

Mahrang barred from travel
F.P. Report

KARACHI: Mahrang Baloch, a renowned Baloch nationalist and human rights activist, was stopped from boarding an international flight at Karachi Airport. According to media reports, Mahrang Baloch was trying to fly to the United States via a foreign airline when airport authorities prevented her from leaving the country due to her name being on the immigration stop list.



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ISLAMABAD: A delegation of Pakistan People's Party called on Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif.

Struggle for Imran's release to continue: CM

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: Following a strong backlash from friends and foes alike over his 'day-long mysterious disappearance' during the recent PTI's protest in Islamabad, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Chief Minister Ali Amin Gandapur voiced his loyalty to party founder Imran Khan and cursed the hypocrites.

"May Allah destroy them and their families who are disloyal to PTI, the party's ideology and Imran Khan [...] Don't buy their claims, they [the government] are afraid of your unity and passion," the chief executive said while addressing the members of the provincial assembly.

Referring to his the criticism over his mysterious disappearance by the PTI members, he said that he wouldn't ask anyone, who according to him made false claims, to tender an apology "as they are my brothers". "I'm here for those who have reservations [...] But don't become part of the conspiracy as the hypocrites are tricking you," Gandapur said, urging the lawmakers and party workers to remain united and continue the struggle for the Constitution, independence of judiciary, and the release of Imran Khan.

Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Assembly Speaker Babar Salim Swati also expressed anguish over the non production of two MPAs despite his orders. He made it clear that any administrative secretary that did not comply his order would be declared as "dislike" by this house.

The Speaker passed these remarks on a point of order of the MPA Shafiuallah who claimed that Special Assistant to the Chief Minister Liaquat Khan and MPA Anwarzeb Khan were arrested by Islamabad police and their production

orders passed by the Speaker has not been honoured. The speaker directed the relevant authorities to inform the house over non implementation of his orders.

Parliamentary leader of Pakistan Peoples Party, Ahmed Karim Kundi termed the Chief Minister Khyber Pakhtunkhwa's disappearance story after D Chowk protest was like a filmy jokes that was being laugh by people.

Speaking on a point of order at Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Assembly, Ahmad Kundi said that CM KP's disappearance story was being mocked by the children in streets as no one took it seriously.

He said that entire Assembly would have stand with CM KP today if he was arrested while raising voice for rights of the province. Ahmad Kundi said that even PTI workers have been disappointed over self imposed disappearance of the Chief Minister KP after D Chowk protest. Kundi said that PPP leadership have accepted gallows and sacrificed life but did not compromise on rights of people of Pakistan.

He suggested incamera briefing of the house on the law and order situation developed at KP House after CM's claims. Earlier, the Chief Minister Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Ali Amin Gandapur has accused the Islamabad police for conducted what he said an uncalled for raid at KP House during his stay.

He paid tributes to the party workers for their commitment with party during protest demonstrations. The CM KP has again narrated the dispetstate story in the house and criticed the treatment of Islamabad police towards him at KP House. Later, the house was adjourned for today.

PPP delegation calls on PM

F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: A delegation of Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP) on Tuesday called on Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif and discussed important national and political issues.

The delegation included Syed Naveed Qamar, a Member of the National Assembly, Sindh Minister Sharjeel Inam Memon. Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Mohammad Ishaq Dar and Minister for Information and Broadcasting Attaullah Tarar, PM Office Media Wing said in a press release.

During the meeting, President Asif Ali Zardari's role in the All Parties Conference (APC) and strengthening of democracy in the country was appreciated. The meeting also discussed in detail the joint working group for Pakistan's assistance to the Palestinians.

The participation of all political parties in the APC convened on Monday for the Palestinians was welcomed. The entire Pakistani nation was united to help their unarmed Palestinian brothers and sisters who were victims of the Israeli atrocities.

KP CM should clarify position: Tarar

F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Information, Broadcasting, National Heritage and Culture Attaullah Tarar said Chief Minister of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Ali Amin Gandapur should tell the people where he had been during the past 24 hours.

A campaign was launched across the country that Gandapur had been abducted, he said, citing the allegations leveled by the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) leaders against every other institution in the country. Talking to the media, he denounced the "drama" orchestrated by the PTI on "disappearance" of the CM KPK who brought the PTI workers to Islamabad, fled to the

KP House in Islamabad, and then abandoned them to return to Khyber Pakhtunkhwa covertly. "The question is very simple that where was he (the CM KP) during the last 24 hours," the minister said while lashing out the PTI for launching a malicious campaign against the institutions and the individuals during the last 24 hours. He said the CM KP is an "irresponsible person" who did politics over the law and order and tried to damage the image of the country.

The minister asked the CM KP why he left his people and fled from the scene to hide in the KP House and then to run away to Peshawar. The history had no such an instance where a person led a mob and then abandoned them, he said asking the PTI why it created the whole drama. The minister criticized the CM KP's attempt to damage the image of Pakistan and destroy law and order, and on top of that for taking the life of a Constable Hameed who got martyred.

Minister sees inflation, policy rate easing further

F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: Warning against 'actions' that impede hard-earned economic growth, Federal Minister for Finance and Revenue, Senator Muhammad Aurangzeb, on Tuesday, hinted at a further drop in consumer price inflation and the central bank's policy rates in the coming months.

"The government has strived hard to bring about economic stability," said the finance minister asserting the efforts of the ruling coalition have started paying off. Announcing that the much-resisted structural economic reforms were finally underway, the finance czar forecast the inflationary pressures to ease further and central bank's hawkish monetary outlook to continue. "Inflation has dropped to single digits," said Aurangzeb expecting it to hit new lows.

Consumer Price Index (CPI)-based inflation fell to

6.9% year-on-year in September 2024, the lowest since January 2021, down from 9.6% in August, driven by the high base effect, easing commodity and energy markets, and a stable currency, according to the Pakistan Bureau of Statistics (PBS). Last month, the SBP's Monetary Policy Committee slashed the key policy rate by 200bps to 17.5% from 19.5%, citing a steep fall in both headline and core inflation over the past two months.

Expressing his condolences over the loss of Chinese engineers working in Pakistan, Aurangzeb said that no amount of money could be placed on the loss of life. "Chinese nationals targeted in Karachi were the officials of independent power producers (IPPs) engaged in talks with the government of Pakistan to revise the agreements."

Deceased engineers were collaborating with Minister for Energy (Power

Division) Awais Leghari on IPPs projects, he said adding that talks were ongoing with IPPs to provide further relief to the public. At least three persons including two Chinese nationals were killed in an explosion near Jinnah International Airport on October 6, while another Chinese national and over a dozen others were injured.

Highlighting their negative impacts on growth and stability, Aurangzeb said that strikes and agitation were taking a toll on the economy and bleeding the national exchequer. "Such actions cost the country around Rs190 billion per day, severely affecting economic growth." He urged those calling for strikes to consider their repercussions and instead engage in negotiations to resolve their issues. He urged those calling for strikes to consider their repercussions and instead engage in negotiations to resolve their issues.

appeared in court for the hearing. After listening to the arguments, the court decided to send the activists to jail for the identification process. The next hearing for this case is scheduled for October 21.

Moreover, the Anti-Terrorism Court (ATC) of Islamabad on Monday sent the 19 arrested Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) activists to a seven-day physical remand to police on charges related to terrorism. The Anti-Terrorism Court (ATC) Judge Tahir Abbas Sipra heard the case. During the hearing, the activists were presented in court where PTI lawyers, led by Ali Bukhari, argued against the physical remand of the arrested.

same case. The case against Aleema, Uzma and others had been registered under terrorism charges at Kohsar Police Station of the federal capital.

Meanwhile, the anti-terrorism court of Islamabad sent the 87 arrested activists of Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) to jail for identification. The anti-terrorism court, Judge Tahir Abbas Sipra heard the case.

These individuals were arrested from different areas of the Federal Capital and brought to court by the police. Among them, 31 were taken into custody at the Sumbal police station, 40 at Atpara police station, and 16 at I-9 police station. PTI's legal team, led by lawyer Ali Bukhari,

The Frontier Post

Four more polio cases reported
F.P. Report

HYDERABAD: Four more polio cases have emerged in Pakistan, bringing the total number of cases to 32 this year. Three cases were reported from Sindh and one from KP. The latest cases include a six-year-old child from UC Ibrahim Hyderi in Malir, Karachi. Another case was reported from UC Thul Toshe in Jacobabad, while a child was diagnosed with polio in Dera Ismail Khan.

2014-like sit-in not to be allowed: PM

Federal cabinet approves setting up of PM Relief Fund for Palestine, Lebanon

Saqib Mushtaq

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif on Tuesday, calling the recent protest of Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf a replica of the 2014 sit-in by the party, vowed that "gory tale" would not be allowed to repeat at any cost.

"Such incidents are a replica of 2014-15 incidents when a sit-in was staged for months and was not called off despite the announcement of the Chinese president's visit to Pakistan without bothering about its impact on the country's image and national economy... We will not allow it to be repeated. We will not tolerate it at any rate, at any cost. This is my promise. I will not let it happen," the prime minister in his opening remarks at the meeting of the federal cabinet chaired by him.

The prime minister drew cabinet members' attention to an attack that took place near Karachi airport killing two Chinese engineers and injuring another, despite the government's all-out efforts to ensure their security.

He apprised the meeting of his telephonic conversation with the Chinese ambassador in Islamabad and also a conciliatory visit to the Chinese embassy where he reiterated his government's assurance to leave no stone unturned to make the security of Chinese national "unreachable."

Referring to the PTI protest, the prime minister said that the allegations were hurled against the government and attempts were made to create chaos at a time when the Chinese Premier was about to pay a bilateral visit and a Saudi delegation was also scheduled to visit Pakistan and MoUs and agreements worth \$2 billion are expected to be signed.

The cabinet meeting offered Fateha for the security personnel martyred in different terrorist incidents. The prime minister thanked China, Saudi Arabia and the UAE for their support in obtaining the IMF loan facility and also mentioned last

week's "successful" visit of Malaysian Prime Minister Anwar Ibrahim when two sides agreed that Pakistan would export Halal meat and rice to Malaysia.

He said consequent to the "finest level" of teamwork, the IMF program had been approved, inflation was reduced from 32% to 6.9%, exports, remittances and IT exports were on surge and the stock exchange was skyrocketing. He said sabotaging all these efforts for the sake of their policies would be the biggest conspiracy to the country, he remarked.

Highlighting his government's reform agenda, he mentioned the doubled number of tax return filers, broadening tax base and the digitisation of FBR. He said oil prices had been reduced for the fifth time, and a Rs50 billion relief package was announced for the power consumers of the protected category, apart from the Punjab government's Rs55 billion package on top of that.

He said on one side, the government was making efforts to stabilize the economy and kick-start its home-grown economic program, while on the other, KP chief minister was leading the saboteur gathering consisting of Afghan nationals and also using government officials. The protestors also carried out aerial firing and an official of Islamabad Police was martyred during the protest, he added. Prime Minister Shehbaz said that the peaceful and secure atmosphere was inevitable to attract investment. Thanking the IMF chief for her support in approving the IMF facility for Pakistan, the prime minister said that she was also appreciative of the reforms introduced by the incumbent and the caretaker governments. He mentioned the martyrdom of a lieutenant colonel and other security personnel, and said the government knew where the terrorists were being funded from.

The federal cabinet also approved the establishment of Prime Minister Relief Fund for Palestine and Lebanon to extend assistance to the

people of both countries suffering the barbarism of Israeli occupation forces.

The meeting of the federal cabinet, chaired by Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif, instructed the State Bank of Pakistan to open a bank account for the purpose. Federal Minister for Planning Ahsan Iqbal has been tasked to oversee the relief activities, according to a PM Office press release.

The federal cabinet was briefed about the status of the implementation of E-office in the federal ministries and departments. It was told that due to the implementation of the e-governance, Pakistan's ranking in the UN's E-governance Index has improved by 14 points. The cabinet members were told that the implementation of e-office was underway in all 40 divisions of the federal government while it has become fully operational in some of the ministries.

The prime minister directed to further improve the e-office implementation which would be reviewed after two weeks. The federal cabinet endorsed an agreement on subsidies for the fisheries sector in light of the decisions of the World Trade Organization. The meeting approved an agreement for declaring Pakistan's Gwadar Port and Shanghai Port of China as sister ports.

It also okayed signing of a Memorandum of Understanding for political consultation between Pakistan's foreign ministry and those of Rwanda and Ghana. The cabinet approved to empower the Judicial Magistrate-1 of Gwadar and Hub to hear the cases of anti-narcotics, on the directives of Chief Justice of Balochistan High Court and recommendation of the law ministry. The federal cabinet also endorsed the decisions made by Cabinet Committee on Legislative Cases on September 25, 2024; Cabinet Committee on Chinese Investment Projects on September 16, 2024; and Cabinet Committee on State Owned Enterprises on October 1, 2024.

PPP continues consultation for constitutional courts

F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: Ahmed Bilal Mehboob, head of Pakistan Institute of Legislative Development and Transparency met Vice President Peoples Party Senator Sherry Rehman.

Syed Naveed Qamar also participated in the meeting. Senator Rehman briefed the PLDAT chief on the policy of the PPP regarding the establishment of the Federal Constitutional Court.

Sherry Rehman said that the purpose of the meeting is to take all stakeholders into confidence regarding the establishment of the Federal Constitutional Court. She said that on the direction of Chairman Bilawal Bhutto Zardari, we are taking on board all political parties, lawyers' organizations, civil society and related private institutions. Sherry Rehman said that we want a wider consensus to be established regarding the establishment of the Federal

Constitutional Court. She said that the PPP considers every stakeholder's opinion important and we are trying to ensure transparency and consultation.

Today, Senator Sherry Rehman and Secretary General PPP Syed Nayyer Hussain Bukhari also met the members of Human Rights Commission of Pakistan. Secretary General HRCP Haris Khaliq, Senior member HRCP Nasreen Azhar and Khushal Khattak were also present in this meeting. The PPP informed the Human Rights Commission of Pakistan about its policy regarding the establishment of the Federal Constitutional Court. She said that we are consulting with all stakeholders regarding the establishment of the Federal Constitutional Court.

The purpose of this consultation is to get all the stakeholders on board, including the HRCP on behalf of Chairman Bilawal

Bhutto Zardari. She said that we want the establishment of the Federal Constitutional Court to be unanimous and based on consensus like the 18th Amendment.

