

Soldiers laid to rest
F.P. Report

RAWALPINDI: A large number of retired and on-duty officers of Pakistan Army, relatives and locals attended the funeral prayers of Pakistan Army personnel who were martyred in North Waziristan clash on Monday. According to ISPR, the martyred soldiers included Lieutenant Colonel Muhammad Ali Shaukat 43 who was laid to rest in Faisalabad.



@thefrontierpost

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

www.thefrontierpost.com

Vol. XXXIXI

No. 254

Regd. No. 241

RABI-US-SANNI 04 1446 -- TUESDAY, OCTOBER 08 2024

PESHAWAR EDITION

12 PAGES

PRICE. 30

PM calls for end to Gaza bloodshed — urges immediate ceasefire in Palestine

Saqib Mushtaq

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif on Monday emphasized the urgent need for a ceasefire in Palestine, urging the international community especially the Muslim World to act swiftly in stopping Israel from further bloodshed in Gaza.

Addressing the All Parties Conference on Palestine and Gaza at the President House, the prime minister said it was the time for the Muslim World to move forward and take practical steps to prevent Israel from further bloodshed in Palestine.

He condemned Israel's ongoing violence and barbarism, expressing deep sorrow that innocent Palestinians were being killed daily. "The first priority should be to stop the bloodshed in Palestine, which is a foremost duty, and for this, the platform of the OIC is available."

Commending the participation of all political parties in the conference, the prime minister said the gathering reflected that whenever Pakistan faced challenges, either external or internal, the country's entire political leadership gets united to present solid recommendation and offers full cooperation in implementing the proposals.

The prime minister announced to formulate a working group that would take decisions in the light of proposals presented in the Conference. He also agreed with other participants' views that instead of adhering to a two-state solution, the focus should be on demanding for an independent state of Palestine with Al-Quds as its capital.

The prime minister highlighted that he forcefully raised the government's stance against Israel's barbarism in Palestine without take care of the consequences. Additionally, he said he along with the delegation, also staged a walkout at the UN General Assembly when Israel's PM

Netanyahu came to address the assembly.

"I knew that my speech would cause a stir, but I didn't care and boldly raised my voice in support of the oppressed Palestinians at the UN General Assembly." The prime minister pointed out that developing the country's economy was the foremost priority of the government as without overcoming poverty and getting economically strong, "our voice would not be heard in the world".

As regards dispatching relief goods to Palestine, PM Shehbaz said the government was making full efforts in this regard. He also appreciated the Al-Khidmat Foundation for cooperating with the government. Furthermore, he announced that the orphan Palestinian students would also be given admissions and other facilities in the Pakistan's medical colleges.

We, the representatives of the political parties of Pakistan, representing a cross-section of Pakistani society, met today to express the following with one voice: We state our deep concern at the continuing brutal aggression and genocide being committed by Israel against the Palestinians, despite repeated calls for ceasefire from the Organization of Islamic Conference (OIC), UN General Assembly, UN Security Council, the International Court of Justice (ICJ), and the international community;

We express our profound alarm at the impunity with which Israel is expanding the war theatre and threatening regional peace and security, and its continued violations of international law and the UN Charter, including its recent aggression against Lebanon, attacks in the West Bank, the assassinations of Hamas leader in Tehran, and the Secretary General of Hezbollah in Lebanon which constitutes a threat to regional

peace and security; We express our unwavering support for the inalienable right of the people of Palestine and Kashmir to self-determination; and for the relevant OIC and UN resolutions on Palestine that call for the withdrawal of Israeli forces from the occupied Palestinian territories, and for a peaceful and negotiated solution to the conflict;

Recalling the resolution titled "Condemnation of Israeli oppression and Brutality against people of Palestine" adopted by the National Assembly of Pakistan in its session held on 2nd August 2024, as well as other relevant resolutions adopted by the Parliament of Pakistan; this All Parties Conference:

1. Expresses its unequivocal condemnation in the strongest possible terms of Israel's genocidal campaign that has resulted in the loss of over 42,000 lives, mostly women and children, as well as grievous injury to over 96,000 Palestinians, in addition to the widespread destruction and displacement of nearly the entire population of Gaza;

2. Condemns Israeli attacks against schools, hospitals, places of worship, shelters and refugee camps and its killing of aid workers and journalists in unprecedented numbers and in complete violation of international humanitarian law;

3. Demands an immediate and unconditional ceasefire and end to brutalities against the Palestinian people; lifting of the siege of Gaza; provision of unimpeded humanitarian, and medical aid; and to hold Israel accountable for its violations of international law, war crimes and acts of genocide;

4. Urges the international community to take urgent measures to prevent Israel from further undermining regional peace and stability, including

(Continued on Back Page)

Punjab bans all meetings inside Adiala jail

F.P. Report

RAWALPINDI: The Punjab government has imposed restrictions prohibiting all meetings inside Rawalpindi's Adiala jail, the facility where Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) founder and former prime minister Imran Khan is imprisoned.

Citing security reasons for the ban which is to remain in place till October 18, the sources added that Khan will not be allowed to meet party leaders, lawyers and family during this time. Prison sources attribute the prohibition on meetings — including those involving common prisoners — to security concerns. This measure aims to bolster the facility's security in light of the upcoming Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO) summit scheduled in neighboring Islamabad from October 15 to 16.

Meanwhile, the provincial government has sent a letter to Rawalpindi's district administration and the jail authorities which also provisions directions for additional security measures to be taken by the latter. The letter, issued by the Punjab Home Department, attributes the security concerns to the threat alert issued by the Counter Terrorism Department (CTD) on October 6 and calls for strict security arrangements and preventive measures to deal with any untoward incident.

The SCO summit holds key significance as it will also be attended by India's Minister of External Affairs Subrahmanyam Jaishankar — the first visit by an Indian foreign minister to Pakistan in nearly a decade. The federal government has called in the Pakistan Army as part of its comprehensive security plan with troops' deployment approved under Article 245 of the Constitution from October 15 to 17. This is not the first time that the authorities have barred meetings inside the Adiala facility previously, such a ban was imposed for two weeks in March due to security concerns. The compound has housed Khan for more than a year as the politician remained embroiled in multiple cases.



ISLAMABAD: Officials of Capital Development Authority sealing Khyber Pakhtunkhwa House.

Islamabad asks Kabul to fix own domestic issues

F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan on Monday rejected a statement by the Afghan foreign ministry regarding the political situation in the country, asking the Afghan Interim Government (AIG) to focus on fixing its own domestic problems instead of lecturing a democratic country.

Commenting on the unrest that unfolded after the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) supporters marched towards the federal capital, a spokesperson for Afghanistan's Ministry of Foreign Affairs said tension between the government and opposition party workers was brewing in Pakistan, which may have negative impact on the entire region.

In a statement, Foreign

Office spokesperson Mumtaz Zahra Baloch, rejected the "frivolous" statement made by the spokesperson of the Afghanistan foreign ministry calling it an "unacceptable" and "deplorable" interference in the domestic affairs of Pakistan.

"Instead of lecturing a democratic country, the AIG should focus on fixing its own domestic problems; prioritise inclusivity; and be responsive to needs and aspirations of its own people including the right to education for women and girls rather than curtailing their rights," the spokesperson said.

She said the AIG should also deliver on the commitments given to the international community by denying space to terror groups

which were seriously threatening peace and security in the neighbouring countries; and by preventing Afghanistan from becoming once again the centre of global terrorism.

The spokesperson reiterated that Pakistan remained committed to peace, dialogue, and cooperation in the region and expected all states, including Afghanistan, to adhere to the basic norms of responsible international conduct and interstate relations.

It should be noted that the law and order has been restored in the federal capital after days of unrest owing to the PTI's protest with authorities resorting to firing tear gas and placing containers across the city to prevent the party workers' march.

56 prisoners in Sri Lankan jails repatriated to Pakistan

F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: As many as 56 Pakistani nationals imprisoned in Sri Lankan jails were repatriated on Monday as a result of successful efforts by the Ministry of Interior.

A chartered plane was dispatched to bring the prisoners back to Pakistan. The repatriated Pakistani nationals include five women and 51 men. The repatriation followed three months of coordination between the

Ministry of Interior, under the direction of Mohsin Naqvi and Sri Lankan authorities.

Speaking on the occasion, one of the repatriate women thanked the government for bringing them back to the country. Another repatriate said that he was happy to be back in Pakistan after undergoing difficult circumstances during their imprisonment in Sri Lanka.

Reacting to the return of Pakistani prisoners, Interior

Minister Naqvi said that he is grateful to the Sri Lankan government and high commissioner for their role in the repatriation. He also thanked Federal Minister for Privatisation Abdul Aleem Khan for his generosity in bearing the expenses of the prisoners as a gesture of support. It may be noted that the Ministry of Interior had been tasked by the security czar with facilitating the release and safe return of the Pakistani nationals.

The Frontier Post

Production orders issued
F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Assembly Speaker Babar Salim Swati here Monday issued production orders of two Members Provincial Assembly Anwar Zeb Khan and Malik Liaquat. The Speaker issued their production orders after receiving their applications. The house also passed six resolutions presented by MPA Mushtaq Ghani and others.



ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif addressing during All Parties Conference with regard to Palestine Solidarity Day.

Committee to probe alleged police raid on KP House

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: The Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Assembly with Speaker Babar Salim Swati in chair here Monday constituted an 11 member parliamentary committee to probe an alleged police raid on the KP House in Islamabad.

The committee was constituted after consultation with opposition to probe the incident from all angles, Law Minister Aftab Alam told the house. The members of the Parliamentary Committee included Munir Hussain Laghmani (Chairman), members Dr Ebad Khan (Opposition Leader), MPAs Akhtar Khan, Iftikhar Mishwani, Muhammad Arif, Shafiullah, Johar Muhammad, Asif Khan, Ahmed Kundi and Adnan Khan.

The Minister said that findings of the committee would be shared with the members of the assembly. Opposition leader Dr Ebad Khan claimed that Chief Minister Khyber Pakhtunkhwa has not been arrested or held and was disappeared by himself.

He condemned PTI workers slogans against political leadership. Dr Ebad said the CM KP has left the assembly without hearing the opposition last night which was an irrational act. He said that opposition would play positive role if KP issues were taken up with the centre with a positive intention.

Anniversary of 2005 quake today

F.P. Report

MANSEHRA: The 19th anniversary of the devastating earthquake of October 08, 2005 will be marked in district Mansehra and Azad Jammu and Kashmir (AJK) on Tuesday.

Several events have been planned in connection with the day which will be attended by local people, traders, local journalists and relatives of the victims of the quake. Quran Khawani and prayers will be offered for those who died and survivors of the devastating earthquake 2005.

A condolence reference will also be held at the Government High School Balakot during which floral wreath will be placed on the mass grave of 63 students at the school. The October 8, 2005 earthquake is considered the worst seismic disaster in the country's history that left over 87,000 people killed in KP, Azad Jammu and Kashmir (AJK) and other parts of the country.

The two cities bore the brunt of the devastating 7.6-magnitude earthquake whose epicenter was 19 kilometers northeast of Muzaffarabad city of AJK and struck at 8.54 am. According to the National Disaster Management Authority, a state-run coordination agency, some 87,350 people, including 19,000 children, lost their lives in the disaster, with over 138,000 more injured.

China urges punishment' to Karachi killers

F.P. Report

KARACHI: China on Monday urged Islamabad to investigate the Karachi blast in which two Chinese engineers were killed and a third was injured and ensure safety of its officials working in Pakistan.

A statement issued by the Beijing embassy urged Pakistani authorities to "conduct a thorough investigation of the attack and severely punish the killers, while at the same time taking practical measures to fully ensure the safety of Chinese citizens, institutions and projects". Beijing has repeatedly asked Islamabad to ensure the safety and security of Chinese nationals and its interests.

A massive blast on Sunday night that targeted a convoy of Chinese workers in Pakistan's largest city killed two engineers in an attack claimed by a separatist group. Sunday night's attack comes a week before Pakistan hosts several heads of governments for a Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO) summit, a bloc established by Russia and China to deepen ties with Central Asian states.

Beijing is Islamabad's closest regional ally, readily providing financial assistance to bail out its often struggling neighbour. The CPEC has seen tens of billions of dollars funnelled into massive transport, energy and infrastructure projects — part of Beijing's

PM visits Chinese embassy

F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif on Monday visited the Chinese Embassy, where he met the Chinese Ambassador Jiang Zaidong to offer his heartfelt condolences over the loss of Chinese citizens' lives in a terrorist attack in Karachi.

The prime minister expressed deep sorrow and anger over the loss of Chinese citizens in the terrorist attack. "The government is fully mobilized to swiftly identify those responsible for this incident," the prime minister said. He assured that after identifying those responsible, they will be brought to justice without delay.

"The protection of the lives and property of our Chinese brothers in Pakistan is our top priority," he added. The prime minister emphasized the government will not tolerate this heinous conspiracy aimed at damaging Pakistan-China relations. He said he will personally monitor the investigation of this incident assuring that security arrangements for foreign nationals would be further strengthened. The Chinese Ambassador expressed gratitude to the prime minister for the swift response and the initiation of investigations following the terrorist incident in Karachi. He expressed confidence in the Government of Pakistan for effective investigations, swift identification of the responsible terrorists, and ensuring that they are brought to justice promptly. He hoped that those responsible for this incident will be punished as soon as possible. Minister for Planning and Development Ahsan Iqbal, Minister for Information and Broadcasting Attaullah Tarar, and senior officials from relevant departments were present at the meeting.

transnational "Belt and Road" scheme.

A suicide bomber killed five Chinese engineers working on the construction of a dam in northwest Pakistan in March, temporarily pausing the project. The attack was not claimed, but it came days after militants attempted to storm offices of the Gwadar deepwater port at the other end of the country, considered a cornerstone of Chinese investment in

Pakistan.

In June 2020, Baloch insurgents targeted the Pakistan Stock Exchange, which is partly owned by Chinese companies, in the commercial capital of Karachi. In 2019, gunmen stormed a luxury hotel in Balochistan province overlooking the flagship Chinese-backed deepwater seaport in Gwadar that gives strategic access to the Arabian Sea — killing at least eight people.

Dar: World seeing gravest crimes against humanity

KARACHI: Israel's genocidal military aggression in Gaza constitutes the "gravest" crimes against humanity committed since World War II, observes Pakistan's Foreign Minister Ishaq Dar.

In an exclusive interview with Anadolu on the first anniversary of Israel's onslaught on the Gaza Strip, Dar said Israeli forces have expanded the conflict and committed "unacceptable" violations of the sovereignty of Lebanon, Syria, and Yemen, relentlessly targeting civilian population centers, including hospitals and schools, and undermining their stability and security.

"It is indeed very unfortunate that we are living in the wake of the gravest crimes against humanity committed since the Second World War," Dar, who also serves as Pakistan's deputy prime minister, said. The prevailing culture of impunity and disregard for international law must be addressed urgently, the top Pakistani diplomat said, urging the international community to take swift action to de-escalate the rapidly deteriorating situation.

Despite international warnings that the Middle East region was on the brink of a regional war amid Israel's relentless attacks on Gaza and Lebanon, Tel Aviv expanded the conflict by launching on Oct. 1 a ground invasion into southern Lebanon. "The people of

Palestine, Lebanon, and the surrounding regions deserve a life free of fear and violence. It is crucial for all sides to step back from the brink and for the international community to take swift action to de-escalate the situation," he went on to say.

Israel has continued its brutal offensive on the Gaza Strip following an attack by the Palestinian group Hamas last Oct. 7, despite a UN Security Council resolution calling for an immediate cease-fire. Nearly 42,000 people have since been killed, mostly women and children, and over 97,100 others injured, according to local health authorities.

The Israeli onslaught has displaced almost the entire population of the territory amid an ongoing blockade that has led to severe shortages of food, clean water, and medicine. Israel faces a genocide case at the International Court of Justice (ICJ) for its actions in Gaza.

Islamabad demands "full" and "effective" implementation of the ICJ ruling, which is a significant milestone in the pursuit of justice for the Palestinian people and international accountability of Israel, said Dar. Pakistan is among several countries that have supported the application filed by South Africa to the ICJ against Tel Aviv under the 1948 Genocide Convention.

"Pakistan calls for the full and effective implementation of the ICJ's decision so that basic human rights, dignity and identity of Palestinian people as a distinct group are upheld and protected, as stipulated by the UN Charter, relevant UN Security Council resolutions, and international law," Dar added. He stressed the UN Security Council to play its role in putting an end to Israel's ongoing brutal military campaign in Gaza, allowing the unhindered flow of humanitarian aid, taking effective measures to protect civilians in the besieged enclave, and holding Israel accountable for its crimes, as stipulated by the ICJ ruling.

To a question about the Muslim world's overall response to Israeli actions, particularly the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC), which has 48 Muslim-majority countries in 57 member states, Dar responded: "There is a consensus in the OIC on this issue. The OIC categorically condemns the brutal aggression against the Palestinian people and holds Israel fully responsible for the repercussions of continuing this aggression." The OIC, he further said, has repeatedly called on the international community to intervene urgently and force Israel to stop its ongoing "adventurism" in the Middle East. — Anadolu

CM inaugurates transport program for women in girls’ colleges

LAHORE (APP): Punjab Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz Sharif inaugurated Chief Minister Transport Programme for Women with 76 buses for girls’ colleges across Punjab.

Nineteen buses were given to women’s colleges under the programme in phase-I.

The CM on Monday during a ceremony met the students of women’s colleges, who presented her a bouquet. The CM called the girls students on stage while inaugurating the transport programme. She handed over keys of buses to the principals of 19 women’s colleges.

Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz inspected the buses, and evaluated a proposal to provide air-conditioned buses for girls’ colleges. She was briefed in detail by Secretary Higher Education Dr. Farrukh Naved about the Program. The CM was apprised that buses would be provided to 76 colleges in Punjab in three phases. In the first phase, buses have been given to 19 tehsils deprived of transport.

These tehsils include: Bhakkar, Sialkot, Chiniot Kamalia, Hasilpur, Malakwal, Ferozewala, Shorekot, Jatoi, Fateh Jang, Hasan Abdal, Kot Momin, Jalalpur Pirwala, Kallar Syedan, Pindi Ghep, Manchanabad and Sharqpur. In the second phase, girls colleges of Nowshera Virkan, Dina, Yazman, Pindi Bhattian, Lalian, Bhawana, Kot Addu, Taxila, Sarai Alamgir and Pellaan would get buses.

Allama Iqbal Town Lahore, Isa Khel, Raiwind and Sohawa Girls Colleges would also get buses by February 2025. By March-April 2025, in the third phase, 2 more buses and 32 coaches would be provided to 35 more tehsils. Senator Pervaiz Rashid, Senior Provincial Minister Marriyum Aurangzeb, Information & Culture Minister Azma Zahid Bukhari, Education Minister Rana Sikandar Hayat and MPA Sania Ashiq accompanied the Chief Minister. Chief Secretary Punjab, Principal Secretary to CM and other relevant officers were also present.

CM’s message on Palestine Solidarity Day: Punjab Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz Sharif has said the Palestinian people are fighting for their fundamental rights and the protection of their land.

In her message on the Day of Solidarity with Palestine, the CM said affirmed Pakistan’s unwavering support for the Palestinian cause.

The CM highlighted the plight of the Palestinian people and condemning the global silence as a tragedy for humanity. “The issue of Palestine is not just a Palestinian issue, but a global issue” she said.

The CM noted that the Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) had consistently advocated for Palestinian rights and opposed Israeli aggression on various platforms. Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif had also presented a robust roadmap for addressing the issues of Palestine and Kashmir.

CM Maryam Nawaz declared that the government and people of Pakistan stand firmly with Palestine, asserting that lasting peace in the world cannot be achieved until a just solution that aligns with the aspirations of the Palestinian people is found. She urged the international community and human rights organizations to step forward and assist the oppressed Palestinian people in safeguarding their rights.



ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Interior Mohsin Naqvi in a meeting with Chinese Ambassador Jiang Zaidong in Federal Capital. —APP Photo

Australian HC Neil Hawkins calls on Governor Punjab

LAHORE (APP): Australian High Commissioner to Pakistan Neil Hawkins on Monday called on Punjab Governor Sardar Saleem Haider Khan and discussed climate change, education, agriculture, dairy sector and promotion of bilateral relations in the field of sports during a meeting at the Governor’s House.

The Governor Punjab said that Pakistan attaches great importance to bilateral relations with Australia, adding that Pakistan wants to collaborate with Australia to develop agriculture sector on modern lines.

He said Pakistan wants to enhance bilateral relations with Australia in education, livestock, agriculture, science and technology.

He said that a large number of Pakistani students are studying in Australian universities. The Governor Punjab hailed the Australian government’s initiative of giving scholarships to Pakistani students.

Sardar Saleem Haider Further said climate change is a big problem and underscored the need that Australia and Pakistan should work together to deal with it. The Governor Punjab said Australian support for the promotion of cricket and hockey is commendable, adding that the hockey team will be invited to the Governor’s House after October 10. He said that the Australian High Commissioner will also be invited on this occasion.

Australian High Commissioner Neil Hawkins said that work is being done on projects in the field of agriculture and farming in Punjab. Neil Hawkins said that there is a need to expand the trade sector between Pakistan and Australia.

Wahab concerned over plight of oppressed Palestinians

KARACHI, (PPI) Mayor Karachi, Barrister Murtaza Wahab, expressed deep concern over the plight of the oppressed and helpless Palestinian people today, stating that nothing could be more tragic than the current situation where no one seems willing to alleviate their suffering.

He urged the United Nations and global powers to wake up from their slumber; otherwise, they would also bear the responsibility of jeopardizing global peace by overlooking this critical and grave humanitarian issue for their convenience. This negligence has allowed Israel to act with impunity in the region. He emphasized that today was dedicated to expressing solidarity with the oppressed Palestinians in Gaza and other areas.

He commended the women members of the City Council for staging a vigorous protest outside the KMC (Karachi Metropolitan Corporation) head office against Israeli oppression, conveying to the entire country and the world that the Karachi City Council condemns the severe atrocities against Palestinians and will continue to protest against Israel’s brutal actions.

This statement was made on the occasion of Palestine Solidarity Day during a meeting with women council members who participated in the rally led by Pakistan People’s Party’s Chief Whip, Ms. Musarrat Niazi. Mayor Wahab was presented with the Palestinian flag and a traditional Palestinian scarf. He remarked that the continuous bombings in Gaza and other Palestinian territories have rendered children, women, and the elderly unsafe. He called for an immediate ceasefire in the region and for Palestinians to be granted the right to live.

He stressed that the Muslim world must wake up to the deplorable situation in Gaza and Palestine, acknowledging that such circumstances could befall anyone. He urged all Islamic countries to set aside their mutual

group and sectarian differences and unite as a single force, sending a clear message to oppressive states like Israel and their allies that the brutalization of Muslims in any part of the world would not be tolerated.

Mayor Karachi recalled that former Prime Minister Shaheed Zulfikar Ali Bhutto had united the Muslim world under one banner and made efforts to empower it through the grand Islamic Summit Conference in Pakistan. He emphasized that we must follow in Shaheed Bhutto’s footsteps and work towards uniting and strengthening the Muslim community, with the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) playing a vital role.

He concluded by stating that it is not enough to merely condemn oppression wherever it occurs; action is needed to stop the oppressor. Karachi is active in this regard, and whether the oppression occurs in Palestine, Kashmir, or elsewhere, the citizens of Karachi have consistently voiced their protests.

Organic cotton termed essential for environment and local livelihoods

F.P. Report

KARACHI: “Cotton is one of the most resource-intensive crops. However, by adopting sustainable practices, we can transform cropping patterns and protect our resources. Through the promotion of organic cotton farming, WWF-Pakistan is eliminating the use of chemicals, preserving the environment, and empowering cotton farmers for a healthier future”. This was stated by WWF-Pakistan in its press release issued on World Cotton Day on Monday.

The press release further mentioned that WWF-Pakistan in partnership with other organizations has made significant strides in organic and regenerative cotton cultivation by engaging over 12,000 farmers and bringing around 43,000 hectares under organic cotton cultivation to help reduce environmental impacts.

The global population worries about environmental issues, especially those related to conventional agriculture which largely relies on synthetic fertilizers, pesticides, and GMO seeds. Conventional cotton cultivation is associated with the rigorous use of fertilizers, pesticides, and herbicides that adversely affect the natural environment and largely add to global warming. Knowing the potential risks for the ecosystem, a need arises for a way to produce organic cotton that prohibits the use of harmful substances.

Hammad Naqi Khan, Director General WWF-Pakistan remarked that Pakistan is the sixth-largest producer of cotton in the world and has the third-largest cotton spinning capacity in Asia, with thousands of ginning and spinning units producing textile products from cotton. Cotton has 51 per cent shares in the country’s total foreign exchange earnings, thus playing a pivotal role in the country’s economy.

This crop produces a versatile fibre that is delightfully soft and completely biodegradable when 100 per cent natural. “Adhering to international standards, we should cultivate sustainable cotton like Better Cotton, Organic Cotton, and Regenerative Cotton that can help reduce carbon footprints”, he added.

Balochistan holds unique geographical features which support organic farming. These include a dry climate, feasible temperatures, and natural buffers like mountains and grasslands. In 2015-2016, considering the scope and value of organic cotton cultivation, WWF-Pakistan launched a project that aimed at supporting small and marginalized tribal farmers to promote organic cotton cultivation in Balochistan.


