imran Khalil (strength and conditioning coach), Muhammad Rafiullah (media and digital manager), Rabia Siddiq (physiotherapist) and Waleed Ahmed (analyst).

All Pakistan U11 Jr Squash C'ship begins

PESHAWAR (APP): The first All Pakistan Under-11 National Junior Squash Championship got underway here at Hayatabad Sports Complex Peshawar on Tuesday. On this occasion, Administrator Hayatabad Sports Complex Abid Khan was the chief guest along with senior coach and chief organizer Manoor Zaman, Finance Secretary Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Squash Association Mohammad Adil Faqir and other personalities were present. In addition to the host KP, more than 32 players from Punjab, Sindh and PAF are participating in the four-day competition. Paying tribute to the administrator of Hayatabad Sports Complex Abid Khan for sponsoring, Munawar Zaman said that these players will make the country and nation famous in the future. Arbaz Zeb of KP, Anas Rafe, Muhammad Safdar of PAF, Muhammad Abdullah, Abdul Moed Ahsan of Punjab, Ahmed Khan of KP, Mustafa Abubakar of Punjab, Arif of Punjab, Azan Zaman of KPK, M Rian Zaman won their respective matches on the opening day.

Amir Jamal aims to help team win series against England

MULTAN (APP): Pakistan's all rounder Amir Jamal has expressed his determination to help his team win the upcoming series against England. Talking to the media at the Multan cricket stadium on Wednesday, he said he had fully recovered from his recent injury. He shared his confidence about regaining the form he had during his successful stint in Australia. "I am completely recovered from my injury, and I aim to pick up from where I left off in Australia. We will do everything possible to win the series against England," Jamal said. The young fast bowler said in response to a question, "If there's no aggression in fast bowling, then

you are not a fast bowler. I always try to maintain that aggression on the field." He also mentioned that he had missed the Bangladesh series due to injury but was now focused on contributing to his team's success in future matches. "I missed the Bangladesh series because of my injury, but now my sole focus was to play a significant role in helping my team win," he added. The series against England was crucial for Pakistan, and Amir Jamal's return adds a valuable boost to the team's fast-bowling attack. With his strong mentality and determination, the young bowler was looking forward to making a strong impact on the inter-

national stage. Earlier, the Pakistan team has commenced its practice session in preparation for the upcoming three-match Test series against England. Under the supervision of head coach Jason Gillespie, players focused on batting, bowling, and fielding drills. Babar Azam was also seen actively participating, practicing his batting and taking laps around the ground. Both Pakistan and England teams have arrived in Multan for the first two matches. England will begin their practice after a two-day rest, starting on October 4. The first Test match was scheduled to begin on October 7 at Multan Cricket Stadium.

Arsenal beat PSG in Champions League duel

PARIS (AFP/APP): Arsenal beat Paris Saint-Germain 2-0 in their heavyweight Champions League duel on Tuesday, while last season's beaten finalists Borussia Dortmund gave Celtic a brutal reality check with an emphatic 7-1 win in Germany. Dortmund were the biggest winners on a night which also saw Barcelona, Manchester City and Inter Milan claim one-sided victories and Champions League debutants Brest won 4-0 at Red Bull Salzburg. The clash between Arsenal and French champions PSG in London was the big game of the day as the second round of matches in the new format of European football's elite club competition got underway. The Gunners were worthy winners with Kai Havertz heading in from a Leandro Trossard cross to open the scoring on 20 minutes and Bukayo Saka doubling their lead before half-time as his free-kick delivery from the right evaded everybody on its way in.



PSG saw Nuno Mendes strike the outside of the post from range in the first half while Joao Neves hit the woodwork after the break, but the visitors could not get back into the game. It is a first win in the Champions League this season for Mikel Arteta's Arsenal, who drew 0-0 away to Atalanta on matchday one two weeks ago. "Really, really happy with the performance," Arteta told broadcaster Amazon Prime. "The Champions League brings different demands but I think we handled it really well." Dortmund are currently on top of the 36-team league after they followed a 3-0 win at Club Brugge in their first game by trouncing Scottish champions Celtic in Germany. Karim Adeyemi scored a hat-trick in the first half for Dortmund, who were 5-1 ahead at half-time. Emre Can opened the scoring from the penalty spot before Daizen Maeda equalised, but Adeyemi

then took centre stage. Serhou Guirassy netted a penalty before the interval and made it 6-1 midway through the second half, with substitute Felix Nmecha wrapping up the victory late on. It is Dortmund's biggest winning margin in the Champions League alongside a 6-0 win away to Legia Warsaw in 2016. "There's no such thing as a perfect game, but it was very, very good," said Can. "This has to be the standard we aim to set." Barcelona beat Swiss champions Young Boys 5-0 to bounce back from a 2-1 loss at Monaco a fortnight ago and their first defeat of the season in La Liga last weekend at Osasuna. Robert Lewandowski scored twice either side of goals by Raphinha and Inigo Martinez before a late Mohamed Ali Camara own goal wrapped up the victory. "We knew after the game against Monaco in the Champions League we had to give a quick reply in the next game, which was this one, and we did that well," Raphinha told broadcaster Movistar. Winners of the Champions League in 2023, Pep Guardiola's City were comfortable 4-0 winners away to Slovan Bratislava in Slovakia, with Ilkay Gundogan, Phil Foden, Erling Haaland and James McAtee getting the goals. Inter, who lost to City in the final in Istanbul two seasons ago, won by the same scoreline at home to

Red Star Belgrade. Hakan Calhanoglu set Inter on their way with a stunning early free-kick before Marko Arnautovic, Lautaro Martinez and Mehdi Taremi all netted in the second half, the latter from a penalty. German champions Bayer Leverkusen got their second straight win in this season's competition as a Victor Boniface goal early in the second half allowed them to beat AC Milan 1-0. Meanwhile Brest, the French Champions League newcomers, also made it two wins out of two with a remarkable 4-0 victory away to Salzburg in Austria. Senegal striker Abdallah Sima, the forward on loan from Brighton who got their winner against Sturm Graz two weeks ago, scored twice. Mahdi Camara and Mathias Pereira Lage also found the target with Brest scoring three of their goals in the space of 10 second-half minutes. Salzburg, Slovan Bratislava and Young Boys are the bottom three in the early standings. VfB Stuttgart and Sparta Prague drew 1-1 with Enzo Millot putting the German side ahead and Finnish international Kaan Karainen equalising before the interval. PSV Eindhoven and Sporting Lisbon also drew 1-1. Jerdy Schouten's opener for the Dutch champions was cancelled out by Daniel Braganca's late leveller.