Meanwhile, President human rights cell of the PPP former senator Farhatullah Babar has said that a new generation of electoral reforms was needed to address the latest generation of nebulous electoral fraud and restore confidence of the people in elected representatives and governments.

He said this at the UNDP seminar on 'next generation of electoral and legislative reforms in Pakistan' in a local hotel in Islamabad Tuesday. Identifying three elements as the latest in electoral fraud he said these were the role of turncoats and floor crossers, systematic manipulation of media including social media and disenfranchising over ten million women voters.

PTI devises new protest strategy

F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: After facing challenges in rallies held in Islamabad, Lahore, and Rawalpindi, the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) has decided to change its protest strategy.

According to sources, the PTI will now shift its focus to district-level protests instead of heading towards Islamabad and major cities. PTI senior leader Asad Qaiser confirmed the new strategy.

"A plan for district-level protests is being developed, and the party spokesperson will soon announce the policy," said Qaiser. Many ministers were upset over the excessive expenses and difficulties faced during the rallies in Islamabad and Lahore. He also mentioned that several MPAs had expressed their concerns as well.

Govt, Fazl to exchange amend drafts

F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: After month-long manoeuvring by the federal government to convince Jamiat-Ulema-e-Islam- Fazl (JUI-F) chief Maulana Fazlur Rahman on its intended constitutional package, the government seems to have conceded to Maulana's demands in order to seek his support in bringing the constitutional amendment.

According to the parliamentary sources, it has been decided that the sessions of both houses of parliament will be summoned after the much-awaited Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) summit.

Rumours have it that the Maulana will present his draft on the constitutional amendment to the government within two to three days while the Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) and the Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP) will also exchange their drafts with the JUI-F chief.

IOJ&K elects first regional govt in a decade

SRI NAGAR (Reuters): Indian-occupied Kashmir (IoK) elected on Tuesday its first government since the territory was brought under New Delhi's direct control, as voters backed opposition parties to lead its regional assembly.

Since then, the Muslim-majority territory of some 12 million people has not had an elected local government. Instead, it has been ruled by a governor appointed by New Delhi. While voters took part in national elections in June when Modi won a third term in power, these were the first local elections since 2014.

As results were announced, with an alliance of the opposition National Conference (NC) and Congress parties tipped to form a government, supporters celebrated. By mid-afternoon, Election Commission

figures showed NC and Congress had won 47 of 90 seats in the assembly, an unassailable lead over the BJP with 27.

Some called the vote a de facto referendum on the federal government's decision to repeal the territory's special status. "The people have given their judgement against what New Delhi did," social activist Iqbal Ahmad Bhat said. Half a million Indian troops are deployed in the far northern region, battling a 35-year insurgency in which tens of thousands of civilians, soldiers and rebels have been killed, including dozens this year.

"We are happy with the election results and hope that the political rights will be restored," said Jahangir Ahmad, among the cheering crowds outside the home of the territory's expected new chief minister, NC leader

Omar Abdullah. Farooq Abdullah, his father and NC president, told reporters that the results were a "verdict" against Modi's government. Critics however say the assembly will only have nominal powers over education and culture.

New Delhi will also have the power to override legislation and will continue to appoint the governor. Modi's BJP says the changes to the territory's governance have delivered a new era of peace to IoK and rapid economic growth — claims other parties reject.

The BJP won seats in the southern Hindu-majority Jammu region and fought only from about a third of the seats in the Kashmir valley. Meanwhile, results from elections in Haryana — a state just north of New Delhi — were also released.

LHC conducts physical audit of pending cases

LAHORE (APP): In an unprecedented move, the Lahore High Court (LHC), under the direction of Chief Justice Aalia Neelum, has conducted a comprehensive physical audit of pending cases, both in the High Court and in district courts across Punjab.

According to an interim report, over 103000 cases are currently pending in the LHC, with 65,975 of these at the court's principal seat. These include 11,836 civil cases, 25,312 criminal cases, 26,175 writ petitions, and 2,652 commercial and tax cases. In addition, the LHC benches in Bahawalpur, Multan, and Rawalpindi report pendency figures of 9,703, 22,675, and 5,343 cases, respectively.

The report also revealed a backlog of more than 1.4 million cases in district courts throughout Punjab, comprising approximately 1.19 million civil cases and 217,000 sessions cases.

In response to these figures, the Administration Committee, chaired by Chief Justice Aalia Neelum, is scheduled to meet soon to finalize a comprehensive plan aimed at the swift disposal of these cases. The initiative will focus on reducing the backlog and ensuring timely justice for litigants. It is pertinent to mention here that such an extensive audit has been carried out in the court's history for the first time.

Crackdown on encroachments continues

LAHORE (APP): The Metropolitan Corporation Lahore (MCL) is ramping up its efforts against illegal encroachments, confiscating two trucks of materials and removing approximately 1,400 banners and streamers from major thoroughfares in the provincial capital.

Under the direction of Deputy Commissioner/Administrator Syed Musa Raza, a city-wide campaign is underway to eliminate illegal structures, including banners and streamers. Chief Officer MCL Shahid Abbas Kathia is overseeing operations across all zones without exception, with recent actions in the Shalimar zone targeting Amir Road, Angori Scheme, and Kotli Peer Abdul Rahman in the Shadbagh area. The anti-encroachment drives have resulted in the confiscation of materials, which have been transported to the MCL junkyard. In total, over 1,400 banners and streamers have been removed from key roads and neighborhoods.



ISLAMABAD: Interior Minister Mohsin Naqvi chairing a meeting regarding preparations of SCO Summit at CDA Headquarters. —APP Photo

Naqvi to review preparations for upcoming SCO summit

ISLAMABAD (APP): Federal Interior Minister Mohsin Naqvi chaired an important meeting at the Capital Development Authority (CDA) to review preparations and arrangements for the upcoming Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) Summit.

The meeting also focused on the beautification efforts underway in Islamabad and other development projects. During the session, Minister Naqvi emphasized the need for extensive beautification of key areas, particularly the Red Zone and VIP routes.

He directed that attractive landscaping be implemented along major roads

and instructed that the entire city be adorned with vibrant flowers and decorative lights in preparation for the international event.

Minister Naqvi highlighted the importance of completing renovation work on the Jinnah Convention Center, assigning the task of finishing the project promptly. He stressed the significance of hosting the SCO Summit, noting it as a reflection of the government's successful foreign policy efforts.

"Special attention must be given to the beautification and cleanliness of Islamabad, with a focus on VIP routes and the Red Zone," said Naqvi. He

added that these measures were vital to enhancing the city's appearance ahead of the summit.

Security arrangements for the SCO Summit were also reviewed during the meeting. The Interior Minister gave clear directives to take firm action against illegal housing societies, stressing the importance of keeping Islamabad free from unauthorized constructions and encroachments.

"There should be no leniency in actions to remove illegal constructions in the city," Naqvi stated firmly. In addition to the summit preparations, the meeting addressed public health concerns, particu-

larly dengue prevention.

Minister Naqvi instructed the Commissioners of Islamabad and Rawalpindi to work together to enhance coordination in boundary areas and to focus on eliminating dengue breeding grounds through joint operations. The Interior Minister further emphasized that surveillance should be intensified around areas where dengue cases have been reported.

Chief Commissioner of Islamabad, Muhammad Ali Randhawa, provided a detailed briefing on the progress of preparations for the SCO Summit, ensuring that all necessary arrangements were on track.

Minister assures resolution of workers' issues

KARACHI (APP): Sindh Minister for Labour and Human Resource, Shahid Abdus Salam Thaheem Tuesday said that Sindh government was taking comprehensive measures to resolve the issues of labour and problems of Sindh Employees Social Security Institution (SESSI) workers will be resolved on priority.

The minister expressed the views in a meeting with a delegation of SESSI CBA led by President Peoples Labour Bureau Sindh Habib-ud-din Junaidi, said a statement.

The delegation apprised the minister about issues being faced by SESSI employees including delay in issuance regarding minimum wages and disconnection of gas supply to staff colony of Social Security Hospital Landhi.

Modern education essential to tackle challenges: Kundi

ISLAMABAD (APP): Governor Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Faisal Karim Kundi on Tuesday emphasized the need for collaborative efforts for the broader interests of Pakistan, highlighting that quality and modern education is essential to tackle the challenges faced by the nation.

He made these remarks as the guest of honor at the Students' Council ceremony at Beaconhouse College Program, Margalla Campus, Islamabad.

During the event, the Governor distributed awards to the Students' Council members and shields to the faculty.

The ceremony also featured speeches from Regional Director of Beaconhouse College Program, Khawaja Haider Latif, Principal Ayesha Ansar, and Senior Headmistress Ayesha Hafeez, who expressed gratitude to the Governor for his visit and participation.

Governor Kundi stressed that education is the fundamental guarantee for societal development and prosperity. He said that education equips individuals with knowledge, skills, and experiences, enabling them to improve their lives.

He said that educated individuals are better posi-

tioned to make informed decisions, adopt healthy lifestyles, and contribute positively to the economy.

He further mentioned that quality education plays a vital role in addressing social issues, fostering critical thinking, analytical abilities, and a spirit of collaboration among individuals.

To advance the journey toward societal prosperity, he urged the importance of ensuring the provision of quality education.

The Governor also commended the performance of the Beaconhouse College Program administration during his address.

Punjab cabinet approves historic program of collective weddings

LAHORE (APP): Punjab Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz Sharif presided over 17th meeting of the provincial cabinet in which the largest historical program of collective weddings in Punjab was approved.

The project of group marriage of 3,000 girls from poor families was approved across Punjab. Rs. 100,000 as wed money will be given to the bride through ATM card. As many as 13 items including furniture, clothes, dinner sets will be gifted. CM Maryam Nawaz Sharif directed to increase the scope of collective marriages.

The Cabinet approved allotment of one lakh acres of land to landless farmers on lease for three and five years for the purpose of temporary cultivation across Punjab. In the meeting, e-bus service scheme was approved in Punjab, under which 27 buses will arrive in the first phase. 1.2 MW solar panels will be installed in the parking lot of e-buses for charging purpose. As many as 680 e-buses will be functional across Punjab by the end of the current year.

The Chief Minister sought the 'Electric Taxi Service Plan' in Lahore. Maryam Nawaz Sharif ordered strict monitoring of flour and chicken prices across the province.

It was informed in the briefing that 170,000 farmers in Punjab received Kisan cards. Kisan cards were issued to 267,000 farmers. Around 1.1 million farmers applied for obtaining Kisan card. As many as 1-2 million applications were received for Green Tractor Scheme. Scrutiny of 700,000 applicants for green tractors has been completed. Approval was granted to transfer funds to the Housing Department to construct 839 houses of New Pakistan Housing Scheme in Raiwind, Chinot and Sargodha.

Age relaxation of five years has been approved for promotion to the posts of Inspector, Sub-Inspector and Assistant Sub-Inspector. The annual repair of helicopter of Government of Punjab was approved. The Cabinet approved the transfer of land at Sheikhpura for oil storage and other purposes to Pakistan State Oil.

Agreement between Board of Revenue and Punjab Bank was approved for collection of tax on transfer of immovable property through e-stamping system. The nomination of the Minister of Agriculture and Technical Member for representation in the Federal Seed Board was approved. Re-appointment of Board of Directors of Punjab Health Initiatives Management Company and appointment of new directors on vacant posts was approved. The release of funds of 1.7 billion rupees was approved for purchasing equipment and furniture for the revamping of tertiary care hospitals.

Development projects in five major hospitals were approved for inclusion in the Annual Development Programme. Reconstitution of Board of Commissioner of Health Care Commission and transfer of share from Irrigation Department to Punjab Power Development Company Limited was approved. Legal Framework Draft of Waqf Administration, Trust and Cooperative Societies Act 2023 was approved.

The Punjab Forensic Act

2007 was repealed and the Punjab Forensic Science Act 2024 was approved. The Cabinet approved the extension of the staff contract of the Management Information System of the Home Department. Nomination of Presiding Officer for Child Protection Court Lahore was approved. Implementation of sale deed for A category property buyer was approved. Punjab Local Government Rules 2024 were approved in the meeting and it was decided to establish a Joint Local Government Authority in each district.

It was decided to set up a high-level Ministerial Committee to amend the Prevention of Child Marriage Act, 1929. A grant of 10 million rupees was approved for Ajoka International Theater Festival in Al Hamra, Lahore. The proceedings of the selection board meeting of Livestock and Dairy Development were approved. Nomination of Board of Directors of Punjab Livestock and Dairy Development Board was approved. Renewal of helpline agreement between Livestock and Dairy Development and PITB was approved. Extension of Family Welfare Centers and Introduction of Community Base Family Worker 2021-2024 has been approved for six months extension of employees contract.

The Cabinet approved the appointment of six non-official members of the Punjab Skills Development Authority and the amendment of the Articles of Association of PIEDMC and FIEDMC. Supplementary grant was sanctioned for establishment of Wildlife Protection

Force. The Wildlife Protection Force will perform duties in 96 Protected Wildlife Areas covering 3408 million hectares of land. Approval was accorded for the completion of Center of Excellence Schools and recruitment of staff at Pir Mahal, Toba Tek Singh and Chakwal. Cabinet approved to increase subsidy rates of Punjab School Reorganization Program to 1200. As many as 13000 primary schools will be upgraded to elementary level under which 1 lakh 4 thousand educated men and women will get employment. Temporary nomination of Chief Executive Officer FIEDMC was approved. Nomination for appointment of members of Punjab Service Tribunal Lahore was approved.

Approval of renewal of contracts of Punjab Health Facilities Management Company and funds for 'Clinic on Wheels' project were granted. Agreement between Punjab Revenue Authority and Pakistan Single Window was approved. Funds under supplementary grant to District Health Authority Rawalpindi for recruitment of dengue staff and purchase of dengue kits were approved. Payment of medical charges of eight lakh rupees for the treatment of Senior Scale Stenographer Qamar Mubeen and Ex-Gratia Grant for Senior Research Officer Muhammad Umar Daraz of Food Department was approved. Relaxation in Medical Charges Reimbursement was approved under West Pakistan Civil Servants Medical Attendants Rules.