The project marked a distinguished outcome by generating Pakistan’s 1st certified organic cotton bale in 2018-19. Since then, organic cotton initiatives have focused on building up capacities for field staff and project farmers, engaging relevant stakeholders, complying with organic certification, and developing an organic cotton supply chain in Pakistan.

New model of waste collection in city

LAHORE (APP):Punjab Local Government Minister Zeeshan Rafiq on Monday said that 100 per cent door-to-door waste collection will be ensured in the provincial capital, under the new sanitation model. He said this while chairing a meeting in which Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz Sharif’s Suthra Punjab programme and the new model of sanitation for Lahore were reviewed. Secretary Local Government Shakeel Ahmed Mian and Additional Secretary Maria Tariq were also present. Lahore Waste Management Company (LWMC) CEO Babar Sahib Din gave a briefing on various aspects of the new model. Addressing the meeting, Minister Zeeshan said making Punjab a zero-waste province was a priority of Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz Sharif. “Currently, Lahore has a population of 13 million and the city generates 5500 tons of garbage every day. Under the new sanitation model, 100 percent door-to-door waste collection will be ensured”, he pledged. “New machinery and manpower required to make this model effective should also be estimated”, he added. Zeeshan Rafiq said along with receiving garbage from houses, sweeping will also be done 3 times a week in each area. He asked the CEO of LWMC to review the segregation of recyclables from garbage. “In particular, the challenges of cleaning in commercial areas should be taken into account as garbage can accumulate again at any time in commercial areas”, he pointed out. Adding that there are 300 big and 200 small commercial markets in Lahore. The minister said that bio-energy can be produced from the cattle waste produced in Gawala colonies.



LAHORE: Students passionately create their vision of Al-Aqsa Mosque on the wall during a painting competition organized by Jamaat-e-Islami. —APP Photo

**Gajju Khan Medical College MTI, Swabi**

CORRIGENDUM

It is for information of all the concerns that the Tender Notice Published in and “Daily Mashriq & The Frontier Post” vide reference No. INF(P)2479/24 dated: 21-09-2024 Newspapers regarding the All-In-One Computer System along with 01 KVA online UPS.

The following changes / amendments may be considered as.

- The tender opening date has been extended from 15-10-2024 to 24-10-2024.
- Pre-Bid Meeting date has been extended from 03-10-2024 to 11-10-2024.
- Tender Title Name Change from “All in one computer system along with 01 KVA online UPS” to “All in one computer system, Centralize UPS and IT Accessories”

The tender documents should reach to the office of the undersigned on or before date: 24-10-2024 at 11:00 am which will be opened on the same day at 11:30 am.

Bid BSDs can be obtained from official website of Gajju khan Medical College-MTI, Swabi i.e. <https://www.gkmcs.edu.pk/>

DEAN / CHIEF EXECUTIVE
BKMC-MTI Swabi INF(P)2619/24

**NADRA**
REGISTRATION



GOVERNMENT OF PAKISTAN

NATIONAL DATABASE AND REGISTRATION AUTHORITY

(Regional Head Office Peshawar - Khyber Pakhtunkhwa)

PURCHASE PLOT REQUIRED FOR NADRA Offices, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa

(Tender Notice No. 2024-25/Estate/3 x NADRA Offices)

NADRA Regional Head Office Peshawar intends to purchase land in following Districts Headquarters :-

S#	Districts	Required Area
1	Bannu	2 x Kanals
2	Chitral	2 x Kanals
3	Peshawar	2 x Kanals

Terms and conditions are as follows:
OFFICE ACCOMMODATION WILL HAVE FOLLOWING FEATURES:

- Plots shall be in declared commercial area
- Security wise viable location and easily accessible by public transport.
- Plot may be located on Main Road
- Availability of utilities i.e water, electricity, telephone and sewerage facility
- Rate may be mentioned in per kanal
- The land shall be cleared from all dues, encroachments & litigations
- Bidding documents along with land ownership documents are mandatory

Note: Interested parties / owners can obtain the bidding documents on submission of a written application at Rs. 100/- on below mentioned address between **09:00 am – 03:00 pm hours** (except gazetted holidays). The bids / proposals should be submitted duly completed in all respects by **29 Oct, 2024 at 11:00 am** hours. The envelopes shall be clearly marked as **Technical and Financial** proposals. Technical bids / proposals will be Opened on **29 Oct, 2024 at 11:30 am** hours at NADRA Regional Head Office, Plot No. 05 Sector B-1, Phase-V Hayatabad Peshawar in presence of bidders/ their nominated representatives. Bid / proposals must include the following documents in addition to any other information that the bidder may find necessary: -

Technical Bid (Separate Envelope):

- Photocopy of property ownership documents along-with its boundaries [Fresh Fard-e-Jaidad/Mutation/Allotment letter/Relevant Certificate by concerned authority (where settled revenue record is not available)].
- Photocopy of valid CNIC.
- Undertaking on Non-judicial stamp paper of Rs. 100/- certifying that owner / plot is not temporary / permanently debarred from any Government agency / authority / department (without bearing any responsibility on NADRA whatsoever in this regard).
- Pictures of the plot offered for purchase.
- In case of absence of owner, authority letter for representative duly signed by property owner, permitting him to attend tender process.

Financial Bid (Separate Envelope):

- Owner’s consent showing per kanal rates & measurement of plot.
- Quoted price shall be inclusive of all taxes.
- No brokerage / service charges will be paid in case of real estate agent.
- Opening date / time of **Financial Proposal** will be informed to all successful bidders of General Proposal Evaluation.
- Bidding documents received after submission of due date / time mentioned above, will not be entertained.
- NADRA reserves the right to reject all bids / proposals under PPRA Rule 33 and can cancel the bidding process before acceptance of bid or proposal.
- Bid can also be rejected if owner of selected plot fail to produce acceptable required / property documents.
- This advertisement is also available on PPRA website at www.ppra.org.pk

For any query contact on following address:

Director (Admin)
NADRA Regional Head Office, Peshawar - Khyber Pakhtunkhwa
Plot No. 05 Sector B-1, Phase-V Hayatabad Peshawar | Telephone: 091-9217840

PID (U) No. 2453/24

UoP and NDU inks MoU to foster activities for peace building narratives



F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: Univesity of Peshawar has signed an memorandum of understanding with the National Defence Univesity, Islamabad for a peiod of three years intially to foster academ- ic and research linkages. Lieuetant General Asif

Ghafoor president National Defence University and Vice Chancellor Prof. Dr. Muhammad Naeem Qazi signed the MoU.

According to the agreement, both institutions' departments' of peace and conflict studis would work together to foster academic and

research related activities to build and mainstreaming peace building narra- tives.

Further, Students from both institutions would arrange exchange and summer school initia- tives.

Before signing the agreement , the vice chancellor University of

Peshawar briefed NDU president about the latest educational and institu- tional efforts for the upfront challenging situa- tion faced by the University.

The president NDU welcommed the efforts initiated by the current administration and hoped that Univesity of Peshawar being the pre- mier alma mater of the country would take chal- lenges up-front and would leave no stone unturned in easing stu- dents difficulties who are hailing from newly merged districts.

Director Planning and Development Prof. Dr. Bushra Khan and Director Institute of Peace and Conflict Studies Prof.Jamil Ahmad were also present on the occasion.



PESHAWAR: Advisor to Chief Minister on Health, Ihtisham Ali being briefed on Police Services Hospital by MS Dr Nayaz.

Saif flays sealing of KP House by CDA

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: Advisor to Chief Minister Khyber Pakhtunkhwa for Information and Public Relations, Barrister Dr. Saif, has strongly con- demned the sealing of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa House by the Islamabad administration and CDA, calling it illegal and an attack on the unity of the federation. He congrat- ulated all party workers for the successful and peace- ful protest and credited Chief Minister Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Sardar Ali Amin Gandapur, for his effective strategy that led to the peaceful demonstra- tion by PTI.

Dr. Saif reiterated that PTI's policy is to avoid any confrontation with the Rangers and military. He pointed out that the so- called government

deployed the Rangers and military at Barhama Bahter Interchange under Article 245, but to avoid any conflict, the Chief Minister, along with some workers, took the Sangjani Interchange route to reach D-Chowk, where he addressed the workers.

Dr. Saif explained that to chalk our future strategy and decide on the next course of action, the Chief Minister went to Khyber Pakhtunkhwa House. However, the illegitimate government illegally sur- rounded the premises in an attempt to arrest the Chief Minister, conducting four separate raids. He high- lighted that this unlawful plan aimed to create polit- ical instability by arresting the Chief Minister, who remained safe at Khyber Pakhtunkhwa House.

Dr. Saif further revealed that the fake government

had planned to incite a clash between the public and Pakistan's armed forces, but PTI's success- ful strategy ensured that no such confrontation occurred.

He denounced the Islamabad administration and CDA's action of seal- ing Khyber Pakhtunkhwa House, declaring it not only illegal but also an attack on the rights of a provincial unit of the fed- eration. He emphasized that Khyber Pakhtunkhwa House is the property of the provincial government and confirmed that PTI would take legal action against this unconstitu- tional move.

Dr. Saif accused the so- called government of using every fascist tactic against the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa government, but assured that PTI would challenge this illegality in

court and fight for true justice for the people.

Regarding the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) summit, Barrister Dr. Saif emphasized that protests are the essence of democracy and are wel- come in any democratic government.

However, he stated that the illegitimate govern- ment, in an attempt to cover up its corruption, was so terrified of a peace- ful protest that it went to extreme measures. These included digging up the billion-rupee motorways, firing 50,000 tear gas shells, and blocking Islamabad with piles of containers, completely shutting down access to the city. He added that the fake government itself sent a clear message to all foreigners that it is active- ly undermining the core values of democracy.

KPFSA seizes substandard meat, dead chickens

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: The Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Food Safety and Halal Food Authority continued its crackdown on businesses involved in adulteration and unhealthy food across the province. Major operations were carried out yesterday in Peshawar and Lower Dir, where the authorities recovered hundreds of kilograms of substandard meat, dead chickens, and fake honey. Legal action has been initiated against the culprits.

According to details released by the Food Authority spokesperson, food safety teams conduct- ed inspections while set- ting checking points at the

Peshawar Motorway Toll Plaza, Ring Road, and near Haji Camp Bus Station. During these inspections, a vehicle arriving from Punjab was found carrying 300 kilograms of spoiled and unhealthy meat and liver, which was immedi- ately disposed of on-site.

In another activity, based on a tip-off, the food safety team raided a shop in Peshawar's poultry mar- ket, where they seized over 300 kilograms of dead chickens, which were also destroyed on the spot.

In Lower Dir, according to details, the food safety team inspected a hotel on Timergara Bypass. Inside the hotel, a room was being used to manufacture fake honey.

The team seized over 200 kilograms of the fake product, which was confis- cated by the food authority officials.

While uncovering details, the spokesperson also told that hefty fines were imposed on the own- ers, and further legal pro- ceedings have been initi- ated under the Food Safety Act.

Director General Food Authority, Wasif Saeed, praised the food safety teams for their successful operations. He emphasized that strict action would be taken against those involved in the sale of sub- standard and hazardous food items, with no leni- ency to be shown in such cases.

PPP KP Assembly demands removal of CM

PESHAWAR (APP): Parliamentary leader of Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP), in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Assembly Ahmad Karim Kundi on Monday calls for Chief Minister's resignation.

Addressing press con- ference, outside KP Assembly Hall, Ahmad Karim Kundi said that the chief minister is mentally retarded and not suitable for this post.

He described the Chief Minister as a "self-imposed absentee" and accused him of evading accountability during a crucial time for the province.

Kundi emphasized the urgency of convening a meeting of the Council of Common Interests within the next 90 days, which he claimed had not been called, further undermin- ing governance.

He pointed out the deteri- orating law and order situa- tion in the southern dis- tricts, saying that the Chief Minister failed to commu- nicate with anyone during his periods of absence.

"He talks about trav- ersing 12 districts, but that is simply unbelievable," Kundi asserted, insist- ing that the sensitive province needs a serious and engaged leader not a film star.

He criticized the Chief Minister's past six-ho- ur disappearance and called for a leader capable of fac- ing the media rather than avoiding it.

Ahmed Kundi, revealed that the Pakistan Tehreek- e-Insaf (PTI) leadership has passed a resolution in KP Assembly regard- ing the Chief Minister's dis- appearance. Kundi criticized the Chief Minister's fit- ness for the role, saying, "Mentally, he is unfit for the position."

Governor praises industries for enhancing Pakistan's global standing

PESHAWAR (APP): Governor Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Faisal Karim Kundi on Monday commended industries for its hard work, dedica- tion, and capabilities that have heightened and enhancing Pakistan's rep- utation internationally.

He expressed these views during his visit to Dawood Sons Arms Industry here where he was welcomed by CEO Hakeemuddin Dawood and Ali.

The event was attend- ed by senior officials, including Maulana Abdul Jalil Jan Senior Vice President of the Sarhad Chamber of Commerce and Industry, Waheed Arif Awan President of the Small Industry Chamber, businessman Muqem Khan, and other political and business fig- ures.

During the visit, busi- ness leaders raised their problems. Governor Kundi

assured them that he would liaise with relevant authorities to ensure proper electricity supply and gas pressure, empha- sizing that meeting the industry's energy needs would enhance produc- tivity and contribute to economic development in the province.

He highlighted that Dawood Sons Arms Industry holds a signifi- cant position not only within the province but also nationally and inter- nationally, deserving commendation for its contributions.

The Governor toured various sectors of the fac- tory, where he was intro- duced to modern methods and technologies in arms manufacturing.

Factory representative Waleem Khan provided insights into the various stages of weapon produc- tion, offering a detailed briefing on the manufac- turing processes and adherence to global stan-

dards.

Kundi praised the management's efforts, saying that the visible progress in local arms manufacturing is com- mendable.

He pledged the gov- ernment's support in fur- ther promoting this sector and ensuring the adoption of advanced technologies in arms production.

The administration of Dawood Sons expressed appreciation for the Governor's visit and hoped for increased gov- ernmental collaboration to enhance the industry.

They said that with the use of modern technology and government support, the arms manufacturing sector could achieve international standards, thereby boosting the local economy.

Meanwhile, former world squash champion Mohibullah Khan, accompanied by his son Salman Mohib, met with Governor Faisal Karim

Kundi to discuss the development of sports and the promotion of squash in the province.

During the meeting, Mohibullah Khan empha- sized the interest of youth in sports and the talent present in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, particu- larly in squash.

Governor Kundi acknowledged the signif- icant contributions of Mohibullah Khan, his brother world champion Jansher Khan, and their family to the sport's pro- motion.

The Governor assured that the Governor House would provide every pos- sible support for the advancement of sports, ensuring that opportu- nities are created for youth to excel in squash and other sports.

They also discussed measures to revive squash on a global scale and restore its promi- nence in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa.

Walk at PMC denounces genocide in Gaza

PESHAWAR (APP): Peshawar Medical College (PMC) organized a special ceremony and walk to com- memorate one year of the Palestinian freedom strug- gle and the ongoing geno- cide of Palestinians by Israel in Gaza on Monday.

The participants carried banners and placards, expressing solidarity with the Palestinian people and raising their voices in sup- port of their cause.

Addressing the gather- ing, Prof. Dr. Shams ul Haq

Haneef said, "The Palestinians have chosen a path of dignity and honor. They are fighting a battle for Islam, and their struggle has the potential to escalate into a global issue, reshap- ing the world map."

He stressed that the resolu- tion of the Palestinian conflict is impossible with- out making it a global pri- ority. Prof. Dr. Ayesha Abdullah urged the atten- dees to boycott Israeli and American products, strong- ly support the Palestinian

cause and take practical steps toward the unity of the Muslim Ummah.

Waleed, a fourth-year student, shared alarming statistics, revealing that over 41,000 Palestinians have been martyred, 75% of whom are women and the elderly.

Additionally, around 100,000 injured Palestinians in Gaza are still awaiting medical aid, and more than 10,000, half of them children, have been martyred under the rubble.

JUI-F announces new executive committee

PESHAWAR (APP): JUI-F Khyber Pakhtunkhwa chapter has announced a provincial executive for a period of next five years. According to a press release issued here on Monday Maulana Atta-ul-Rehman has been elected as provincial Ameer for the second time unopposed and Maulana Atta-ul-Haq as General Secretary for the second term while Abdul Jalil Jan as Provincial Information Secretary for the 11th term consecutively. Similarly, Maulana Muhammad Idris and Maulana Muhammad Qasim will be the provincial patrons of JUI-F while Mufti Ubaidullah of Hangu, Maulana Ziaullah (Lakki Marwat) and Maulana Abdul Haseeb (Peshawar) as deputy provincial chiefs. Furthermore, Mufti Nasir Mahmood (Mansehra) Shah Hussain Alai and Hammad Azam Advocate (Karak) will be the Deputy General Secretaries during the period. Other office bearers include Noor-ul-Islam as Secretary Finance, Muhammad Israr Marwat as Provincial Salar and Sadaqat Khan as Coordinator Digital Media respectively.

KP's Debt Management Fund: A Landmark initiative



Abdul Qayyum Khan

AS of June 2024, Pakistan's gross public debt stands at approximately Rs. 71 trillion, which accounts for 67.2% of the country's GDP. The growing debt burden is a major concern, particularly in light of Rs. 9.7 trillion budgeted for interest payments, which represents over 80% of total projected revenue or 51% of the total budget for FY 2024-25. When measured against total revenue, total Federal government debt is a staggering 584%, underscoring the fiscal challenges.

As of June 2024, KP's total debt stock stands at Rs. 670 billion. For the current fiscal year, KP's debt servicing obligations are Rs. 67 billion, accounting

for just 3.9% of the total revenue. While the debt stock itself does not pose a major issue, the real challenge lies in the debt flow, the recurring burden of debt servicing, which directly impacts available revenue for other priorities.

To ensure the sustain- ability of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa's (KP) debt, the provincial government took two pioneering steps that have yet to be imple- mented by other provinces.

First, in June 2022, KP government enacted the Fiscal Responsibility and Debt Management Act, marking an important leg- islative reform. This law, passed by the Provincial Assembly, provides a legal framework to promote fiscal discipline and prudent debt management practices within the province. The legislation is designed to impose clear limits on bor- rowing, ensure transparen- cy, and maintain fiscal stability by mandating regular reporting on public debt and fiscal performance.

Second, in September 2024, KP government made a groundbreaking move by establishing a

Debt Management Fund, the first of its kind in Pakistan. This fund is specifically aimed at man- aging the province's debt servicing obligations more efficiently and effectively. The Debt Management Fund serves as a financial tool to centralize and streamline debt-related activities, allowing for bet- ter planning and allocation of resources towards serv- icing existing debt. This proactive approach reduces reliance on ad hoc mea- sures, mitigates the risks of financial shortfalls, and ensures that KP can meet its debt obligations in a structured and sustainable manner.

The establishment of a Debt Management Fund in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP) serves as a strategic finan- cial tool designed to create a buffer against the reliance on costly borrowing for future projects. By building this fund, the KP govern- ment aims to accumulate resources that can be used to finance development projects internally, without needing to resort to expen- sive loans. This will not only reduce the province's

exposure to interest rate volatility and debt servic- ing costs but also provide greater financial flexibility. Over time, the fund will allow KP to finance high- impact projects in infra- structure, education, health, and other important sectors with less depend- ence on borrowing, pro- moting long-term fiscal sustainability.

In addition to supporting development, the Debt Management Fund will also act as a safeguard for the province during times of economic uncertainty. It will be utilized for emer- gency and contingency planning, ensuring that KP has the financial resources to respond swiftly to crises, such as natural disasters or economic downturns. This aspect of the fund mirrors the function of a sovereign wealth fund, which is used by many governments globally to secure fiscal stability in the face of unfore- seen circumstances. By cre- ating a dedicated reserve for emergencies, KP govern- ment will not need to rely on expensive short- term borrowing in times of crisis, thereby protecting its

fiscal position and ensuring smooth governance during challenging times.

The importance of establishing the Debt Management Fund extends beyond immediate finan- cial relief. It represents a forward-thinking approach to risk management and economic resilience. The fund will enable KP to maintain a more balanced debt profile, reduce its vul- nerability to economic shocks, and enhance investor confidence in the province's financial man- agement capabilities.

These two initiatives, the enactment of the Fiscal Responsibility and Debt Management Act, 2022 and the establishment of Debt Management Fund, set KP apart from other provinces, positioning it as a leader in adopting innovative, responsible debt manage- ment practices. These steps not only strengthen fiscal responsibility but also enhance the province's ability to maintain long-term financial stability amidst increasing debt pressures.

One of the key elements of this strategy is enhanc- ing the province's ability to

mobilize domestic resources by broadening the tax base, improving tax compliance, and exploring new revenue streams. This will include optimizing the collection of provincial taxes, increasing non-tax revenue from state-owned enterprises, and leveraging public-private partnerships (PPP) to fund infrastruc- ture and other development projects without adding to the debt burden.

In addition to increasing revenues, KP government will undertake a thorough review of its budget to reduce non-essential expenditures and redirect those savings towards important areas, such as debt servicing and devel- opment. A stronger focus will be placed on eliminat- ing wasteful spending and improving the efficiency of public service delivery. This approach ensures that scarce financial resources are deployed in ways that generate the most value for the province, while also creating fiscal space to strengthen the Debt Management Fund.

In addition to above, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP)

government is committed to adopting a more strate- gic approach to borrowing in the future. Moving forward, KP government will focus exclusively on secur- ing productive loans, those intended for projects that are financially sustainable. This means that the proj- ects funded by these loans will be capable of generat- ing enough revenue to service their own debt, without placing an addi- tional burden on the province's finances.

Debt Management Fund will invest in secure, risk-free financial instruments that will generate profits and help grow the fund, along with contributions from KP's resources. The profits earned will be non- tax revenue and can be used to support the social sector in KP.

Additionally, by creat- ing this fund, KP govern- ment will have more liq- uidity at its disposal. This means the government will have more flexibility to meet financial obligations without the need to rely heavily on borrowing or cutting down on essential spending.

As part of the strategy to build and sustain this fund, KP government has com- mitted to allocating at least 5% (or more) of the total provincial debt, which currently stands at PKR 632 billion, to the Debt Management Fund. This allocation will help ensure that the fund grows steady- ly over time and becomes a reliable tool for managing debt while supporting long-term financial stability for the province.

The KP government firmly believes that debt, in itself, is not inherently problematic. Rather, it is the utilization of debt that determines its value. Borrowing is a useful tool when it is invested in proj- ects that deliver tangible economic benefits. Therefore, the province's borrowing strategy will priori- tize loans for initiatives that contribute to revenue generation, job creation, and economic growth.

The author of this article serves as the Head of Debt Management Unit for the Government of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and can be contacted via email at: aqkhan.virgo@gmail.com.



In brief

Two shot dead in Shahdadkot

SHAHADADKOT (INP): A man gunned down two people including his sister and a youth here on Monday and escaped the scene. According to details, the incident took place in village Miro Khan of Shahdadkot where accused Waheed Magasi sprayed bullets at two people engaged in grazing the crop. The firing resulted in death of Pirani Magasi and Mithal Chandio on the spot and attacker fled the scene of crime. The bodies were shifted to tehsil hospital for postmortem and police after registering a case against the culprit started raids for his arrest.

Two dacoits arrested

FAISALABAD (INP): The police arrested two dacoits during an encounter in the area of Madina Town police station. Police said here on Monday that a team of dolphin force was on its routine patrolling when spotted two suspects near Dera Faiz Ullah Kamoka late Sunday night. The team intercepted them but they opened fire and escaped from the scene. The dolphin force called police help and started chasing them. The police encircled them after some distance and directed the outlaws to surrender but they again opened blunt firing on the police team. The police retaliated and overpowered both the criminals who were also wanted by the police in a number of dacoity, robbery and other cases. One of the accused suffered injuries and was shifted to hospital. Further investigation was underway, said police.

Shutterdown strike observed

DALBANDIN (PPI): A shutterdown strike was observed in Dalbandin on Monday on the call of All Parties, Anjuman-e-Tajirran, Alaqae Panels Students Action Committee and Tehreek-e-Nujawanan Dalbandin against power outages in Dalbandin and its adjoining areas. According to detail, shutter down strike was observed in Dalbandin city against power outages in Dalbandin city and its adjoining areas. Main markets, shops and other business centres remained closed during the strike observed on the call of All Parties, Anjuman-e-Tajirran, Alsqae Panels Students Action Committee and Tehreek-e-Nujawanan Dalbandin said that if the power issue in Dalbandin was not addressed immediately, main RCD highway would be blocked indefinitely.

PFA discards infected pickle

MULTAN (INP): The Punjab Food Authority (PFA) on Monday conducted a crackdown on businesses violating health standards in the division and imposed heavy fines on various outlets. According to details, the PFA teams during the inspection targeted pickles and preserves units, transport station containers, and grinding units, seizing over 250-kg of preserves, 140-kg of pest-infested pickles, 50 liters of sub-standard mixtures, and 7-kg of banned ingredients. Three factories using hazardous ingredients in food production were fined a total of Rs 100,000. Meanwhile, a spice grinding unit near New Central Jail was fined Rs 30,000 after it was found using artificial coloring in turmeric powder. A canteen at the M4 Motorway Interchange was fined Rs 15,000 for using expired food products.

Schools' teachers take to street for acceptance of demands

F.P. Report

LOWER DIR, LANDI KOTAL, BUNER: The All-Primary Teachers' Association (APTA) on Monday staged a protest rally in front of the Timergara press club for acceptance of teachers' demands. The protesters threatened to stage a sit-in outside the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa assembly in Peshawar if their demands were not accepted soon.