Battling Alcaraz outlasts Sinner in thriller to win China Open

BEIJING (AFP): Carlos Alcaraz roared back from a set down to beat world number one Jannik Sinner in a thriller and win his first China Open title on Wednesday. The four-time Grand Slam champion edged a captivating final 6-7 (6/8), 6-4, 7-6 (7/3) for his fourth ATP crown of the year and 16th overall. The Spaniard, who will return to number two in the world behind Sinner, was 3-0 down in the final-set tie break only to fight back and win in three hours, 21 minutes. The longest men's singles match in China Open history ended Sinner's run of 14 victories in a row and saw him deposed as the Beijing champion after an almighty fight. Alcaraz called it "a special win" that was even more satisfying in light of his shock second-round exit at the recent US

Open. He hopes it will win the sport more fans. "When Jannik and I play it's a good thing for tennis because we always show a really intense match, really close match, great points, great rallies," he said. "I think for the people who don't watch tennis, probably thanks to these kind of matches, they will start to watch tennis or even practise it." US Open champion Sinner reached the final in Beijing under fresh scrutiny. The Italian has admitted to sleepless nights over his doping case, which was reignited at the weekend when the World Anti-Doping Agency (WADA) said it had appealed against a decision to clear him. He called it one of the toughest matches he had ever played. "These kind of matches can really go both ways, but it was not my

day," said Sinner. "He played better in the important moments, that's it." "Great battle" In front of a packed house, the early exchanges were nervy with both players under immediate pressure on their service games. Sinner, 23, was the first to blink, with second-seeded Alcaraz breaking for a 3-1 lead and celebrating with a fist pump. The Spaniard held easily for 4-1 and had his opponent rattled. Alcaraz, 21, served for the set but Sinner grabbed the break back when he needed it most. Sinner then saved set point on his own serve to force the tie break, and saved another in the tie break before taking the set at his first opportunity when Alcaraz fell long. It was the first set Alcaraz had dropped all week. The second set was just as tight. Both players

saw chances come and go but they went with serve until Alcaraz broke for 5-4, before holding with ease to send the final into a third set. The decider again went to a tie break, where Alcaraz finally prevailed on his first match point. "It was a great battle again," said Sinner, who twice tested positive for a steroid in March but was cleared of wrongdoing and allowed to keep playing. In August, the International Tennis Integrity Agency (ITIA) accepted Sinner's explanation that the drug entered his system unintentionally when his physiotherapist used a spray containing it to treat a cut, then provided massage and sports therapy to the player. WADA said on Saturday it had appealed and was seeking a ban of up to two years.



Ruthless Sabalenka In the women's draw, top seed Aryna Sabalenka won her 15th match in a row to power into the quarter-finals with a 6-4, 6-3 victory over Madison Keys. The US Open champion will face Karolina Muchova of the Czech Republic. World number two Sabalenka is on a collision

course in the semi-finals with China's Olympic champion Zheng Qinwen, who faces 43rd-ranked Amanda Anisimova in the last 16 later Wednesday.



In brief

IESCO notifies power shutdown programme

ISLAMABAD (APP): Islamabad Electric Supply Company (IESCO) on Wednesday issued a power suspension programme for Thursday for various areas of its region due to necessary maintenance and routine development work. According to IESCO Spokesperson, the power supply of different feeders and grid stations would remain suspended for the period from 07:00 AM to 12:00 Noon Islamabad Circle, Mangial, Sharifabad, Khanna East, Rehman Enclave, Kaderpar, Wahidabad, Tramiri, Ghori Garden, Suhdran Road, Khanna-II, Al Noor, Sohan, Faizabad Housing Society, I-8/4 Feeders, Rawalpindi Cantt Circle, Humayun, PAECHS, Old Rawat, CWO, Sparco, DHA Homes, Bisali, Pind Jatla, Sahala College, Model Town Feeders, Rawalpindi City Circle, Kayani Road, Muzmal Town, Service Road, Muslim Town, Kurry Road, Khuram Colony, Jinnah Camp, KRL, AFOHS, Azharabad, Mohammadi Colony, PAF, Bhadana, Dhok Hasu, Pirwadhai, Q u a d a b a d , Muslimabad, Gulzar Shaheed, Ahsanabad, Industrial, Social Security, Bagh Sardaran Feeders, Attock Circle, Dhirak, Jhang, DI Colony, People Colony, Bhandar, Jund City-I Feeders, Chakwal Circle, Manara Feeder and surrounding areas.

CTP issues 2652 challan tickets

RAWALPINDI (APP): City Traffic Police (CTP) Rawalpindi has launched a crackdown on traffic law violations, issuing 2,652 challan tickets and collecting fines worth millions of rupees. Chief Traffic Officer (CTO) Beenish Fatima stated that this campaign was initiated to prevent road traffic accidents and improve traffic flow in the district of Rawalpindi and surrounding areas. A special squad was formed for this purpose to take strict action against violators. Among the 2,652 challan tickets issued were 178 for illegal parking, 91 for violating traffic signals, 78 for one-way traffic violations, 199 for lane violations, 476 for driving without a license, and 33 for emitting excessive smoke from vehicles. Additionally, during the crackdown, 43 underage drivers, 72 without fitness certificates, 96 without permits, and 433 individuals riding without helmets were also fined. Beenish Fatima further added that 1,960 driving licenses were issued to citizens yesterday, and the crackdown will continue to ensure compliance with traffic laws. She said that every effort is being made to smooth traffic flow and leniency would not be tolerated. She also warned that strict action will be taken against those officials found negligent in performing their duties.

Police arrested 5 with illegal arms

RAWALPINDI (APP): Police have arrested five illegal arms holders and recovered arms and ammunition from their possessions during a crackdown. According to police spokesman, Bani, New Town, Naseerabad, R.A.Bazar and Saddar Wah police rounded up five illegal weapon holders namely Ethesham, Rizwan, Qasim, Ahsan Abbas and Zubair and recovered five 30 bore pistols and ammunition from their possessions. Police have registered separate cases against the accused and further investigation was in progress. Divisional Superintendents of Police commended police teams and instructed to take strict action against those carrying illegal weapons.



ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Interior Mohsin Naqvi chairing a meeting regarding preparation of SCO Summit. —APP Photo

Dastgir vows to address concerns of all parties on 'Constitutional Reforms'

ISLAMABAD (APP): Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) senior leader Khurram Dastgir has promised to make changes to the country's constitution in agreement with all political parties and concerns of Jamiat Ulema-e-Islam (F) leader Mulana Fazal ur Rehman will be addressed as a top priority.

By engaging with all stakeholders and addressing their reservations, the PML-N leader aims to create a more inclusive and collaborative political environment, he said while talking to private news channel.

Khurram highlights the importance of Maulana Fazlur Rehman's involvement in the constitutional amendment process, adding, his ability to bring

changes to the amendments will likely contribute to a more unified approach, fostering collaboration and consensus among political parties.