Baby Food Dating and Shelf Life Dynamics in Pakistan

Muzamil Syre

After the 18th amendment in the Constitution of 1973, food authorities emerged in the provinces to regulate food business in the country with their primary focus on, among other things, provision of safe and hygienic food to the public in the main. These authorities are mandated to monitor Food Business Operators (FBOs) anywhere in the country to ensure that the production, manufacture, import, export, distribution, sale or food handling etc. is performed as per the standards prescribed in laws, rules, regulations etc. enacted from time to time.

Be it foods for the adult or infant formulae or follow-on formulae, it is expected of all the FBOs in the country to meet and maintain food standards without fail. Regulatory frameworks are also in place to take actions against the violators of such standards. When it comes to baby foods, some of the growing apprehensions, alarms and matters of unease for the authorities as well as the well-informed citizens, especially, mothers, are, inter alia, baby food product dating and shelf life practices in the food business, especially retailers and/or wholesalers, be it small-scale FBOs or the business giants in the industry.

It is an established fact that baby food products are consumed by a highly vulnerable population. Unlike adults, infants are more susceptible to foodborne illnesses as their immune system is in the developmental phase. Any compromise in food safety, even subtle, can have crucial, far-reaching and testing health impacts. Sad to say, there is a business tendency and practice of promoting and discounting products (at times, without resorting to such promotions or discounts) that are nearing the expiration dates to

encourage sales and reduce wastage with higher profit margins, especially baby food products.

Ironically, baby food sellers—the ones that sell baby foods near expiration or which have crossed half of the shelf life—often defend themselves by asserting that they do not violate any laws, regulations or SOPs since they do not sell expired products; hence, they are, as they claim, well in line with legal formalities and professional expectations.

Needless to say, as the product approaches its expiration date, there are higher chances of it going through irreversible chemical changes making it unfit for human consumption, and making it way riskier for babies, especially infants. Besides, owing to various instances of poor supply and storage management, there is a grave risk of spoilage, contamination, or degradation of nutrients.

If a baby product pack reads that it contains servings over seven days, this could be assumed that the product would possibly be consumed past its expiration date if the same is purchased close to or on the last date for sale. Some may, if they are well-versed with MRD mechanism, discard the product immediately after the expiration date, while others may unknowingly consume the product until it is used through and through even after the expiry date has passed. As it were, very few consumers are aware of MRD mechanism or chances of those well-versed in the same are fairly low.

Moreover, if the product is to be consumed for a month, selling the same on an expiry date of three to five days means that the buyer must discard the same after five days. That suggests that the buyer has paid for a product to be consumed for a month but has practically used the same only for five days. It is not only wastage of the product but

also leads the buyers to buckle under duress in financial terms.

Besides, those buyers, who do not choose to discard such products—just on the grounds that they might presume it safe since the same was purchased before the expiry—might use them till those are fully consumed. Both the scenarios paint high risk of consuming expired food items, which are unfit for human consumption.

It stands to reason that such products incur inherent health risks, in this case, to infants, potentially the most susceptible class. So, the FBOs cannot shirk such a weighty, collective responsibility merely on the grounds that they have not sold the product past its expiry. And when it comes to baby foods, it is not only a serious business, but fairly sensitive one too. Products that are sensitive to temperature or environmental conditions—like infant formula or certain baby foods—might degrade quicker near their expiration. Thus, FBOs are expected to shoulder special responsibility in managing and selling baby food products.

The best possible way to tackle this sensitive issue would be for the FBOs to calculate as to how many servings a baby food product pack is supposed to offer the consumer, and accordingly, its shelf life ought not to be less than the period/time that product pack could be consumed up to the hilt given the number of its servings.

For instance, if the product pack offers total fifteen servings, three to be consumed daily, the last date of the product being on display shelf should be at least 5 days before its expiry. If the FBO sells such a product with an expiry date of two days, it poses health risks to the babies, and as such would invite regulatory action against itself or the business.

As per the FDA (Food and Drug Administration, USA) standards,

all baby formula and baby food with an expiration date should not be consumed beyond that date, and the same be discarded upon the expiration or use-by date. However, a best by date product may be consumed beyond the printed date depending on the recommendations of the manufacturer and some other considerations.

It goes without saying that the FBOs must observe such anomalies in their food product management in general, and accordingly, comply with the standards with higher prudence, both local and/or global, especially with reference to baby food products. Those baby products that are near their expiry and do not fall within the parameters discussed above must be removed from shelves without any delay.


Besides, baby food products ought to be placed at designated areas in stores, especially the infant formulae or follow-on formulae, with halal certification and optimal storage conditions stated in clear terms, at least in English and Urdu, to avoid causing confusion for consumers. FBOs need to assume their responsibilities in safeguarding the health of their consumers based on the foods they claim they sell as per the standards. The citizenry ought to make informed decisions with respect to food products, especially baby foods.

All the food authorities should take lead and educate people about the risks linked to baby food products sold in the markets, and they must take preventive measures to ensure that healthy food is being sold by the FBOs. Without a comprehensive regulatory mechanism such a neglected area in the food industry cannot be addressed in a reasonable manner. The writer is a published poet, short story writer, magazine editor and civil servant while serving as Director General Sindh Food Authority.



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PUBLIC NOTICE

Beware of Illegal Gas Connections

It has come to the attention of Sui Northern Gas Pipelines Limited (SNGPL) that some miscreants are involved in providing illegal gas connections to unsuspecting members of the public in the franchise area of SNGPL. These activities are conducted in violation of the government-imposed ban on new gas connections in publicly developed areas.

Dangers of Illegal Gas Connections.

These illegal gas connections:

- **Pose Serious Safety Risks:** Installed by unqualified individuals, these connections do not conform to safety standards and pose significant threats to life and property.
- **Result in Disconnection:** SNGPL routinely disconnects illegal connections, causing inconvenience and financial loss to the deceived public.

Fraudulent Activities by Housing Schemes.

We have also discovered that some housing schemes are laying gas pipelines themselves to increase land value, falsely claiming these pipelines are laid by SNGPL. These pipelines are:

- **Unsafe:** Not adhering to safety standards, they endanger residents' lives and properties.
- **Illegal:** Such activities are fraudulent and punishable by law.

Legal Actions Against Offenders.

SNGPL takes a firm stance against illegal gas connections:

- **Disconnection and Penalties:** Any illegal gas connection Identified will be immediately disconnected by SNGPL.
- **Legal Prosecution:** Owners or occupants of premises with illegal gas connections will face legal action, including imprisonment, fines and other penalties as per the law.
- **Accountability for Safety Hazards:** Those responsible for installing unsafe connections will be held accountable for any resultant safety hazards or damages.

SNGPL's Commitment to Safety and Legality.

SNGPL is committed to ensuring the safety and legality of all gas connections. We completely disassociate ourselves from these illegal activities.

How You Can Protect Yourself

- **Verify Connections:** Always verify the legitimacy of any gas connection directly with SNGPL.
- **Report Suspicious Activity:** If you come across any suspicious activities or unauthorized connections, report them immediately to SNGPL.
- **Stay Informed:** Educate yourself about the risks of illegal gas connections and the importance of adhering to safety standards.


Contact Us

For verification, reporting, or more information, please contact SNGPL at 1199 or visit regional offices of SNGPL.

Your safety is our priority. Help us ensure a safe and reliable gas supply for everyone.

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PESHAWAR: Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Chief Minister Sardar Ali Amin Khan Gandapur chairing a meeting to review security arrangements for Chinese and other foreigners working in the province.

Walk held to mark Pakistan National Resilience Day

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: The University of Peshawar's Centre for Disaster Preparedness and Management (CDPM) organized a commemorative walk today, titled "Empowering the Next Generation for a Resilient Future," to observe Pakistan National Resilience Day and International Day for Disaster Risk Reduction. The event aimed to raise awareness about disaster risk reduction, climate change, and resilience-building among students, communities, and stakeholders.

Participants included students, faculty members, government officials, and representatives from civil society organizations.

CDPM Director Prof. Dr. Zulfiqar Ali addressed the walk participants, highlighting the devastating impact of disasters on communities, specifically on vulnerable groups worldwide and in Pakistan.

"The 2005 earthquake killed 73,000 people, and the 2010 flood affected 20 million in Pakistan. During the recent 2022 floods, out of 33 million affected people,



almost 16 million were children," he said.

"These statistics underscore the need for building preparedness among communities, emphasizing an inclusive Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR) approach," he added. Dr. Zulfiqar Ali emphasized, "Empowering the next generation is crucial for building a resilient Pakistan. We must invest in education, awareness, and capacity-building initiatives to mitigate the impacts of disasters and climate change."

As a pioneer academic Disaster Risk Reduction institution in the country, CDPM offers BS, MS, and PhD degree courses. The Centre is closely engaged with all DRR stakeholders in Pakistan, including the NDMA, PDMA's, Rescue Services, United Nations, and NGOs.

A walk participant representing civil society stated, "Today's event demonstrates our commitment to disaster risk reduction and

resilience. We will continue to work with communities and stakeholders to promote a culture of safety and resilience."

Walk participants urged governments and partners to commit to implementing risk reduction and climate resilience activities to ensure community safety, protect economies, and contribute to a resilient Pakistan.

The event concluded with prayers for disaster victims.

Ihtisham briefed on health Development Schemes

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: Advisor to chief minister Khyber Pakhtunkhwa for Health, Ihtisham Ali, was briefed on the ongoing health development projects by Chief Planning Officer, Qaiser Alam. During the briefing, the advisor emphasized the importance of prioritizing projects that are near completion to ensure that their benefits start reaching the public as soon as possible.

He instructed that the work on these projects should be expedited and opened for public use at the earliest, so that projects funded by public money are made accessible to the people.

Chief Planning Officer Qaiser Alam provided an overview of the budget, stating that a total of PKR 147 billion has been allocated for 120 health projects. Out of this, PKR 114 billion has been designated for 95 projects in the settled districts, while PKR 12 billion for 10 projects in the merged districts, and PKR 20 billion for 15 projects under the Accelerated Development Program.

He further shared that so far, PKR 57 billion has already been spent on these projects, with several nearing completion and ready for inauguration.

KP districts report measles outbreak

PESHAWAR (APP): Various districts of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa on Tuesday reported measles' outbreak following a surge in cases of the disease.

A report of KP Health Department said during the current week 12 cases of measles were reported from different districts. It said districts Bajaur topped the tally of cases as District Headquarters Hospital Khar received 21 measles patients during one week.

Giving the number of measles cases from different districts, the report said from Peshawar 21 cases were reported while from Shangla 20, from Dera Ismail Khan 17 and from Malakand 11 cases were reported.

From Bannu and Dir Lower 10 cases each were reported while from Lower Kohistan 6, from Swabi 9 cases of measles were reported.

PMLN KP spokesman said that PTI Government has failed to construct five million houses in the country as announced by PTI founder in 2018 general election.

He accused PTI Government for outsourcing public sector schools that was tantamount to depriving thousands of poor students of education.

Alaiki, he said that about 25 public sector universities were operating without Vice Chancellors, which are adversely affecting higher education and research works.

Experts argued that controlling population growth is vital for addressing wider socio-

Meeting reviews proposed amends in lease policy

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: A meeting of the committee to review the proposed amendments to the lease policy in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa was held at the office of the Secretary Tourism and Culture on Tuesday. The meeting was presided over by Advisor to Chief Minister Khyber Pakhtunkhwa for Tourism and Culture Zahid Chanzeb.

Special Assistant to CM Khyber Pakhtunkhwa for Anti-Corruption Mussaddiq Abbasi was also present on this occasion. Senior Member Board of Revenue, Secretary Tourism and Culture, Director General Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Culture and Tourism Authority and Director General Kagan Development Authority attended the meeting.

DG Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Culture and Tourism Authority Tashfeen Haider presented a brief overview to the participants of the meeting regarding the proposed amendments in the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Lease Policy.

Adviser Tourism and Culture hailed the formation of the committee regarding the amendments in lease policy rules and said that the committee has a key position regarding the promotion of investment. He

said that if the investment increases, the economic condition of the country, including the province, will improve.

He said that in order to attract investors, the lease duration should be kept in mind in the lease policy rules and it should be extended to long term so that the risk could be reduced and the investors feel safe.

Regarding the auction process in relation to the lease, the Advisor for Tourism and Culture said that the rules should be clear in this regard and preference should be given to experienced firms in lease bidding so that timely completion of projects is possible.

On this occasion, Special Assistant for Anti-Corruption, Mussadeq Abbasi, expressed his views and said that to avoid legal complexity and confusion, it is necessary to change the title of the document because amending rules or laws are easier than amending policies.

He further said that in relation to amendments in the rules, clear definitions of terms should be ensured and grievance redressal mechanisms should be clearly presented in order to avoid court proceedings in business done by government to ensure timely completion of projects.



PESHAWAR: Advisor to Chief Minister Khyber Pakhtunkhwa for Tourism and Culture Zahid Chanzeb chairing meeting on amendments in lease policy in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa.

KTH launches breast cancer awareness drive

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: Khyber Teaching Hospital has officially launched its Breast Cancer Awareness Campaign from October 1st, aiming to raise awareness about breast cancer and promote early diagnosis and treatment of the disease.

October is globally recognized as Breast Cancer Awareness Month, and to mark this occasion, the Surgery Department of Khyber Teaching Hospital is spearheading this campaign. Prof. Dr. Maah

Munir, Chairperson of the Surgery Department, emphasized the importance of early detection, stating: "Breast cancer remains one of the most deadly diseases affecting women worldwide, but with timely diagnosis and treatment, it can be cured. Women, particularly those over 40, should regularly undergo screenings."

As part of the awareness initiative, the Surgery Department is offering a free Breast Care Camp from Monday to Friday, 9:00 AM to 12:00 PM, throughout the month. Free

services include mammograms, ultrasounds, and biopsies for women. To date, 259 women have been screened, with 49 mammograms, 20 ultrasounds, and 12 biopsies provided.

The hospital administration encourages the public to take full advantage of this free medical camp and not delay in addressing their health concerns.

"Our mission is to promote the early detection of breast cancer and dispel misconceptions surrounding the disease," hospital officials stated.

76 fake candidates held for appearing in ETEA test

PESHAWAR (APP): The Khyber Pakhtunkhwa police on the identification of the concerned officials on Tuesday arrested at least 76 fake candidates in an attempt to appear in the

Education Evaluation Testing Agency (ETEA) test on behalf of others for recruitment in the police department.