Dozens of school teachers from different parts of the district participated in the protest. The rally was addressed by the APTA district president Qazi Habibullah, provincial leader Badshah Mahmood, former district president Ali Rehman, general secretary Siraj ud Din, provincial additional deputy secretary Syed Hanif Shah and others.

The speakers rejected the government plan to privatize public sector schools and said that the teachers' community would strongly resist if the plan was implemented. They said that teachers were not ready to accept the government proposed reforms regarding pension rules. They said that introduction of contributory pension fund (CP fund) instead of regular pension for government employees was tantamount to

financial killing of government workers. The speakers demanded immediate regularization of all ad hoc teachers and exemption in income tax.

Solidarity rally: Like other parts of the province the Jamaat-i-Islami on the call of its central chief Hafiz Naeem ur Rehman staged solidarity rallies at different places in favour of Palestinians here on Monday. Hundreds of the JI workers marched from Ahya ul Uloom Balambat and gathered at the Timergara Shaheed Chowk. They were chanting slogans against Israel and in favour of Palestinians.

Addressing the rally the JI secretary information Shuiab Ahmad condemned the UNO and world powers for their silence over the Gaza situation. He said that thousands of innocent children, women and aged people were killed by Israeli during the last one year. He said that mosques, hospitals and houses in Gaza and other cities had been ruined but the world powers did nothing to end the massacre. The JI held such rallies at Talash, Chakdara, Khall, Maidan, Munda and Samarbagh.

The Islami Jamiat Tulba (IJT), a students' wing of Jamaat-i-Islami on Monday staged the 'Labaik Ya Aqsa' rally against Israel and in

favour of Palestinians at the University of Malakand. Hundreds of the IJT activists and other students of the varsity participated in the rally.

The participants were carrying placards inscribed with slogans in favour of the Gaza citizens. The participants marched on the road and chanted slogans against the Israel. The IJT nazim UoM Hafiz Hanifullah while addressing the rally said that Muslims across the globe saluted the courage and bravery of the people of Gaza against the Israeli aggression. "We stand by the Palestinians in their just struggle for freedom", he said, adding that 43 thousand people had been martyred in Gaza. He asked the world powers to take practical steps for ending the cruelty and brutality of the Israeli forces against Palestinians. The rally was addressed by the IJT general secretary UoM Ahmad Zada and secretary information Roman Ayub and other activists. They said they would continue their struggle for the sanctity of the Aqsa Mosque.

Meanwhile, state-run primary schools teachers demanded of the government of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa to grant them upgradation and regularization and rejected privatization of the government schools in a protest rally

held at Bacha Square, Landi Kotal Bazaar on Monday. On the call of their Provincial Associations primary teachers in Landi Kotal took out protest rally in the bazaar. While carrying placards inscribed with sayings like "up gradation is our right" "Pension reform unaccepted" etc. and chanted slogans in favor of their demands.

Addressing on the occasion Tanzeem-e-Asateza, Pakistan Khyber chief Sharifullah Afridi and Primary Teachers Association, Khyber General Sectary Ajmal Khan said that the cabinet of the previous provincial government had approved their up-gradation but ironically had not been materialized that was step mother behavior towards them.

They categorically rejected privatization of the government schools and said it would deprive thousands of poor children of their basic right of getting free education. Pension reforms, introduced by the government were the economic murder of the teachers' community they added and said to revise CP fund policy and issue GP fund. They urged the provincial government to give up its anti-education policy and grant the primary teachers of their rights so that they could execute their duties with efficiency. The protestors

threatened that if their demands were not met then they would shut down primary schools in protest.

The primary school teachers held protest demonstration from Sentinel School Daggar to Daggar Chowk, Buner in favor of their demands, on Monday.

The APTA district chapter president Afsarul Mulk was leading the protest while General Secretary Miraj Ali Shah and AGEGA KPK Chairman Wazir Zada also participated. The teachers participating in the protest were carried banners and placards on which slogans were written for immediate notification of upgradation, restoration of pension, immediate permanency of thirteen thousand teachers appointed on merit. They were also raise slogans and repeated this one "Marna hoga Jina hoga dharna hoga dharna hoga".

APTA District President Afsarul Malik Senior Vice President Muhammad Aslam Vice President Siraj Ali General Secretary Provincial General Secretary Meraj Ali Shah and AGEGA Provincial Chairman Wazir Zada addressed.

The speakers reminded the PTI government that in the previous government of the PTI cabinet and the assembly had approved the

demands, therefore it is the responsibility of the PTI new government to fulfill the previous promises and to avoid APTA protest on roads.

Otherwise primary teachers across the province will stage a dharna (set in) near the Assembly Hall in Peshawar on November 5 and as usual will not leave until their demands are met, they threatened. They repeated the teachers will face all kind of violence and finally the government will be forced to accept the demands. So, it would be better if the government accepts the demands before the deadline, they suggested. They added such an advance step taken by the government will avoid to closes the boys and girls' schools and wastes the time of the students and brings the teachers to the streets.

The protestors granted a month time and hoped the government will prefer sitting on the negotiation table with APTA leaders, settle matters, otherwise the government will be responsible for the consequences. On the occasion, AGEGA Chairman Wazir Zada assured the APTA leaders of all possible cooperation and full participation in the sit-in, following the APTA leaders and teachers have extended heartiest appreciation.

Tribesmen to resist transfer of courts

F.P. Report

WANA: The political and legal representatives of South Waziristan have raised alarm over the proposed transfer of district courts to Dera Ismail Khan, warning that such a move would spark public outrage and further alienate the already marginalized population.

During a press conference held at the District Press Club Wana, prominent political leaders Ayaz Wazir and Advocate Nawab Ali expressed their collective dismay, citing that the current courts are situated 120 kilometers away in Tank, causing severe hardship for lawyers, judges, and litigants. They called for an immediate relocation of these courts to Wana, stressing that justice must be accessible and affordable, rather than a distant and costly burden for the region's impoverished citizens.

As rumors circulate about the judiciary's impending move to Dera Ismail Khan, the leaders warned of widespread protests and boycotts if local demands are ignored. According to the alliance, transferring the courts to another district would expose the hollowness of promises to bring justice to

the people's doorstep, fueling discontent and deepening a sense of abandonment in the tribal district.

This press conference follows months of appeals to higher authorities, including letters to the Chief Justices, demanding the swift establishment of district courts in Wana. The political and legal alliance maintains that failure to act will only escalate the crisis, as they prepare to resist any judicial relocation outside their district.

Tribesmen facing inflated edible due to protests, closure of Angoor Ada: The tribesmen are grappling with an alarming surge in the prices of essential food items. The sharp increase has been attributed to the recent closure of the Angoor Adda Gate, a critical border crossing, and the deteriorating security situation in the region. The impact has been felt most in the prices of vegetables and fruits, which are now significantly higher compared to other districts in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa.

Recent market rates show that the price of onions has soared to 200 PKR per kilogram, while potatoes are being sold at 150 PKR per kilogram. Other commonly used veg-

etables, such as bitter gourd, okra, eggplant, and pumpkin, are priced between 100 and 110 PKR per kilogram. In the fruit market, apples have reached 200 PKR per kilogram, and grapes are being sold for an unprecedented 400 PKR per kilogram. Bananas are also more expensive, with a dozen now costing 150 PKR.

Local shopkeepers and fruit traders report that food prices in the newly merged tribal districts have always been slightly higher due to their reliance on imports from the neighboring country. However, the recent closure of the Angoor Adda Gate, along with other checkpoints, compounded by security concerns and ongoing protests, has forced traders to source essential goods from Peshawar, leading to further price hikes.

Traders warn that unless the security situation improves and border crossings reopen, food prices may continue to rise, placing an additional burden on local residents already struggling with economic challenges. The prolonged closure of these key trade routes could exacerbate the situation, making basic necessities increasingly unaffordable for many.

Police arrests four PTI workers

F.P. Report

SHAHADADKOT: Police has arrested four Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) workers including two women during raids Shahdadkot district, on Monday.

The police stationed outside the residence of Naheed Khawar, the provincial leader of the PTI women wing. When contacted by the media, the provincial leader of the PTI women wing, she said that a crackdown has started against PTI workers in the whole country, as 3 police mobiles are stands being harassed, she expressed her concern and said that at any time the police can arrest me.

It is true that if my arrest takes place, I will present the arrest. On the other

hand, according to reports from the city, the police have arrested two activists of Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf, Faraz Mastoi and Saeed Chandio and transferred them to an unknown place. Ashiq Dinari and Abid Ali Dinari of PTI were raided and arrested from taluka Sijawal Junejo.

Meanwhile, unidentified armed men raided the house of residential Muhammad Mithal Mugheri, a resident of village Saindad Mugheri near Waggan Town of Qamber Shahdadkot district, at Indus Highway Pakho Karachi Indus highway stop, traffic was suspended for a long time due to which the traffic of vehicles from different cities of the country was suspended for a long time.

On this occasion, protestors Muhammad Mithal Mugheri, Gulzar Mugheri, Comrade Ghulam Hussain Mugheri, Asghar Mugheri and others said that 7 months ago, unknown armed persons stole 65 lakh rupees in cash and 30 tolas of gold ornaments from the house of Muhammad Mithal Mugheri, a resident of village Saindad Mugheri, in the limits of Police Station Pakho.

Actions have not been taken by police to recover stolen goods while more thefts are continuing in the village Saindad Mugheri due to the continuous laziness of the police, but the police are busy protesting their carelessness. Traffic was flown by giving assurances of the SHO Police station Pakho and dispersing the sit-in.



MUZAFFARABAD: Students busy in study under open air Government High School at Bani Langrial village.

Two brothers killed due to old enmity

F.P. Report

SWABI: Two brothers were shot dead by unknown assailants in Mene jurisdiction of Police Station Topi in Swabi on Monday. Police sources told media men that the deceased brothers were killed due to old enmity.

Sources further said that both brothers were returning home after meeting with their cousin. On their way back, some unknown assailants who were waiting for them in a target location opened fire on them, killing both of them on the spot. The deceased brothers were identified as Mohammad Zaib and Farrukh Ser.

Local police reached the crime scene immediately and shifted dead bodies of two brothers to Tehsil Headquarters Hospital Topi for autopsy. The accused persons fled away from the scene after firing. Police registered a case against three accused persons and started investigation.

Police arrests three alleged thieves

F.P. Report

GHAZI: Police has arrested three alleged armed gang members involved in planning theft, robbery and street crimes in the premises Ghazi police station, on Monday.

For the past few days, there has been an increase in theft and robbery cases in the region, leaving the local population in fear and distress. On the day of the incident, SHO Ghazi Police Station, Shehryar Khan, along with his police team, was patrolling the area when they received critical information about an armed gang hiding in the bushes near the Tamrai GBHP Canal. The gang was reportedly waiting for an opportunity to commit theft and robbery.

The alleged culprits identified as Wajahat, Naveed and Bilal residents of Hamlet Ghazi. Upon searching the suspects, the police recovered two pistols with ammunition and a knife from their possession.

Negligence in public delivery can't be tolerated

F.P. Report

HAFIZABAD: Deputy Commissioner Abdul Razzaq has said that provision of healthcare and other amenities of life to people at their doorsteps is top priority of the Punjab government under people friendly vision of the Chief Minister Punjab Maryam Nawaz Sharif. He expressing these views while paying surprise visit of Rural Health Centre Sukheki Mandi and Tehsil Headquarter Hospital Pindi Bhattian the other late night. He inspected different areas of the Rural Health Centre Sukheki Mandi and THQ hospital Pindi Bhattian and checked attendance of staff and record of medicines.

DC said that district administration was committed to ensure provision the best treatment facilities to the people under relief-oriented policy of the government. He warned the staff that delay and negligence in giving treatment facilities to patients and absenteeism would not be tolerated at all, whereas strict action would be taken against those doctors and other staff of the hospitals found absent from duty as well as committing negligence.

Meanwhile, Deputy Commissioner Abdul Razzaq inspected Trauma Centre Hafizabad and Rural Health Centre Kolo Tarar the other midnight and checked availability of medicines and treatment facilities being provided to patients, attendance of staff, emergency, C.T scan, and other parts of Trauma Centre and RHC.

DC warned the doctors and management that negligence in provision of treatment facilities to patients would not be tolerated at all. He said that provision of the best treatment facilities to people was top priority of the Chief Minister of the Punjab Maryam Nawaz Sahrfir and district administration was focusing on implementation on people welfare agenda of the government.

Moreover, DC also visited different bus and wagon stands surprisingly in Hafizabad. He reviewed fare-table and receiving of fare from passengers. He

get returned extra fare extorted from passengers by drivers at bus and wagon stands and warned the drivers and conductors that punitive action would be taken against drivers involved in overcharging. He also directed the bus and wagon stands managers to ensure issuance of fare-ticket.

Teachers' role praised: Former Federal Minister Saira Afzal Tarar has said that teachers who are performing their duties for progress and prosperity of the country and improving future of the nation are heroes of the whole nation. She expressed these views while addressing a function held in connection with celebrating Slam Teachers Day here. ADCG Hammdullah, Chief Executive Officer Education Hafizabad Muhammad Anwar Javed, local leader of PMLN Sheikh Gulzar Ahmad, Chaudhary Muhammad Bukhash Tarar, District Education officer Madam Samina Yasmeen, Deputy District Education Officer Sadaf Khanam, AEO Ishtiaq Nazir, teachers and prominent personalities attended the function.

Saira Afzal Tarar said that the whole nation was paying tribute to dutiful and hardworking teachers while their everlasting hard work and experience would be remembered forever. Addressing on this occasion, CEO Education Muhammad Anwar Javed said that the Punjab government, education department and district administration acknowledge the best performance of teachers in enrolment of students, good results and other activities and lauds the best services of nation boulder teachers. At the end of function, hero awards and commendation certificates were distributed among teachers.

GTA hold protest: Grand Teachers Alliance Hafizabad staged protest sit-in in front of the office of District Education Authority Hafizabad and taken out rally from office of the District Education authority to Deputy Commissioner Office against privatization of schools, deduction in leave encashment, Pension bene-

fits, anti-teachers and wrong policies of the Punjab government led by district convener Grand Teacher Alliance Hafizabad Naseer-ul-Din.

Leadership of teachers' union Hafizabad including Fayyaz Ahmad Warriach, Ehsan Ullah Bawra, Aqeel Azad, Asghar Ali Hanjra, Rana Waqar Ahmad Khan, Jafar Bajwa, Muneer Khan Shannoo, Riasat Ali Raon, Rao Zameer-ul-Hassan, Azfar Bhatti, Mohsin Tarar, Rai Ziaullah, Jaffar Chadar addressed the protestor teachers. They said that we rejected privatization of school's black rules of leave encashment, new timetable of schools.

GTA demanded the government to withdraw anti-employee rules of leave encashment, new timetable and to give time scale promotion and in-service promotions as well as to restore pay and service protection, to remove deficiency in transfer policy. They also demanded that all un-academic duties of teachers be withdrawn so that teaches could focus on their original duty of teaching students. The teachers gave deadline of 7, October to fulfill demands of teachers otherwise all school would be locked till acceptance of justifi demands of teachers.

Five power pilferers booked

SARGODHA (INP): Five people involved in electricity theft were arrested during crackdowns conducted by the Faisalabad Electric Supply Company (Fesco) here on Monday.

According to details, taking notice of the complaints regarding power theft, a task-force of Fesco conducted operations against the elements involved in stealing electricity from main line and through tampering the meter. During operations conducted in different areas, five power pilferers were arrest. The Fesco teams imposed Rs 139,883 fine on the detained power pilferers while the police registered cases against them.



Russian opposition activist killed fighting for Ukraine

KYIV (BBC): Ildar Dadin, a well-known Russian opposition activist who was fighting in Ukraine on the side of Kyiv, has been killed in action, according to the group that recruited him. A spokeswoman for that group, the Civic Council, told the BBC that Dadin had died, adding that "he was, and he remains a hero".

The activist-turned-fighter was killed when soldiers from his volunteer battalion, the Freedom of Russia Legion, came under Russian artillery fire in the Kharkiv region of north-eastern Ukraine. For now, there are no more details and the Legion itself won't comment whilst it says a military operation is still active. But Ilia Ponamarev, an exiled Russian opposition politician with previous links to the Legion, has told the BBC he is "certain, alas" that Dadin is dead. Another source clarified that this was "confirmed by those who were with him in battle".

The latest messages I've sent to his phone are still marked "unread". Ildar Dadin became known in Russia a decade ago for his persistence in staging peaceful protests as political repression there intensified. He was the first person prosecuted under a new Article 212.1 - quickly dubbed Dadin's Law - that in 2014 made it a criminal offence to commit repeat violations of Russia's increasingly restrictive rules on protest. In his case, that simply meant standing on the streets of Moscow with a banner. Sentenced to

two and a half years, Dadin was placed in a punishment cell and immediately went on hunger strike. His prison guards then tortured him to get him to stop. Soon after his release in 2017, I met him in Moscow and he described being hung from a wall by his cuffed wrists. The guards had then threatened him with rape. He admitted that the brutality nearly broke him.

So when I learned that Dadin had joined a battalion of Russian volunteers fighting for Ukraine, I got back in touch and earlier this year and we had a series of long exchanges. "I can't sit by and do nothing and so become an accomplice to Russian evil, to its crimes," Dadin explained his decision to sign-up, just as principled and intense as I remembered him. He'd always considered himself a pacifist but now listed his reasons for taking-up arms: "The aggression, the mass killing, the torture, rape and looting." Still, he chose the call sign Gandhi. Dadin felt deeply that that he bore personal responsibility for Russia's full-scale invasion of its neighbour. He argued that he and fellow Russians had failed to stop Vladimir Putin, allowing themselves to be scared off the streets by police violence and the threat of prison.

"The main thing now is to act according to my conscience," Dadin wrote to me one night from near the frontline in Sumy. He initially signed-up with the Siberian Battalion in June 2023 before moving to the Freedom of Russia Legion last winter - both officially

part of the Ukrainian Armed Forces. Recruits are mainly Russian citizens who hope that helping Ukraine defeat Vladimir Putin will be a first step towards ending his rule in the Kremlin. Their numbers aren't clear, nor their effectiveness as a fighting force. They have claimed some successes, including a cross-border incursion into Russia earlier this year at the time of Putin's re-election.

But for Dadin, the experience wasn't quite as he'd hoped. He felt that some of the missions his unit were sent on were "pointless" in any military sense. He described one battle where he ended up pinned down for eight hours by Russian fire in a bomb crater, with a drone trying to drop a grenade on him, whilst a fellow volunteer soldier bled to death. And like many Ukrainian soldiers, he was exhausted, fighting with barely any days off and limping from a wound to his hip. I wondered whether he might leave, but Dadin was clear his conscience would not allow him to sit "on the sidelines". Not whilst Ukrainians were being killed, as he put it, "by Russian criminals". "I tried to stop Russia - but did I do it? No," he berated himself in one of our last chats. "And thousands of people have been killed because I did not do enough." Those who sent him to fight, disagree. "Ildar was strong, brave, principled and honest," the Civic Council wrote. "That's how we should remember him."

Glasgow vigil on eve of 7 Oct attacks anniversary

GLASGOW (BBC): A vigil to remember the victims of Hamas attacks on Israel has been held in Glasgow ahead of the one-year anniversary of the latest Middle East conflict. Hundreds gathered at the steps of Kelvingrove Art Gallery to remember the victims of the 7 October attacks and to demand the immediate release of the hostages.

A number of events have been held across the country this weekend to mark the anniversary of the current conflict breaking out. Thousands attended pro-Palestinian rallies in Edinburgh, Inverness and Aberdeen, calling for an immediate ceasefire in Gaza and to highlight the human cost of Israel's response to the attacks. The war began when Hamas gunmen attacked Israel on 7 October last year, killing about 1,200 people and taking 251 others as hostages. A total of 97 hostages remain unaccounted for. Israel responded with a military campaign in Gaza that has now killed at least 41,825 people, according to the Hamas-run health ministry.

Violence has spread to Lebanon in recent weeks. Members of Scotland's Jewish community, including speakers from the Glasgow Friends of Israel

group attended the event. The sister of Bernard Cowan, who was killed by Hamas gunmen in Southern Israel during the 7 October attack was also at the vigil. Attendees waved banners with the faces of some of the hostages on them and held red heart-shaped balloons. They sang songs including 'Bring them home' from Les Misérables. One of the vigil's organisers's Sammy Stein told BBC Scotland News the event was "crucial" to highlight that there are "two sides to every story". He said: "When the event happened a year ago the news was all about the terrible atrocities that happened in Israel, then after about a week people started forgetting about what happened on 7 October." Mr Stein continued: "Through the last year the hostages have completely been forgotten and it's so important to make sure that people remember that they are still in captivity and many of them are already not alive. "What we are doing here is a vigil. It's respectful, it's quiet and it's for remembrance. "The event we are having today is not just for the Jewish community. There are people here today from all walks of life, all religions and it just shows that in Glasgow there is a huge amount of support." Phyllis

Segal from Glasgow also attended the vigil. She told BBC Scotland News: "I find it heart-breaking that we are a year down the road and we don't seem to be any further forward. "When I see all these young women, young men and children it's actually beggar's belief that they've been hidden in tunnels for a whole year. "I get very upset about it all. Somebody said 'do you have family in Israel' and we say 'yes, millions of people' because we are all brothers and sisters."

Ahead of the first anniversary on Monday, the first minister has renewed calls for a ceasefire, John Swinney said: "The strength of world leaders must be focused on an immediate ceasefire in the Middle East - and we know at the heart of this situation is the need for an immediate ceasefire in Gaza. "A lasting ceasefire in Gaza, that sees the secure release of all hostages and a two-state solution, that includes the full international recognition of a sovereign Palestinian state, is critical to ending conflict across the region and is the foundation upon which long term peace in the Middle East can be achieved. "We must also see the end to all arms sales that continue to cause civilian deaths."

Kais Saied set to win Tunisia presidential election

TUNIS: Tunisian President Kais Saied is on course to win the presidential election with 89.2 percent of the vote, according to an exit poll aired on state TV, solidifying Saied's rule after a power grab three years ago. The Independent High Authority for Elections of Tunisia (ISIE) will announce the official results of the election on Monday evening.

Saied, 66, was running against two rivals, including his former ally turned critic Chaab Party leader Zouhair Maghzaoui, and Ayachi Zammel, a businessman who was seen as posing a big threat to Saied's re-election until he was jailed last month. According to the exit poll, Maghzaoui, 59, got 3.9 percent of the vote and 47-year-old Zammel, 6.9 percent. The ISIE said voter turnout stood at 27.7 per-

cent in vote. The board's spokesman, Mohamed Tlili Mansri, said earlier that they were expecting it to be about 30 percent.

Senior figures from the country's most prominent political parties, who largely oppose Saied, have faced imprisonment on various charges and have not publicly backed any of the three candidates on the ballot. Jailed opposition figures include Rached Ghannouchi, the head of the opposition Ennahda party, which dominated politics after the 2011 "Arab Spring" protests to oust President Zine El Abidine Ben Ali. According to rights groups, since 2019, when Saied was elected, the president has undone democratic gains for the country that were secured through the revolution. Saied has rejected the criticism, argu-

ing that his actions were to fight a "corrupt elite" and "traitors". Political tensions grew in Tunisia ahead of the election after an electoral commission named by the president disqualified three candidates amid protests by opposition and civil society groups. At the same time, Tunisia is experiencing weak economic growth, high inflation, and unemployment, which have also caused protests.

Last week, lawmakers loyal to Saied stripped the administrative court of authority over election disputes. The court is seen as the country's last independent judicial body after Saied dissolved the Supreme Judicial Council and dismissed several judges in 2022. In 2021, Saied dissolved the elected parliament and rewrote the constitution in a move the opposition dubbed a coup. — Aljazeera

3 arrested in S Africa over massacre of 18 relatives

CAPE TOWN (BBC): South African police have arrested three people in connection with the massacre of 18 relatives that took place in a remote town last week following a manhunt, the police say. Police Minister Senzo Mchunu confirmed the arrests during the memorial service for the 18 victims, in the town of Lusikisiki, in the Eastern Cape, where the killings happened.

He added that the arrest of a fourth suspect would be announced soon. Shockwaves erupted across South Africa when gunmen opened fire on two homes, killing fifteen women and three men. Several were shot in the head. The victims were aged from 14 to 64 years old, according to local newspaper Dispatch Live. Mchunu said the police are still trying to "piece together" a motive for the killings. The attack happened when the family had gathered for a traditional ceremony. The three suspects will appear in court on Monday to hear their charges. This massacre has shocked South Africa, adding to calls for more police protection. South Africa has one of the highest murder rates in the world, according to the latest figures from the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime. There were more than 27,000 murders in 2022 - amounting to 45 people per 100,000, out of a population of almost 60 million. By comparison, the US rate is six per 100,000. It has also led for people to calls to end gender-based violence. South Africa also has a high femicide rate. Deputy minister in the presidency Mmapaseka Letsike attended the memorial and said civil society, traditional leaders, government need to "raise the bar" to help end gender-based violence.

Maldives president visits India

NEW DELHI (BBC): Maldivian President Mohamed Muizzu is expected to seek a bailout during his visit to India this week as the archipelago nation stares at an economic crisis with fears of debt default. It's Muizzu's first official bilateral visit after he was voted to power late last year following a campaign centred on an 'India out' policy, with a promise to reduce Delhi's influence. Since then, ties have been strained between the countries but experts say the visit indicates that the Maldives can't afford to ignore its giant neighbour.