Khurram emphasized the pivotal role of Nawaz Sharif and Shahbaz Sharif in shaping Pakistan's national affairs, asserting that their wise decision-making will contribute to the country's betterment.

He highlighted their extensive experience in governance, citing Nawaz Sharif's three terms as Prime Minister and Shahbaz Sharif's tenure as Chief Minister of Punjab.

Khurram noted that Shahbaz Sharif's leadership as Chief Minister of Punjab from 2008-2018 was marked by notable develop-

ment projects, improved education and anti-corruption efforts.

He also acknowledged Shahbaz Sharif's role as Prime Minister from 2022-2023, during which he navigated complex challenges, including economic crises and extreme weather events.

The Pakistan Muslim League (N) is indeed a democratic government that has historically shown willingness to collaborate with other parties to address national issues and implement reforms, he mentioned.

By engaging with other parties and prioritizing democratic values, PML-N has demonstrated its commitment to Pakistan's progress and stability, he added.

Syedaal, Mandokhail discuss development issues

ISLAMABAD (APP): Deputy Chairman of Senate Syedaal Khan Wednesday met with Fazal Qadir Mandokhail, a Member of the Balochistan Provincial Assembly from Zhob, and discussed key issues related to the development of Balochistan.

During the meeting, Fazal Qadir Mandokhail praised Syedaal Khan's performance, describing him as a beacon of hope for the people of the province.

He also commended the Deputy Chairman's significant role in fostering a positive political environment in the Upper House, highlighting his efforts to transcend party lines and prioritize the region's progress.

Syedaal Khan expressed his appreciation for Mandokhail's visit, emphasizing the importance of new political faces.

"Their involvement brings fresh hope for the public, while also placing a great responsibility on them to serve beyond party politics for the greater good of Balochistan's development," he noted.

IRSA releases 171,400 cusecs water

ISLAMABAD (APP): Indus River System Authority (IRSA) on Thursday released 171,400 cusecs water from various rim stations with inflow of 126,100 cusecs.

According to the data released by IRSA, water level in River Indus at Tarbela Dam was 1537.09 feet and was 139.09 feet higher than its dead level of 1,398 feet. Water inflow and outflow in the dam was recorded as 74,800 cusecs and 85,000 cusecs respectively.

The water level in River Jhelum at Mangla Dam was 1213.90 feet, which was 165.90 feet higher than its dead level of 1,050 feet. The inflow and outflow of water was recorded at 9,900 cusecs and 45,000 cusecs respectively.

The release of water at Kalabagh, Taunsa, Guddu, and Sukkur was recorded as 82,900, 85,300, 57,500, and 10,500 cusecs respectively.

Similarly, from River Kabul, a total of 19,200 cusecs of water released at Nowshera and 3,700 cusecs were released from River Chenab at Marala.

Ethiopia, Pakistan discuss ways to strengthen ties

ISLAMABAD (APP): Ethiopian Ambassador to Pakistan, Dr. Jemal Beker Abdula and Prime Minister's Youth Programme Chairman Rana Mashhood Ahmed Khan on Wednesday discussed ways to promote people-to-people relations by enhancing youth exchanges between the two nations.

During a meeting between, the two sides explored bilateral cooperation to empower youth by offering education, skills training, and exposure to modern technologies, including Artificial Intelligence and Blockchain.

Ambassador Dr. Jemal Beker highlighted that both Ethiopia and Pakistan have young populations that need to be equipped

with advanced technological skills to form a productive workforce, essential for rapid economic growth. He emphasized the potential for both countries to share experiences and best practices for youth empowerment.

During the meeting, the ambassador briefed Rana Mashhood on Ethiopia's "Home-Grown Economic Reforms 2.0," a continuation of its first phase, which successfully addressed macroeconomic imbalances, boosted productivity, and attracted foreign investment.

Dr. Jemal also pointed to Africa's significant potential in the IT services sector and urged Pakistani entrepreneurs to participate in the Single Country Exhibition scheduled for

January 2025 in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia.

Highlighting Ethiopia's role in Pakistan's "Look Africa, Engage Africa" policy, Dr. Jemal mentioned the launch of Ethiopian Airlines operations in Karachi, which has strengthened both people-to-people and business-to-business relations.

Rana Mashhood praised Ethiopian Airlines for enhancing connectivity between Pakistan and Africa, a continent of 1.4 billion people. He also lauded Ethiopia's socioeconomic progress under the leadership of Prime Minister Dr. Abiy Ahmed and expressed Pakistan's intent to further strengthen bilateral ties with Ethiopia, particularly in youth empowerment initiatives.

Dengue's highest attack, 118 new cases reported

RAWALPINDI (APP): The total number of dengue fatalities reach 6 as the dengue fever has claimed another life in Rawalpindi region, showing a continuous surge in positive cases. During the last 24 hours 118 new cases have been reported which is a new highest one-day count in the District.

According to the details shared by the District Health Authority, a female patient Naseem Begum, 65 died of dengue fever in Chak Jalal Din which remains the most affected area of the Pothohar Town.

(Peri Peri) locality. However, the District Health Authority clarified later on that the death toll in the district was 5 as one death was reported from outside of the district areas. Earlier, the 6th dengue death was included in the district's data by the health authority.

According to the data released by the health authority, as much as 221 new cases have been reported during the last 48 hours from various parts of the city, including highest 118 patients from Pothohar Town. Despite continued

awareness campaigns, public awareness messages and surveillance activities, the dengue endemic continues attacking the city.

Presently 202 patients are under treatment in allied hospitals. However, the bed occupancy capacity of 300 in the allied hospitals is being extended up to 600 beds.

The total number of fatalities due to viral diseases in 2024 has become 8 as two patients have already died of Congo virus. The total dengue positive cases reported since January 2024 is 1476.

ANF foils drug smuggling bids; recovers 3.5 kg heroin

RAWALPINDI (APP): The Anti-Narcotics Force (ANF) in an operation conducted in Karachi foiled an attempt to smuggle 3.5 kg heroin and 7.2 kg Ice drug abroad through International consignments, said an ANF Headquarters spokesman here on Wednesday.

He informed that ANF recovered heroin and Ice drug tactfully concealed in sweets packaging and the international consignments were being sent to four countries. The spokesman said that acting on a tip-off, ANF conduct-

ed an operation at a courier office and recovered drugs from dozens of tins which were being sent to the UK, Sri Lanka, Hong Kong and New Zealand.

2.1 kg heroin was concealed in 6 tins out of 40, being sent to Birmingham, UK. Over 1.4 kg heroin was recovered from 4 candy tins out of 40 booked for Sri Lanka, Colombo while the Ice drug being sent to Hong Kong was recovered from 10 candy tins out total 40. The fourth consignment was booked for New Zealand containing 3.6 kg

Ice drug, recovered from 40 tins. Total 3.5 kg heroin and 7.2 kg ice drug worth Rs 9.55 million were confiscated during the operation while an accused was also arrested, he informed.