According to the officials of ETEA, 31 such

candidates were held in Lakki Marwat, 12 in Peshawar, 10 in Tank, and 12 in Kohistan, adding that legal action had been initiated against all fake candidates.

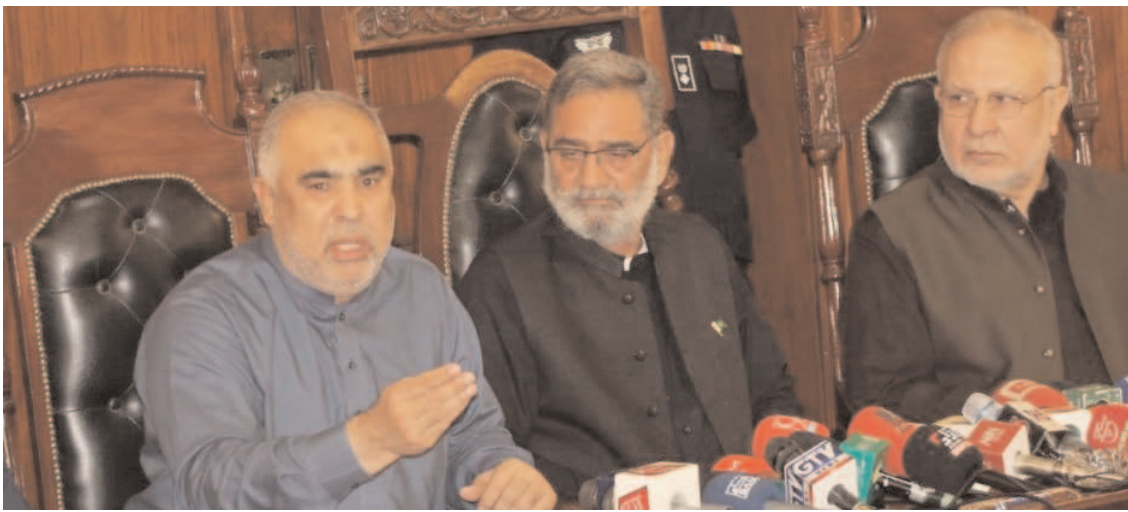
PHC bars Anti-Corruption from action against former CM

PESHAWAR (APP): The Peshawar High Court (PHC) on Tuesday barred the Anti-Corruption from taking action against the former Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Chief Minister, Mahmood Khan.

The PHC Judges, Justice Attiq Shah and Justice Sahibzada Asad Ullah while hearing the petition filed by the former CM KP, sought a reply from the Anti-Corruption in this regard.

The advocate for Mahmood Khan told the court that Anti-Corruption has issued notice on Mahmood Khan but not details about the allegations were provided.

He said the petitioner time and again appeared before the Anti-Corruption and now feared his arrest. A case was filed against the former KP Chief Minister at Anti-Corruption for transferring amount from the national exchequer to his personal account.



PESHAWAR: PTI leader Asad Qaiser addressing a press conference.

Overpopulation: a threat to food security, healthcare, housing services

PESHAWAR (APP): The rising population growth has created serious challenges to the country's socioeconomic resources including food security, healthcare, housing services and the experts underlined the need for its control to achieve heights of economic prosperity.

As Pakistan's population surges to a staggering 241 million mark early this year, the pressure on its socio-economic fabric have become increasingly evident in all provinces, especially in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa where 2.5 million housing units are required for poor and underprivileged.

This demographic boom, which has escalated from just 33 million

population in 1950, is now positioning Pakistan as the fifth most populous in the world, trailing only China, India, USA, and Indonesia, bringing socioeconomic services including education, agriculture, housing and hospitals under mounting pressure.

"The findings from the 6th Population and Housing Census conducted in 2017 are alarming. The national census recorded a growth rate of 2.4% since 1998, highlighting an urgent need for comprehensive strategies at national and provincial level to address the burgeoning health, education, food and housing problems in KP," said Prof Dr Naeem

Khan, former Chairman, Economics Department, University of Peshawar while talking to APP.

"Currently, there is a reported shortfall of about 10 million housing units in the country including 2.5 million in KP, a number that could double by 2030 if population growth remained unchecked."

He claimed that the demand for new housing units was growing at a rate of 600,000 per year, and that 1.1 million housing units annually are needed keeping in view of rapid population growth.

The trend of rural-urban migration has further complicated the issue, with around 63.6% of the population still residing in rural areas,

despite a noticeable increase in urban dwellers from 32.52% in 1998 to 36.4% in 2017.

This shift has placed an additional strain on urban infrastructure, education, healthcare, agriculture and houses services to people especially in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa.

In KP alone, he said the population has crossed 30 million million mark, with an annual growth rate of 2.89%, which should be a matter of great concern.

He maintained that the increasing influx of individuals from less-developed regions is exacerbating housing shortages in urban centers like Peshawar.

Ikhtair Wali Khan,

economic challenges such as unemployment, poverty, illiteracy and corruption.

Dr. Naeem emphasized that a failure to implement effective family planning and population welfare programs has negatively impacted education and health delivery, agricultural productivity, and overall economic growth.

Without addressing the monster issue of overpopulation, he said it would be difficult to tackle unemployment, illiteracy or poverty, adding the current landscape of shortage of housing in Peshawar have posed serious challenges to the KP government.

Aside from a few hous-

ing projects like Hayatabad Township and Regi Model Town, there has been little progress in public housing initiatives in KP, resulting in skyrocketing property prices and rent in major cities of KP.

Residents like Waris Khan, who have spent huge amount on rented houses, feel the weight of these challenges daily. "I have paid about Rs 20 million in house rent with no end insight in Peshawar" he lamented.

The experts suggested that Pakistan must learn from successful housing projects in countries like China, launching small residential developments in urban areas to provide affordable housing to

poor coupled with robust family planning initiatives, which could help reduce the current population growth rate significantly besides reduce property cost.

Ultimately, the solution to Pakistan's pressing issues lies in a collective effort by all stakeholders to control population explosion.

By doing so, the country can pave the way for sustainable economic growth, ensure food security, enhanced living standards, and a brighter future for its citizens. As the country especially KP stands at this crossroads, the urgency for action has never been more important to achieve goals of economic prosperity.



In brief

One killed, four injured F.P. Report

CHARSDDA: At least one person was killed and four others injured in exchange of fire between two rival groups here on Tuesday, police said. According to details, armed men of two groups which were in old dispute traded fire outside Judicial Complex in Charsadda. The fire exchange resulted in death of one person besides leaving four others critically injured. The body and injured were shifted to Charsadda Hospital and police after registering a case armed men of the two groups started raids for their arrest.

Neelum Valley receives snowfall F.P. Report

NEELUM VALLEY: Ratti Gali and Baboon Valley, two tourist destinations in Neelum Valley, Azad Jammu and Kashmir (AJK), received the first snowfall of the winter season on Tuesday, which brought down the temperatures considerably. On the other hand, rain has also been reported from the upper parts of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, including Dir, that have caused the temperatures to dip further. On the other hand, the Met Office forecast dry weather for most parts of the country during the next 24 hours. However, it said rains were expected in the upper parts of the country.

Police arrest 4 in theft cases F.P. Report

DI KHAN: The district police have arrested four accused allegedly involved in a theft cases and recovered Rs One million cash from them here in the limits of Parao police station. According to police spokesperson, the thieves were traced and arrested during ongoing operation conducted under the supervision of District Police Officer Nasir Mehmood and led by SDPO Parao Circle Noor Haider Khan and SHO Gulsher Khan. He added the arrested accused namely Qaiser Iqbal son of Abdul Rasheed, Syed Ayaz son of Miraz Ali, Hameed Ullah son of Ashraf Ullah and Shahid Ullah son of Nawab Khan were involved in multiple theft cases. The police have recovered Rs One million which they earned after selling the stolen goods including electric batteries, solar inverters and converters. The accused were taken into custody while further investigation was underway, he added.

Ten of family hospitalized

JHELUM (INP): Women and children among 10 family members were hospitalized after consuming poisonous food here on Tuesday. According to details, a family took meal which turned toxic due to unknown reasons in Dhoke Sherian in suburbs of tehsil Dina of Jhelum district. Condition of 10 family members including four women and two children deteriorated due to consuming toxic food. The affected people were shifted to DHQ Hospital Sohawa. Samples of the toxic food were collected and sent for laboratory test. It should be mentioned here that it was the second incident of food poisoning in the same family in last couple of days.

Girl killed

SARGODHA (INP): A girl was killed while seven others sustained multiple injuries in a road accident near here on Tuesday. Two families were returning to Sargodha from Faisalabad by a carry-van when a dumper truck hit their vehicle from behind near Faisalabad Road.



ABBOTTABAD: KP Minister for Local Government, Arshad Ayub Khan chairing a meeting of TMA's and Urban Areas Development Authority.

Govt providing patronage to culture and sports

F.P. Report

MARDAN: Assistant Commissioner Mardan Kamran Khan has said that the district administration should give full patronage to cultural sports so as to keep the historical and cultural sports alive. That is why the provincial government and sports directorate Peshawar have included archery in the sports calendar. So that sports can get more recognition.

He expressed these views while speaking at the prize distribution ceremony in the final of the All Baizai Mukha (Archery) super six tournaments with the support of Peshawar Sports Department in Chapalabad Shamoza Katling. On this occasion, Haji Nawab Shah, Sulaiman Khan, Syed Akhtar Gohar Shah, Farman Shah and Ajmal Khan were also present. Provincial President Mukha Organization Amjad Hussain Yousafzai informed the participants about the aims and objectives of the tournament. Eight teams participated in the tournament and the final was played between Chappellabad and Babuzai teams in which the Chappellabad team won by two points and won the tournament. Assistant Commissioner Kamran Khan and Deputy Director Sports Jamshed Baloch said that the

provincial government is taking practical steps to promote the ancient game of Mukha so that this traditional game can develop in this regard the provincial government is taking positive and concrete steps.

He said that in November and February Peshawar DI Khan will organize its exhibition in which all the cultural sports of the province will participate and Mukha (archery) will also be a part of it. Jamshed Baloch gave 50,000 rupees to the winner team of Chapalabad on this occasion while the dropped Babuzai team got Rs 30,000 and the coach of the third position team got Rs 20,000 and Man of the Tournament Saifullah Khan got Rs 15,000 and Man of the Match Qasim Khan got Rs 10,000 cash at the end, trophies and shields were distributed among the players of Mukha who got the best positions, while organizing the tournament, the provincial president Amjad Hussain Yousafzai, member Farman Shah, Gohar Shah and Ajmal Khan were given special awards.

Police to crackdown against drugs: District Police Officer Mardan has said that making Mardan district ice and drug free is our priority. In the month of October, 16 kg of ice and 48 ice sellers have been arrested

in Mardan district does and the police take practical measures against these evils.

The pictures of ice sellers and other drug dealers will be advertised through social media and social media. I have given clear instructions to all my commanders that ice sellers, drug sellers do not deserve any discount. By the grace of Allah, Mardan district is a better district than other districts in terms of peace and security.

The cooperation of the people of Mardan district with the police is ideal, wherever there is understanding between the police and the people, there will be less crime and the situation of law and order will be ideal. He expressed these views during a conversation with media representatives at Baizai Press Club, Shergarh. On this occasion SP Sadar Division Rahim Hussain DSP Takhtbhai Shakeel Khan was also with him and he stayed with the journalists for some time. He said that during the last one month, Mardan police recovered ice worth two and a half crores during the month of October, during the ongoing campaign against ice and other drugs, the police recovered 16 kg of 252 grams of ice and 15,299 during the campaign. A gram of hashish and 4,470 grams of heroin were also recovered.

Constitution supreme document, says Punjab Governor

F.P. Report

FAISALABAD: Punjab Governor Sardar Saleem Haider Khan said on Tuesday the constitution was a supreme document which would be strengthened through constitutional amendment.

Addressing the District Bar Association (DBA), he said amendments would be made after due process of consultation with all stakeholders including lawyers. He said that PPP wanted a strategic balance between judicial commission and parliamentary party with a focused vision to strengthen the democracy. He said that all decisions must be made on merit and there should be no room to speculate decisions on the basis of bench formulation.

He said that his party had offered unprecedented sacrifices for the independence of judiciary. "I was in forefront of the movement for the restoration of former chief justice Iftikhar Chaudhry", he said and added that upon his restoration, Iftikhar Chaudhry smartly ignored the lawyers as well as political parties. He said that constitutional amendment had become a buzzword today. Bilawal Bhutto Zardari intended to add some constitutional amendments with a clear objective to strengthen the democracy and parliamentary system of the country.

Bilawal Bhutto Zardari had visited different bars in Karachi and Balochistan and he would soon visit Faisalabad to further clarify the party stand on the constitutional amendments, he added. The Governor Punjab supported the demand of High Court Bench in Faisalabad and assured of his full cooperation in this regard. Earlier, President DBA Mian Anwaar-ul-Haq Advocate presented the demand of Lahore High Court bench in Faisalabad and said that different governments had intentionally skipped this issue which was deemed imperative to provide justice to 25 million people of this region at their door steps.

Disappearance of KP CM a 'drama', says Sherpao

F.P. Report

SWABI: Quami Watan Party (QWP) Chairman Aftab Ahmad Khan Sherpao on Tuesday questioned the haste the federal government was showing to bring the amendment to establish the constitutional court. He was speaking as chief guest at the condolence reference for QWP leader Mohammad Jamil Marghuz Advocate, who recently passed away in Swabi.

Paying rich tributes to the deceased party leader, Aftab Sherpao said that being a committed and sincere politician Jamil Marghuz was an asset to QWP, who strived for the cause of democracy and rule of law. Aftab Sherpao explained that though making the constitutional amendment was prerogative of the parliament, the government should have a debate on this issue to reach a consensus. "The way the government is pushing the process to pass the amendment is not the right

approach. The political forces have apprehensions so the government must address them first," he said, questioning the timing of bringing the legislation.

Commenting on the prevailing political situation in the country, the QWP leader remarked that the political instability the country was facing was happening by design. He believed that the establishment wanted the political forces be it the government or the opposition to be at its mercy. Coming down hard on the PTI leaders for using public funds for staging protests, the QWP leader said the provincial government was least bothered to work for the welfare of the people and secure the rights of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. He termed the recent disappearance of the chief minister a "drama" which did not serve any purpose.