The foreign exchange reserves of the Maldives stood at about \$440m (£334m) in September, just enough for one-and-a-half months of imports. Last month, global agency Moody's downgraded the Maldives' credit rating, saying that "default risks have risen materially". An Indian bailout will bolster the country's foreign currency reserves. Before visiting India, Muizzu chose to travel to Turkey and China - his visit to the latter in January was seen as a high-profile diplomatic snub to Delhi as previous Maldivian leaders first visited Delhi after being elected. Around the same time, a controversy erupted in India after three Maldivian officials made derogatory comments about Prime Minister Narendra Modi. "President Muizzu's visit is a turnaround in several ways," says Azim Zahir, a Maldives analyst and lecturer at the University of Western Australia.

"Most notably, the visit is a realisation of how dependent the Maldives is on India, a dependency that no other country will find easy to fill," he says. The Maldives consists of about 1,200 coral islands and atolls located in the middle of the Indian Ocean. The archipelago has a population of about 520,000 compared to India's 1.4 billion. As a small island nation, the Maldives depends on its giant neighbour India for most of its food, infrastructure building and healthcare. Delhi and Male have not officially confirmed that a financial package for the Maldives is on the agenda during the visit. But experts believe it will be part of the discussion.

Hurricane Milton strengthens as it heads towards storm-ravaged Florida

FLORIDA: Hurricane Milton is gaining strength as it churns towards the coast of Florida, authorities have warned, as the southeastern United States continues to reel in the aftermath of the deadly and destructive Hurricane Helene.

The National Hurricane Center (NHC) said that Milton had intensified into a Category 1 hurricane with maximum sustained winds of 130km per hour (80 miles per hour). It was expected to "become a major hurricane on Monday", the NHC said.

While forecast models vary widely, the most likely path suggests Milton could make landfall on Wednesday in the Tampa Bay area and remain a hurricane as it moves across central Florida into the Atlantic Ocean, forecasters said. That would largely spare other southeastern US states ravaged by Hurricane Helene, which caused catastrophic damage from Florida into the Appalachian mountains. The death toll from Helene rose to 230 people, days after the storm roared into the Florida coastline as a Category 4 hurricane on September 26 before carving a path of destruction inland and causing major flash flooding.

Florida Governor Ron DeSantis said that while it remains unclear where exactly Milton will strike, it was clear that the US state would be hit hard. "I don't think there's any scenario where we don't have major impacts at this point," said DeSantis, who raised the number of counties under a state of emergency to 51 ahead of the storm's arrival. He urged Florida residents to ensure they have a "hurricane preparedness plan" in place. "If you're on that west coast of Florida, barrier islands, just assume you'll be asked to leave," the governor added.

US President Joe Biden said that he had been briefed on Milton and that his administration was preparing "life-saving resources". "I urge all residents in Florida to listen to local officials and make preparations as needed," Biden said in a statement.

"As these communities brace for potentially yet another catastrophic storm, and as part of my Administration's solemn obligation to stand with impacted communities as they rebuild their lives, we will continue working hand-in-hand with local and state leaders - regardless of political party and no matter how long it takes," Kevin Guthrie, the executive director of the Florida



Division of Emergency Management, said the agency was preparing "for the largest evacuation that we have seen, most likely since [the] 2017 Hurricane Irma". "I highly encourage you to evacuate" if you're in an evacuation zone, Guthrie said.

The state has prepared emergency fuel sources and electric vehicle charging stations along evacuation routes, and "identified every possible location that can possibly house someone along those routes", Guthrie added. The St Petersburg-Tampa Bay area is still cleaning up extensive damage from Helene and its powerful storm surge. Twelve people were killed as Helene swamped the coast, with the worst damage along the narrow, 32km (20-mile) string of barrier islands that stretch from St Petersburg to Clearwater. — Aljazeera

Division of Emergency Management, said the agency was preparing "for the largest evacuation that we have seen, most likely since [the] 2017 Hurricane Irma". "I highly encourage you to evacuate" if you're in an evacuation zone, Guthrie said.

Sao Paulo mayor's race heads to a runoff in Brazil's elections

RIO DE JANEIRO (AP): Incumbent Ricardo Nunes and leftist lawmaker Guilherme Boulos will face each other in a runoff to decide the next mayor of Sao Paulo, following a first round of voting in Brazil's local elections. Nunes, Boulos and self-help guru turned far-right politician Pablo Marçal were running for housing rights who is backed by President Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva, vehemently denied the veracity of the document. A judge sitting on Sao Paulo's electoral court ordered the suspension of Marçal's Instagram account for 48 hours and deemed that there are "indications of various offenses under the Electoral Code."

Some of former President Jair Bolsonaro's political base has been drawn to Marçal, enthralled by his fiery rhetoric, although the far-right leader is supporting Nunes. In Rio de Janeiro, incumbent Mayor Eduardo Paes was reelected for a fourth, non-consecutive term, after win-

ning an absolute majority of votes in the first round. Paes, an enthusiastic fan of carnival who had Lula's support, easily fought off his principal challenger, Alexandre Ramagem, the former chief of Brazil's intelligence agency under Bolsonaro. Ramagem is being investigated as part of a wider probe into alleged spying on political opponents. He has denied the accusations. Bolsonaro backed Ramagem, and his slight ascent in the polls in recent weeks was widely attributed to the former president's campaigning on his behalf. But in the end it proved insufficient.

Bolsonaro's failure to spur Ramagem into the runoff vote is a setback for the former president, who built his career in Rio. "It shows how Bolsonaro is no longer capable of getting candidates elected like he did in past elections," said Manoel Galdino, a political scientist at the University of Sao Paulo. But the bad news was mitigated by

relection to Rio's municipal assembly, where he received more votes than any other councilor. Brazilians were casting their vote to decide the next mayors, deputy mayors and councilors in the country's 5,569 municipalities. More than 155 million Brazilians are eligible to vote, 52% percent of them women. Forty-three percent of the electorate is in the south-eastern region, where Rio and Sao Paulo are located. Nearly 1,000 transgender politicians ran in every one of Brazil's 26 states, according to the nation's electoral court, which tracked them for the first time. The number of candidacies tripled since the last local elections four years ago, when trans rights group Antra mapped them. A second round will be held in municipalities with more than 200,000 registered voters where, like in Sao Paulo, none of the candidates for mayor obtained an absolute majority.

Fresh faces in Mozambique's poll as independence era leaders bow out

MOZAMBIQUE (BBC): Mozambique is set for a watershed election that will see a change of the presidential guard, with the era of leaders who forged their careers in the trenches of the independence war against Portuguese rule coming to an end.

For the first time, the once all-powerful Frelimo party is fielding a presidential candidate who was born after independence - the charismatic 47-year-old Daniel Chapo, who it hopes will rally voters fed up with its 49-year rule. "In some places Frelimo campaign members have been booed and openly rejected," political commentator Charles Mangwiro tells the BBC.

Mozambique - strategically located along the southern African coast and rich in natural resources, but hit by an insurgency in the remote north - will hold presidential elections on Wednesday, along with parliamentary and gubernatorial elections. President Filipe Nyusi is stepping down at the end of his two terms and hopes to hand the reigns of power to Chapo. His government had to deal with the fallout of the "tuna bond" corruption scandal - which triggered the country's worst economic crisis. In comparison, Chapo is a breath of fresh air - and draws big crowds at rallies across the country as he distances himself from the corruption that has plagued Frelimo for much of its rule since independence in 1975. "Brother Dan is honesty in person... He is the voice of hope we want to embrace... It's time for

change," say the lyrics of one of his campaign songs.

But human rights activist and journalist Mirna Chitsungo says she doubts whether Chapo can convince all voters that he can change Frelimo. "If we have a degraded country, it is because of corruption. He faces the challenge of promising to fight this evil while belonging to a party that, on a large scale, has perpetuated corruption," she told the BBC. Counting in Chapo's favour is the fact that he is a relative newcomer in the political arena, having joined government only in 2011 as a district administrator, rising by 2019 to become governor of the southern Inhambane province until taking over as general secretary of Frelimo in May. But his critics say that to ensure victory, Frelimo has a backup plan: fraud. A leading non-governmental organisation in Mozambique, Centro de Integridade Pública, says its research showed that around 5% of the names on the voters' roll are fake, or so-called "ghost voters" - that is a figure of nearly 900,000. "The simple fact is that data published by the CNE [Central National Elections Commission] itself shows that 878,868 more voters were registered than there are voting age adults in some provinces, and thus these are ghost voters on the voters roll," Mozambique analyst Joe Hanlon told the BBC. Miguel de Brito, from the International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance, notes that the "ghost voters" are

not evenly distributed across the country - only seven key provinces out of 10 have registered more voters than people.

For instance, one-third of all the people registered in Gaza Province, which usually votes overwhelmingly for Frelimo, are thought to be "ghost voters". It is also the area where large numbers of people leave every year for work in South Africa. "It's gotten worse, this year we managed to register nationally almost 105% of the voting age population," Mr De Brito told the BBC. Both the election commission and Frelimo deny any foul play, insisting that the elections will be free and fair. Chapo is facing a challenge from three other candidates Venâncio Mondlane, an independent; Ossufo Momade of the main opposition Renamo party, and Lutero Simango, who is spearheading the campaign of the third-biggest party, the Democratic Movement of Mozambique (MDM), with a promise to build more factories and lower the cost of living. Of the three, Mondlane is the fresh face, vying for the presidency for the first time after breaking away from Renamo. With the slogan "Save Mozambique - this country is ours", the 50-year-old is proving to be a big hit, especially in the campaign to win the youth vote. "He [Mondlane] uses this slogan everywhere and he tries to explain to young voters that they should take pride in being Mozambican because conditions are there for them not to be poor or unemployed," Mangwiro

explains. "He draws large numbers at his campaign rallies and people are not frog-marched to attend - come rain, cold or sun." A former banker, Mondlane first made his mark when he ran for mayor of the capital, Maputo, in local elections last year.

Many people believed that he won - alleging the result was then rigged in favour of Frelimo's candidate. Mondlane fought that election under the banner of Renamo, but quit the party after Momade, 60, refused to make way for him to take over. Momade became Renamo's leader following the death of its long-time leader Afonso Dhlakama in 2018. He is widely credited for signing a peace deal with Nyusi to end a civil war that had raged between Renamo fighters and government forces. Momade ran for the presidency in elections in 2019, and claimed that he was robbed of victory by Nyusi, but remained committed to the peace deal. Though he is confident of winning this time, his chances have been hampered by Mondlane's entry into the race - a point that Chitsungo, the human rights activist, made when she said that Mondlane is seen by many Renamo voters as a "young man with the spirit of Dhlakama".

"It is as if we are having elections with a resurrected Dhlakama, a rejuvenated Dhlakama. So, we have this novelty," she pointed out. Chapo is hoping that the Renamo vote will be split between the two men, improving his chances of clinching victory.

The Frontier Post

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

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Fueling antagonism only intensifies spiral of violence

AFTER the Oct 7 Hamas attacks on Israel last year, Israeli leader Benjamin Netanyahu vowed to eliminate the threat of terrorism.

At first, it was a war on Hamas, which killed 1,200 Israelis and took 250 others hostage in those attacks. Then, as the war in the Gaza Strip expanded, Israeli offensives have invoked counterattacks from Hezbollah in Lebanon, Houthis in Yemen, militia forces in Iraq, and finally Iran.

As Israeli military operations crossed the one-year mark on Monday, there is no sign of the cross fire between the Israel Defense Forces and its regional foes nearing an end. Instead, as Fu Cong, China's permanent representative to the United Nations, has warned, the situation threatens to spiral out of control and is now "hanging by a thread".

Netanyahu's insistence on accomplishing his war aims is sinking Israel deeper into a vicious spiral of violent exchanges with hostile neighbors. If there is any lesson worth learning, it is the same old one many have correctly brought up: Violence is not the answer to any country's security concerns, including Israel's.

All the enemies Israel has targeted, from Hamas to Hezbollah and Iran, remain defiant. Ironically for the Israelis, the harder the Netanyahu government pushes to realize its set goals, the more threatened and isolated they are. The more Netanyahu sticks to his guns, the greater the humanitarian disasters being caused — Gaza has become "hell on Earth", as Fu said — and corresponding alienation of Israel within the international community.

Given Israel's unrivalled military strength across the Middle East, many, including Netanyahu and his Cabinet, seem to assume it is only a matter of time and resolve for the country to eliminate the outstanding security threats surrounding it. That is why Netanyahu has defied calls for restraint from his country's closest allies, from the United States to France. That is also why, despite repeated warnings against Israel escalating and expanding the conflicts, the Joe Biden administration has offered persistent support for the Israeli offensives.

Yet, in contrast to Netanyahu's repeated claim to be near to reaching that set goal, the continuously expanding military operations say something very different. After round after round of violent offensives in the Gaza Strip, the IDF seems to be repeating what it has done since October, revealing the simple fact that the overwhelming previous onslaughts didn't work as anticipated. The Israeli military on Saturday warned residents in parts of central Gaza to evacuate. An early Sunday air strike reportedly killed at least 21 people in central Gaza. The IDF's killing of Hamas official Saeed Atallah Ali and his family in a refugee camp in north Lebanon on Saturday is a fresh reminder of how broadly and deeply the militant group is spread and embedded across the region, not just Gaza.

The same is true of Hezbollah and the Israeli campaign against it. After killing its longtime leader, and a couple of his potential successors, the IDF has had to resort to "limited" ground operations against Hezbollah in Lebanon. Just as the war on Hamas in Gaza has been less than successful, the ground intrusion in Lebanon may not achieve as much as intended.

After all, Israel and Hezbollah and other regional enemies of Israel are still trading fire across the Israeli border. And while the enemies of Israel with target on their backs are eliminated one after another, countless innocent civilian lives are also being extinguished as "collateral damage". As the blaring rocket alert sirens in northern Israel indicate, the military operations have not brought peace, even to Israel. Not to mention millions have been displaced since Israel launched its first military operations. UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres condemned "the broadening of the Middle East conflict, with escalation after escalation" on Tuesday, and appealed for the violence to end now.

As China has repeatedly said, a cease-fire is indeed the essential first step toward lasting peace in the region. But until the US stops using Israel as a battering ram to advance its own agenda in the region, an end to the violence seems to be ever more remote.

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Israel's search for a definitive military solution

Dr. Mohammed Al-Sulami

THE question of a possible endgame for Israel to declare victory and then think of a political process in the Middle East is a key one not only for regional states and citizens, but also for the international community. Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu envisions a "Greater Israel" without a Palestinian state and he has no political solution for the endless military conflicts in Lebanon, Iraq or Yemen. Netanyahu's dream is based on a security-only approach without any consideration for peace, which remains the main hurdle to integrating Israel into the regional landscape.

The endless occupation of Palestine and perpetual wars in the region cannot be a long-term political strategy for Israel. Overall, Israel's strategic considerations in Lebanon, Iraq and Yemen reflect its broader security concerns in the Middle East. The region's volatility, driven by non-state actors like Hezbollah, Iran's influence and the ongoing conflicts in Yemen and Iraq, poses challenges for Israel's national security. In such a complex landscape, Israel's military and political objectives are shaped by its goals of attempting to neutralize threats, secure its borders and maintain its military dominance.

Hezbollah has been Israel's primary concern. Israel views Hezbollah's missile arsenal and military infrastructure as a major threat.

A key objective is to neutralize Hezbollah's ability to fire rockets into Israel. Tel Aviv is using precision strikes on Hezbollah's weapons depots, rocket launch sites and military installations. And by targeting Iranian-backed infrastructure and logistics, Israel hopes to

reduce Hezbollah's power and undermine Iran's influence in Lebanon.

By eliminating the threat of Hezbollah, Tel Aviv hopes to be in a position to militarily target Iranian territories without risking counterattacks by Hezbollah on its northern border. This is why Israel is keen on ensuring that Hezbollah cannot establish control over areas near the Israeli-Lebanese border. By creating buffer zones and enforcing demilitarized areas, Israel aims to reduce the threat of cross-border attacks. A significantly degraded Hezbollah — militarily and politically — would be a major victory for Israel.

Iraq is a major battleground for competing regional powers, particularly Iran, which exerts significant influence over the country's Shiite militias. These militias, especially those aligned with Iran's Revolutionary Guards, pose a direct threat to Israel. They could be used to facilitate the transfer of weapons or deployed as proxies in a conflict with Israel.

Tel Aviv has reportedly conducted airstrikes on weapons convoys and bases belonging to Iranian-backed militias in Iraq. The goal is to disrupt the flow of weapons, including advanced missile technology, to groups that might be deployed against Israel, particularly in Syria or Lebanon. The land corridor connecting Iran through Iraq to Syria and Lebanon is of strategic importance to Iran. Israel views preventing the consolidation of this corridor as essential to its broader strategy of curbing Iranian influence.

A victory for Israel would include severely limiting the operational capacity of Iraqi Shiite militias that pose a poten-

tial threat to its national security. From Israel's perspective, this can only be achieved through a combination of airstrikes, intelligence operations and diplomatic pressure.

If Iraq's central government were to shift away from Iranian influence, perhaps through internal political realignments or international pressure, this would represent a significant win for Israel's long-term regional security.

Also, Israel has strategic interests in ensuring that Iran does not gain a foothold in Yemen, as this would pose a threat to its maritime routes and regional allies. Israel's primary concern is that Iran is using Yemen as a base to launch attacks against its territories and that the Houthis are receiving weapons, including advanced missiles, from Iran. Another Israeli objective is to secure the Red Sea and Bab Al-Mandab Strait. Indeed, controlling this critical maritime chokepoint is vital for Israel's trade and military logistics. A Houthi-controlled Yemen, under Iranian influence, will disrupt shipping routes and pose a threat to Israel's naval operations.

For Israel, favorable outcomes include diminishing Iranian support for the Houthis, limiting their military capabilities and preventing them from destabilizing the region. Israel wants to see Yemen as part of a regional pro-Western alliance. For Israel, victory is likely defined in terms of achieving security and deterrence rather than territorial gains.

Some possible conditions under which Israel might declare victory and move toward a political process include the de-escalation of hostilities. Once the immediate mili-

tary threats are neutralized, Israel could think about a ceasefire, either unilaterally or through international mediation.

Moreover, Israel could seek greater international involvement to reinforce the new status quo, ensuring that Hezbollah, Iranian militias or the Houthis are constrained by international agreements. This would limit Tehran's capacity to threaten Israel directly. This is why Israeli military forces are trying to directly strike Iranian territories with US approval.

The end Israeli goal is to target the head of Tehran's regional network of influence. Nevertheless, Israel's mistake is to think that regional proxies and partners of the Islamic Republic are merely puppets of the Iranian supreme leader. In fact, some are local actors that are seeking to achieve their own domestic interests, which also fall within the framework of Tehran's broader objectives.

Israel's potential plans in Lebanon, Iraq and Yemen are interconnected with its broader goal of countering Iranian influence and securing its borders from militant groups. Victory, from an Israeli perspective, involves weakening hostile forces like Hezbollah and Iranian-backed militias, while maintaining control over key security zones. The political process can only begin once Israel achieves a deterrence-based security arrangement; one that curbs Iran's influence and minimizes the military threats from its proxies.

Nevertheless, this Israeli search for a definitive long-term military solution remains the main hurdle to any meaningful political solution to regional conflicts involving Israel, given the high-level regional polarization in the context of the Gaza war.

PTI and Centre on a collision course

Farhan Ahmad

THE political crisis unfolding in Pakistan, with PTI once again marching on Islamabad under the leadership of KP Chief Minister Ali Amin Gandapur, is a stark reminder of a deeper malaise that has plagued the nation for years. It is not merely a protest but reflection that the fault lines that have historically strained the balance between provincial autonomy and federal authority. What we are witnessing now is the culmination of a trend that, if unchecked, could lead to irreparable damage to the state's ability to govern effectively.

To fully understand the gravity of the current situation, we must revisit its antecedents. In 2014, during the infamous dharna led by Imran Khan, then KP Chief Minister Pervez Khattak led PTI workers from his province to the capital. That was the first instance where a provincial government actively confronted the center. This wasn't just a protest but a challenge to the federal government's writ and it set a dangerous precedent. Today, under Gandapur's leadership, we see a similar defiance, but the stakes are even higher.

Ali Amin Gandapur's language and tone in recent weeks are telling. His open threats of confrontation signals a deepening of the divide between the provincial and federal authorities. Gandapur's rhetoric is not just aimed at the federal government but challenges the very state institutions that uphold the rule of law. Gandapur's statements to hold the Punjab police accountable, should they act against PTI workers, are equally inflammatory. This sort of rhetoric pushes the boundaries of acceptable political discourse, turning governance into a battleground where provincial leaders are openly defying the

lenging the federal government through street power and mass mobilization. By invoking popular protests, PTI places itself as the voice of the "people" against a government it claims lacks legitimacy. But this tactic carries significant risks. The persistent defiance of federal authority by a provincial government like KP sets a troubling precedent for Pakistan's federation. If one province can openly challenge the center, what is to stop others from following suit? This erosion of central authority could lead to a breakdown in the very governance structure that holds the nation together.

This brings us to a broader historical lesson. Pakistan's history is replete with examples where provincial versus federal tensions have led to disastrous outcomes. The most stark reminder is the secession of East Pakistan in 1971, when a failure to address political grievances led to the disintegration of the country. While today's situation is not comparable in scale, the underlying principle remains the same. When provinces feel disenfranchised or marginalized and when they defy federal authority, the integrity of the state is at risk.

Moreover, by continuously resorting to such protests, PTI risks normalizing the idea that street power and confrontation are legitimate forms of political expression. This is dangerous for any democracy. It creates a political culture where negotiation, dialogue and parliamentary processes are undermined and where groups believe they can extract concessions by threatening the state with chaos. The long-term impact of this on Pakistan's democratic institutions cannot be understated.

What, then, is the solution? The federal government must recognize that the use of containers and roadblocks is not a sus-

The federal government's response, too, must be scrutinized. Why has it resorted to blocking roads and closing Islamabad to such protests? The answer lies partly in the strategic timing chosen by PTI. These protests are not happening in a vacuum. This march, just like the 2014 sit-in, coincides with critical diplomatic engagements. In 2014, the dharna coincided with a visit by Chinese dignitaries, affecting crucial development agreements under the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC). Today, foreign dignitaries are due in Islamabad for the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) meetings and other high-level engagements. PTI's decision to march at such times puts the federal government in an untenable position. The federal government must safeguard Pakistan's international image while dealing with domestic unrest.

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China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC). Today, foreign dignitaries are due in Islamabad for the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) meetings and other high-level engagements. PTI's decision to march at such times puts the federal government in an untenable position. The federal government must safeguard Pakistan's international image while dealing with domestic unrest. Thus, the federal authorities are left with little choice but to block entry into Islamabad to prevent any disruption to these critical international meetings.

However, one must also question why PTI resorts to such tactics repeatedly. The party seems to have found a successful model in chal-

tainable response. These tactics only serve to deepen the resentment and embolden groups like PTI to present themselves as the victims of state repression. On the other hand, PTI must come to terms with the fact that challenging the state's writ, particularly through the use of provincial resources, is neither sustainable nor productive. The party must return to parliamentary processes to air its grievances.

A comprehensive framework for managing such protests is the need of time. One that balances the right to protest with the need to maintain law and order. Perhaps, a return to the principles of cooperative federalism, where provinces and the center engage in constructive dialogue, is the only way forward. But for that to happen, both sides must de-escalate their rhetoric and commit to the democratic process.

The current situation, if allowed to continue unchecked, risks plunging Pakistan into deeper instability. At a time when the country faces multiple external and internal challenges, ranging from economic crises to security threats, this kind of infighting between the provinces and the center is not just sad but a recipe for disaster.

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Anti-China hysteria could prove self-defeating for US

Xinhua

True nobility is being superior to your former self." This famous quote from Ernest Hemingway might serve as a wake-up call and precious advice for politicians in Washington today.

Fervent anti-China rhetoric was highlighted by the so-called "China Week" in the US Congress earlier this month. House of Representatives lawmakers oversaw the mass passage of 25 bills, targeting Chinese biotechnology, drones, electric vehicles, batteries and more. It is quite obvious that these lawmakers have noticed the fact that China is catching up with or even overtaking the United States in certain fields, and as a result feel a heightened sense of anxiety. Unfortunately, in their desperate attempt to maintain "American superiority," they have not tried anything concrete to turn America into a "better self," but instead opted for relentless efforts to slow down and even stifle China's progress.

Proposing anti-China bills and pushing for their passage seems to have become a popular trend in US Congress in recent years. The numbers of China-related bills introduced by the 116th and 117th Congresses were both more than double that introduced by the 115th Congress. The breadth of

these bills is unprecedented, covering economy, trade and investment, politics, technology and security. But can these legislative moves really work and serve their initiators' purposes? Facts and realities have repeatedly provided a negative answer.

Take electric vehicles (EVs) as an example. A latest bill passed by the House of Representatives tightens rules limiting Chinese content in vehicles qualifying for US EV tax credits, showing a clear intention to cut China from America's EV supply chain. However, according to industry experts, China's lead in EV batteries and some other technologies is so big that any attempt to build a China-free supply chain will have a cost "beyond the limits" and significantly slow down America's auto industry upgrading and green transformation.