The suspect during the investigation revealed a large and organized drug network. Raids are being conducted to net other suspects. ANF would continue operations to thwart drug trafficking, he added.

A case has been registered against the accused under the Anti-Narcotics Act and further investigation is under process.



ISLAMABAD: Chairman Prime Minister's Youth Programme Rana Mashhood Ahmed in a meeting with the Ambassador of Ethiopia, Jamal Bakar Abdullah.

Asif Aziz urges young professionals to seize limitless opportunities

ISLAMABAD (APP): Asif Aziz, President of Enterprise Solutions at Jazz, on Monday urged students and young professionals to capitalize on the vast opportunities presented by the digital age. Speaking at NUST's "Career Launchpad" event, themed "From Classroom to Career," he encouraged the country's next generation to embrace change, continuously evolve, and carve their paths to success.

He emphasized that transitioning from academia to the professional world is more than merely applying classroom knowledge. "This transition is your opportunity to shape not only your careers but the future itself," Aziz said, reminding graduates that they stand at the forefront of

the Fourth Industrial Revolution, where technologies like artificial intelligence (AI), automation, and machine learning are revolutionizing industries and opening new avenues.

Aziz highlighted the importance of agility, continuous learning, and maintaining a purpose-driven mindset. "At Jazz, we view AI not as Artificial Intelligence, but as Augmented Intelligence—a tool to amplify human potential," he said.

He encouraged the audience to boldly embrace these technologies, cautioning that in a world driven by innovation, standing still means falling behind. Showcasing Jazz's evolution from a telecom giant to a cutting-edge digital ServiceCo, Aziz demonstrated

how organizations, like individuals, must evolve to remain relevant.

He praised the Career Launchpad initiative as a crucial platform that bridges the gap between education and real-world careers, equipping Pakistan's youth with essential skills for today's job market.

He concluded his address with a call to align careers with purpose. "At Jazz, our mission is to improve lives, particularly for Pakistan's youth and women. I urge you to pursue a career that not only challenges you but also contributes to the greater good of society," he said, inspiring students to build networks, embrace challenges, and lead with vision and compassion.

Muttaqi leaves for Moscow

KABUL (Ariana News): Acting Foreign Minister Amir Khan Muttaqi headed a delegation to Moscow on Wednesday at the official invitation of the Russian Federation to participate in the sixth Moscow Format meeting on Afghanistan, the ministry's deputy spokesman Zia Ahmad Takal said in a post on X. Ahmad Takal stated that Muttaqi is expected to discuss bilateral issues with Sergey Lavrov, the Russian Foreign Minister, on the sidelines of the meeting on October 4.

IEA condemns attacks

KABUL (Ariana News): The Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan (IEA) condemned Israel's attacks on Lebanon, Syria, Yemen and the continuation of genocide in Palestine. According to a statement issued by the ministry, the attacks are anti-human and are against all international moral principles and standards. The ministry stated that countries around the world must take serious action against Israel's increasing attacks.

MoPH reports 2m respiratory cases

KABUL (TOLOnews): Officials from the Ministry of Public Health (MoPH) have reported an increase in seasonal diseases in the capital and said that nearly two million patients with respiratory problems have been registered with the ministry in the past three months.

Sharafat Zaman Amarkhil, spokesperson for the Ministry of Public Health, said that medical facilities in remote parts of the country will be provided.

Amarkhil told TOLOnews: "In the past three months, based on the figures we have received, nearly two million of our fellow citizens have visited health centers due to

coughing or respiratory system issues."

Some doctors have said that the seasonal diseases that spread among people include diarrhea in the summer and pneumonia in the winter, which often affect children.

Mohammad Arif Hassanzai, one of the doctors, said: "There are two categories of diseases in children that are very prevalent, and they are generally seasonal diseases. In the summer, diarrhea and its various types, and in the winter, pneumonia and its various forms."

Another doctor, Abdul Qudoos Shinwari, told TOLOnews: "Currently, digestive system seasonal

diseases are prevalent because their time is almost over, but the main cause is often viral diarrhea."

Meanwhile, some caregivers told a TOLOnews reporter that their patients are facing health challenges in medical centers.

Malalai, one of the caregivers, said: "It's been four days since we brought our child here. The child was sick at home for two days and did not get better, and the doctors are trying hard to treat the patients."

Air pollution, consumption of street food, and failure to observe hygiene measures are considered among the causes of various diseases in different seasons.

‘Helping thousands of women learn new skills’

KABUL (Khaama Press): The World Food Program (WFP) has announced that it is helping thousands of women in Afghanistan, many of whom are the sole breadwinners for their families, to learn new skills and become self-reliant.

In a post on X/Twitter, the UN agency stated that women in Afghanistan have very limited opportunities to earn an income.

On Wednesday, October 2, the WFP released a video showing how it is assisting a number of women in earning a living. In the video, women are seen baking bread, weaving carpets, and sewing.

The WFP previously declared Afghanistan the worst country in the world for women.

Since the Taliban came to power in August 2021, they have banned education and employment for girls and women, forcing many to stay home.

The humanitarian crisis in Afghanistan has hit women the hardest. With education beyond the sixth grade banned and employment opportunities restricted, many women face extreme poverty and have been stripped of their rights to learn, work, and contribute to society.

The Taliban's suppressive policies have further deepened the suffering of Afghan women, pushing them into isolation and dependency. The lack of access to education and job opportunities has crippled the potential of an entire generation of Afghan women.

International organizations, while providing some relief, are calling for urgent action to address the dire humanitarian situation and restore basic rights for Afghan women. Without significant changes, Afghanistan risks long-term socio-economic collapse, leaving women and girls in a perpetual state of crisis.

Kabir meets with Panjshir officials and elders

— says IEA committed to inclusivity

PANJSHIR (Ariana News): The Political Deputy Prime Minister, Mawlawi Abdul Kabir, met with officials, scholars, and tribal leaders from Panjshir on Tuesday night at ARG where he stated the Islamic Emirate is committed to inclusivity and has initiated projects for equitable development.

The Panjshiri participants in turn shared various issues with him and called for more efforts to be made in infrastructure development and in completing stalled projects.

They also stressed that those who oppose the Islamic Emirate from outside the country cannot represent Panjshir, nor will Afghans accept them.

Kabir said the Islamic



Emirate "will not tolerate discrimination and prejudice" and that Afghanistan has an independent and strong system.

The meeting was also

attended by the Acting Minister of Industry and Commerce, the Acting Minister of Vice and Virtue, the Director General of Intelligence, and the Chief

of Army Staff. They all gave their assurance that they would try to resolve problems faced by Panjshir residents.

Islamic Emirate denies discrimination amid Iranian claims

KABUL (TOLOnews): Following the recent remarks of the Iranian ambassador and special representative of the Iranian president to Afghanistan, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Islamic Emirate said that there is no discrimination against citizens in Afghanistan.