He was also critical of the federal government's tactics to deal with the protest of the PTI by placing containers on key roads

in Islamabad, which created problems for people. The QWP leader did not approve of the ban imposed by the federal government on the Pashtun Tahafuz Movement and said it was a political issue and should be dealt with politically.

Aftab Sherpao also questioned the payment of capacity charges to the Independent Power Producers, saying the agreements reached with the IPPs were largely investor-friendly; therefore, the deals should be revisited at the earliest. "Nowhere in world exists any such agreement under which payment is made to the non-functional IPPs," he said. He recalled that when he was the chief minister, he had given incentives to the industries in Gadoon Industrial Estate in Swabi to boost industrialization to create employment opportunities for the people. He said some elements did not want economic development in the Pakhtun-inhabited areas.

NADRA, CFC centers closed in Landi Kotal

F.P. Report

LANDI KOTAL: The National Database and Registration Authority (NADRA) and Citizen Facilitation Center (CFC) in Landi Kotal have suspended for all kinds of services for the last three days after brawl between NADRA staff members and Tehsil Chairman and councilors, sources informed.

According to the sources after exchange of hot words between the Tehsil Chairman along with a number of councilors and manager of the NADRA center over blocking of National Identity (ID) Card of a local, physical quarrel erupted among them however with no serious injuries to either side.

Tehsil Chairman Haji Shah Khalid said that the NADRA staff had thrice blocked the ID card of an applicant besides their attestation and when they inquired the reason of the center manager, he arrogantly replied that blocking and rejection of any application

was his authority and no one questioned him. Poor attitude and unsatisfactory replies from the manager led to a brawl between the councilors and the NADRA officials, he added.

He alleged that some staff members in the center with support of the manager victimized applicants while blocking their ID cards to collect illicit money from them. The manager of the center filed a First Information Report (FIR) in Landi Kotal police station against the Tehsil Chairman and two other councilors for assaulting him and threatened dire consequences.

NADRA officials' disproved allegation leveled against them and said they had an authority to block the ID card of any suspected applicant. Till legal action to be taken against the alleged councilors and guarantee of their security, the centers would remain closed, NADRA staff added. The unpleasant event took place two days back and since then,

NADRA and the CFC center were closed, which multiplied the problems of the locals.

Two killed in Dir road accident

F.P. Report

LOWER DIR: Two persons were killed while one was critically injured when two motorcycles collided head on at Mandish area of Rabat in the jurisdiction of Khall police station here on Monday evening, residents and police said.

They said that locals shifted the dead and the injured to the DHQ hospital Timergara. The dead were identified as Suhail 33, a resident of Munjai and Azimullah 30, a resident of Khall Sacha while the injured was identified as Hasnain 16, a resident of Munjai. The Khall police registered a case and started further investigations.



QUETTA: Activists of civil society holding a protest against recent attack on Chinese Engineers.

Gaza - Past, present and future

Dr. Najib Ul Haq

ON October 7, the conflict in Gaza will mark one year since the outbreak of war, during which Israel has been formally convicted by the International Court of Justice for committing genocide. The Balfour Declaration, issued by the British government in 1917, endorsed the idea of a Jewish state in Palestine, which prompted a significant influx of Jewish immigrants to the region.

Following World War II, the State of Israel was established in 1948, resulting in a large number of Jewish settlers moving to the newly formed nation. Since then, the Israel has acquired land from impoverished Muslim communities and has utilized its military power to expand its territory under various justifications.

The U.S.-Israel alliance has complete disregard for human rights, UN General Assembly resolutions, and moral principles. Israel's open declaration of targeting children, women, and non-combatants reflects a troubling shift toward a "might makes right" mentality on the

global stage. This situation underscores a serious concern for the rule of law and humanity in coming days. The figures so far available are alarming for every human being including the following:

Human Tragedy: More than 51,615 lives have been lost, including approximately 17,000 children and 11,500 women. Thousands of bodies remain trapped under rubble, while around 96,210 individuals have been wounded, with 69% being children and women. Additionally, 174 journalists have been killed.

Many children have succumbed to starvation, and over 2 million Palestinians have been displaced multiple times within the Gaza Strip, as all routes to the outside world are blocked. To date, 130 mass graves have been discovered. An estimated 9,500 prisoners in Israeli jails are enduring inhumane treatment and torture.

Infrastructure Damage: The extent of infrastructure damage is staggering. Nearly 80% of buildings in Gaza are either completely or partially destroyed, rendering them uninhabitable. More than 90 schools and universities have been dam-

aged, and an estimated 516,000 residential units have been either fully or partially destroyed. The war has resulted in damage to or the destruction of nearly two-thirds of homes in Gaza, alongside a devastating impact on 84% of health facilities. This destruction stems from over 45,000 missiles and bombs dropped by Israel, totaling approximately 85,000 tons of explosives-more than six times the amount used in the atomic bombing of Hiroshima.

The destruction has resulted in an estimated 26 million tons of debris and rubble. Assessments indicate that the damage is at least \$18.5 billion, as reported by the Arab Center for Washington DC. The report also notes that of the 45,000 bombs dropped on Gaza, approximately 9% to 14% are unexploded. In early May 2024, the United Nations Mine Action Service (UNMAS) estimated that it would take at least 14 years to clear Gaza of explosive remnants of war.

Additionally, a Reuters report on May 2 highlighted that rebuilding Gaza's shattered homes could take until at least 2040, with the possibility of the process extending for many

decades, as mentioned in the UN report. However, while addressing the U.S. Congress on July 25, 2024, Israeli Prime Minister Netanyahu stated, "The day after we defeat Hamas, a new Gaza can emerge. My vision for that day is of a demilitarized and deradicalized Gaza. Israel does not seek to resettle Gaza."

The arm supply to Israel: The Gaza Strip has become a "testing laboratory" for ammunition suppliers and manufacturers. Between 2013 and 2023, the estimated volume of major arms transferred to Israel was, the United States accounted for 65.6%, Germany 29.7%, and Italy 4.7%, with 10 other countries supplying the remainder. (Source: SIPRI)

As of June 28, the Biden administration has sent a significant amount of munitions to Israel since October of last year, including at least 14,000 MK-84 2,000-pound bombs, 6,500 - 500-pound bombs, 3,000-Hellfire precision-guided air-to-ground missiles, 1,000 bunker-buster bombs, and 2,600 air-dropped small-diameter bombs, among other munitions (reported by Reuters).

The major types of bombs used include: Dumb bombs: Unguided, free-fall bombs that

can cause destruction wherever they land. CNN reported that nearly 50% of the munitions used by Israel in Gaza have been "dumb bombs," according to research from the U.S. Office of the Director of National Intelligence. Bunker buster bombs - designed to penetrate hardened structures before detonating, these bombs typically weigh over 900 kg (2,000 lbs) and JDAMs (Joint Direct Attack Munitions) that are precision-guided munitions using GPS for targeting and can also cause secondary strikes shortly after the initial explosion, potentially harming rescue workers and civilians rushing to assist the wounded. Additionally, there are claims that colorless white phosphorus has been used as a chemical weapon, which is restricted under international humanitarian law. (Source: www.aljazeera.com/new/2023/12/29/beyond)

What next? If the conflict in Gaza escalates into a global war, the world could be on the brink of catastrophic destruction. It is essential for responsible world powers to reconsider the framework of international relations based on humanity, justice, and morality. New principles of

engagement in warfare need to be established.

While issues like economic imbalance, poverty, and environmental concerns are crucial, the immediate priority must be to safeguard human life and the humanity. The world nations cannot afford to be ruled by those who behave like beasts in human form. Nations must act decisively now; if they fail to do so, a future dominated by the law of the jungle may become inevitable, threatening the very fabric of humanity.

Time to act Now: While issues such as economic imbalance, poverty, and environmental concerns are undeniably important, the immediate priority must be to safeguard human life and uphold our shared humanity. The world cannot afford to be governed by those who act like beasts in human form. Nations must act decisively now; failure to do so could lead to a future dominated by the law of the jungle, threatening the very fabric of humanity itself. It's time to act now or never. The urgency of the moment demands our collective commitment to change.

The writer is a retired professor of Medicine at Khyber Medical College, Peshawar.



Kim threatens to use nuclear weapons against S Korea, US

SEOUL (AP): North Korean leader Kim Jong Un warned again that he could use nuclear weapons in potential conflicts with South Korea and the United States, as he accused them of provoking North Korea and raising animosities on the Korean Peninsula, state media reported Tuesday.

Kim has issued similar threats to use nuclear weapons preemptively numerous times, but his latest warning came as outside experts say North Korea could ramp up hostilities ahead of next month's US presidential election. In a speech at a university named after him, the Kim Jong Un University of National Defense, he said that North Korea "will without hesitation use all its attack capabilities against its enemies" if they attempt to use armed forces" against North Korea, according to the North's official Korean Central News Agency.

"The use of nuclear weapons is not ruled out in this case," he said. Kim said North Korea's nuclear response posture must be fully enhanced because South Korea and the United States are pushing to beef up their military alliance based on joint nuclear and strategic planning, a move that he said would increase the danger of breaking the balance of power on the Korean Peninsula.

Kim apparently refers to the new South Korea-US deterrence guideline that the two countries signed in July to integrate South Korean conventional capabilities with US nuclear weapons to better deal with North Korea's evolving nuclear threats. South Korea has no nuclear weapons. Since adopting an aggressive nuclear doctrine in 2022, North Korea has repeatedly vowed to use nuclear weapons first if it perceives the leadership in Pyongyang as under threat. But many experts question if North Korea could really do so because its military is outgunned by the US and South Korean forces. US and South Korean officials have warned that an attempt by North Korea to use nuclear weapons would result in the end of the Kim government.

Tensions on the Korean Peninsula deepened in recent weeks, with North Korea unveiling a facility to produce weapons-grade uranium, a nuclear ingredient, and continuing a run of missile tests. In recent responses to questions from The Associated Press, South Korean President Yoon Suk Yeol said that North Korea's disclosure of that nuclear site was likely an attempt to grab US attention ahead of next month's presidential election, and the North will likely stage major provocations like a nuclear test

explosion and a long-range missile test. Many analysts say North Korea will likely leverage its enlarged nuclear arsenal for US concessions like sanctions relief after a new US administration is inaugurated.

North Korea earlier said its rubber-stamp parliament was to meet on Oct. 7. But as of Tuesday, state media hasn't said whether the parliament meeting began as scheduled. Observers say the parliament meeting was likely meant to constitutionally declare a hostile "two-state" system on the Korean Peninsula to formally reject reconciliation with South Korea and codify new national borders. In January, Kim ordered the rewriting of the constitution to remove the long-running state goal of a peaceful Korean unification and cement South Korea as an "invariable principal enemy."

All exchange and cooperation programs between the two Koreas remain dormant since a broader US-North Korea diplomacy on the North's nuclear program collapsed in 2019. Since late May, North Korea has floated thousands of trash-carrying balloons toward South Korea, reviving a Cold War-style psychological campaign. On Tuesday, South Korea's military said North Korea was again launching such balloons across the border.

France's fragile new govt faces a no-trust vote

PARIS (AP): France's minority government is expected to survive a no-confidence vote on Tuesday in a test for new conservative Prime Minister Michel Barnier, forced to rely on the far right's good will to be able to stay in power. It comes as Barnier's fragile government faces a major challenge to get a budget for next year approved with no majority at parliament.

Following June-July parliamentary elections, the National Assembly, France's powerful lower house of parliament, is divided into three major blocs: the New Popular Front, Macron's centrist allies and the far-right National Rally party. None of them won an outright majority. The no-confidence motion was brought by 192 lawmakers of a left-wing coalition, the New Popular Front, composed of the hard-left France Unbowed, Socialists, Greens and Communists. It needs 289 votes to pass.

The far-right National Rally group, which counts 125 lawmakers, has said it would abstain from voting a no-confidence motion for now. Far-right leader Marine Le Pen, herself a lawmaker, said she decided to "give a chance" to the government. Barnier's cabinet is mostly composed of members of his Republicans party and centrists from French President Emmanuel Macron's alliance who altogether count just over 200 lawmakers. Left-wing lawmakers denounced the choice of Barnier as prime minister as they were not given a chance to form a minority government, despite securing the most seats at the National Assembly. This government "is a denial of the result of the most recent legislative elections," the motion read.

Russia sentences American national to jail

MOSCOW (BBC): A Russian court has sentenced a 72-year-old American citizen to almost seven years in jail for allegedly fighting as a mercenary for Ukraine. Prosecutors said Stephen James Hubbard was serving in a defence unit based in the eastern city of Izium when he was captured by Russian forces in April 2022, shortly after Moscow launched its full-scale invasion of Ukraine.

Hubbard "systematically received material compensation" for his participation in the war on the Ukrainian side, a statement by the Russian Prosecutor General said. He has now been sentenced to 6 years and 10 months imprisonment in a penal colony. Hubbard, a native of Michigan, pleaded guilty to the charges last week, according to Russian state media. However, his sister Patricia Fox told Reuters that Hubbard held pro-Russian views and was unlikely to have taken up arms at his age.

"He is so non-military," Ms Fox told Reuters, adding that her brother "never had a gun, owned a gun, done any of that... He's more of a pacifist." According to Ms Fox, Hubbard had moved to Ukraine in 2014 and lived there for a time with a woman, surviving off a small pension. He and his partner later split but he continued living in Ukraine.

Although Hubbard was detained by Russian forces in early 2022, his case only became public when his trial began in Moscow in September.

In a video shared by Russian authorities, Hubbard can be seen walking with difficulty inside the defendants' glass box in the courtroom where he was sentenced. The eastern Ukrainian city of Izium where Hubbard was detained was captured by Russia soon after it invaded Ukraine. It was liberated by Ukrainian troops in the autumn of 2022. In a separate case, Robert Gilman, an ex-US marine who was already serving time in Russia for an assault conviction, was handed seven years and one month in jail for assaulting a prison officer.

New Zealand loses first naval ship to sea since WW2



WELLINGTON (BBC): The Royal New Zealand Navy has lost its first ship to the sea since World War Two, after one of its vessels ran aground off the coast of Samoa. HMNZS Manawanui, a specialist diving and ocean imaging ship, came into trouble about one nautical mile from the island of Upolu local time, while conducting a survey of a reef.