In fact, despite pressure and threats from politicians, Ford Motor and some other US companies are seeking cooperation with China's leading battery maker, CATL, on battery production in the United States.

Apart from inflicting harm on its own industries and economy, US moves to erect barriers to trade and cooperation with China in an insensible or even hysterical

manner, could also result in self-isolation.

Among the latest cluster of China-related legislation, the Biosecure Act aims to ban contracts with major Chinese biotechnology companies. However, US researchers and executives believe that this law could hurt both the industry and scientific research, and warn that the United States also risks falling behind and being isolated from international cooperation in this field. Amid rapid and drastic changes in the global economic and technological landscape, some US industries and sectors, such as iron and steel, automobiles and new energy, really face tough challenges and are in dire need of assistance and support. But by always pointing the finger at China or resorting to trade protectionism and tech isolationism, politicians in Washington are not helping, but making things worse.

If such politicians are really taking China so seriously, they should take a serious look at the "secret recipe" of China's success -- a government dedicated to the pursuit of high-quality development based on reform and innovation, a huge and vibrant domestic market allowing enterprises to fully compete and grow strong, as well as an open

attitude that attracts global capital and businesses, and facilitates win-win cooperation. But can these politicians learn from China and effectively assist struggling US industries? Do they have the motivation, determination and wisdom needed to achieve such progress? There is plenty of room for doubt, particularly in a period when the only bipartisan consensus on Capitol Hill is said to be the one targeting China as a threat.

After all, China has made it very clear that its innovation and modernization efforts are never aimed at defeating or supplanting the United States. China has also emphasized that it will not yield to any external pressure and relinquish its legitimate right to development. All this means that maneuvers like "China Week" will inevitably be exposed as no more than political stunts, which serve only to induce self-deceit and boost baseless fear-mongering. So the time has probably come for these politicians to take heed of Hemingway's words of wisdom, which means they should do what the American people truly need them to do -- to focus on fixing America's own problems, rather than look for external scapegoats to cover up their incompetence and inaction.

Harris’ border visit and economy speech capture attention as warning signs emerge for campaign

Kamala Harris’ visit to the border and speech outlining her economic vision captured the attention of a sizable share of Americans as September came to a close, according to new findings from The Breakthrough, a polling project that tracks how the public is following election news. But some emerging trends in the data hint at warning signs for the vice president’s campaign.

The share of Americans hearing anything at all about Harris has dropped each week since her presidential debate with former President Donald Trump in early September, and during that same time, the tone Americans use in describing what they’ve heard about her has grown more negative, reaching the lowest point of her campaign in the latest results.

Looking at what people say they have heard, read or seen about Harris, “lie” has emerged as a persistent top word that some Americans associate with her. In the latest data, it was the fourth-most mentioned word after “border,” “polls” and “campaign.”

It ranked sixth in the previous week’s data and second the week of the ABC News presidential debate, after ranking no higher than

12th in earlier rounds of the survey and no higher than 20th prior to the Democratic convention in August.

The survey, conducted September 27-30 by SSRS and Verasight for research teams from CNN, Georgetown University and the University of Michigan, measures what Americans say they have recently heard, read or seen about Harris and Trump.

The share of Americans mentioning words such as “lie” or “liar” when asked what they’ve heard about Harris remains quite small — just 6% in the latest data, compared with 15% who mentioned something related to immigration, for example — but it has grown over time, rising from 3% or less prior to the Democratic convention to peak at 9% shortly after the debate.

“Kamala says nothing,” wrote one respondent included in the latest survey. “She uses a bunch of words that make no sense. She says she will close the border, but that is a lie to get elected. Everything she promises are lies.”

The broader focus on immigration (mentioned by 15% in relation to Harris) and the economy (mentioned by 13%) in the latest

Jennifer Agiesta

data marks a notable shift in responses about Harris, following her campaign’s efforts to focus attention on the two topics with a visit to the southern border in Arizona and an economic policy speech in Pittsburgh. It marks the first time in the survey that multiple policy-related topics have landed in the top five for Harris, and the most recent data saw by far the most mentions for immigration-related words in relation to her campaign since she entered the race in late July.

“I have watched her speeches and appreciated her articulate explanation of her policies and positions on various things,” another respondent wrote. “Her concern for all and ability to concretely point to solutions to problems is a sharp contrast to Donald Trump.”

On Trump’s side, the assassination attempts against him remain prominent in the public’s attention, while immigration has faded a bit and his meeting last month with Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky garnered attention.

“He met with Zelensky and was not very enthusiastic about helping Ukraine,”

one respondent wrote.

Responses calling the former president a liar are also persistently near the top of his list. About 8% in the latest data use the word “lie” or “liar” in relation to Trump. That figure has frequently been in the high single digits as a share of topics about Trump since the start of the survey in June, dipping below that at times, including around the first assassination attempt against the former president and the Republican National Convention.

Although responses about Harris are generally still less negative in tone than those about Trump, there has been a notable decline in overall sentiment in the Harris responses, while Trump’s numbers have rebounded slightly following a post-debate drop. For Harris, the negative shift is apparent across parties, with sentiments expressed by Democrats, Republicans and independents all tilting slightly more negative in the new data than in the week prior. For Trump, though, sentiment has held steady among Republicans, while shifting slightly less negative than the previous survey among independents and Democrats.

The latest poll found that

just under two-thirds of Americans (64%) reported seeing, reading or hearing something about Harris, compared with 68% who said the same about Trump. It marks the fourth straight week in which more people reported hearing about Trump than they did about Harris, and it’s a notable drop from the previous week in the shares saying they’d heard about each candidate (Trump down 7 points, Harris down 5).

The overall level of attention to the presidential candidates now is lower than it was at this point in previous cycles, though that may be a side effect of debate timing.

In 2020, for example, more than 8 in 10 Americans reported having heard news about Trump and Joe Biden in the same week of that campaign, but there was a presidential debate held on September 29. In 2016, there was a mid-September dip in attention ahead of that year’s first debate between Trump and Hillary Clinton, held on September 26.

“It has been relatively quiet this week,” one respondent to the latest survey wrote when asked about Trump. “I haven’t heard of anything.”

— CNN

Al-Qaeda, Daesh keeping their distance from Gaza

Dr. Abdellatif El-Menawy

high-stakes conflict like Gaza.

Engaging Israel directly could expose them to retaliatory strikes, not just from Israel but also from global powers aligned against them, further diminishing their already limited capabilities. This detachment underscores the declining influence of these groups on the broader fundamentalist landscape, as well as their diminishing relevance in conflicts like Gaza, where other actors have taken the lead.

There is also the issue of geographical and logistical challenges. With the increased security presence in countries surrounding Gaza, including Egypt, opportunities for these groups to infiltrate or establish a foothold have diminished. In addition, the issue of liberating Jerusalem has been part of Al-Qaeda’s rhetoric since its founding in the 1980s, despite the lack of attacks directed against Israel. Osama bin Laden justified this in 2009 by saying that the organization was unable to penetrate Israeli borders due to regional agreements. Its leadership argues that dismantling regimes seen as collaborators with the West is a prerequisite to any meaningful action in Palestine. Their strategy emphasizes broader global objectives, rendering Palestine more of a symbolic cause rather than a tactical priority.

Daesh, meanwhile, has shown little interest in the Palestinian struggle. Emerging from the shadow of Al-Qaeda, the group centered its efforts on establishing a caliphate in Iraq and Syria. However, after the loss of its so-called caliphate, its efforts have been primarily focused on surviving and regrouping in its remaining territories. Its leadership considers Palestinian factions like Hamas to be compromised by their participation in democratic processes and their focus on nationalistic rather than global objectives. This view has led Daesh to disregard the Palestinian question, sometimes even denouncing factions fighting Israel as apostates, thus rendering action in Palestine to be secondary to other fronts.

It is evident that this detachment is in large part strategic. With their resources stretched thin and leadership fragmented, both organizations have opted to focus on consolidating their existing operations rather than risk further losses by engaging in a

ing so-called lone wolf attacks rather than organized military engagements.

In light of this, it can be observed that Al-Qaeda continues to exploit events to support its propaganda linked to the Palestinian cause, although it has failed to translate this support into direct operations against Israel. In contrast, Daesh is likely to remain focused on other geographical priorities, particularly in Africa, where it seeks to strengthen its presence and leverage regional conditions to its advantage.

In response, Israeli intelligence has been closely monitoring the potential for extremist groups to leverage the conflict. However, so far, these fears have not materialized, thanks in part to Israel’s stringent security measures in areas such as

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the West Bank.

One key observation is the position of these organizations toward Hamas. Al-Qaeda praised the military arm of Hamas, the Al-Qassam Brigades, without mentioning Hamas itself, while Daesh ignored the organization entirely. This stance can be attributed to the ideological and political differences between these organizations and Hamas, particularly regarding political participation and Hamas’ relationship with Iran.

The current events in the region represent a pivotal moment that could have significant effects on these organizations, as well as on regional and international security.

It is expected that the current developments will impact the activities of both Al-Qaeda and Daesh. Al-Qaeda may escalate its attacks against Western targets in the coming period, attempting to regain the momentum it lost compared to Hamas. On the other hand, Daesh is likely to remain distant from the Palestinian-Israeli conflict, focusing instead on its expansion in Africa.

Is this the change in the wind that the Israel-Gaza crisis demands?

THE British have an idiom – “It is an ill wind that blows nobody any good” – which is our way of describing a not-unfamiliar universal circumstance, when a benefit can be discerned in even the very worst of circumstances.

October 7, 2023, and the aftermath that is still being lived through, is an unlikely candidate for the idiom. After 12 months of misery, violence and death on a medieval scale, it is hard for any positive analysis to surface. But, as I wrote in The National a year ago, I still believe there is one to which to cling – that this is the Arab moment, the regional moment, to ensure that what we are witnessing must be the last time that victims suffer the consequences of the failures of the past.

The year has fulfilled the fears that many were expressing within hours of the shocking and brutal Hamas attacks. A reprisal from Israel was certain, and history suggested it would be unconstrained. So it has been. Gaza has been levelled, and Hamas severely reduced, but not extinguished.

Israeli military targets have been hit, but the consequential damage to the innocent as well has been high, with the reported deaths of almost 42,000 and plenty of evidence to suggest that, once the rubble is cleared, there could be double that number. Hostages remain – the only ones to emerge were mostly recovered through negotiation, or their bodies were released, some after cruel recent murder.

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conclude

the agony, no clear pathway to peace nor the restoration of anything like normal life for all who have been displaced in Gaza and Israel. And now the feared escalation is upon us. Israel’s identification of Hezbollah facilities, rocket bases and strongholds in southern Lebanon may have been anticipated. So perhaps also the strikes on the Beirut suburbs, but the assassination of Hassan Nasrallah and the pager attacks not at all.

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and its response to direct Israeli attacks upon it and its military leaders – is now upon us. The next stage in the dangerous scenes we are seeing unfold is the response of each to the attacks upon each other. We are all prisoners of those over whom most of us have no say.

While blood is hot, the cooling balm of diplomacy has little chance to begin the healing process. No one

Alistair Burt

has been listening to the pleas from the UN for a “sustained ceasefire” in Gaza, or to US President Joe Biden’s “three-stage plan” for deconfliction and moving forward.

Rarely have so many dire predictions come to pass. But there were others.

Within a week of October 7 last year, I wrote the following in this paper: “But the new Middle East depends on peace and stability. Without finally resolving the cause of conflict at its heart, we must know that sooner or later violence will engulf us. The recent regional diplomacy [of reaching out from Arab

This is the moment for Arab and the Gulf leadership, and it must be seized.”

The formation of the Global Alliance to Implement a Two-State Solution, announced by Saudi Foreign Minister Prince Faisal bin Farhan at the UN last month, might just be that change in the wind that the crisis demands.

Supported by an alliance of Arab and Islamic states, and by the EU and the UN, Prince Faisal made clear his belief that a permanent resolution to the current conflict, and preventing the repeated re-kindling of it, was only through the establishment of a Palestinian state. Coupled with the recent declaration by UAE Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Sheikh Abdullah bin Zayed, whose country has ties with Israel through the Abraham Accords – that there would be no support for the reconstruction of Gaza without the recognition of a Palestinian state – they demonstrate unmistakably that the time for the marginalisation of the issue by

states to Iran, and of the Abraham Accords] was designed to prevent that cataclysmic possibility. Now is surely time for the final step.

“To escape the failures of the past, such efforts must be led by the region itself, supported by the international community – not the other way around. There can be no more patch-ups, until the next round of violent exchanges.

Why Palestinians won’t leave their land

Ahmad Ibsais

OVER the past year, Israel’s genocidal violence has officially killed nearly 42,000 Palestinians in Gaza. Estimates put the real death toll at more than 180,000. Simultaneously, the Israeli occupation forces have repeatedly carried out bloody assaults on the West Bank, massacring more than 740 Palestinians. Last month, the colonial regime expanded its violence into Lebanon, where on September 23, more than 500 people were killed. In two weeks, Israel has murdered more than 2,000 Lebanese people.

The Israeli army has flattened whole neighbourhoods in Gaza, digging out roads with bulldozers, bombing infrastructure and utility installations, and pulverising residential buildings. Health and educational facilities have been obliterated – water stations,

electricity plants and solar panels destroyed. In short, Israel has tried to wipe out all that sustains life in Gaza.

Palestinians have been ordered to “evacuate” the vast majority of the strip and are being crowded into 16 percent of its territory. This same strategy to empty the land has been applied to some areas of the West Bank and now in Lebanon.

People are told they can return once Israel’s “military operations” are done. But we all know that the slaughter is meant to clear the land for colonisation. It happened before – during the Nakba of 1948 – and the Palestinians were never allowed to return to their homes despite a United Nations resolution demanding it. That is why Palestinians will not leave.

To some outsiders, the enduring Palestinian attachment to their land may seem difficult to understand. It is especial-

ly incomprehensible to the Zionists who expelled so many of us, hoping we would just move elsewhere in the Arab world and assimilate. But the Palestinian people have not given up their rightful claim to their land for more than seven decades now.

The question of why Palestinians refuse to leave their homes and ancestral lands, even in the face of relentless bombardment, raids, settler encroachment and economic dispossession, is one that is deeply personal and fundamental to Palestinian identity. It is not simply a matter of geography or property ownership but a profound connection to the land that is woven into the fabric of Palestinian history, culture and collective memory. There is a stubbornness to this decision, yes, but also a deep understanding that to leave would be to sever a connection that has been in

place for generations.

As an agrarian society, the Palestinians have a special place for land in their culture and collective consciousness. The olive tree is the perfect symbol of it. Olive trees are ancient, resilient and deeply rooted – just like the Palestinian people. Families tend to these trees the way they tend to their heritage. The act of harvesting olives, pressing them into oil and sharing that oil with loved ones is an act of cultural preservation.

That is why the Israeli army and settlers love to attack Palestinian olive groves. Destroying an olive tree is more than an attack on Palestinian livelihood. It is an attack on Palestinian identity. Israel’s attempt to wipe it out is reflected in its relentless war on Palestinian olive trees. From 1967 to 2013, it uprooted about 800,000 of

them. The attachment to the homeland is there even among us, the diaspora Palestinians. I myself was born in Nablus in the occupied West Bank but grew up outside Palestine. Even when far away, I never stopped feeling a connection to the Palestinian land.

My family was forced to flee during the second Intifada. My father had watched the Israeli army steal his father’s land and turn it into a military checkpoint, and my mother was being shot at by settlers on her way to work.

Theirs was not a decision to voluntarily emigrate; it was an act of survival.

Over the past two decades, I have gone back to Palestine regularly, watching settlers steadily encroach on Palestinian land, trying to displace more Palestinians from their homes. What I

remembered as a child as clusters of illegally built houses grew to become whole cities – besieging Palestinian towns and villages from all sides.

But as I saw Palestinian olive trees burned, Palestinian water rerouted and stolen, and Palestinian homes demolished, I also witnessed resistance and defiance. Palestinians were setting up water tanks to make it through periods of water cut-offs by the Israelis. They were rebuilding their homes at night after a demolition, and they were rushing to help communities like Huwara when a settler raid would take place.

In the past year, Israeli violence has become genocidal, but Palestinian “sumud” – steadfastness – has not been diminished. From Jenin to Gaza, Palestinians – under relentless Israeli attacks and bombardment – have not stopped resisting the colonial onslaught

through the simple act of living and surviving.

The more the occupier tries to make Palestinian life impossible, the more Palestinians come up with makeshift solutions to make it possible – whether it is a washing machine powered by a bicycle, a clay oven made from mud and straw to bake bread or an electricity generator assembled from random machine parts.

These are just a few acts of stubborn perseverance, of sumud, crystallised.

Meanwhile, in the diaspora, our hearts and minds have never left Palestine. We have watched in pain and in terror as the genocide has unfolded and as the leaders of the countries where we have sought refuge have turned a blind eye. Many in the West do not believe Palestinian life has value. They do not see us as human beings.

This relentless dehu-

manisation of Palestinians has spread despair and hopelessness among our communities. But we have no right to give up when the people of Gaza carry on amid the horrors of genocide. We have to awaken Palestinian sumud within us and mobilise to tell other societies that we are here, we exist and we will persevere in a world bent on erasing us.

The metaphor of “we are the land” is not just poetic. It is a lived reality for the Palestinian people. When Palestinians are asked, “Why don’t you leave?” they respond with “Why should we?” This is Palestinian land, cultivated by the blood and tears of generations of Palestinians. Leaving it would mean losing everything.

It would mean allowing the erasure of our history, our culture, our collective soul.

A year into this genocide, Palestinians remain because they must.



Stock Exchange crosses another milestone

— reaches historic level of 84,910.30 points

ISLAMABAD (APP): Positive sentiments prevail over the 100-Index of the Pakistan Stock Exchange (PSX) as it continued with bullish trend on Monday, gaining 1,378.34 more points, a positive change of 1.65 percent, reaching all time high level of 84,910.30 points against 83,531.96 points on the last trading day.

A total of 449,507,635 shares were traded during the day as compared to 381,529,555 shares the previous trading day, whereas the price of shares stood at Rs30.196 billion against Rs20.523 billion on the last trading day.

As many as 448 compa-

nies transacted their shares in the stock market, 224 of them recorded gains and 86 sustained losses, whereas the share price of 3 companies remained unchanged.

The three top trading companies were Pak Petroleum with 40,779,930 shares at Rs126.69 per share, Hub Power Company XD with 28,080,507 shares at Rs121.70 per share and Fauji Cement XD with 23,127,553 shares at Rs28.00 per share.

Hoechst Pakistan Limited witnessed a maximum increase of Rs185.20 per share price, closing at Rs2,285.20, whereas the runner-up was Pakistan Tobacco Company Limited

with Rs85.77 rise in its per share price to Rs1,027.45.

Bhanero Textile Mills Limited witnessed a maximum decrease of Rs82.27 per share closing at Rs966.73 followed by Hallmark Company Limited with Rs43.04 decline to close at Rs1,132.30.

Rupee sheds 13 paise against dollar: Pakistani rupee on Monday depreciated by 13 paise against the US dollar in the interbank trading and closed at Rs277.64 against the previous day's closing of Rs277.51.

However, according to the Forex Association of Pakistan (FAP), the buying and selling rates of the dollar in the open market stood

at Rs278.25 and Rs279.75 respectively.

The price of Euro decreased by Rs1.47 to close at Rs304.47 against the last day's closing of Rs305.94, according to the State Bank of Pakistan (SBP).

The Japanese yen came down by 02 paise and closed at Rs1.87, whereas a decrease of Rs1.50 was witnessed in the exchange rate of the British Pound, which traded at Rs363.89 as compared to the last day's closing of Rs365.39.

The exchange rates of the Emirates Dirham and Saudi Riyal increased by 03 paise 04 paise to close at Rs75.58 and Rs73.91.

SCCI chief stresses early resolution of small industries issues



F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: Sarhad Chamber of Commerce and Industry president Fazal Moqem Khan urged the government and relevant authorities to address small-scale business and industries issues on priority basis to boost up the economy and create employment opportunities in the province.

Moqem Khan was speaking to a delegation of Small Industrial Estate Association Kohat Road Peshawar led by its presi-

dent Wahid Arif Awan here on Monday.

SCCI senior vice president Abdul Jalil Jan, vice president Shehryar Khan, Executive committee members Muhammad Nadeem, Aftab Iqbal, Muhammad Ashfaq and Hamoodul Rehman also present on the occasion.

Patron in chief of the Association and former president of the chamber Engr Maqsood Anwar Pervaez, former senior vice president Imran Khan Mohmand, Aurangzeb Mohmand,

association members, and small manufacturers were amongst the delegation.

The delegation congratulated the newly elected office bearers of the SCCI.

Members of the delegation pointed out several issues, especially relating to electricity, gas, property tax and others that has brought de-industrialization in the province.

The SCCI chief highlighted that small business and industries have played a pivotal role in the economic growth.

Fazal Moqem fully endorsed issues that had been highlighted during the meeting and promised to take up all these issues with relevant authorities to resolve promptly. He vowed no stone will remain unturned to resolve the business community issues.

The SCCI chief emphasized the need of demonstrating unity among traders to early address all problems.

Fazal Moqem asked the federal and provincial governments to take serious steps for ease of doing business. He commended traders of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa for continuing their businesses and industries despite all odds.

The chamber president asserted that a special fiscal incentive must be announced for war-affected businesses and industries.

Earlier, the Association president Wahid Arif Awan and patron in Chief Engr Maqsood Anwar Pervaez and others also spoke on the occasion and congratulated the newly elected office bearers of the chamber and presented garlands to them.

LCCI urges SBP to ensure facilitation for businesses

LAHORE (APP): Lahore Chamber of Commerce and Industry President Mian Abuzar Shad Monday urged the government and State Bank of Pakistan (SBP) to ensure adequate facilitation to the business community.

"Enabling the business sector to function smoothly is essential for driving the country's economic growth and prosperity," he remarked in a meeting with Chief Manager of the State Bank of Pakistan Tariq Riaz here at Lahore Chamber. The meeting was also attended by the LCCI Executive Committee members.

Mian Abuzar Shad acknowledged the efforts of the Federal Shariah Court which has directed that the country's conventional banking system be transitioned to Shariah-compliant Islamic banking by 2027. He said that the State Bank of Pakistan is already taking various steps toward achieving this goal. He commended these initiatives and described them as both timely and crucial given the increasing demand for Islamic banking across the country.

The LCCI chief added that the Lahore Chamber is focusing on several key areas including taxation reforms. He urged the government to take swift action in digitizing the economy as this is essential to modernizing the financial system and making it more transparent and efficient.

Mian Abuzar Shad also raised concerns of the business community regarding the Federal Board of Revenue saying that traders have voiced their reservations over certain practices. He urged the government to address these concerns to create a more business-friendly environment.

The LCCI President stressed the need for the State Bank of Pakistan to automate its processes, particularly in the area of banking transactions. He said that the current monopoly of commercial banks in the opening of Letters of Credit

has created hurdles for businesses. He urged the State Bank to ensure that commercial banks are fully under its control allowing for more fair and transparent banking practices.

Mian Abuzar Shad also called upon the State Bank to address the concerns of traders, especially in areas where commercial banking practices have led to complications for business owners.

He urged the Chief Manager of the State Bank, Tariq Riaz, to issue clear instructions to all commercial banks, ensuring full cooperation with LCCI members. He stressed that traders and entrepreneurs should be treated as valued partners in the country's economic growth rather than facing obstacles in their daily business transactions.

One of the key areas that Mian Abuzar Shad appreciated was the State Bank's efforts to enhance financial access for women entrepreneurs and Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs). He welcomed the initiatives aimed at facilitat-

ing easier access to financing for these sectors describing them as vital for Pakistan's economic growth. Mian Abuzar Shad also praised the State Bank's decision to encourage commercial banks to take proactive steps in supporting women entrepreneurs and SMEs, which he described as essential engines of economic development.

In addition, he applauded the State Bank's initiative to launch banking kiosks across the country in collaboration with five of the nation's leading banks. These kiosks will provide easier access to banking services in underserved areas, particularly for SMEs and individual entrepreneurs. This initiative, according to Mian Abuzar Shad, is a step in the right direction and aligns with the country's broader goal of promoting financial inclusion.

To further strengthen the partnership between the State Bank and the Lahore Chamber, Mian Abuzar Shad invited the State Bank

to hold awareness sessions at the Lahore Chamber of Commerce. He emphasized that these sessions would greatly benefit LCCI members by providing them with critical insights into financial regulations, banking processes, and upcoming reforms.

In response, Chief Manager Tariq Riaz congratulated Mian Abuzar Shad and other LCCI officials for their efforts and leadership. He acknowledged the long-standing and strong relationship between the State Bank and LCCI and assured the business community that the State Bank would continue to work closely with the chamber to facilitate businesses.

Tariq Riaz highlighted several initiatives that the State Bank is currently undertaking, including an upcoming awareness program focusing on SMEs scheduled for October 10. This event, he explained, will place special emphasis on women entrepreneurs, a group that the State Bank is keen to support.

Asian markets track Wall Street rally on US jobs data

HONG KONG (AFP/APP): Asian markets rose Monday after a blockbuster US jobs report soothed any concerns about the world's top economy, while the dollar held gains with traders scaling back bets on another bumper interest rate cut.

Oil prices rose as traders await Israel's response to Iran's missile barrage last week amid fears of a region-wide war in the Middle East.

All three main indexes on Wall Street rallied Friday on data showing a forecast-busting 254,000 US jobs were created last month and the unemployment rate fell.