Hafiz Zia Ahmad Takal, deputy spokesman for the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, emphasized that all of Afghanistan's territory is under the control of the Islamic Emirate's security forces, and the country's soil will not be used against any other nation.

According to Takal, the

Islamic Emirate treats all citizens equally. He said, "The security forces of the Islamic Emirate have control over all Afghanistan's geography and borders and will not allow anyone to use Afghanistan's soil against other countries or create threats from Afghan soil."

Previously, Hassan Kazemi Qomi, ambassador and special representative of the President of Iran in Afghanistan claimed that there is discrimination against ethnic, linguistic, and religious minorities in Afghanistan.

Qomi also mentioned in relation to the interim gov-

ernment's fight against ISIS that it should not only take a stance against ISIS but also act against other groups that threaten the security of Afghanistan's neighbors.

Hassan Kazemi Qomi stated, "One cannot take a stance against ISIS and remain silent about other groups that challenge the security of Afghanistan's neighbors. For the past three years, we have been offering sincere advice and emphasizing that a mono-ethnic, mono-linguistic, mono-gender, and mono-religious system cannot meet the needs of a population that has linguistic, eth-

nic, and religious diversity." Sayed Akbar Sial Wardak, a political analyst, told TOLOnews: "The discrimination that previously existed among Afghans, in government offices, or across all sectors, including the Afghan parliament, in my opinion, has reached zero with the arrival of the Islamic Emirate."

Earlier, Iran's Foreign Minister, during the third four-party meeting of the foreign ministers of Russia, China, Iran, and the defense minister of Pakistan on Afghanistan's issues, emphasized forming a united front against terrorists.

ARCS discusses ongoing aid initiatives



KABUL (BNA): The Acting Head of the Afghan Red Crescent Society (ARCS), Sheikh Shahabuddin Delawar, reaffirmed that the ARCS is the only national humanitarian organization that consistently works to provide assistance to the most vulnerable, including those

affected by disasters and orphaned families.

During a recent visit with Ms. Karen, Head of Asia and Europe Affairs for the Danish Red Cross, Mr. Torsten, DRC's representative in Afghanistan, and their accompanying delegation, the Acting Head highlighted the ongoing initia-

tives of the ARCS.

These initiatives include the provision of essential health, educational, and humanitarian services to those in need. Delawar stated, "The Afghan Red Crescent Society remains the leading national charitable institution dedicated to the continuous support of the needy, disaster-affected individuals, and orphaned families."

The visit encompassed tours of significant ARCS-operated facilities, including Mashal-e-Bayat High School, the ARCS Kindergarten, Psychological Support Centers for both men and women, the Central Orphanage, and vocational training centers.

Ms. Karen expressed her satisfaction with the services provided at these facilities and pledged continued support for the ARCS, particularly in its programs related to orphan care and welfare.

Floods claim 13 lives and ravage eight provinces

KABUL (TOLOnews): Recent floods have claimed the lives of at least thirteen individuals and left sixteen others injured across eight provinces in the country over the past few days.

The National Disaster Management Authority (NDMA) reports that more than 100 residential houses have been partially or completely destroyed, and over 650 acres of farmland have suffered significant damage.

The provinces hardest hit include Ghazni, Laghman, Nangarhar, Farah, Paktia, Badghis,

Herat, and Daikundi.

Janan Saiq, a spokesperson for the National Disaster Management Authority (NDMA), said, "Since the beginning of this month, thirteen citizens have tragically lost their lives, and sixteen have been injured in these affected areas."

In addition to the tragic loss of life, the floods have inflicted substantial financial damage. Many victims are now urgently appealing to the Islamic Emirate for assistance.

Agha Jan, one such victim, lamented, "The floods

have devastated us, destroying all our wheat crops, and we urgently seek government support." Another affected individual, Mohammadullah, expressed despair: "Our homes and shops have been washed away, and countless people have lost their lands."

The National Disaster Management Authority (NDMA) has announced that its teams are actively working to provide initial aid to the victims and establish temporary shelters for families who have lost their homes in this natural disaster.

Marco Polo Sheep population declined

BADAKHSHAN (Khaama Press): Officials from the Department of Agriculture, Irrigation, and Livestock of Badakhshan province have reported a decline in the population of the Marco Polo sheep and the Ibex, based on a survey conducted in the country's second national park.

This survey highlights the risk of these species facing a significant population decrease.

Amanullah Hasan, the head of the Department of Agriculture, Irrigation, and Livestock in Badakhshan, stated that the survey was conducted in the Big Pamir region of Wakhan district to assess the living conditions of these animals.

Hasan added that the survey covered valleys such as Gharbin, Kandar, Nakhsher Sheet, Manjilaq, Jalmasir, Alisu, Dida Spoon, Jin Ali, Moristan, and the hunting grounds of Big Pamir in Wakhan district, Badakhshan. The team used binoculars to monitor herds of Marco Polo sheep and Ibex at altitudes higher than 4,000 meters above sea level.

According to the observations, the technical team found that, compared to the 2021 data from WCS (Wildlife Conservation Society), the population of these rare animals has decreased due to habitat overcrowding and living conditions. The increasing human population and environmental challenges are contributing factors.

The head of Badakhshan's Department of Agriculture also pointed out that hunting and livestock encroachment on the habitat of these rare animals are the primary causes of the population decline.

The Marco Polo sheep is considered one of the rarest animals globally, and its presence in the Pamir region of Wakhan, Badakhshan, has historically attracted international tourists.

Minister engages with Turkish officials on drug trafficking efforts

KABUL (BNA): Mawlawi Abdul Haq Hamkar, Deputy Minister for Drug Control at the Ministry of Interior, met with Fazil Akin Erdogan, the Turkish Cooperation Coordinator for Afghanistan.

According to the press release, In this meeting, both sides engaged in discussions focusing on strategies for combating drug trafficking, promoting alternative livelihoods for farmers, and providing treatment and support for individuals affected by drug addiction.

The Turkish Cooperation Coordinator reaffirmed further Turkey's commitment



to assist in these vital areas,

emphasizing the impor-

tant of collaborative efforts to address the pressing drug-related challenges facing Afghanistan.

11 citizens of Afghanistan killed in traffic accident in Iran

KABUL (Khaama Press): Iranian media have reported that 11 citizens of Afghanistan lost their lives in a traffic accident in Sistan and Baluchestan province.

According to reports, the accident occurred when a vehicle carrying Afghan migrants collided with a freight truck.

The Sistan and Baluchestan Red Crescent said the incident happened early Tuesday on the Saravan-

Kouhak road.

The Red Crescent also reported that 14 others were injured in the accident, in addition to the two drivers.