It later caught fire before capsizing. All 75 people on board were evacuated onto lifeboats and rescued, New Zealand's Defence Force said in a statement. Officials said the cause of the grounding was unknown and will be investigated. The incident occurred during a bout of rough and windy weather. Military officials said rescuers "battled" currents and

winds that pushed life rafts and sea boats towards the reefs, and swells made rescue efforts "challenging".

Officials said the area had not been surveyed since 1987. The vessel's crew and passengers - including seven scientists and four foreign military personnel - are being accommodated in Samoa before being flown back to New Zealand. As of 06:40 local time (18:40 BST), the ship was seen listing heavily with smoke billowing from it. By 09:00 (21:00 BST), it was below the surface. Defence minister Judith Collins described the incident as "a really sad day for the Navy" during a news conference.

She added: "But everyone came through, and that, I have to say, is down to the professionalism [of

the crew], the training and their own courage." Dave Poole, who witnessed the ship ablaze, told the Reuters news agency: "As we came into the bay we saw the ship and no smoke. Within 15 minutes fire and smoke were visible. It sank shortly after." HMNZS Manawanui is the first of New Zealand's naval vessels to be unintentionally sunk since the nation participated in naval battles during World War Two. Several other ships have been intentionally sunk in the intervening period for various reasons, including to serve as a diving wreck or an artificial reef. Military officials said their efforts are now turning towards attempting to salvage the vessel and minimising the environmental impacts of the sinking.

Water gushes through palm trees and sand dunes

RABAT (AP): A rare deluge of rainfall left blue lagoons of water amid the palm trees and sand dunes of the Sahara desert, nourishing some of its most drought-stricken regions with more water than many had seen in decades. Southeastern Morocco's desert is among the most arid places in the world and rarely experiences rain in late summer.

The Moroccan government said two days of rainfall in September had exceeded yearly averages in several areas that get an average of less than 250 millimeters (10 inches) annually, including Tata, one of the areas hit hardest. In Tagounite, a village about 450 kms (280 miles) south of the capital Rabat, more than 100 mm (3.9 inches) was recorded in a 24-hour period. The storms provided more rainfall than had been seen in decades,

leaving striking images of bountiful water gushing through the Saharan sands amid castles and desert flora. In desert communities frequented by the many tourists who visit the Sahara, 4x4s motored through the puddles and residents surveyed the scene in awe.

"It's been 30 to 50 years since we've had this much rain in such a short space of time," said Houssine Youabeb of Morocco's General Directorate of Meteorology. Such rains, which meteorologists are calling an extratropical storm, may indeed change the course of the region's weather in months and years to come as the air retains more moisture, causing more evaporation and drawing more storms, Youabeb said. Six consecutive years of drought have posed challenges for much of Morocco, forcing farm-

ers to leave fields fallow and cities and villages to ration water consumption.

The bounty of rainfall will likely help refill the large groundwater aquifers that lie beneath the desert and are relied upon to supply water in desert communities. The region's dammed reservoirs reported refilling at record rates throughout September. However, it's unclear how far September's rains will go toward alleviating drought. Yet water gushing through the sands and oases left more than 20 dead in Morocco and Algeria and damaged the farmers' harvests, forcing the government to allocate emergency relief funds, including in some areas affected by last year's earthquake. NASA satellites showed water rushing in to fill Lake Iriqui, a famous lakebed between Zagora and Tata that had been dry for 50 years.

Ethiopia president replaced after falling out with PM

ADDIS ABABA (BBC): Ethiopia's parliament has approved the appointment of a new president to replace the country's first female head of state, Sahle-Work Zewde. Taye Astike Selassie, foreign minister since February, has taken up the largely ceremonial role. In Ethiopia, political power lies with the prime minister - currently Abiy Ahmed.

Sahle-Work had reportedly fallen out with Abiy in recent years. The prime minister's backing of her initial appointment in 2018 was hailed as a breakthrough for gender equality

in Ethiopian politics. Sahle-Work posted a brief and somewhat cryptic message on X, implying she was unhappy as a result of staying silent for the past year.

Sources close to the 74-year-old told BBC Amharic she had not been happy for some time and was eagerly awaiting the end of her term, due later this month. During her presidency, she made several calls for peace across the country, though she was criticised for not talking more about the gender-based violence during the two-year civil war in Tigray. But it is believed she was con-

cerned about the current conflicts in Oromia and Amhara regions. In Amhara, federal forces have been fighting a local militia, which has led to hundreds of deaths and security forces being accused of committing crimes against humanity.

President Taye, 68, an experienced diplomat having served at the UN and in Egypt, is considered close to Abiy. He was sworn in in front of MPs. The replacement of Sahle-Work means that Tanzania's President Samia Suluhu Hassan is currently Africa's only female head of state.

North Korean soldiers 'highly likely' killed in Ukraine: Seoul

SEOUL (AFP): North Korean soldiers are likely fighting in Ukraine alongside Russian troops, with some believed already killed and more expected to be deployed, Seoul's defence minister said Tuesday.

Ukrainian media have reported that six North Korean military officers were killed in a Ukrainian missile attack on Russian-occupied territory near Donetsk on October 3. Seoul's defence minister, Kim Jong-hyun, told lawmakers Tuesday that it was "highly likely" that the report was true.

"We assess that the occurrence of casualties among North Korean officers and soldiers in Ukraine is highly likely, considering various circumstances," he said. North Korea is expected to send more foot soldiers to support Russia's war effort, he added. "The issue of deploying regular troops is highly likely due to the mutual agreements

that resemble a military alliance between Russia and North Korea," Kim said.

Both Ukraine and Russia have foreign fighters in their ranks, with AFP journalists in India and Nepal having investigated recruitment drives for the Russian military. Experts have long said North Korean missiles are being deployed in Ukraine by Russian forces - something both Moscow and Pyongyang have denied. South Korea also claims Pyongyang has sent thousands of containers of weapons to Russia for use in Ukraine.

The nuclear-armed North has publicly bolstered military ties with Moscow in recent years. President Vladimir Putin made a rare visit to Pyongyang in June, where he signed a mutual defence agreement with leader Kim Jong Un. Analysts have warned that the recent ramped-up testing and production of artillery and

cruise missiles by the North could be in preparation for shipments to Russia.

Experts said that moving from supplying shells to soldiers to Russia was the logical next step. "For North Korea, which has supplied Russia with many shells and missiles, it's crucial to learn how to handle different weapons and gain real-world combat experience," said Lim Eul-chul, a professor at Seoul's Institute for Far Eastern Studies. "This might even be a driving factor behind sending North Korean soldiers - to provide them with diverse experiences and war-time training," he told AFP.

It is likely that higher-ranking North Korean officials would have been dispatched to Russia earlier on, to help manage the North Korean weaponry or facilitate trainings on their use, Lim said. "What's new here is not only the potential for continued artillery and weapons support from

North Korea but also their growing involvement, such as using North Koreans as additional labour as the war drags on."

The key question, he added, is what North Korea will get in return from Russia. North Korea is barred by United Nations sanctions from any tests using ballistic technology. But Moscow used its UN Security Council veto in March to effectively end UN monitoring of violations, for which Pyongyang has specifically thanked Russia.

North Korea is expected to scrap a landmark inter-Korean agreement signed in 1991 at a parliamentary meeting this week, as part of Kim's drive to officially define the South, Washington's security ally, as an enemy state. Moscow and Pyongyang have been allies since North Korea's founding after World War II and have drawn even closer since Russia's 2022 invasion of Ukraine.

Ex-Philippine President Duterte to run as mayor

MANILA (AP): The Philippines's former President Rodrigo Duterte registered to run for mayor of his southern home city despite his notorious legacy over his brutal anti-drugs crackdown that the International Criminal Court is investigating as a possible crime against humanity.

Duterte, 79, filed his papers before the Election Commission in Davao city, where he had served as mayor for about two decades before winning the presidency in 2016. His son - incumbent Davao city Mayor Sebastian Duterte - would run as his vice-mayor in next year's mid-term elections, officials said. More than 6,000 people, mostly poor drug suspects, were killed under a massive police-enforced crackdown against illegal drugs that Duterte oversaw when he was president, according to government pronouncements. But human rights groups say

the death toll is considerably higher and should include many unsolved killings by motorcycle-riding gunmen, who may have been deployed by police.

Duterte has denied condoning extrajudicial killings of drug suspects, although he has openly threatened suspects with death and has ordered police to shoot suspects who dangerously resist arrest. Despite his administration's massive crackdown against illegal drugs, Duterte acknowledged that drugs remained a major problem. During his presidential campaign, he vowed to eradicate the drug problem in three to six months but said after winning the presidency that he underestimated the enormity of the problem.

Duterte withdrew the Philippines from the ICC in 2019, in a move critics said was an attempt to evade accountability. The ICC prosecutor said the court still has jurisdiction over alleged

crimes, while the Philippines was still a member of the court. When Duterte's turbulent presidential term ended in 2022, he said he would retire from politics, but he has walked back on his public pronouncements multiple times.

His daughter, current Vice President Sara Duterte, said in June that her father and two brothers were planning to run for seats in the 24-member Senate. But the former president told reporters in Davao city that his frail health could not withstand the rigors of a campaign for any national position. Duterte has remained popular after stepping down from the presidency, but human rights groups and his political opponents would likely campaign hard to block his return to politics. He and his family have also been at odds with his successor, President Ferdinand Marcos Jr., whom he has publicly reviled as a weak leader

and a drug addict.

Marcos has laughed off Duterte's allegations and shot back at Duterte as a user of fentanyl, a powerful opioid. Sara Duterte resigned from her posts of education secretary and head of an anti-insurgency body under the Marcos administration in July. It was the latest sign her alliance with Marcos has floundered over key differences, including the Marcos administration's high-profile pushback against China's increasing aggressive actions in the disputed South China Sea.

Marcos has strengthened his country's treaty alliance with the US as his country's territorial disputes with China flared alarmingly since last year. During his presidency, Duterte nurtured cozy ties with Chinese President Xi Jinping and Russian leader Vladimir Putin while lambasting the security policies of the United States and other Western governments.

China is oversupplying lithium to eliminate rivals, US official says

LISBON (Reuters): Chinese lithium producers are flooding the global market with the critical metal and causing a "predatory" price drop as they seek to eliminate competing projects, a senior US official said on a visit to Portugal that has ample lithium reserves.

Jose Fernandez, under secretary for economic growth, energy and the environment at the US Department of State, told a briefing late that China was producing much more lithium "than the world needs today, by far". "That is an intentional response by the People's Republic of China to what we are trying to do" with the Inflation Reduction Act - the largest climate and energy investment package in US history

valued at over \$400 billion, Fernandez said, adding:

"They engage in predatory pricing... (they) lower the price until competition disappears. That is what is happening." China accounts for about two-thirds of the world's lithium chemical output, which is mainly used in battery technologies including for electric cars. Prices of lithium have fallen more than 80% in the past year largely due to overproduction from China and a drop in demand for electric vehicles.

However, the price collapse is also affecting China as it has forced Chinese companies like battery giant CATL to suspend production at certain mines. Europe aims to reduce its dependence on

imports from China and other countries of lithium and other materials essential to the green transition. Fernandez said the low price "constrains our ability to diversify our supply chains on a broad, global scale" and also hurts countries such as Portugal that need investment to develop these industries.

Falling prices have forced many global lithium producers to scale back production and cut jobs. Portugal, with some 60,000 tons of known reserves, is already Europe's biggest producer of lithium, traditionally mined for ceramics. Along with neighbouring Spain, the country wants to take advantage of local lithium deposits, aiming to cover the entire value

chain from mining and refining to cell and battery manufacturing to battery recycling. Several mining companies in Portugal have been looking for financing, customers and suppliers to crank up projects.

"We want to help them, and we think we can... lithium mining companies, everywhere, have to survive this difficult phase that was created by predatory pricing," Fernandez said. China's Premier Li Qiang in June used his address at a World Economic Forum meeting in Dalian to hit back at accusations from the United States and EU that Chinese firms benefit from unfair subsidies and are poised to flood their markets with cheap green technologies.

Woman goes on trial in Sweden for war crimes

COPENHAGEN (AP): A 52-year-old woman associated with the Islamic State group went on trial in Sweden on charges of genocide, crimes against humanity and war crimes against Yazidi women and children in Syria. Lina Laina Ishaq, who is a Swedish citizen, is accused of committing the crimes during the period from August 2014 to December 2016 in the Syrian city of Raqqa, which at the time was the seat of the militant group's self-proclaimed caliphate and home to about 300,000 people.

The trial marks the first time that IS attacks against the Yazidis, one of Iraq's

oldest religious minorities, have been tried in Sweden. The hearings are expected to last about two months, most of them behind closed doors. The crimes took place under IS rule in Raqqa, where Ishaq was living at the time.

Under IS rule, Yazidi women and children were "regarded as property and subjected to being traded as slaves, sexual slavery, forced labor, deprivation of liberty and extrajudicial executions," prosecutor Reena Devgun said when the charges were made public last month. The prosecution says that at her home in Raqqa, Ishaq abused Yazidis with the aim to

"completely or partially annihilate the Yazidi ethnic group," Devgun said as the trial opened at the Stockholm District Court, the Swedish TT news agency said.

The charge sheet, obtained by The Associated Press, says Ishaq is suspected of holding nine people, including children, for up to seven months, treated them as slaves and also abused several of those she held captive. Ishaq, who denies wrongdoing, is also accused of having molested a baby, said to have been 1 month old at the time, by holding a hand over the child's mouth when he screamed to silence him.

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ROK gains nothing by antagonizing China

ALTHOUGH the Republic of Korea has tried to stay clear of such anti-China cliques as the Quad, and strives to practice its autonomy in the "chip alliance" the US has tried to form against China for its own interests, the Yoon Suk-yeol government has been very active in trying to close ranks with the North Atlantic Treaty Organization to serve as a bridgehead for the de facto military bloc's expansion to East Asia.

Worse, it has tried to play the "Taiwan card", ignoring Beijing's strong opposition and stern warnings. In an exclusive interview with Reuters in April last year, Yoon said: "The Taiwan question is not simply an issue between China and Taiwan but, like the issue of North Korea, it is a global issue."

Such erroneous remarks, which directly challenge the redline of Beijing and shake the political foundation for ROK-China relations, represent arguably the first time that a ROK leader has interfered in the internal affairs of China since the two neighbors established their diplomatic relations in 1992.