The reading was the best in six months and sharply

higher than readings in July and August, which had sparked worries that the economy could be heading for a recession.

The dollar rallied on the reading as investors lowered their expectations the Federal Reserve will cut interest rates 50 basis points for a second straight meeting when it gathers this month.

"The September payrolls print was meaningfully better than expected," said Taylor Nugent, a senior markets economist at National Australia Bank.

"It was going to take more bad news for the (board) to match the extent of cuts in near-term pricing. "But instead the data

was supportive of (its) assessment that the US labour market is not primed for imminent, sharper deterioration and may even be holding up a little better than expected."

Inflation data later in the week will be closely watched by traders hoping for more of an idea about the Fed's decision-making. Jim Reid at Deutsche Bank Research said: "My personal view was always that the amount of rate cuts priced in since mid to late summer was only likely if we had a recession."

"If we didn't, then the rates market overall was too pessimistic. I would still say that today."

The stronger dollar

against the yen boosted Japanese stocks, with the Nikkei 225 climbing almost two percent, while Hong Kong extended its recent rally fuelled by China's raft of economic stimulus measures.

There were also gains in Sydney, Singapore, Seoul, Taipei, Jakarta, Bangkok and Manila.

Wellington and Mumbai edged down, while London, Paris and Frankfurt were on the back foot in early trade.

Shanghai was closed for a holiday.

Crude prices reversed early losses after a volatile day Friday that saw them soar five percent at one point before paring the gains.



KARACHI: MD & CEO PPL Imran Abbasy exchanging settlement agreement for Block 8, Iraq with DG MdOC Muhammad Yaseen Hassan.

Shipping activity at Port Qasim

KARACHI (APP): Two ships, MSC Fair Field and OM Singapore carrying Container and Palm oil, berthed at Qasim International Container Terminal and Liquid Cargo Terminal respectively on Sunday.

Meanwhile four more ships, Kapra Thos Dawn, Haj Mohammad, Rasha and Petrel-1 are also arrived at outer anchorage port during last 24 hours.

Seven ships were engaged at POA berths during the last 24 hours, out of them a General cargo carrier 'Peppino' left the port on today early morning.

Cargo volume of 85,152 tonnes, comprising 58,977 tonnes imports cargo and 26,175 tonnes export cargo carried in 2,438 Containers (1,180 TEUs Imports& 1,258 TEUs Export) was handled at the port during last 24 hours.

Eight ships at Outer Anchorage of Port Qasim, out of them a 'Sunda' and two more ships, Aligot and Al-Diab are scheduled to load/offload Cement, Gas oil and LPG are expected to take berths at MW-2, FOTCO and SSGC respectively on Monday. Meanwhile two more ships, MSC Alina and MSC Melissa are due to arrive at port on Tuesday.

Tokyo stocks end higher on financial

TOKYO (APP): Tokyo stocks ended higher on Monday, as financial issues were bought on hopes for improved profits and exporters on the yen's weakness.

Japan's benchmark Nikkei stock index, the 225-issue Nikkei Stock Average, ended up 697.12 points, or 1.80 percent, from Friday at 39,332.74.

The broader Topix index, meanwhile, finished 45.32 points, or 1.68 percent, higher at 2,739.39.

The stock market was lifted by shares in banks, insurance firms and securities houses which were sought due to higher interest rates, while the weakening yen lifted shares of auto and electronics companies, analysts said.

Market watchers here noted that while the benchmark Nikkei nears the 40,000 threshold after volatile moves since late September, whether it can reclaim the key level last seen in July will depend on earnings results from both Japanese and US companies this week.

PPL ASIA, MdOC reach settlement on EDPS contract

F.P. Report

KARACHI: The Pakistan Petroleum Limited (PPL) Asia has reached at an amicable settlement with Midland Oil Company (MdOC) that brings closure to PPL's operations in block-8 Iraq while securing a net payment of US\$ 6 million.

The settlement between Pakistan Petroleum Limited (PPL) Asia E&P B.V., a subsidiary of PPL, and Midland Oil Company (MdOC) marks the conclusion of their Exploration, Development and Produ-

ction Service Contract (EDPSC) for Block-8, Iraq, which expired in May 2022, said a statement on Monday.

"Efforts to resolve the lingering settlement from 2022 involved addressing longstanding disputes and claims between the parties," it said adding that sustained negotiations and legal efforts by PPL Asia resulted in to signing an agreement on October 6, 2024, by PPL's MD and CEO Imran Abbasy and MdOC's DG Muhammad Yaseen Hassan.

"A significant milestone in these efforts was the net settlement of USD 6 million, with MdOC paying through a third party," the statement further informed and added that after over two years of engagement the final resolution closed all matters related to the contract without either side admitting fault or liability.

The agreement not only brought closure to PPL's operations in Block-8 but also delivered a valuable foreign exchange recovery for the company and Pakistan, it stated.

Kamal calls for boosting rice exports, meeting EU food safety standards

ISLAMABAD (APP): Federal Minister for Commerce Jam Kamal Khan on Monday emphasized the need to increase Pakistan's rice exports and ensure compliance with European food safety standards, citing the country's 25% share of the European rice export market.

He said during a meeting with the representative of the Rice Exporters Association of Pakistan (REAP), a news release issued here.

Pakistan holds 25% of the European rice export market compared to India's 16%. To maintain this competitive edge, Jam Kamal highlighted the necessity of collaboration between the government and exporters.

Rice exports play a vital role in Pakistan's economy, ranking second in export value after cotton. Rice exporters are a primary source of revenue and employment, with the government aiming to increase

exports from \$4 billion to \$6-7 billion in the near future.

"We are focusing on improving our standards to meet international food safety requirements, especially in Europe," Federal Minister for Commerce Jam Kamal Khan added.

Recent diplomatic developments include discussions with Malaysian Prime Minister Anwar Ibrahim on expanding rice and meat exports to Malaysia. A Pakistani business delegation, led by Jam Kamal, will visit Malaysia in November to explore new opportunities.

Malik Faisal Jahangir, Chairman of the Rice Exporters Association of Pakistan (REAP), said that Pakistan's rice exports face fewer regulatory challenges, with only 74 Rapid Alerts for pesticides were issued last year, compared to 264 for India.

Pakistan remains one of the lowest-risk countries concerning food safety

standards. However, Jahangir expressed concern over potential harm to Pakistan's export reputation from negative campaigns.

Jam Kamal stressed educating farmers to improve rice production quality and reduce alerts. Balochistan, despite producing a small quantity of rice, cultivates some of Pakistan's best organic rice.

He called for a joint effort by stakeholders to develop a five-year strategy enhancing Pakistan's rice export capacity and compliance with international standards.

Federal Minister for Commerce Jam Kamal Khan urged REAP to propose actionable suggestions for achieving the government's export targets within the next year, emphasizing the importance of addressing food safety concerns, especially in the European Union, where standards are becoming increasingly stringent.

FBR holds training session on tax at NUST



F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: The

Federal Board of Revenue (FBR), through its Tax Education department, conducted a training session at the National University of Sciences and Technology (NUST) Business School, Islamabad. The session was attended by students and faculty members of NUST Business School.

It is worth mentioning that organizing training sessions in educational institutions is a long-standing initiative of FBR's Tax Education department. Memorandums of understanding have been signed with several educational

institutions, including NUST, to facilitate these sessions.

The FBR team included Secretary of Tax Education, Mr. Muhammad Alam Zeb Khan, Second Secretary, Mr. Muhammad Zahid Awan, Inspector Salman Khaliq, and Coordinator, Mr. Muhammad Zia Farooqi.

Upon arrival at NUST Business School, the FBR team was welcomed by the Dean of NUST Business School, Dr. Naukhez Sarwar, Department Head Saad Al-Marwat, and other faculty members.

The event was hosted by Ms. Mehreen, while Ms. Fizza Khan led the pro-

gram, with Ms. Ramia Kiran serving as the coordinator from NUST Business School.

Secretary of Tax Education, FBR, Mr. Muhammad Alam Zeb Khan, highlighted the importance of fostering a tax culture among the participants and emphasized that by paying taxes, we can actively contribute to the nation's development and growth.

The session also included a Q&A segment, where participants asked various tax-related questions, which were answered satisfactorily. Prizes were distributed among the students during the event.



In brief

Karachi wins Deaf Cricket Tournament

B A H A W A L P U R (APP): Deputy Commissioner Dr. Farhan Farooq attended the closing ceremony of All Pakistan T20 Deaf Cricket Tournament as the chief guest. The final match of the Deaf Cricket Tournament was played between the Karachi Deaf Cricket Team and the Faisalabad Deaf Cricket Team, in which the Faisalabad team scored 102 runs while the Karachi team chased the target and was declared the winner. The DC distributed trophies and cash prizes among the winning and runner-up teams. The ceremony was attended by Divisional Sports Officer Aamir Hameed, President of the Deaf Association Mirza Waseem Baig, President of the Bahawalpur Deaf Welfare Society Ahmed Nadeem, General Secretary Abdul Rehman, District Sports Officer Fawad Anwar, players of the Deaf Cricket Team, members of the Deaf Association, and spectators. While expressing his views, the DC stated that the Punjab government is promoting sports and providing facilities to athletes. He expressed his happiness over the organization of the Friendship Cup 2024 under the auspices of the Bahawalpur Deaf Sports Association and praised the players for their outstanding performance. The Deputy Commissioner congratulated the Karachi Deaf Cricket Team on winning the final match.

Man City and Premier League both claim victory

LONDON (AFP): Manchester City and the Premier League both claimed victory on Monday after the champions challenged the English top flight's rules on commercial deals. City launched legal action against the associated party transaction (APT) rules earlier this year on the grounds they were anti-competitive. The APT rules are designed to ensure commercial deals with entities linked to a club's owners reflect fair market value. The case is separate from an ongoing hearing involving City, with the club fighting 115 charges relating to alleged breaches of Premier League financial rules. The Premier League said on Monday that City were "unsuccessful in the majority of (their) challenge" and that the tribunal considering the case had determined the APT rules were necessary and pursued a legitimate objective. But City released a statement saying the tribunal had declared the APT rules "unlawful" and that the league had abused a dominant position under competition law. The Premier League said the tribunal had supported the legitimacy of the regulations and said it had found them essential to make the profitability and sustainability rules (PSR) effective. It said the tribunal had agreed with the Premier League that if a transaction was evidently not at fair market value, that would distort competition within the league. The league also said the panel had rejected City's argument that the purpose of the rules was to discriminate against clubs with ownership from the Gulf region. The Premier League said the panel found in favour of City in "two respects only" — that shareholder loans should not be excluded from APT rules and that a "limited number of amendments" to the APT rules made earlier should not be retained. Manchester City said the panel found the APT rules were "structurally unfair" and that the panel had set aside specific decisions of the Premier League to restate the fair market value of two transactions entered into by the club.



MULTAN: Pakistan's Abdullah Shafique bows his head in gratitude after scoring a magnificent century on the first day of the Test match against England at Multan Cricket Stadium. —APP Photo

Saim wins National Jr U11 Squash title

PESHAWAR (APP): Promising little master Muhammad Saim of Sindh lifted the trophy of the All Pakistan National Junior Boys U11 Squash Championship after defeating Ahmed Ali Naz of the Pakistan Air Force by 3-2 in a thrilling final witnessed by capacity crowd present at the Qamar Zaman Squash Complex.

Administrator Hayatabad Sports Complex Abid Khan distributed the prizes among the players.

He was accompanied by Senior coach Manuwar Zaman, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Finance Secretary Wazir Gul Muhammad and other dignitaries were also present. The final played between Muhammad Saim and Ahmed Ali Niaz of the Pakistan Air Force provided great thrill for the sitting spectators as both the players gave each other a tough fight with some fine strokes were also witnessed. Mohammad Saim failed

to click in the first two sets won by Ahmad Ali Niaz at 11-13, and 10-12 but later on Saim strike back and marched into victory in three consecutive sets at 12-10, 13-11 and 11-9. A total of 50 players from all across Pakistan took part in the Championship organized by Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Squash Association with the collaboration of Regional Sports Officer and District Sports Officer Peshawar.

Sports Board wins Volleyball title

PESHAWAR (APP): Deputy Commissioner Peshawar Inter-Club Volleyball Championship was won by Sports Board Academy, defeating Youth Khalil Club by 3-0 in the final played here at PSB Coaching Center on Monday. Deputy Commissioner Peshawar Samad Saleem distributed prizes among the players along with Provincial Volleyball Association Secretary Khalid Waqar, Regional Sports Officer Kashif Farhan, Directorate of Sports Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Coach Wasifullah, Bakhtiar Alam Finance Secretary Provincial Volleyball Association and Tajamal Khan were present.

The final of Inter-Club Volleyball Championship was played between Youth Khalil Club and Sports Board Academy, in which Sports Board Academy showed the best game and defeated Youth Khalil Club by 25-16, 25-18 and 25-19 to win the title. Earlier the first semi-final was played between Youth Khalil Club and Aftab Club Bara Sheikhan which Youth Khalil Club won by 3-1, the score was 27-25, 25-21, 25-23 and 25-22. A total of 20 clubs of Peshawar District participated in the Inter-Club Volleyball Championship wherein Deputy Commissioner Peshawar Samad Saleem distributed prizes among the players.

Jayasuriya named head coach

COLOMBO (Reuters): Sri Lanka's cricket board on Monday named Sanath Jayasuriya as the national team's head coach until the end of the Twenty20 World Cup in 2026. The 55-year-old, a former captain and World Cup-winning allrounder, led Sri Lanka to a 2-0 test series win over New Zealand as interim head coach late last month. Sri Lanka got their first 50-over series win over India in 27 years under Jayasuriya in August, before winning their first away test against England in 10 years in September. "The appointment came into effect on October 1, 2024, and will remain until March 31, 2026," the SLC posted on X.

Masood, Abdullah centuries lift Pakistan to 328-4 in first Test

MULTAN (AFP): Skipper Shan Masood and opener Abdullah Shafique both cracked centuries as Pakistan scored an impressive 328-4 on the opening day of the first Test against England in Multan on Monday.

Masood's brilliant 151 was his first hundred for four years, while Shafique also returned to form with 102 as the pair put on a solid 253-run stand for the second wicket after Pakistan won the toss and batted.

England, led by Ollie Pope in the absence of the injured Ben Stokes, briefly fought back when they removed both Masood and Shafique in the space of just two runs in the third session.

The visitors then took the second new ball at 308-3 and dismissed Babar Azam, trapped leg-before by fast bowler Chris Woakes for 30.

Saud Shakeel was unbeaten on 35 at the close of play, with nightwatchman Naseem Shah yet to score.

England's attack toiled hard in the Multan heat, with fast bowler Gus Atkinson the most successful with 2-70. Woakes and spinner Jack Leach both took a wicket each.

Masood had been under

pressure to make runs, with his last hundred coming against the same opponents at Manchester in 2020 -- 14 Tests and 27 innings ago.

He pushed Woakes for a single to complete his fifth Test hundred off just 102 balls with two sixes and 13 fours in a dominant display of batting. Shafique was equally assured as the pair made England's three-pronged pace attack and two spinners toil on a batting-friendly pitch.

"Thanks to the management that they backed me in my lean phase," he said. "I am happy that I have contributed today. As a batting unit, we have done well but we still need to carry on tomorrow," Shafique said.

"Pretty happy" Assistant coach Jeetan Patel was satisfied with the hard work put in by England's bowlers. "The toil the bowlers put in today was great," said former New Zealand spinner Patel. "They tried different things to take wickets, with different fields." "We are pretty happy with what we have ended up with. We would have liked them six down or all out but it's a sub-continental pitch."

England took a wicket in the fourth over when Atkinson forced opener Saim Ayub to glove a shorter ball down the leg side to wicketkeeper Jamie Smith with the total on eight.

The visitors thought they had a second when pace bowler Brydon Carse, on debut, trapped Masood in front on 16 and umpire Kumar Dharmasena gave him out. However, a review showed the ball had pitched outside the leg stump.

Masood went on the attack against Shoaib Bashir, hitting the off-spinner for four boundaries before two more off Atkinson took him to his 11th Test fifty. Shafique survived being run out on 34 when Pope missed the stumps with his diving throw with the batsman well short of his ground. He smashed two fours and a six off Bashir to reach his sixth Test half-century.

Both teams picked three fast bowlers and two spinners, hoping that the pitch would offer new-ball help to the seamers before taking spin later in the match. The remaining Tests are in Multan (October 15-19) and Rawalpindi (October 24-28).

Zalmi Foundation kicks off Girls cricket camp



F.P. Report

RAWALPINDI: The Zalmi Foundation successfully completed day one of trials for its Girls Cricket Camp today at the Government Post Graduate College in Rawalpindi.

The event, organized by the Zalmi Foundation in collaboration with Dukhtar-e-Pakistan and the National Commission on the Status of Women (NCSW), brought together students from various universities across Rawalpindi and Islamabad divisions.

This landmark initiative, part of the lead-up to the inaugural Pakistan Women's League, aims to empower young women by providing them with an unprecedented opportunity to showcase their cricketing skills and compete at a national level. The initiative aligns with the core mission of empowering women in sports and fostering gender equality through inclusive platforms.

Dr. Saima Hamid, Vice

Chancellor of Fatima Jinnah Women University, Rawalpindi, praised the event's significance, stating: "This event marks a turning point for women in sports in Pakistan. By offering a space where young women can thrive and showcase their talent, the Zalmi Foundation is breaking down barriers and creating new possibilities for female athletes."

Ms. Shabana Nawaz, Deputy Chief of NCSW, highlighted the broader social impact of the event:

"The Girls Cricket Camp is a powerful initiative to challenge the status quo. By empowering women in sports, we are promoting equality and creating a future where young girls are not only encouraged but expected to excel in all areas, including sports."

Mr. Mohayyudin Ahmad Wani, Special Secretary of the Federal Ministry of Education, emphasized the importance of collaboration for empowering women:

"The combination of education and sports is transformative. The Zalmi Foundation has taken a bold step by collaborating with NCSW and Dukhtar-e-Pakistan to provide opportunities that will shape the future of women in Pakistan."

Mr. Abbas Layaq, COO of Peshawar Zalmi, expressed excitement over the talent displayed during the trials, saying:

"Peshawar Zalmi is thrilled to support such a groundbreaking initiative. The young women participating today have immense potential, and we are committed to ensuring that they have the resources and platform to succeed."

With day one of the trials concluded, excitement continues to build as the Girls Cricket Camp moves into its second day tomorrow, providing more participants with the chance to demonstrate their cricketing skills and take their place in the inaugural Pakistan's first Women League.

England Coach praises Pakistan security forces

MULTAN (APP): In a heartwarming gesture, England cricket team's assistant coach, Paul Collingwood, has shown his appreciation for Pakistani security forces by sharing a remarkable image of them on social media.

Collingwood, who was currently in Pakistan with the team for their tour, posted a picture of the local security personnel escorting the team to the stadium in Multan, giving it the caption "The lads," accompanied by the Pakistan flag and clapping hands emojis.

The image, which featured members of the Multan police protecting the England team, quickly went viral across social media, drawing praise from both Pakistani and international cricket fans. Collingwood's gesture not only highlighted the professionalism of Pakistan's security forces but also

shone a light on the extraordinary hospitality the country has provided to the visiting English team.

Pakistan has been lauded in recent years for its exceptional security arrangements for international teams, a crucial factor in bringing major cricketing events back to the country. Collingwood's acknowledgment of these efforts reinforces the positive narrative surrounding Pakistan's ability to host international sporting events safely and securely.

The post comes at a time when Pakistan was eager to demonstrate its capability of providing a safe environment for international players. Over the past few years, Pakistan's cricket grounds have once again opened their doors to global teams, following enhanced security protocols and a nationwide effort to restore the country's image as a safe

and welcoming destination for sports.

Fans and officials alike appreciated the recognition from the England coaching staff. Many took to social media to express gratitude for the post, with some pointing out that gestures like these help foster stronger relationships between nations. Collingwood's praise has also served as a morale boost for the local law enforcement, who were often tasked with managing the extensive security needs of such high-profile events.

As Pakistan continues to host major international cricketing events, this kind of acknowledgment from figures like Collingwood serves as a testament to the country's growing stature in the global cricketing community and its commitment to ensuring a safe and welcoming environment for all.

England's batting improves in win over SA

SHARJAH (Agencies): A much-improved batting performance saw England seal a seven-wicket win over South Africa at the Women's T20 World Cup.

On a more batter-friendly surface than the previous encounters at Sharjah, Danni Wyatt-Hodge's 43 and Nat Sciver-Brunt's unbeaten 48 helped England reach their target of 125 with four balls to spare.

The pair rode their luck, with several chances falling short of fielders or into gaps, but were ultimately rewarded for taking calculated risks and smart running between the wickets - in stark contrast to the one-dimensional approach against Bangladesh.

Opener Maia Bouchier struggled as South Africa dominated the powerplay, before Alice Capsey - who was dropped on nought - added a dynamic 19 to take the sting out of the Proteas' attack, before the experienced duo's match-winning partnership of 64.

South Africa, who knocked England out of the previous T20 World Cup in 2023, were restricted to 124-6 after another stellar performance from England's spinners.

Proteas captain Laura Wolvaardt hit 42 but England squeezed the rest, with left-armers Sophie Ecclestone delivering an impeccable 2-15 and Linsey Smith, Charlie Dean and Sarah Glenn claiming a wicket each.



All-rounder Marizanne Kapp threatened to finish the innings explosively before she was bowled by Ecclestone for a 17-ball 26, but Annerie Dercksen's 20 from 11 balls secured a total over a run a ball, which have been hard to come by throughout this tournament.

England are in a promising position to finish top of Group B, and South Africa are still in contention for a semi-final spot as both teams take on winless Scotland next, with the Proteas playing on Wednesday and England on Saturday.

Ecclestone leads epic spin quartet

While the sluggish pitches and slow outfielders at Sharjah have bamboozled many batters so far - including England's - they have certainly played into the hands of the enviable array of spinners that Heather Knight has at her disposal.

The opening match against Bangladesh was a rare wicketless day for Ecclestone but she responded

with a sublime spell on a pitch that offered just enough to aid the extra bounce from her height.

But there are still areas of concern for England. The spinners salvaged an uncertain batting effort against Bangladesh and here they had to make up for a shabby fielding performance, with four dropped catches.

Brits were dropped twice and Wolvaardt was put down on 22 as the pair continued their fine form following unbeaten half-centuries against West Indies in their first outing.

South Africa reached 37-1 after the powerplay, a decent score considering the tournament's low-scoring trends, but England's quartet of spinners turned the screw, with only 17 runs added between overs seven to 10.

Anneke Bosch stuttered her way to 18 from 26 balls, while the explosive Kapp and Chloe Tryon waited in the dugout, which aided England's cause.

Fritz wins delayed match to reach Shanghai Masters third round

SHANGHAI (AFP): World number seven Taylor Fritz finally made it into the third round of the Shanghai Masters on Monday, two days after his match against France's Terence Atmane had been suspended because of rain.

Resuming at 4-3 in the first set, Fritz defeated 161st-ranked Atmane 7-6 (7/4), 7-6 (7/5).

"I thought he played really well and if I wasn't on top of my game... I definitely could have lost that match," said Fritz.

"I just stayed with it, and played solid in a lot of the big moments." Fritz will next face Japanese qualifier Yosuke Watanuki. World number 10 Grigor Dimitrov also managed to finish a delayed match on Monday, beating Belgium's Zizou Bergs 6-3, 3-6, 6-2 and the Bulgarian will meet Australia's Alexei Popyrin in the third round.

"It's been very challenging the last couple of days," Dimitrov said. "But we just have to make the most out of what we have."

American Frances Tiafoe ended Chinese hopes when he defeated Zhou Yi 6-2, 6-4. ("Zhou) played a good match, obviously it seemed pretty one-sided, but the second set was very tough," said Tiafoe after beating the last home player remaining in the draw. In the third round, Tiafoe will meet Russian Roman Safiullin, who he called a "super dark horse".

"He can beat a lot of guys... He's had an up-and-down season, but he's capable," said Tiafoe. Nine second-round matches have been delayed or rescheduled because of rain at the weekend.

The bad weather continued on Monday, causing further havoc to the sched-

ule with play suspended on outside courts.

Naomi Osaka pulls out of Japan Open with back injury: TOKYO: Four-time Grand Slam champion Naomi Osaka on Monday pulled out of her home Japan Open next week because of an injury that caused her to retire from the China Open in Beijing.

"Due to injury, Naomi Osaka will not participate" in the WTA 250 tournament in the city of Osaka from October 14-20, the Japan Tennis Association said in a statement.

The 26-year-old former world number one looked in good touch as she recorded three wins at the China Open in Beijing last week. But in her last-16 match, against eventual champion Coco Gauff, Osaka retired at the end of the second set because of a back injury.

"So I locked my back

up during practice earlier and honestly wasn't sure if I could even play but I just wanted to try," she said on social media.

"Unfortunately things just got progressively worse during the match."

Osaka's last WTA tournament appearance in her home country was a fleeting one, two years ago at the Pan Pacific Open in Tokyo. She won a first-round match after one game when opponent Daria Saville retired.

Osaka then withdrew with abdominal pains before her second-round match. It was her last tournament before taking leave to give birth to her daughter Shai in July 2023.

Osaka returned to the tour in January this year but has struggled to recapture the form that saw her win two Australian and two US Opens between 2018 and 2021.