Iranian media stated that the victims of this accident were citizens of Afghanistan who had entered Iran illegally. The tragic accident underscores the desperate situation of Afghan refugees, many of whom are forced to enter Iran illegally due to dire conditions

in Afghanistan. These hazardous journeys often end in disaster, reflecting the dangerous circumstances refugees face.

Amid Afghanistan's ongoing humanitarian crisis, many refugees are fleeing to neighboring countries like Iran, only to face life-threatening situations. The plight of Afghan refugees is worsened by forced deportations, which send vulnerable individuals

back into an unstable and war-torn country.

The international community must take urgent action to address the refugee crisis and ensure the safety and protection of Afghan migrants. Iran and other host countries should focus on providing support and humanitarian aid rather than resorting to deportations that exacerbate the already critical situation in Afghanistan.

ANDMA signs MoU with int'l organization



KABUL (BNA): The Afghanistan National Disaster Management Authority (ANDMA) today announced the signing of two significant cooperation agreements with the Danish International Migration Organization aimed at strengthening efforts in disaster preparedness and response across Afghanistan.

During the signing ceremony, Mullah Nooruddin Turabi, the Acting Head of ANDMA, urged both governmental bodies and international organizations to collaborate closely in mitigating the risks posed by natural and man-made disasters. He highlighted the

importance of continued assistance in efforts to reduce poverty levels across the country.

Anbar Al-Sharif, Head of the Danish International Migration Organization, expressed satisfaction with the longstanding partnership, stating that the organization has been active for over 25 years in Afghanistan, as well as other countries, providing vital assistance to migrants and Afghans affected by natural and conflict-related disasters.

He noted that the organization has also been involved in demining operations and emergency relief

efforts. Al-Sharif commended the ANDMA for its timely and effective cooperation in supporting these initiatives.

The agreements, valued at \$1,493,015, focus on implementing key projects in sectors such as education, healthcare, demining, and solar energy, across the provinces of Kabul, Kapisa, Parwan, Bamiyan, Kandahar, Zabul, Helmand, Nimroz, Farah, Badghis, Laghman, and Kunar. These projects are set to be executed over the course of one year, aiming to enhance infrastructure and provide sustainable solutions for disaster-affected regions.

Head of Afghan Business Council meets US, UK officials

KABUL (TOLOnews): The president of the Afghanistan Business Council in the UAE, Haji Obaidullah Sader Khail, in separate meetings with US Charges d'Affaires Karen Decker and UK Charges d'Affaires Robert Chatterton Dickson, discussed resolving challenges facing the private sector in Afghanistan. Addressing issues related to money transfers and obtaining business visas were the central topics in discussions between the president of the business council and the US Charge d'Affaires for Afghanistan.

Haji Obaidullah Sader Khail, head of the Afghan Business Council in the UAE, said about these meetings: "I met with Karen Decker and discussed the issues and challenges our traders face inside and outside Afghanistan. Our problems involve the banking system, visas, and transportation—

how we can get raw materials and medicine into the country."

Meanwhile, ACCI said that economic restrictions over the past three years have created challenges for the private sector, and these restrictions need to be lifted.

Khanjan Alkoza, a member of the ACCI's Board of Directors, told TOLOnews: "The money that the international community pledged during the republic, and some of the projects they initiated—amounting to over 80 billion afghani—most of them have been invoiced, some projects have been completed, and others are left unfinished or 90% to 99% complete."

Mir Shakeeb Mir, an economic expert, shared this perspective: "The economic restrictions imposed on Afghanistan's private sector, particularly the banking sector, over the past



three years have had negative effects. Lifting these restrictions could significantly improve Afghanistan's economic situation and strengthen its private sector."

PHC restrains KP CM from using discretionary funds

Humayun Khan

PESHAWAR: A divisional bench comprising of Chief Justice Peshawar High Court (PHC) Justice Ishtiaq Ibrahim and Justice Waqar Ahmad has restrained Chief Minister from utilizing discretionary funds allocated in the Annual Development Program (ADP) while ordered submission of reply within three days, on Wednesday.

The writ petition filed by opposition members of

the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Assembly including Dr. Ibad, Arbab Muhammad Waseem, Ahmad Kundi, Arbab Muhammad Usman, and others, alleged that the provincial government illegally included block/umbrella schemes in the ADP, violating laws and Supreme Court/ Peshawar High Court decisions.

The counsel Babar Khan Yousafzai and Sultan Muhammad Khan advocates argued that these schemes, worth Rs. 1 billion, were approved with-

out proper scrutiny and favored certain constituencies while neglecting opposition party areas. They argued that this is a clear case of favoritism and nepotism.

However, Additional Advocate General requested for further time to submit a response, which was granted by the court.

PHC divisional bench comprising of Chief Justice Ishtiaq Ibrahim and Justice Waqar Ahmad restrained the Chief Minister from using dis-

cretionary funds and directed the provincial government to submit a detailed response within three days.

The Opposition Leader in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Assembly Dr. Ibad welcomed the court's decision, stating that the PTI government has been practicing double standards in fund allocation, depriving opposition constituencies of development funds. We will continue to fight for the rights of our constituents.



KARACHI: PPP Chairman Bilawal Bhutto-Zardari speaking to journalists in an informal conversation on Wednesday.

Helene's flooding swept away 11 workers at a Tennessee factory

NASHVILLE, Tenn. (AP): Tennessee state authorities said Wednesday they are investigating the company that owns a plastics factory where 11 workers were swept away by cataclysmic flooding unleashed by Hurricane Helene.

As the nearby Nolichucky River swelled from rainfall, employees in the Impact Plastics factory in Erwin, a small community in rural Tennessee, kept working. Several asserted that they weren't allowed to leave in time to avoid the storm's impact.

It wasn't until water flooded into the parking lot and the power went out that the plant shut down and sent workers home. Several never made it.

The raging waters swept 11 people away, and only five were rescued. Two of them are confirmed dead and are part of a toll across six states that has surpassed

160. Four others in the factory are still missing since they were washed away Friday in Erwin, where dozens of people were also rescued off the roof of a hospital.

Tennessee Bureau of Investigation spokesperson Leslie Earhart said Wednesday that the agency is investigating allegations involving Impact Plastics at the direction of the local prosecutor.

District Attorney Steven R. Finney said in a statement that he asked the bureau to look into any potential criminal violations related to the "occurrences" on Friday.

"Impact Plastics has not been contacted by the TBI yet but will fully cooperate with their investigation," said the company's spokesperson Tony Treadway. He said the company is preparing an internal review which it will

release to the public.

Some workers managed to drive away from the plant, while others got caught on a clogged road where water rose high enough to sweep vehicles away.

Videos show the brown floodwaters covering the nearby highway and lapping at the doors of Impact Plastics.