Against that backdrop, Yoon's irresponsible remarks regarding the maritime disputes between China and the Philippines in the South China Sea, which he made during his visit to Manila on Monday, represent the latest sign that the loose-tongued ROK leader needs to be reminded of the necessity of speaking with due prudence and within proper limits.

Although Yoon apparently tried to avoid offending Beijing, he should have been able to predict the Chinese side's interpretation of the common understanding he reached with Philippine President Ferdinand Marcos Jr. in "upholding an international rules-based order, including on safety of navigation in the South China Sea", since the Philippines, the United States and Japan have been using that discourse to justify their overt and covert actions that infringe upon China's sovereignty and territorial integrity in those waters.

In a joint news conference with Marcos, Yoon said his country would actively take part in the latest phase of the Philippines multi-billion-dollar effort to modernize its military security at a time of rising tensions in the South China Sea.

Even if a major objective of Yoon's visit to Manila was to secure a fat weapons sales contract with the Philippines, the South China Sea disputes between China and the Southeast Asian country, to which the ROK is not a party, should by no means have become an excuse for him to hype up a nonexistent security threat from China to sell ROK weapons.

During their meeting in New York on Sept 28, ROK Foreign Minister Cho Tae-yul told his Chinese counterpart Wang Yi that Seoul is happy that ROK-China relations show a good trend of resuming exchanges, and expressed the hope that both sides would work together to maintain this positive momentum, strengthen high-level exchanges, and promote the stable development of bilateral relations.

The ROK is willing to enhance economic and trade cooperation with China and jointly promote regional economic integration, Cho added.

It is to be hoped the ROK side's actions are in accordance with these words, and it cherishes the positive trend of improvement in bilateral ties since the beginning of this year.

As Wang said, as long as both countries remain committed to the principles of their diplomatic ties, continue their focus on friendship, and pursue mutual benefit and win-win cooperation, China-ROK relations will continue to develop healthily and sustainably.

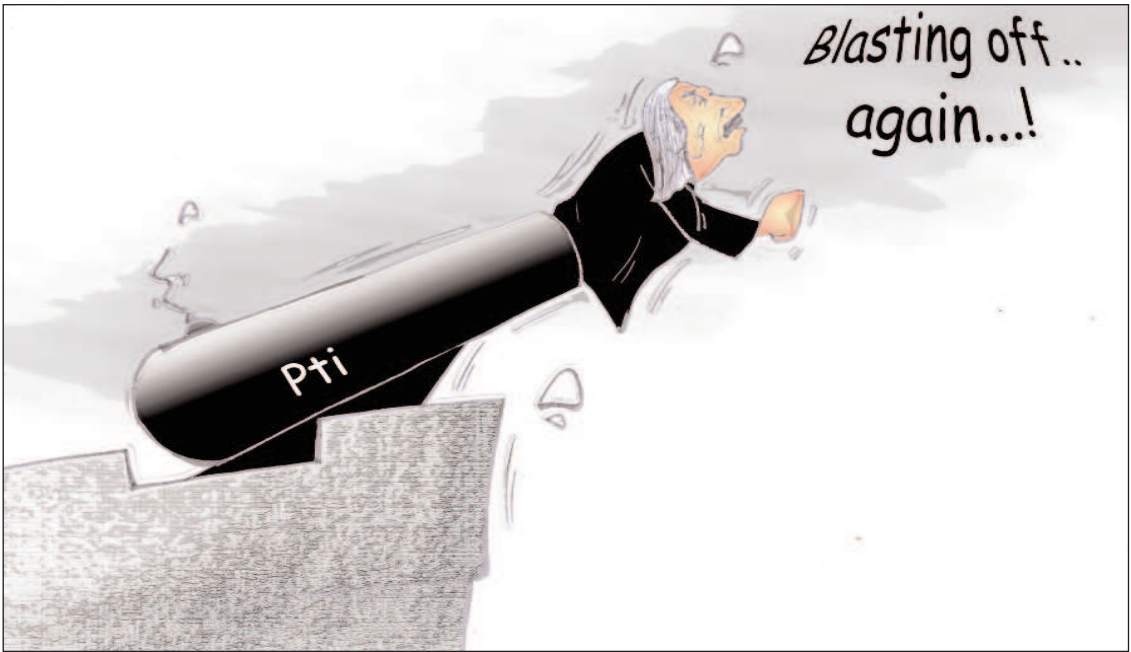
The irreconcilability between the ROK and Japan on historical issues and maritime disputes had long been a headache for Washington, which sought to form a closer alliance in East Asia with the two allies. But all the concessions that the Yoon government has made toward Japan to overcome their historical differences, which would have been unthinkable before, is the price the ROK is paying for the US' support to raise the ROK's profile on the world stage, for instance, by its admittance to the G7.

However, the rewards offered by the US, so far, have proved to be more symbolic than real or substantial.

Even if Yoon hopes Washington sees his latest efforts to woo Manila as the ROK's new input into the US' China-containment strategy, the US side knows clearly that selling ROK weapons was his main goal.

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Who benefits from attacks on Chinese nationals

Muhammad Mohsin Iqbal

THE targeting and killing of Chinese experts and residents working in Pakistan has raised concerns about both the safety of foreign nationals and the stability of long-term development projects, particularly those under the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC). These attacks are not random acts of violence but are part of a broader, calculated strategy aimed at undermining Pakistan's growth and the strengthening of Pakistan-China relations. Understanding the real reasons behind these targeted killings, identifying the beneficiaries, and addressing the internal and external forces orchestrating these incidents is essential for ensuring the future of joint ventures, including CPEC, and safeguarding Pakistan's geopolitical and economic interests.

One of the primary reasons for these targeted attacks is to destabilize Pakistan's economic progress. The China-Pakistan Economic Corridor, a multi-billion-dollar investment project, is the flagship of the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI). It represents a long-term partnership that promises significant economic benefits to Pakistan, including the development of infrastructure, energy projects, and industrial zones. This partnership has the potential to make Pakistan a regional economic hub, which does not sit well with those who want to see the country in a state of perpetual dependency and instability. By targeting Chinese nationals, these actors aim to scare away foreign investment and stall the progress of CPEC, thereby hindering Pakistan's development.

External forces are believed to play a significant role in these attacks.

Some regional and global powers are uncomfortable with China's expanding influence in South Asia, especially through its deep-rooted partnership with Pakistan. CPEC, given its strategic importance in terms of trade routes and energy supplies, is viewed as a direct threat to the economic and geopolitical ambitions of rival powers. These powers may seek to disrupt this partnership by sponsoring or instigating militant groups to carry out attacks on Chinese personnel in Pakistan. The objective is clear: to create friction between Pakistan and China, drive away Chinese investments, and strain the Pakistan-China relationship. Such efforts, if successful, would benefit these external actors by diminishing China's influence in the region and weakening Pakistan's economy.

Internally, there are groups that are either ideologically opposed to Pakistan's cooperation with China or have vested interests in keeping certain regions of the country unstable. Baloch separatist groups, for instance, have frequently claimed responsibility for attacks on Chinese workers. These groups see CPEC as a threat to their cause, believing that it marginalizes the local population while exploiting the province's resources. While their grievances may have a local flavor, they have often been accused of receiving support from external powers that are interested in destabilizing the region. Other extremist factions operating within Pakistan may also carry out these attacks to undermine the state, create an environment of insecurity, and gain international attention for their causes.

The beneficiaries of these attacks are not difficult to

identify. The development of CPEC is seen as enhancing Pakistan's economic and strategic capabilities, which challenges India's influence in the region. Thus, any setbacks to CPEC, such as a reduction in Chinese investment or delays in project completion, would serve India's strategic interests. Additionally, some Western powers, wary of China's global rise, may view the disruption of CPEC as part of a broader strategy to contain China's influence in Asia and beyond.

The impact of these attacks on CPEC and other joint projects is considerable. Every time Chinese nationals are targeted, it sends a message of insecurity, not only to China but also to other potential investors and foreign workers. While China has shown remarkable resilience in continuing its investments in Pakistan, frequent attacks could lead to a reevaluation of risk. Chinese companies and workers may demand stronger security guarantees, increasing the cost of these projects. In the worst-case scenario, sustained violence could lead to a reduction in Chinese involvement, which would be a major setback for Pakistan's economic future. Other countries may also hesitate to engage in joint ventures if they perceive Pakistan as unable to protect foreign nationals.

Pakistan must take immediate and concrete steps to address this issue. First, the government must significantly improve security measures for foreign workers, particularly those associated with CPEC. Additionally, intelligence sharing and coordination between Pakistan and China should be enhanced to preempt future attacks.

Second, Pakistan must address the internal griev-

ances that are fueling some of these attacks. In regions like Balochistan, where CPEC is seen as a source of disenfranchisement rather than development, the government must engage in dialogue with local communities. Ensuring that the local population benefits from these projects, through employment opportunities and social development initiatives, could help mitigate the grievances that militant groups exploit. Economic development and political inclusion in these regions will reduce the appeal of militancy.

Finally, on the diplomatic front, Pakistan needs to take a firmer stance against external actors that are suspected of sponsoring or facilitating these attacks. Through effective diplomacy, Pakistan should present evidence to international forums and engage its allies to counter efforts aimed at destabilizing its relationship with China. Pakistan's foreign policy should remain aligned with China while also seeking to resolve tensions with neighboring countries through dialogue.

In conclusion, the attacks on Chinese nationals in Pakistan are not isolated incidents but part of a larger strategy to disrupt Pakistan's economic progress and weaken its partnership with China. Both internal and external forces are involved in this destabilization, and their aim is to undermine CPEC and other development projects that are critical to Pakistan's future. To counter these challenges, Pakistan must take immediate action on multiple fronts: improving security, addressing internal grievances, and confronting external threats. Only by doing so can Pakistan safeguard its economic future and maintain the strong relationship it has with China.

Regional Diversity and Development

Muhammad Mushtaq Jadun

Pakistan is a country having Provincial, regional and intra district diversities. These diversities may range from social, climatic, edaphic and environmental aspects to law and order. Zoning on the basis of social, climatic and geographic homogeneity is essential for devising a viable development model. Khyber Pakhtunkhwa has remained gateway to India. Its strategic importance has remained relevant since recorded history. Besides Pakhtunkhwa is the upper riparian of the country and catchment area of Indus basin system. Thus it is essential to develop an understanding of its regions.

Merger of erstwhile tribal areas with Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Province has not only changed geographic and demographic balance but also the political powers dynamics. Broadly speaking the province of KP can be divided into four region e.g Malakand (25% population, 31% area, Hazara (15% population, 17% area), Southern (23% population, 40% area) and Peshawar (37% population, 12% area).

After merger of tribal areas the Southern and Peshawar regions share in population and area of province has increased, while Malakand and Hazara share in population and area decreased. It has also changed the power dynamics. Malakand and Hazara Regions have more or less identical geography and climate. In Hazara region Haripur (altitude from sea level 1700 feet), is geographically, part of Peshawar valley and (Attock) plains. Similarly Dargai Sub Division (1500 altitude from sea level) is part of Peshawar Valley. Both Malakand and Hazara have similar cultural traits. These regions constitute major portion of catchment areas of Indus basin system. Its natural resources are forests, hydal power and minerals.

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Chitral and onward to Central Asia have great potential of development and trade in both the regions. Population explosion is a great threat. Malakand 251 persons per square kilometers and Hazara 312 persons per square kilometers, looks great but the whole population is concentrated in cultivated areas of 17% in Hazara and 28% of Malakand. Forest areas are being cleared for construction of houses. Rivers and springs polluted. New housing colonies and commercial centers established in the irrigated rice fields. Peshawar valley has the highest population density of 1554 persons per square kilometers. Rural to urban population is on the rise and so are the slums in Peshawar, Charsadda and Mardan. Irrigated lands encroached upon for housing societies.

Peshawar is the second most polluted city in Pakistan and fifth worldwide. Merged districts of Khyber and Mohmand have less population pressure. Discovery of minerals in Mohmand has changed the economy of district. Tirah Valley of Khyber is ideal, and nearest, hill resort for tourists. Southern region has gained more areas due to merger of erstwhile five frontier regions and four tribal agencies. CPEC passing through D.I khan, Tank and Sherani areas open new vistas of development. Its linkage with Sough Waziristan and North Waziristan would promote trade with Afghanistan. Southern region is rich in natural resources such as oil, gas and minerals, both, metallic and nonmetallic. Comparatively with less population density the regions has great potential to bring more areas under cultivation.

Southern region has 26% area as culturable waste and about 16% area as current fallow which means 42% more areas can be brought under cultivation. Apart from rain

fed dams in the mountain range of Koh-e-Suleman, proposed second canal from Indus would irrigate millions of acres in districts of Karak, Lakki, Tank and D.I khan.

Due to Gomal Zam Dam about 266000 across area brought under cultivation. Potential for other such dams in Sherani, Paniala, Behittani, Lakki, South and North Waziristan. Southern regions, subject to availability of water, can meet the entire food requirements of the province.

KP shares borders with GB, Afghanistan, Punjab, Baluchistan and AJK. Locational advantages offer great opportunities of trade. Gilgit-Baltistan and AJK offers great opportunities of marketing of agricultural produce. CPEC, Swat, Ghazi Brotha Motorway and Hakla-D.I Khan CPEC link has facilitated transportation.

Pindi Division has a population of more than 11 million and offers good market for vegetables and fruits from KP.

Regional development plans are required keeping in view climatic, locational, social and geographic diversities of four regions.

Author is an Ex-PAS Public Servant, Advisor to Federal Ombudsman, Regional Office Peshawar.

US politicians put Israel ahead of disaster-hit Americans

ISRAEL is the largest recipient of US foreign aid, having received more than \$310 billion (adjusted for inflation) since its founding in 1948. That funding has allowed Israel to arm and train its forces to fight wars and impose military rule over the lands it occupies.

In fact, Israel “has been using American-made weapons” to fight its wars “for decades,” according to the Council on Foreign Relations. “The extraordinary flow of aid has included tank and artillery ammunition, bombs, rockets and small arms,” the council stated in a report this year.

In the years prior to Oct. 7, 2023, whenever Hamas attacked Israel, it responded with repeated strikes using American weapons, targeting and killing hundreds of thousands of Palestinians in Gaza and the West Bank. It was always confident that it would never have to worry about running out of bombs, missiles, tanks, armor or bullets. During the past decade, for example, America has been giving Israel an annual sum of \$3.8 billion.