In brief

PHA kickoff renovation of Liaquat Bagh

RAWALPINDI (APP): Parks and Horticulture Authority (PHA) has started renovation and maintenance work in Liaquat Bagh. Maintenance of pedestrian paths, availability of the proper light, beautification of the park with planting flowering plants and sitting arrangements are among the focus areas of the work. According to the details, Director General PHA Rawalpindi, Ahmed Hassan Ranjha said that the work has been initiated while keeping the historical and cultural importance of Liaquat Bagh where hundreds of people visit daily. He said that plantation of winter flowers and plants has been set in Liaquat Bagh to amuse the public with beautiful flowers in the winter season. Ranjha noted that Liaquat Bagh was the identity of Rawalpindi being a historic and cultural activities centre. PHA always remains steadfast to ensure all respective arrangements in Liaquat Bagh, he said. The DG further said that PHA has been fulfilling its responsibilities to ensure state of the art arrangements in Liaquat Bagh which was the centre of the city's political and cultural activities.

Jatli Police resolves blind murder

RAWALPINDI (APP): The Jatli Police have resolved the mystery of blind murder of one Shakeel who was found dead in his home some two weeks ago. According to the Rawalpindi Police spokesman, the Jatli Police during investigations found that the deceased's wife Yasmin, his stepdaughter Maria and stepsons Hamza and Yusuf were involved in his murder. After killing Shakeel the accused got registered a case against the unknown murderers, however, the police using scientific means and human intelligence managed to arrest the real culprits, the spokesman said on Monday. Meanwhile, Superintendent of Police Rawalpindi Muhammad Nabil Khokhar lauded Sub-Divisional Police Officer. Gujjar Khan and the Jatli police team for their swift action against the accused.

IRSA releases 150,400 cusecs water

ISLAMABAD (APP): Indus River System Authority (IRSA) on Monday released 150,400 cusecs water from various rim stations with inflow of 125,200 cusecs. According to the data released by IRSA, water level in River Indus at Tarbela Dam was 1537.10 feet and was 139.10 feet higher than its dead level of 1,398 feet. Water inflow and outflow in the dam was recorded as 71,100 cusecs and 65,000 cusecs respectively. The water level in River Jhelum at Mangla Dam was 1208.95 feet, which was 158.95 feet higher than its dead level of 1,050 feet. The inflow and outflow of water was recorded as 10,700 cusecs and 42,000 cusecs respectively. The release of water at Kalabagh, Taunsa, Guddu and Sukkur was recorded as 94,200, 75,900, 61,700 and 11,100 cusecs respectively. Similarly, from River Kabul, a total of 20,100 cusecs of water released at Nowshera and 3,600 cusecs released from River Chenab at Marala.

Police bust street criminal gang

RAWALPINDI (APP): Police have busted a street criminal and bike-lifting gang by arresting two active members of the Tata gang allegedly involved in street and other crimes and recovered cash of Rs 36,000, two snatched iPhones, stolen motorcycles, weapons, and other items from their possession.

Ayaz Sadiq condemns Israeli fascism in Palestine

ISLAMABAD (APP): Speaker National Assembly Sardar Ayaz Sadiq on Monday expressed solidarity with the oppressed and innocent Palestinians living in Palestine & Gaza, stating, "Zionist aggression in Palestine and the Middle East is intensifying with each passing day."

In statement the Speaker while strongly condemning the ongoing Israeli fascism in Palestine & Gaza stated that the UN must play an effective role to immediately stop the Palestinian Genocide & for a complete ceasefire in Palestine.

Speaker Sadiq expressed these views on the 'Day of Solidarity with Palestine', which is being celebrated all across Pakistan on 7th October, 2024.

Sardar Ayaz Sadiq termed the ongoing Israeli aggression in Palestine as a serious violation of the United Nations Charter & UN Resolutions.

He expressed lamentation on Israeli atrocities being perpetrated against

Palestinians "Oppressed & innocent Palestinians are forced to face all kinds of deprivation."

He further said that more than 42,000 Palestinians, including innocent children, women and the elderly, have been martyred as a result of merciless bombardment of schools, hospitals and residential areas by Zionist forces.

While condemning the illegal & immoral blockades enforced by Israeli Forces on entry & exit points of Palestine & Gaza, along with other war crimes including bombardment of medical camps, Speaker NA stated that several injured Palestinians embraced martyrdom due to no access to medical aid or facilities.

The NA Speaker, extended complete solidarity with the brotherly people of Palestine and stated that the Parliament and people of Pakistan stand in solidarity with their Palestinian brothers and sisters.

He reiterated Pakistan's principled stance on the

Palestine issue and stated that Pakistan rightfully demands the establishment of an independent Palestinian state according to the pre-1967 borders with Jerusalem as its capital as per the resolutions of the United Nations Security Council.

Speaker NA while highlighting the importance of durable regional peace stated that an immediate solution to the Palestine issue and the Kashmir issue is indispensable for the establishment of sustainable peace in the region.

He also expressed his deep concern over the current situation in the Middle East and strongly denounced Israel's bombing on Lebanon, calling it a serious threat to regional peace. He described the ongoing Israeli aggression in Palestine and the Middle East as a test of global conscience and called upon the international community to play an effective role in ending the ongoing Israeli state terrorism.

JUI-F Haideri condemns Karachi explosion

ISLAMABAD (APP): Jamiat Ulema-e-Islam Fazl (JUI-F) Secretary General Maulana Abdul Ghafoor Haideri on Monday strongly condemned the recent explosion near the vehicle carrying Chinese citizens in Karachi, resulting in the loss of two lives and injuries to several others.

Maulana Haideri, in a

news statement, expressed deep sorrow and grief over the incident, extending heartfelt sympathy and condolences to the affected families. "The nefarious intentions of the enemy cannot sabotage Pakistan-China friendship," Maulana Haideri stated, reaffirming that the friendship between the two countries is "higher

than the Himalayas".

He also called upon law enforcement agencies to swiftly apprehend and bring to justice those responsible for the incident.

Maulana Haideri urged authorities concerned to provide immediate medical aid to the injured and prayed for their speedy recovery.

ICT issues guideline for public transportation vehicles

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Islamabad Transport Authority has issued guidelines for public transport vehicles in the Federal Capital to ensure safe and fair services.

These new guidelines focussed on passenger safety, prioritization of vulnerable commuters, and curbing overcharging and violations, said the spokesman of ICT administration here.

These guidelines were included that all the public transport vehicles must have their fitness certificates and route permits displayed clearly on the front glass. While, both the front and back glass of rental

cars must clearly show signage indicating their status as rental vehicles.

Similarly, women and senior citizens should be given priority seating at the front of public transport vehicles. Furthermore, vehicles were required to complete their assigned routes as per the route permit. Any failure to do so would result in legal action against the relevant transport coordinator (Adda Munshi).

Meanwhile, the vehicles equipped with CNG cylinders must obtain a Cylinder Pass Certificate from stations approved by OGRA to ensure safe operations. And the driv-

ers must adhere to the proper road lanes and designated routes while operating their vehicles.

The spokesman said that overcharging passengers and overloading vehicles were strictly prohibited. Pressure horns and playing music inside the vehicle are not allowed, he added. Vulnerable passengers must be seated with priority, and they should be charged 50% less than the standard fare.

The transport authority notified that the passengers with any concerns or complaints can contact the Islamabad Transport Authority at 051-9108005 for assistance.

IPRI hosts special lecture on Gaza's aggression

ISLAMABAD (APP): Islamabad Policy Research Institute (IPRI) on Monday marked a year of aggression and genocide in Gaza by hosting a Special Lecture of His Excellency Deputy Head of Mission, Embassy of the State of Palestine, Nader K. Alturk, who spoke eloquently on "A Year of War in Gaza."

Addressing the special lecture, he listed out the trials and tribulation of a year, and said hapless Palestinians and Gazans were on the receiving end as more than 50,000 were killed, millions are displaced, and almost 80 percent of Gaza has been obliterated. He said that Israel had attacked each and every human and civil installations, under the guise of taking out military targets, and destroyed mosques, schools and hos-

pitals, said a press release.

He said that under International Law, besieged Palestinians had every right to defend themselves and use measures at their disposal in self-defence.

Alturk said that Gaza, a region of 365 km, today is in rubble and more than a million were displaced, leaving behind the rest to live in a squeezed territory of less than 30 kms.

He particularly mentioned the tactics that Israel and the United States were employing to hoodwink the definition of "Right to return" of Palestinians under the UN Resolutions.

The Palestinian envoy talked about "Greater Israel" plans and showed a map wherein the Zionist state had explicit aggressive designs over almost all of its neighbours up to Iraq and Saudi Arabia. He said that one year

of death and destruction had simply proved the incapacity and failure of international organisations, as well as the UN Security Council that had failed to uphold international security as per its mandate under the UN Charter.

He said that the legitimate government of Palestine was doing everything in its capacity to further the cause of Palestinian Statehood, and all avenues were being tapped in lawfare and diplomacy. President IPRI Dr Raza Muhammad, in his welcome address, said that Pakistan stands with the brethren of Palestine, and termed the year-long terrorism of Israel as genocide. He also underscored the need for pushing the cause of statehood at every forum to realise Two-State solution in the volatile region of Mideast.

ANF foils smuggling attempt; recovers 60 kg Ice

RAWALPINDI (APP): Anti-Narcotics Force (ANF) while conducting an operation managed to foil a drug smuggle attempt and recovered 60 kg Ice, said an ANF Headquarters spokesman here on Monday.

He informed that a consignment of drugs was seized in a successful intelligence based operation conducted near Makran

coastal line.

The ANF while conducting hours long surveillance chased a speedboat going to the Gulf of Oman and recovered total 60 kg ice in deep-sea operation near Jiwan. The recovered ice was tactfully concealed in various boxes and packets.

The accused taking advantage of the deep sea managed to escape, while the operation to net the

accused is going on.

This is a very successful operation of the ANF despite limited resources and manpower, the spokesman said adding, the force would continue its successful operations against drug trafficking.

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



ISLAMABAD: Albert P. Khorev, Ambassador of the Russian Federation called on Federal Minister for Defence, Defence Production and Aviation, Khawaja Muhammad Asif. —INP Photo

PTI failed to unleash violence despite massive attempt: Muqam

ISLAMABAD (APP): Federal Minister for State and Frontier Region, Kashmir and Gilgit-Baltistan Affairs, Engineer Amir Muqam on Monday said that the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) protest had failed to unleash violence and bloodshed in the federal capital despite massive attempts.

Addressing a press conference, the Minister appreciated the positive role of security forces and police in showing patience. Muqam said Ali Amin Gandapur's role has been that of a film actor from day one and that too of a villain. "Thankfully, the 'Imrani agenda' has not been completed.

However, despite Article 144 in Islamabad, the deployment of the Army, and many hurdles, PTI's purpose of bringing the innocent Pashtuns to create bloodshed could not be achieved. These anti-state ele-

ments were expecting severe reaction and bloodshed but their aim was not fulfilled," he said. Engineer Amir Muqam while appreciating the role of the security and law enforcement agencies said that the security agencies worked in the best interest of the country and worked patiently.

"However, the martyrdom of one constable and the injuries of many are deeply regretted," he added.

How the resources, machinery, and manpower of a poor province were used recklessly would have to be accounted for, he said. Engineer Amir Muqam warned and said that he would also ask the government officials of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa not to be part of the work against the country's interest, otherwise, they too would be held accountable. "Instead of using the innocent youth against the state, it should think about

employment and welfare for them," Federal Minister Amir Muqam said.

The minister said that the PTI regime badly failed to launch a new mega project for the welfare of people in the province in the last six months as compared to the other all other provinces working very smoothly but the KPK Chief Minister and his team protesting against the federation.

Amir Muqam said that under the dynamic leadership of Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif, a number of mega projects have been launched and in the upcoming day Pakistan will host the Conference of Organization of Islamic Countries (OIC).

The federal government will take stern action against the facilitators of PTI protestors who massively misused the resources of the poor province of KPK.

World Teachers Day celebrated at AIOU

ISLAMABAD (APP): The National Commission for Human Development (NCHD) and UNESCO Office in Pakistan, in collaboration with Allama Iqbal Open University (AIOU), and Basic Education Community Schools (BECS), celebrated World Teachers' Day 2024 at AIOU's Main Auditorium in Islamabad.

This year's theme, "Valuing Teachers' Voices: Towards a New Social Contract for Education," highlighted the essential role teachers play in shaping future generations and building a skilled, educated society. The event honored the dedication and contributions of teachers, particularly in the context of educational reforms and societal progress.

Speaking at the ceremony NCHD's Director General Mr. Ali Asghar welcomed the participants, commending the dedication of teachers, especially those working under challenging conditions in NCHD and Federal Directorate of Education (FDE) schools. He highlighted the invaluable role of teachers in human development of Pakistan.

The UNESCO representative Mr. Zafar Hayat Malik delivered a keynote address on the global importance of World Teachers' Day, emphasizing this year's theme. He emphasized the important role teachers play in promoting participatory democracy.

Women on Wheels' program launched at Girls Guide House

RAWALPINDI (INP): The "Women on Wheels" programme was launched by Chief Traffic Officer (CTO) Beenish Fatima at the Girls Guide House on Monday. More than 25 girl guides will be imparted scooter driving training under the programme.

Speaking on the occasion, CTO Beenish Fatima said that the "Women on Wheels" programme was part of the traffic police's commitment to support and empower the women.

The training would make it easy for the girls to travel

on motorbikes independently, she added.

Dr Saira Mufti, Regional Girls Guide Commissioner, warmly welcomed CTO Fatima, who was presented with a bouquet of flowers by the guides.

The CTO was of the view that "Our goal is to empower more women through this program."

After completing their training, the girls would issued driving licenses on fast-track basis as only licensed drivers could operate scooters on the roads, she added.

The CTO announced a 50% reduction in training fees to make the programme more accessible for the girls.

Lady traffic assistant instructors had been deployed at Girls Guide House while registration for the training programme was already underway, she said.

CTO Beenish said female teachers from Rawalpindi and surrounding areas could also get motorcycle training from Traffic Training Institute with special discount in fee.

Health minister directs for anti dengue measures

RAWALPINDI (APP): Punjab Health Minister, Khawaja Salman Rafique

has directed the district administration to utilize all resources in the fight against dengue issues which has hit with accelerated momentum.

"Act on an emergency basis as our top priority is to reduce the dengue outbreak in Rawalpindi," said the minister while charging a meeting to review the recent dengue situation.

He directed the administration to further accelerate and widen the ongoing awareness campaigns along with strict surveillance and monitoring. Salman Rafique urged the public representatives to consistently visit their constituencies for a

regular eye on the situational developments of dengue.

He said that CM Maryam Nawaz has been reviewing the dengue situation in the district and has directed the public representatives to play their due role in the dengue eradication. He further observed that the dengue issue could be completely defeated by the support of citizens.

The meeting which was held at the DC Office was attended by the parliamentarians including the Focal Person on Dengue, Tahira Aurangzeb, Parliamentary Secretary Information and Culture Shazia Rizwan, Malik Iftikhar, Zeib-Nisa, Mohsin Khan, Ziaullah Shah, and Deputy

Commissioner Rawalpindi Hasan Waqar Cheema.

Talking during the meeting, Tahira Aurangzeb informed that public representatives were conducting field visits with the health department teams on the instructions of CM Maryam Nawaz, to assess the dengue situation.

A detailed briefing was given to the meeting participants in which it was apprised that 1996 dengue patients have been reported in Rawalpindi in 2024. It was informed that presently there were 281 under treatment dengue patients in hospitals, whereas 1716 patients have been discharged from the hospitals after full recovery.



ISLAMABAD: CDA workers giving a fresh coat of paint to a bridge at Shakar Parian in the Federal Capital. —APP Photo

WFP provides cash assistance

KABUL (Ariana News): The World Food Program said almost four million needy people in Afghanistan have received cash assistance from the UN agency so far this year. In a post on X, WFP said about half of the recipients were women. The amount of cash donated to these individuals has not been disclosed. However, the World Food Program says the cash will enable people to spend it on what their families need most.

Tourism boosting in Panjshir

PANJSHIR (BNA): A modern recreational park, aimed at enhancing the tourism industry in Panjshir, is set to be constructed in Bazarak, the provincial capital, with an estimated investment of 100 million Afghanis. Rahmatullah Mohammadi, the Mayor of Bazarak, told the Bakhtar News Agency that this initiative, supported by the financial resources of the Panjshir Municipality, is part of broader efforts to promote tourism and attract both local and international visitors.

Amu River devouring our lands: Residents

JAWZJAN (TOLOnews): Local officials in Khwaja Doko district of Jawzjan say that in the past three months, the Amu River has destroyed approximately 500 acres of agricultural land in this district. Officials and residents of this district are calling on the caretaker government and aid organizations for fundamental reinforcements along the riverbanks. The districts of Qarqin and Khwaja Dako in Jawzjan are remote areas that face annual destruction of residential homes, agricultural lands, and orchards due to flooding and the lack of essential reinforcements along the banks of the Amu River.

Abdul Majid Saadat, the district governor of Khwaja Doko in Jawzjan, said: "Nearly 500 acres of people's agricultural lands have been destroyed by water. We ask the Islamic Emirate to take serious action and address the problems of the people."

Several residents of Khwaja Dako and Qarqin districts of Jawzjan believe that the implementation of emergency reinforcement projects along the banks of the Amu River in these districts will not solve their problems.

Juma Gul, a resident of Khwaja Dako district of Jawzjan, said: "The government should pay attention and provide reinforcements because the river is taking our lands with it."

AQ Mohammad, a resident of Qarqin district of Jawzjan, said: "The reinforcements done with sandbags are not effective. There needs to be more attention so that we can be saved from the river's destruction."

Meanwhile, the project to reinforce the banks of the Amu River is underway in several parts of various provinces along the river, and officials say that this has prevented further destruction of people's homes, agricultural lands, and orchards.

Iran to deport 2m Afghan nationals this year

KABUL (Ariana News): Iran has stepped up efforts to deport Afghan migrants and said that by the end of March next year, two million undocumented migrants will be "expelled" from the country.

According to Iranian media reports, Ahmad Reza Radan, the commander-in-chief of Iran's law enforcement, stated that "over 750,000 illegal migrants" have already been deported from Iran, and this number will total two million by the end of the current solar year.

Radan said: "This year alone, over 500,000 illegal migrants have been arrested and deported from Iran, and as a result, 250,000 others have voluntarily turned themselves in and left the country."

The mass deportation of Afghan migrants from Iran has raised concerns among human rights organizations, and as tensions between Iran and Afghanistan continue to rise over this issue, international bodies are urging both governments to engage in dialogue and find a solution that ensures the safety and dignity of Afghan migrants while addressing Iran's concerns over illegal immigration.

UNICEF donates equipment to Nangarhar hospital



JALALABAD (Pajhwok): Medical supplies worth \$70,000 have been donated by the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) to the maternity ward of the Nangarhar provincial of Afghanistan hospital, officials said on Monday.

Naqeedullah Rahimi, Public Health Department spokesman, told Pajhwok Afghan News the UNICEF had donated a batch of modern medical equipment and health supplies worth \$70,000 to the maternity ward of the provincial hospital.

The donated medical supplies and equipment included delivery beds, neonatal intensive care units, ultrasound machines and other items, which would be used for the improvement of mother and child health, he explained.

Public Health Director Maulvi Aminullah Rahimi welcomed the UNICEF donation and hoped equipment and supplies would benefit patients.

Public Health Department officials say the government has started efforts to expand services in the province and resolve the problems of health centres.

60 Afghan refugee families deported



KANDAHAR (Khaama Press): Officials in Kandahar province report that 60 families were expelled from Pakistan and have entered Afghanistan through the Spin Boldak border.

The registration and refugee identification committee at the Anjargi camp in Kandahar stated that 60 families, consisting of 323 individuals, returned to the country through Spin Boldak over the past two days.

The same committee also mentioned that these Afghan families have received financial assistance from the relevant institutions and have been referred to aid organizations for further support.

The expulsion of Afghan refugees from Iran and Pakistan has intensified recently. Iranian authorities, in recent months, have increased the deportation of undocumented Afghan migrants, detaining and expelling them from the country.

Recently, restrictions against Afghan refugees in Iran have also significantly increased.

A local official in Islamshahr recently announced that Afghan migrants are only permitted

ICRC donates 13 ambulances

KABUL (BNA): The International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) has officially handed over 13 ambulances to the Afghan Red Crescent Society to support the organization's humanitarian efforts.

According to the ARCS press release, the vehicles consist of 11 standard ambulances and two large trucks, aimed at enhancing the operational capacity of the national charity.

Sheikh Shahabuddin Delawar, Acting President of the ARCS, extended his gratitude for the ICRC's enduring support. He called on the ICRC to further extend its assistance, particularly in providing aid to underprivileged and vulnerable families across the country.

Sheikh Delawar highlighted that the newly acquired vehicles will play a crucial role in expediting and expanding ARCS services and urged staff to ensure proper maintenance and management of the fleet.

Scott Doucet, Head of Operations for the ICRC in Afghanistan, commended the ARCS for its humanitarian services and pledged continued cooperation. He reaffirmed that supporting the Afghan population, especially those in need and affected by ongoing challenges, remains a top priority for the ICRC in collaboration with the ARCS.

Execution of 7 Afghans in Iran: Activists call for legal support

KABUL (TOLOnews): The Iran Human Rights Organization says that in the past month, Iran has executed seven Afghan citizens.

According to this organization, the individuals executed were accused of committing various crimes, including murder and rape.

The report from the Iran Human Rights Organization states: "In September, at least 13 Baloch prisoners, 10 Kurdish prisoners, 7 Gilak prisoners, 6 Turkish prisoners, and 6 Lurish prisoners were executed in Iranian prisons. Additionally, at least 7 Afghan nationals were executed last month."

Several migrant rights activists are urging the Islamic Emirate to engage in talks with Iranian authorities.

Alireza Karimi, a migrant rights activist, said: "The Islamic Emirate should engage with Iranian officials about providing legal support to its citizens, delivering services, raising awareness, and cooperating with migrants to defend their rights and improve their living conditions so that Afghan migrants can live a normal life in Iran."

The spokesperson for the Islamic Emirate said that the executions in Iran have been shared with them, and they pledged efforts are underway to address these challenges.

Zabiullah Mujahid, the spokesperson for the Islamic Emirate, said: "We are in contact with the Islamic Republic of Iran, and we have emphasized that their treatment of migrants must be within the framework of the law. The executions and imprisonment of migrants have been shared with us, and they have said that they are working on it. Our effort is to ensure that those imprisoned there who are sentenced be transferred to Afghanistan."

Previously, the Ministry of Refugees and Repatriation of the Islamic Emirate said that 11,000 Afghan migrants are currently imprisoned in Iran and Pakistan.

Foreign carpet imports hurt local market: Sellers

BALKH (TOLOnews): The representative of the carpet sellers in Balkh said that due to the lack of a proper market for locally handmade carpets, only a few shops have remained open over time, out of dozens that previously existed.

Hafizullah Sadat, who has been selling locally handmade carpets in a corner of Balkh province for over 30 years, says that over time, the demand for domestic carpets has declined inside the country, and most citizens now prefer foreign carpets.

Hafizullah Sadat told TOLOnews: "God willing, all citizens of the country will turn to local carpets because it benefits their economy. If someone uses a foreign carpet for a year or two, no one will buy it again, but a local carpet can be used for many years, and it can even be passed on to the next generations."

Shahabuddin Amiri, the representative of the carpet sellers in Balkh, said: "There used to be about 50 carpet-selling shops, and the alley was filled with rug sellers. But now only about 10 shops remain, and the others are all selling foreign carpets and rugs."

According to some carpet sellers, the import of Iranian, Turkish, and Uzbekistani carpets is one of the reasons for the decrease in demand for locally handmade carpets.

Abdul Karim, a carpet seller, said: "Our carpet business is currently facing stagnation, and no one buys local carpets. We have been in the carpet business for a century, passed down from my father, and that's why we've kept our shop open, even though we don't sell more than two carpets a year."

Hekmatullah, another carpet seller, said: "In the past, governments used to support the carpet industry and its craftsmen. We also ask the Islamic Emirate to hold exhibitions to revive the carpet market and encourage people to buy carpets again."

However, the Department of Industry and Commerce in Balkh pledged that efforts are underway to support domestic handmade carpet producers and raise taxes on imported carpets.

Naseer Ahmad Niazi, Deputy Head of the Department of Industry and Commerce in Balkh, said: "Indeed, Afghan carpets are the identity of Afghans. The Islamic Emirate has taken many steps in this regard. The taxes on carpets imported from neighboring countries have been increased, and we are continuously working to revive the carpet market both inside the country and abroad."

Many residents of northern provinces who have used locally handmade carpets say that domestic carpets have unique quality and finesse and are also beneficial in terms of health.

However, their high price has caused fewer families to use them.

Iran introduces plan to end residency for migrants

KABUL (Khaama Press): Valiollah Bayati, spokesperson for the Iranian Parliament's Internal Affairs Committee, stated that the proposed plan for organizing foreign nationals does not provide for permanent residency for migrants in Iran.

Iranian media reported that the Internal Affairs Committee of the Iranian Parliament is reviewing the plan for managing foreign nationals and the charter of the National Immigration Organization.

According to the report, the plan only includes three types of temporary residency permits: one-year, three-year, and possibly seven-year permits.

The spokesperson emphasized that various government agencies are reviewing the plan, and more than 20 provisions have already been approved.