Jacob Ingram, a mold changer at the factory, filmed himself and four others waiting for rescue as bobbing vehicles floated by. He later posted the videos on Facebook with the caption, "Just wanna say im lucky to be alive." Videos of the helicopter rescue were posted on social media later Saturday.

In one video, Ingram looks down at the camera, a green Tennessee National Guard helicopter hovering above him, hoisting one of the other survivors. In

another, a soldier rigs the next evacuee in a harness.

Impact Plastics said in a statement Monday that it "continued to monitor weather conditions" Friday and that managers dismissed employees "when water began to cover the parking lot and the adjacent service road, and the plant lost power."

In interviews with local news outlets, two of the workers who made it out of the facility disputed those claims. One told News 5 WCYB that employees were made to wait until it was "too late." Another, Ingram, made a similar statement to the Knoxville News Sentinel.

"They should've evacuated when we got the flash flood warnings, and when they saw the parking lot," Ingram said. "We asked them if we should evacuate, and they told us not yet, it wasn't bad enough."

Govt not to tak loan at 11% interest rate

ISLAMABAD (INP): Pakistan has 'decided' against taking loans from commercial bank at higher interest rate, sources said Wednesday.

As per sources, the finance ministry has decided not to proceed with borrowing from a commercial bank at an 11% interest rate. Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif reportedly directed the finance minister to avoid taking expensive loans.

Although an agreement had been made with commercial banks for a loan at 11% interest, the government has now decided not to take the funds. In case

of a financing gap, loans will be sought from other sources at lower interest rates, the sources aware about the development said.

They further say Pakistan may secure up to \$700 million in loans from the International Trade Finance Corporation and the Islamic Development Bank (IDB).

Additionally, \$1 billion more is expected from the IMF during the current fiscal year, with a further \$2 billion to follow next year.

The IMF is expected to disburse another \$2 billion to Pakistan by fiscal year 2027, with the final \$1 bil-

lion installment arriving in the 37th month of the program. The first economic review under the Extended Fund Facility will take place in March.

This move by the government may violate the commercial bank loan agreement, potentially complicating future loan requests.

Pakistan has availed 25 IMF programmes since becoming a member of the International Monetary Fund (IMF) in 1950. The most recent programme is a 37-month Extended Fund Facility (EFF) approved in September 2024.

Russia, Iran, China expected to use AI to influence US election

WASHINGTON (Reuters): The U.S. sees a growing threat of Russia, Iran and China attempting to influence the Nov. 5 elections, including by using artificial intelligence to disseminate fake or divisive information, according to an annual U.S. threat assessment released on Wednesday.

Russian "influence actors" have amplified stories about migrants entering the U.S. in an attempt to stoke discord, according to the Department of Homeland Security report, and have used generative AI to create fake websites that appeared to be authentic U.S.-based media outlets.

Iran has become "increasingly aggressive in its foreign influence efforts," the report said. In one example, Iranian actors posed as activists online to encourage protests over the conflict in Gaza, DHS said.

The U.S. is gearing up for a close presidential election between Vice President Kamala Harris, a Democrat, and Republican former President Donald Trump that could further inflame partisan tensions and offer opportunities for foreign adversaries to try to disrupt the democratic process. The DHS assessment anticipates Russia, Iran and China "will use a blend of subversive, undeclared, criminal, and coercive tactics to seek new opportunities to undermine confidence in U.S. democratic institutions and domestic social cohesion."

Domestic violent extremists pose another serious threat, according to the report. Trump already has been the target of two alleged assassination attempts.

The report said it expects domestic extremists to attempt violent actions "with the intent of instilling fear among voters, candidates, and election workers, as well as disrupting election processes."

Harris widens lead over Trump to 47%-40%, Reuters/Ipsos poll finds

WASHINGTON (Reuters): Democratic Vice President Kamala Harris leads Republican Donald Trump 47% to 40% in the race to win the Nov. 5 U.S. presidential election, as she appeared to blunt Trump's edge on the economy and jobs, a Reuters/Ipsos poll published on Tuesday found.

Harris had a lead of six percentage points based on unrounded figures - which showed her with support from 46.61% of registered voters while Trump was backed by 40.48%, according to the three-day poll that closed on Monday.

The Democrat's lead was slightly higher than her five-point advantage over Trump in a Sept 11-12 Reuters/Ipsos poll. The latest poll had a margin of error of about four percentage points.

While national surveys including Reuters/Ipsos polls give important signals on the views of the electorate, the state-by-state results of the Electoral College determine the winner, with

seven battleground states likely to be decisive.

Polls have shown Harris and Trump are neck-and-neck in those battleground states, with many results within the polls' margins of error. A recent New York Times/Siena College poll showed Trump with marginal leads in three of these states - Arizona, Georgia and North Carolina.

Asked which candidate had the better approach on the "economy, unemployment and jobs," some 43% of voters responding to the latest Reuters/Ipsos poll picked Trump and 41% selected Harris. Trump's two-point advantage on the topic compares to his three-point lead in an August Reuters/Ipsos poll and an 11 point lead over Harris in late July shortly after she launched her campaign.

Harris entered the race after President Joe Biden folded his reelection effort following a poor debate performance against Trump in June.

Trump at the time was widely seen as the frontrunner, partly based on his perceived strength on the economy after several years of high inflation under the Biden administration.

Reuters/Ipsos polling between April and June also showed voters picked Trump over Biden on the economy, unemployment and jobs by between five and eight points.

Trump has still had wide leads in some measures of confidence in his economic stewardship. A Reuters/Ipsos poll from August asked voters which candidate had a better approach on the "the U.S. economy" - without specific reference to jobs or unemployment - and Trump led Harris by 11 points, 45% to 36%.

Both candidates are focusing campaign pledges on the economy, which the latest Reuters/Ipsos poll showed was the No. 1 issue for voters. Trump on Tuesday said he would create special manufac-

turing zones on federal lands. He has also promised to raise tariffs on imported goods.

Harris has pledged tax breaks for families with children as well as higher taxes for corporations. She is expected to unveil new economic proposals this week, even though some advisers acknowledge time is running out to convince voters with pitches on policy.

The polling average maintained by FiveThirtyEight.com shows a close race at the national level, with Harris leading Trump 48.3% to 45.8%.

The latest Reuters/Ipsos poll surveyed 1,029 U.S. adults online, nationwide, including 871 registered voters. Among these, 785 were considered the most likely to turn out on Election Day. Among these likely voters, Harris led 50% to 44%, though similar to her lead among all registered voters, her advantage was only five points when using unrounded figures.

Khamenei had warned Nasrallah of Israeli plot to kill him

DUBAI/BEIRUT (Reuters): Iran's Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei warned Hezbollah leader Syied Hassan Nasrallah to flee Lebanon days before he was killed in an Israeli strike and is now deeply worried about Israeli infiltration of senior government ranks in Tehran, three Iranian sources said.

In the immediate aftermath of the attack on Hezbollah's booby-trapped pagers on Sept. 17, Khamenei sent a message with an envoy to beseech the Hezbollah secretary general to leave for Iran, citing intelligence reports that suggested Israel had operatives within Hezbollah and was planning to kill him, one of the sources, a senior Iranian official, told Reuters.

The messenger, the official said, was a senior Iranian Revolutionary Guards commander, Brigadier General Abbas Nilforoushan, who was with Nasrallah in his bunker when it was hit by Israeli bombs and was also killed.

Khamenei, who has remained in a secure location inside Iran since Saturday, personally ordered a barrage of

around 200 missiles to be fired at Israel on Tuesday, a senior Iranian official said. The attack was retaliation for the deaths of Nasrallah and Nilforoushan, the Revolutionary Guards said in a statement.

The statement also cited the July killing of Hamas Leader Ismail Haniyeh in Tehran, and Israel's attacks on Lebanon. Israel has not claimed responsibility for Haniyeh's death.

Israel on Tuesday began what it labelled as a "limited" ground incursion against Hezbollah in southern Lebanon.

Iran's foreign ministry and the office of Israel's Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, which oversees the country's foreign intelligence agency Mossad, did not reply to requests for comment.

Nasrallah's assassination followed two weeks of precise Israeli strikes that have destroyed weapons sites, eliminated half of Hezbollah's leadership council and decimated its top military command.

Iran's fears for the safety of Khamenei and the loss of trust, within both Hezbollah and Iran's establishment and between them, emerged in the con-

versations with 10 sources for this story, who described a situation that could complicate the effective functioning of Iran's Axis of Resistance alliance of anti-Israel irregular armed groups.

Founded with Iran's backing the 1980s, Hezbollah has long been the most formidable member of the alliance.

The disarray is also making it hard for Hezbollah to choose a new leader, fearing the ongoing infiltration will put the successor at risk, four Lebanese sources said.

"Basically, Iran lost the biggest investment it had for the past decades," said Magnus Ranstorp, a Hezbollah expert at the Swedish Defense University, of the deep damage caused to Hezbollah that he said diminished Iran's capacity to strike at Israel's borders.

"It shook Iran to the core. It shows how Iran is deeply infiltrated also: they not only killed Nasrallah, they killed Nilforoushan," he said, who was a trusted military adviser to Khamenei.

Hezbollah's lost military capacity and leadership cadre might push Iran towards the type of attacks

against Israeli embassies and personnel abroad that it engaged in more frequently before the rise of its proxy forces, Ranstorp said.

IRAN MAKES ARRESTS

Nasrallah's death has prompted Iranian authorities to thoroughly investigate possible infiltrations within Iran's own ranks, from the powerful Revolutionary Guards to senior security officials, a second senior Iranian official said. They are especially focused on those who travel abroad or have relatives living outside Iran, the first official said.

Tehran grew suspicious of certain members of the Guards who had been traveling to Lebanon, he said. Concerns were raised when one of these individuals began asking about Nasrallah's whereabouts, particularly inquiring about how long he would remain in specific locations, the official added.

The individual has been arrested along with several others, the first official said, after alarm was raised in Iran's intelligence circles. The suspect's family had relocated outside Iran, the official said, without identifying the suspect or

his relatives.

The second official said the assassination has spread mistrust between Tehran and Hezbollah, and within Hezbollah.

"The trust that held everything together has disappeared," the official said.

The Supreme Leader "no longer trusts anyone," said a third source who is close to Iran's establishment.

Alarm bells had already rung within Tehran and Hezbollah about possible Mossad infiltrations after the killing in July of Hezbollah commander Fuad Shukur in an Israeli airstrike on a secretive Beirut location while meeting an IRGC commander, two Hezbollah sources and a Lebanese security official told Reuters at the time. That killing was followed a few hours later by the assassination of Hamas leader Haniyeh in Tehran.

Unlike Haniyeh's death, Israel publicly claimed responsibility for the killing of Shukur, a low-profile figure who Nasrallah nonetheless described, at his funeral, as a central figure in Hezbollah's history who had built its most impor-

tant capabilities.

Shukur was key to the development of Hezbollah's most advanced weaponry, including precision-guided missiles, and was in charge of the Shi'ite groups operations against Israel over the past year, Israel's military has said.

Iranian fears about Israeli penetration of its upper ranks stretches back years. In 2021, former Iranian president Mahmoud Ahmadinejad said the head of an Iranian intelligence unit that was supposed to target agents of Mossad had himself been an agent for the Israeli spy agency, telling CNN Turk that Israel obtained sensitive documents on Iran's nuclear programme, a reference to a 2018 raid in which Israel obtained a huge trove of top secret documents about the programme.

Also in 2021, Israel's outgoing spy chief Yossi Cohen gave details about the raid, telling the BBC that 20 non-Israeli Mossad agents were involved in stealing the archive from a warehouse.

PAGER WARNING

Khamenei's invitation to Nasrallah to relocate to Iran came after thousands of pagers and walkie

talkies used by Hezbollah blew up in deadly attacks on Sept 17 and 18, the first official said. The attacks have been widely attributed to Israel, although it has not officially claimed responsibility.

Nasrallah, however, was confident in his security and trusted his inner circle completely, the official said, despite Tehran's serious concerns about potential infiltrators within Hezbollah's ranks.

Khamenei tried a second time, relaying another message through Nilforoushan to Nasrallah last week, imploring him to leave Lebanon and relocate to Iran as a safer location. But Nasrallah insisted on staying in Lebanon, the official said.

Several high-level meetings were held in Tehran following the pager blasts to discuss Hezbollah and Nasrallah's safety, the official said, but declined to say who attended those meetings. Simultaneously, in Lebanon, Hezbollah began conducting a major investigation to purge Israeli spies among them, questioning hundreds of members after the pager detonations, three sources in Lebanon told Reuters. Sheikh Nabil Kaouk, a

senior Hezbollah official, was leading the investigation, a Hezbollah source said. The probe was progressing rapidly, the source said, before an Israeli raid killed him a day after Nasrallah's assassination. Another raid earlier last week had targeted other senior Hezbollah commanders, some of who were involved in the inquiry.

Kaouk had summoned for questioning Hezbollah officials involved in logistics and others "who participated, mediated and received offers on pagers and walkie-talkies," the source said. A "deeper and comprehensive inquiry" and purge were now needed after the killing of Nasrallah and other commanders, the source said.

Ali al-Amin, the editor-in-chief for Janoubia, a news site based that focuses on the Shi'ite community and Hezbollah said reports indicated that Hezbollah detained hundreds of people for questioning after the pagers saga. Hezbollah is reeling from Nasrallah's killing in his deep bunker in a command HQ, shocked at how successfully Israel penetrated the group, seven sources said.