Bayati clarified, "According to this plan, migrants entering the country will be given a card after an iris scan. This card will provide all necessary services for the individual. It cannot be forged, and the migrant must carry it until they leave the country."

He added, "We do not intend for migrants in the country to stay long-term, and under this plan, there will no longer be permanent residency for foreign nationals in Iran."

Previously, Iranian officials have emphasized the deportation of "illegal" migrants, particularly Afghan citizens, from the country.

Recently, Ahmad Reza Radan, the commander of Iran's law enforcement, announced that by the end of this solar year, 2 million Afghan migrants will be expelled from Iran.

He stressed that the deportation of Afghan migrants from Iran is ongoing.

This new plan underscores Iran's strict stance on migration, particularly towards Afghan nationals, as the country continues to tighten its immigration policies.

With millions of Afghan refugees already facing expulsion, concerns grow over the humanitarian impact of these policies.

UNICEF announces water supply network

KABUL (Khaama Press): The United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) has announced that it has constructed a drinking water supply network for 1,300 students.

UNICEF shared a message on its X page, stating that the water supply network was built in Parwan province.

UNICEF has not mentioned how many water supply networks have been constructed in the province.

UNICEF also previously reported the construction of dozens of drinking water supply networks in various provinces across Afghanistan.

The shortage and lack of access to clean drinking water have become serious issues for citizens in different parts of the country.

According to a report from the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA), 67% of Afghan families do not have access to safe drinking water.

It is also worth noting that climate change has had widespread effects globally, and Afghanistan has experienced three consecutive years of drought and devastating floods.

Additionally, officials of the National Environmental Protection Agency have stated that 21 million people in Afghanistan are facing drinking water shortages due to climate change.

The ongoing water crisis, exacerbated by climate change and infrastructure challenges, highlights the urgent need for sustainable solutions. Efforts by organizations like UNICEF provide critical relief, but long-term strategies are essential to address the country's growing water scarcity problem.

MAIMANA (Pajhwok): Farmers in northern Faryab province report a significant increase in grape yield this year, but complain of low prices.

They say prices have dropped by more than 50 percent, compared to last year, making their earnings insufficient to cover expenses.

Officials from the Department of Agriculture acknowledge the claims, attributing the decline in grape prices to an unprecedented yield spike, a lack of markets and insufficient cold storage facilities.

Haji Estantal, a farmer from the Shirin Tagab, the district has 5,000 grape gardens. He adds this year's yield is several times higher than last year's.

However, the prices have nosedived and there are few buyers for the fruit.

He listed the lack of market and cold storage facilities as key reasons for the price decline, saying last year, per seven kilograms of grapes sold for 300 to 350 afis. But this year, they are selling for just 100 to 150 afis.

Estantal urged the interim government to create marketing opportunities for their produce and construct cold storage facilities in each district to preserve crops.

Najmuddin, another farmer from Khwaja Sabzposh district who brought grapes to Maimana, also grumbled about the lack of market and the low price of the fruit.

He said his income from grapes did not even cover transportation costs and the expenses of maintaining his garden.

He added that grapes that sold for 250 afghanis last year were currently priced at just 100 afis.

Hayatullah, another farmer from Qaisar, said he had leased out three grape gardens. But this year, grape prices have dropped by half, with no buyers available.

He attributed the fall to increased yields, unemployment and the economic hardships of the people.

"Last year, I had sold per seven kilograms of Taifit-type grapes for 250 afis but today I've got only 130 afis. There are fewer buyers, and recent rains have damaged orchards, causing grapes to start rotting."

Meanwhile, agriculture department official Makhdoom Habib Rahman acknowledged the growers' complaints.

He linked the decline in grape prices was to increased production, a lack of markets and people's economic difficulties.

Despite a shortage of irrigation water, he noted the grape yield in Faryab had gone up by over 50 percent this year.

According to Habib Rahman, there are nearly 16,000 hectares of grape orchards in Faryab, with an estimated yield of 21 tonnes per hectare.

This suggests that farmers will harvest more than 330,000 tonnes of grapes and produce around 100,000 tonnes of raisins

Grape yield up, prices down in Faryab



though it still lacks equipment and materials.

This issue has been raised with the Ministry of Agriculture, and it is expected that the problems faced by farmers will soon be resolved.

At the same time, some residents of the province expressed satisfaction with the lower grape prices in the local market.

Mohammad Sharif, a resident of the third district of Maimana, recalled that last year, one kilogram of grapes cost 50 to 60 afghanis. But now the fruit is selling for 20 to 30 afis, making it more accessible for poorer families.

Concerted efforts have been made to support farmers, including the construction of approximately 400 raisin houses in the districts of Qaisar, Almar, Khwaja Sabz Posh and Shirin Tagab, where many people are engaged in farming. Fifteen additional raisin houses are currently under construction.

Regarding the lack of cold storage for agricultural products, he said a small cold storage facility has been established on an experimental basis.

A larger facility of the kind had previously been constructed in Maimana,

Israel steps up Lebanon bombing as Hezbollah attacks Haifa

BEIRUT: Israel has expanded attacks on southern Lebanon and pounded the capital Beirut's southern suburbs as the Lebanese armed group Hezbollah has claimed a series of missile attacks on northern Israel, including near the city of Haifa.

The Israeli military said it carried out 120 strikes on Hezbollah positions in southern Lebanon "within an hour" on Monday. An earlier attack on a municipal building near Bint Jbeil killed at least 10 Lebanese firefighters, the latest of dozens of first responders killed in recent weeks, according to the Lebanese Ministry of Public Health.

Israel also said it would soon launch operations on Lebanon's southern coast, telling residents to stay off the beaches and the sea for a 60-kilometre (36 miles) stretch along the Mediterranean. Hezbollah said it launched series of rocket attacks on northern Israel, including near the port city of Haifa "with a large rocket salvo" and on Israeli military positions. Later, the group said it targeted areas north of Haifa with another round of rockets.

At least 10 people were wounded in the initial attack on Haifa. It was the first time the port city has been hit since Israel and Hezbollah began trading fire in October last year. In a statement, the Israeli army said about 135 rockets fired by Hezbollah had crossed from Lebanon into Israeli territory as of 5pm (14:00 GMT). Earlier, Israel carried out more than 30 strikes on Beirut's southern suburbs overnight, the heaviest bombardment since September 23, the day Israel began a significant escalation in its assault on Lebanon, the country's official news agency NNA said.

The targets included a petrol station on the main highway leading to the Beirut airport and a warehouse for medical supplies, the agency reported. Hezbollah also said it targeted Israeli troops in two border villages in southern Lebanon. The Lebanese group said its fighters "bombed ... a gathering of Israeli forces" in Maroun

al-Ras with "a rocket salvo". The Lebanese group has reported several clashes in the Maroun al-Ras area over the past several days since Israel said it had begun "targeted" ground raids in the area.

Hezbollah later said its fighters "bombed ... a gathering of Israeli enemy forces" in the nearby village of Blida "with a barrage of rockets and artillery shells". The Israeli military said two Israeli soldiers were killed in border-area combat, taking Israel's military death toll inside Lebanon so far to 11. It also announced it had deployed another division to participate in operations in Lebanon. Lebanese health authorities say a year of Israeli attacks on the country had killed at least 2,083 people and wounded 9,869.

More than 1 million people have been displaced, mostly from towns and villages in southern Lebanon, according to local authorities. United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees Filippo Grandi said Lebanon is seeing a "major displacement crisis" as a result of Israel's escalating air campaign and some of the strikes have violated international law. Grandi made his remarks during a visit to Beirut on Sunday.

The UN has appealed for \$425.7m to respond to the humanitarian crisis. About 40 percent has been funded so far. Grandi also said there had been "many instances of violations of international humanitarian law in the way the air strikes have been conducted that have destroyed or damaged civilian infrastructure". Two people working for Grandi's agency have also been killed in the strikes.

Grandi said an attack that cut access to a major border crossing between Lebanon and Syria last week had also created an obstacle for civilians trying to flee to safety. The escalating violence has pushed both Lebanese citizens and Syrian refugees in Lebanon to cross the border en masse. The warnings come as the Israeli military ordered people in

more than a dozen towns and villages in southern Lebanon to evacuate. Israeli evacuation warnings in recent days have expanded to include a provincial capital. Israel's military spokesperson Avichay Adraee in a post on X told residents to immediately flee north.

"You are not allowed to head southward," the statement read. "Any movement to the south puts your lives at risk." Meanwhile, a UN official told The Associated Press news agency the Israeli military is setting up a forward operating base close to a UN peacekeeping mission on the border in southern Lebanon. The base puts peacekeepers there at risk, said the official, who spoke on condition of anonymity. The UN peacekeeping mission in southern Lebanon, known as UNIFIL, said in a statement that it was concerned about "recent activities" by the Israeli military southeast of the Lebanese border town of Maroun al-Ras.

It did not give any details on what Israel was doing but said it was close to point 6-52, where Irish peacekeepers are positioned. This comes days after UNIFIL refused the Israeli military's request to vacate some of its positions before a ground incursion. Hezbollah said it ordered its fighters not to attack Israeli troops who recently moved behind the UNIFIL position.

The group reported "unusual movement of Israeli enemy forces behind a UNIFIL position, on the outskirts of the border village of Maroun al-Ras," ordering fighters "not to take action... to preserve the lives of the peacekeepers", quoting a field commander in their statement. The group accused Israel of "trying to use UNIFIL forces as human shields". UNIFIL was created to oversee the withdrawal of Israeli soldiers from southern Lebanon after Israel's 1978 invasion. The UN expanded its mission after the 2006 war between Israel and Hezbollah, allowing peacekeepers to deploy along the Israeli border. — Aljazeera



ISLAMABAD: Pakistani prisoners on their return from Sri Lanka at airport.

Imran, KP CM among PTI leaders booked

F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: A case has been registered against several senior leaders of the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) for their alleged involvement in acts of vandalism and blockage of GT Road during a recent protest in Islamabad.

The case, filed at Tarnol police station, names prominent PTI figures such as party Founder Imran Khan, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Chief Minister Ali Amin Gandapur, Chairman Barrister Gohar, opposition leader Omar Ayub, Azam Swati, Amir Mughal, Barrister Saif, and 350 unidentified activists.

The charges against them are severe, including terrorism, attempted murder, and other serious offences. According to the first information report (FIR), the suspects opened fire on police officers, held them hostage, and detained them during the protest. Ali Amin Gandapur is accused of misusing government resources, while Azam Swati allegedly provided financial backing to the demonstrators.

Investigations revealed that the arrested individuals claimed they were instructed by PTI Founder Imran Khan to gather at D-Chowk in Islamabad. Imran Khan is also named in the FIR for inciting party workers to carry out acts of violence against the state. Law enforcement agencies have intensified their efforts to apprehend the remaining accused, as further investigations continue. On Saturday, normal life in Islamabad and Rawalpindi was severely disrupted for the second consecutive day as the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf's (PTI) protests continued to paralyse the twin cities. Major highways and mobile services were suspended.

Court convicts Food Inspector Humayun Khan

PESHAWAR: Anti-Corruption Court Khyber Pakhtunkhwa has sentenced Food Inspector Dinar Wali for 10 years imprisonment and fined him Rs. 1.4 million for stealing thousands of bags of government wheat, on Monday.

According to prosecution, in 2013-14, Dinar Wali, entrusted with overseeing food grain stores in Chitral's Korgh area but he abused his power and embezzled 5,574 bags of wheat. This brazen act of corruption cost the nation Rs. 1.49 crore.

An open inquiry exposed Dinar Wali's wrongdoing, leading to his dismissal from service. In 2017, authorities registered a case against him at Chitral's Anti-Corruption Police Station. The Anti-Corruption Court Khyber Pakhtunkhwa convicted Dinar Wali for 10 years imprisonment after conclusion of trial.

PHC grants protective transit bail: Peshawar High Court Chief Justice Ishfaq Ibrahim granted protective bail to Special Assistant for Anti-Corruption Musaddiq Abbasi and two Anti-Corruption officials till 25th October and ordered them to appear before the relevant court.

The petitioners booked in a case registered Federal Investigation Agency (FIA) at Islamabad, the lawyer informed.

‘Russia doesn’t want to use nuclear weapons’

MOSCOW: Russia, which holds the world's largest stockpile of nuclear warheads, has unveiled its new nuclear doctrine, lowering its threshold for nuclear engagement while continuing its invasion of Ukraine.

But as panic sets in across some Western nations, Russian experts say Moscow does not want to tap into its arsenal. The revised rules, outlined by President Vladimir Putin, say that an attack on Russia with "participation or support of a nuclear power" will be seen as their "joint attack on the Russian Federation", seemingly responding to the possibility that Ukraine could strike targets deep within Russian territory using long-range weapons supplied by Western allies. The United States, Ukraine's most important ally, is the world's second-largest nuclear power, with 5,224 warheads compared to Russia's 5,889.

Alexey Malinin, the Moscow-based founder of the Center for International Interaction and Cooperation, told Al Jazeera that from the Russian perspective, a reassessment of nuclear capabilities was necessary in the face of encirclement

by hostile powers. "Russia does not want to use nuclear weapons, understanding the seriousness of the consequences of a conflict with the use of such weapons," he said.

"However, at present, our country is forced to respond to the growing threats directed against us. The West continues to pump Ukraine with weapons, including F-16 fighters and long-range missiles like [US-made] ATACMS. Moreover, NATO is developing its infrastructure around the borders of Russia: new units are being created in Finland." He claimed that although Russia is trying to avoid the use of nuclear weapons, Moscow is "forced to demonstrate" that it is ready to defend "integrity and sovereignty" by any possible means.

However, Kremlin critics worry that Putin is pushing closer towards, if not a nuclear apocalypse, then at least a regional humanitarian disaster. "The USSR said that it would never strike first ... Now Putin says that he will strike whenever he wants," exiled politician Leonid Gozman wrote in the Novaya Gazeta newspaper. "He obviously doesn't have that moral barrier to

using nuclear weapons, that understanding that it's a step toward destroying the planet that both [Soviet leaders Nikita] Khrushchev and [Leonid] Brezhnev had.

"He certainly doesn't care how many Ukrainians will die, and how many of them and his own soldiers will die from radiation sickness later, either." During the Cold War, both Washington and Moscow operated on the principle of mutually assured destruction, the understanding that a nuclear strike from one side would prompt a response in kind, leading to an all-out atomic altercation and mass devastation on a global scale.

However, Putin is warning that Russia would use nuclear weapons in response to a "critical threat to our sovereignty" — referring to not necessarily a nuclear assault, but also a conventional one. Alexandra, an everyday Russian in Moscow who works as an architect, told Al Jazeera: "I'm scared, but I don't understand much of what's going on." The Russian government and its supporters believe they are sending a strong signal to Ukraine's Western allies, warning against interfering in the conflict. — Aljazeera

Govt to dissolve two authorities of Health Ministry

ISLAMABAD (INP): The Pakistani government has announced plans to dissolve two authorities under the Health Ministry, sources said on Monday.

According to source, the decision will be taken to ensure cost-cutting measures and streamlining healthcare services. Sources said that the Islamabad Blood Transfusion Authority and the Human Organ Transplant Authority will be merged with the Islamabad Healthcare Regulatory Authority, resulting in a significant reduction in staff.

Earlier today, the Pakistan government

decided to dissolve the Ministry of States and Frontier Regions (SAFRON). The SAFRON ministry will be merged into the Ministry of Kashmir Affairs and Gilgit-Baltistan (GB), following recommendations from the Rightsizing Committee.

The administrative wing of the Ministry of SAFRON will be dissolved, and a special committee will be formed to decide the future of Jammu & Kashmir State Properties. As per sources, the sale of state properties will occur as needed, and the revenue generated will be spent on the welfare of

Azad Kashmir and GB. Additionally, the Directorate of Health Services (DHS) of Kashmir and GB will undergo a review, with plans to transfer control to the Azad Kashmir government. DHS funding for GB will be managed in consultation with the Ministry of Health, the sources said. The Jammu and Kashmir Refugee Rehabilitation Organization is also set to be dissolved, and staff reductions will take place in the Azad Kashmir and Gilgit-Baltistan Councils, as well as in the Chief Commissioner's Office for Afghan Refugees.

PM calls for end

(Continued from Page 1)

the prevention of Israeli aggression against Lebanon and other regional countries;

5. Expresses full support for the ongoing political and diplomatic efforts by the OIC, the League of Arab States, the United Nations, and other brotherly countries in addressing the prevailing situation in Occupied Palestine, as well as for the peace and stability of the broader region;

6. Calls on the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) to convene an Emergency Summit to discuss the situation in Palestine, Israel's brutal aggression in the region and its implications for regional peace and security and underscores the need for unity of the Islamic Ummah;

7. Calls for full implementation of the UN General Assembly resolution ES-10/24 of 18 September 2024, which, inter alia, demands an end to Israeli occupation; the provisional measures by the International Court of Justice (ICJ) that call for preventing Israel from committing further acts of genocide against the

Palestinian people; as well as ICJ's Advisory Opinion of 19 July 2024 that reaffirms the illegality of the Israeli occupation;

8. Recalls the Joint Communiqué of the Arab-Islamic summit of 11th of November 2023 that called for all countries to stop exporting weapons and ammunition to the Israeli occupation authorities;

9. Expresses its support to the role of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Refugees (UNRWA) in providing relief to the Palestinian people;

10. Affirms Pakistan's determination to redouble its efforts for all possible political, diplomatic, moral and humanitarian support for the brotherly people of Palestine;

11. Appreciates the dispatch of 10 consignments of humanitarian aid from Pakistan for the people of Gaza, and medical relief assistance for the people of Lebanon; and urges continued humanitarian aid to the brotherly people of Palestine, including educational opportunities for Palestinian students and medical treatment of wounded Palestinian children in Pakistan;

12. Declares unwavering support for the realization of the right to self-determination and other fundamental rights of the Palestinian people, as well as for the establishment of a viable, secure, contiguous, and sovereign State of Palestine, with Al-Quds Al-Sharif as its capital, as well as for the State of Palestine's full UN membership;

13. Calls on the government of Pakistan to continue extending political, diplomatic and humanitarian support to the brotherly people of Palestine and to support diplomatic efforts for bringing an end to the genocide in Gaza;

14. Decides to observe, with special fervor, 29 November 2024 as a Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People.

15. Strongly reaffirms the right of the people of Kashmir to self-determination and call for the settlement of the Jammu and Kashmir Dispute in accordance with the wishes of Kashmiri people and the relevant resolutions of UNSC. This resolution is hereby passed by the All Parties Conference held in Islamabad on 07th of October, 2024.

US spends a record \$17.9b on military aid to Israel since last Oct 7

WASHINGTON (AP): The United States has spent a record of at least \$17.9 billion on military aid to Israel since the war in Gaza began and led to escalating conflict around the Middle East, according to a report for Brown University's Costs of War project, released Monday on the anniversary of Hamas' attacks on Israel.

An additional \$4.86 billion has gone into stepped-up US military operations in the region since the Oct. 7, 2023, attacks, researchers said in findings first provided to The Associated Press. That includes the costs of a Navy-led campaign to quell strikes on commercial shipping by Yemen's Houthis, who are carrying them out in solidarity with the fellow Iranian-backed group Hamas.

The report — completed before Israel opened a second front, this one against Iranian-backed Hezbollah militants in Lebanon, in late September — is one of the first tallies of estimated US costs as the Biden administration backs Israel in its conflicts in Gaza and Lebanon and seeks to contain hostilities by Iran-allied armed groups in the region. The financial toll is on top of the cost in human lives: Hamas militants killed more than 1,200 people in Israel a year ago and took others hostage. Israel's retaliatory offensive has killed nearly 42,000 people in Gaza, according to the territory's Health Ministry, which does not distinguish between civilians and combatants in its count.

At least 1,400 people in Lebanon, including Hezbollah fighters and civilians, have been killed since Israel greatly expanded its strikes in that

country in late September. The financial costs were calculated by Linda J. Bilmes, a professor at Harvard's John F. Kennedy School of Government, who has assessed the full costs of US wars since the Sept. 11, 2001, attacks, and fellow researchers William D. Hartung and Stephen Semler. Here's a look at where some of the US taxpayer money went:

Israel — a protegee of the United States since its 1948 founding — is the biggest recipient of US military aid in history, getting \$251.2 billion in inflation-adjusted dollars since 1959, the report says. Even so, the \$17.9 billion spent since Oct. 7, 2023, in inflation-adjusted dollars, is by far the most military aid sent to Israel in one year. The US committed to providing billions in military assistance to Israel and Egypt each year when they signed their 1979 US-brokered peace treaty, and an agreement since the Obama administration set the annual amount for Israel at \$3.8 billion through 2028.

The US aid since the Gaza war started includes military financing, arms sales, at least \$4.4 billion in drawdowns from US stockpiles and hand-me-downs of used equipment. Much of the US weapons delivered in the year were munitions, from artillery shells to 2,000-pound bunker-busters and precision-guided bombs. Expenditures range from \$4 billion to replenish Israel's Iron Dome and David's Sling missile defense systems to cash for rifles and jet fuel, the study says.

Unlike the United States' publicly documented military aid to Ukraine, it was impossible to get the full details

of what the US has shipped Israel since last Oct. 7, so the \$17.9 billion for the year is a partial figure, the researchers said. They cited Biden administration "efforts to hide the full amounts of aid and types of systems through bureaucratic maneuvering."

Funding for the key US ally during a war that has exacted a heavy toll on civilians has divided Americans during the presidential campaign. But support for Israel has long carried weight in US politics, and Biden said Friday that "no administration has helped Israel more than I have."

The Biden administration has bolstered its military strength in the region since the war in Gaza started, aiming to deter and respond to any attacks on Israeli and American forces. Those additional operations cost at least \$4.86 billion, the report said, not including beefed-up US military aid to Egypt and other partners in the region.

The US had 34,000 forces in the Middle East the day that Hamas broke through Israeli barricades around Gaza to attack. That number rose to about 50,000 in August when two aircraft carriers were in the region, aiming to discourage retaliation after a strike attributed to Israel killed Hamas political leader Ismail Haniyeh in Iran. The total is now around 43,000. The number of US vessels and aircraft deployed — aircraft carrier strike groups, an amphibious ready group, fighter squadrons, and air defense batteries — in the Mediterranean, Red Sea and Gulf of Aden has varied during the year

reporters last week, when asked about deadly Israeli bombings in Lebanon. "They need to take actions to mitigate civilian harm. They're required to do that under international humanitarian law, in Lebanon as they are anywhere else," Miller added.

But critics say such statements have little effect on the actions of Netanyahu's right-wing government, as the Biden administration has refused to condition US military and diplomatic support for Israel. "President Biden has spent a year enabling the Israeli government's expanding war crimes, violating US laws that require an arms embargo on Israel, and ignoring the majority of Americans who oppose sending more weapons to Israel," the Council on American-Islamic Relations (CAIR) said in a statement on Sunday.

"Now the entire region is in chaos." The Biden administration's policy has come under renewed criticism as tensions have escalated in recent days between Israel and Iran. Last week, Iran's Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC) fired a barrage of ballistic missiles at Israel in what it said was an act of retaliation for killings in Lebanon and Gaza, as well as the assassinations of top Hamas, Hezbollah and Iranian leaders. Netanyahu has said Iran would "pay" for the attack, raising fears that Israel could strike strategic sites in the country such as Iranian nuclear facilities. — Aljazeera

Harris skirts question on whether Netanyahu is ‘close ally’ of US

WASHINGTON: US Vice President Kamala Harris has skirted a question on whether Benjamin Netanyahu can be considered a "close ally" of the United States, as critics accuse the Israeli prime minister of stymying Washington's stated goal of de-escalation in the Middle East.

In an excerpt of an interview with CBS News's 60 Minutes, which was released, Harris was pressed on what the US is doing to get its top ally to end its military offensive in the Gaza Strip and stop its attacks on Lebanon. Harris, the Democratic candidate in November's presidential election, said the US has been applying pressure on Israel — as well as on Arab leaders in the region — to reach a Gaza ceasefire deal and would continue to do so.

"The work that we have done has resulted in a number of movements in that region by Israel," she said, without providing details. Harris was then asked if the United States had a "real, close ally" in Netanyahu. "I think, with all due respect, the better question is, do we have an important alliance between the American people and the Israeli people? And the answer to that question is 'yes,'" she replied. The exchange highlights the continued refusal by US President Joe Biden's administration to change tack and curtail its staunch support for Netanyahu's government as the Israeli military bombards the Gaza Strip and Lebanon.

For months, analysts have accused Netanyahu of holding up a possible Gaza ceasefire agreement for his own political purposes. Observers also warned that Washington's failure to pressure Israel to end the Gaza war would push the Middle East towards a wider regional conflict — and rights advocates had urged the Biden administration to impose an arms embargo on the Israeli government. Washington provides Israel with at least \$3.8bn in military aid annually, and Biden has greenlit \$14bn in additional assistance to the US ally since Israel's war on the Gaza Strip began in October of last year.

To date, more than 41,800 Palestinians have been killed in Israeli attacks on Gaza. At least 1,100 people also have been killed in Lebanon since the Israeli military — which had been trading fire with Lebanese group Hezbollah across the Israel-Lebanon border for months — recently escalated its bombardment of the country. Amid the mounting violence, the Biden administration has repeatedly said it favours diplomacy and wants to see a de-escalation. But senior US officials have also said they support Israel's "right to defend itself".

"Obviously attacks, targeted attacks on civilians, could not be justified, but Israel does have the right to go after terrorists," US State Department spokesman Matthew Miller told