Whenever the victims of Israel’s violence respond with violence, they are labeled as “terrorists,” triggering an emergency. America duly proceeds to

give Israel even more military aid. Since the Hamas attack on Oct. 7, for example, America has approved tens of billions of dollars in additional funding for Israel.

Presidents, members of Congress and many local officials who receive massive campaign donations and either fully or partially paid trips to Israel from pro-Israeli political action committees have never hesitated to support the funding of Israel because it is a vote-winner. Unfortunately, these American officials do not always have the same concern for their own citizens, especially when it comes to funding.

For example, all Americans who are at least 62 years of age receive monthly Social Security benefits, which effectively return some of the taxes these citizens gave to their government while they worked over the 45-year qualifying period. The Social Security system is on the brink of collapse but, rather than giving it the \$100 billion needed to strengthen it and ensure its continuity, members of Congress are suggesting that it be “reorganized.”

And, last month, residents of many Southern states, including Florida, Georgia, South Carolina and North Carolina, faced terror when struck by

Ray Hanania

Hurricane Helene, the deadliest hurricane to hit the US mainland since Katrina in 2005. Helene caused catastrophic damage, killing more than 220 people, erasing whole towns and communities and leaving tens of thousands of Americans without power or drinkable water.

The total damage and economic loss caused by Helene is estimated to be more than \$250 billion, not including the money needed to help the thousands of families who need immediate shelter, food, clothing and support.

Yet, those members of Congress, Republicans and Democrats alike, who rallied without engaging in a political debate to fast-track money to Israel, are today engaged in an embarrassing public row over help for the victims of Hurricane Helene.

Unlike Israel, which can call on the White House or Congress anytime it wants money to brutalize Arabs and Muslims, Americans have to go through a bureaucratic government agency called the Federal Emergency Management Agency.

FEMA is supposed to provide relief to Americans who suffer catastrophic tragedy, usually as a result of natural disasters.

Unfortunately, it does not have the money to care for the victims of Hurricane Helene and that has created a rift between political opportunists who are using the shortfall to undermine the election chances of their rivals.

Helene hit the American coastline on Sept. 26 before dissipating from a hurricane to a tropical storm the following day. But it was not until Oct. 2 that President Joe Biden traveled to North Carolina to witness the devastation. After the president’s helicopter tour, the White House and FEMA announced they were providing a mere \$20 million to help the victims.

The next day, Republican House Speaker Mike Johnson denounced Biden and FEMA for not doing enough.

Biden then increased the funding to \$45 million. Ironically, Johnson and many of his fellow Republicans had, on Sept. 25, voted against \$20 billion of additional funding for FEMA, though the bill passed anyway.

Homeland Security Secretary Alejandro Mayorkas said that FEMA would still run out of money long before the end of the hurricane season, which will continue throughout November.

Will Americans get the funding they need to fight

off the catastrophic devastation caused by Hurricane Helene — and with Hurricane Milton expected to hit Florida on Wednesday — as fast as Israel gets the money to continue its genocide in Gaza, attacks against Hezbollah in Lebanon and threatened nuclear war against Iran?

If you listen to the political debate in the US today, Americans who need help should be prepared for a long, drawn-out struggle to survive. Congress is now in recess and will not reconvene until after the Nov. 5 elections, so it is unlikely that any additional funds will be approved.

However, Congress does not need to be in session for the White House to grant additional emergency aid to Israel. There is no doubt that, if requested, funding for Israel would be fast-tracked ahead of relief for needy Americans.

It can take months to get money from FEMA. When my own home flooded in 1997, it took three months to get \$50,000 to repair it. I had to rely on relatives to repair the damage until the FEMA money came in.

I doubt Israel will ever have to wait in line for American money to fuel its wars and strikes on Arab and Muslim targets.

— Arab News

Despite war horrors, hope remains for Gaza’s universities

Hassan El-Nabih

IT has been a year now of Israel’s genocidal war on the Gaza Strip. Israeli aircraft, tanks and warships have been indiscriminately bombarding the whole Strip. All aspects of life have been tremendously impacted. Tens of thousands of civilian buildings have been destroyed, including houses, schools, universities, mosques, churches, hospitals, bakeries, and United Nations shelters.

Brutal Israeli attacks, along with the illegal inhumane blockade, have spared no Palestinian. The official death toll stands at nearly 42,000, with about 100,000 injured and 10,000 missing. The majority of the casualties are women and children.

Although I have never been affiliated with any militant or political group, my own house was destroyed by an Israeli warplane on October 23, 2023. Since then, I have been living with my large family in deplorable conditions at a UN school shelter.

Besides the trauma of homelessness and displacement, we were devastated by the loss of my beloved mother. She fell ill and could not receive the medical care she needed because the Israeli military has largely decimated Gaza’s healthcare system. Her condition deteriorated, and she passed away on December 1, 2023.

In addition, I have suffered a profound professional loss: my university, the Islamic University of Gaza (IUG) has been destroyed. It is one out of 18 institutions of higher education in Gaza, which served about 87,000 students before Israel reduced them to ruins.

I joined IUG’s English Department in 1997 after I returned from the United States, where I had finished an MA in Linguistics at California State University, Fresno. Then I obtained a PhD in language development from Boston College and returned to IUG, where I continued to teach and do research, publishing many articles in local and international journals and participating in numerous conferences, symposia and workshops. I have also supervised and served as an examiner of several MA theses in applied linguistics.

IUG has 11 faculties, serving about 17,000 students, 63 percent of them women. Throughout the years, it has offered an excellent academic environment, making use of various technologies such as computer labs, e-learning Moodle and videoconferencing and other high-quality facilities, such as libraries, gardens, gyms and playgrounds. It has awarded students with physical, visual and hearing disabilities scholarships and assisted them through a professional special needs office.

The English Department is the largest at the IUG, serving about 1,500 students in six different programmes: BA in English, BA in English with a minor in translation, BA in English with a minor in media and journalism, BED in teaching English, MA in linguistics and MA in translation.

I have always had a great passion for teaching and maintained good relationships with my students; for me, teaching is a mission. I consider IUG my second home. Seeing it in ruins has broken my heart.

In October 2023, Israeli fighter jets attacked IUG, destroying several buildings. Then in November, Israeli ground troops with bulldozers and tanks invaded western Gaza City, razing more buildings and setting others on fire. When they withdrew from the area two weeks later, I went to see what was left of IUG. I was overwhelmed with grief, unable to believe my eyes: everything was gone!

Over the past 12 months, I have not been able to teach a single class. Even during the COVID pandemic, when the university was shut down, I was still able to give lectures online. My YouTube channel still has recordings of three online courses I have taught: Semantics and Lexicology, English Grammar 2, and Psychosociolinguistics.

Since the start of this war, Israel has restlessly targeted Gaza’s infrastructure, including telecommunication, which has made it impossible for instructors to teach online. Just to check my email and WhatsApp messages, I have to walk or bike a long distance to purchase an internet ticket and use a very low-speed connection.

Despite the grave circumstances over the past year, I have tried to stay in touch with my students. We communicate through phone calls, text messaging or WhatsApp and sometimes in person. We exchange greetings, inquire about health, and talk about IUG and the English Department, unable to hide our sorrow and indignation. However, I remain optimistic and determined not to give up.

Optimism is a source of resilience, which we Palestinian educators need to nurture in order to support our students and help them cope with stressful conditions.

Even in the darkest of times, there is hope. That is why I use the present tense in this article when I talk about my university. IUG is, not was. I see several reasons to be optimistic.

First, it is not the first time Gaza’s universities have been targeted by the Israeli army. Before the present war, Israel launched four other aggressive assaults on the Gaza Strip in 2008-9, 2012, 2014 and 2021. In each of these wars, Gaza’s universities were severely damaged and prevented from functioning to their full potential. However, thanks to collective efforts, university buildings were restored and the educational process successfully resumed.

Even though Israel’s attacks on Gaza continue, emergency measures have been taken. The Palestinian Ministry of Education and several Palestinian academic institutions have circulated petitions against Israel’s destruction of Gaza’s universities, appealing to international organisations and academic institutions to intervene swiftly and take effective

measures to ensure Palestinian students’ right to education.

Second, many journalists and human rights activists have reported on Israel’s targeting of Palestinian universities. These and other Israeli violations of Palestinian human rights have been condemned worldwide. This has strengthened international solidarity with the Palestinian people and will undoubtedly help us with the future reconstruction process.

Third, several leading Palestinian universities in the West Bank have expressed their readiness to support higher education in the Gaza Strip. Last March, Birzeit University launched its “Rebuilding Hope” initiative, which aims to provide resources to support Gaza’s institutional infrastructure and assist researchers and students in accessing the knowledge necessary to complete their academic journeys.

The Palestinian Ministry of Education and several local and international universities have adopted the initiative, and fortunately, a few thousand students from Gaza’s universities, including IUG, have already started online learning.

Fourth, IUG has also encouraged students to apply for Erasmus+ exchange scholarships which provide the opportunity to study for a semester in Europe. Some of my students asked me to write letters of recommendation for them; I did so with great pleasure.

I have shared all this promising information with students and acquaintances in Gaza. I have also referred English major students to my online courses uploaded onto YouTube.

Recently, one of my students sent me this WhatsApp message:

Dear Professor, I have decided to continue your Grammar 2 course on my own. [We started in September 2023 but couldn’t finish it because of the war.] These days I am watching your YouTube recordings, and I am doing quite well. I am interested in more practice; I need the extra grammar exercises file you previously uploaded onto the Moodle, which is inaccessible now. Unfortunately, I lost my laptop with all my files in an Israeli attack on my family’s house. Could you please send me the file?

What a remarkably resilient girl! I thanked her and praised her strong motivation and true affection for learning. I sent her the file and told her not to hesitate to ask me for help.

Similarly, I recently called one of my MA students, whose thesis I am supervising. I encouraged her to finalise her thesis for the viva voce. She happily welcomed the idea. By taking reasonable precautions, I feel we can organise this academic event somewhere in Gaza, even in a tent at a school shelter.

The past year has been full of immense pain and suffering for the people in Gaza, but we must not lose hope. It will all pass! Israeli oppression will end! Gaza’s universities will be reconstructed! And Palestinian higher education will be revived!

No care for Palestinian suffering, deaths

ISRAEL missed its opportunity to avoid the carnage of the Hamas attack a year ago and end its forever wars during the 1980s and early 1990s. If Israel had then adopted the two-state solution for a Palestinian state in the West Bank, Gaza, and East Jerusalem, a democratic Palestine could have emerged. Hamas could have been jostling for power with Fatah and other Palestinian factions instead of preparing a cross-border raid to kill and kidnap Israelis. Palestinians could have been absorbed with building their state while Israel could have benefitted from implementing the 2002 Arab plan promising peace in exchange for territory occupied in 1967.

The 1982 war on Lebanon gave momentum to Israel’s infant peace movement. Yesh Gvul (“There is a Limit”) was established at the launch of the war by combat veterans who rejected service in Lebanon and the occupied Palestinian territories. Yesh Gvul’s efforts are said to have contributed to the Israeli withdrawal from southern Lebanon.

While mainstream Peace Now was founded in 1978 by 348 army reserve officers and soldiers during negotiations for a peace treaty between Egypt and Israel, the 1982 “war of choice” launched by Israeli Defence Minister Ariel Sharon was a turning point for the movement. The officers realised that Israel would secure peace only if the 1967 occupation ended and Palestinians would achieve statehood. Peace Now warned against getting “stuck in the mud of Lebanon” during the war. After the massacre of hundreds of Palestinians and Lebanese in Beirut’s Sabra and Shatila neighbourhoods, Peace Now staged a mass demonstration in Tel Aviv. More than 400,000 — 10 per cent of Israel’s population — demanded Sharon’s resignation. In response, the government established a commission of inquiry which found Israel indirectly responsible by laying siege to Sabra and Shatila and introducing armed Maronite Christian Phalangists who took revenge for the assassination of their leader President Bashir Gemayel. When the government, headed by Menachem Begin, balked at the commission’s call for Sharon to step down, Peace Now led a march to the prime minister’s Jerusalem residence to protest. On the way right-wing Israelis attacked the demonstrators

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and activist Emil Grunzweig was killed. Sharon relinquished the defence ministry and was appointed minister without portfolio. Peace-minded Israeli activism long predated Peace Now but it was the first mass movement to complement the multiplicity of groups with human rights focus. Hebrew University organic chemistry professor Israel Shahak headed the Israeli League for Human and Civil Rights (1970-1990). When it was clear that the 1967 occupation of Palestinian territories would

Michael Jansen

not end soon, Jeff Halper established the Israeli Committee Against House Demolitions in 1997 and has campaigned against colonisation and the displacement of Palestinians. Breaking the Silence was created in 2004 by Israeli army officers and reservists to collect testimonies from soldiers to reveal to the Israeli public human rights abuses committed against Palestinians. B’Tselem, the Israeli Information Centre for Human Rights in the Occupied Territories, seeks to end the occupation and apartheid imposed on Palestinians dominated by Israel.

While Peace Now has survived and established a US branch, it has joined the

Palestinian and supported the Likud and right-wing parties which join coalitions formed by the Likud.

There were other contributing factors. The failure of the 1993-1999 Oslo process to deliver peace for Israelis and a homeland for Palestinians (largely due to Israeli obstruction) led to the 2000-2005 Second Intifada of the gun and bomb. Negotiations produced no breakthrough and were abandoned in 2014. Israeli settlers and soldiers withdrew from Gaza in 2005 but since then Israel has repeatedly waged war against Gaza and ramped up colonisation and suppression of Palestinian resistance in the West Bank.

Writing in The New Republic on May 22nd, 2024, Eric Alterman asked,

“What on Earth Has Happened to the Israeli Peace Movement?” He cited the Israeli-American pollster and political analyst Dahlia Scheindlin who wrote that “the number of Israeli Jews who defined themselves as members of the left fell by 50 percent, from 30 percent to just 15 percent in the early 2000s. At the other half immediately shifting to the self-defined centre, as the right wing’s popularity began to climb, reaching 60 percent of Jewish Israelis by 2019.” While Israelis now mount

huge weekly protests against the Likud-right wing coalition under Benjamin Netanyahu, their goal is to press him to ceasefire in Gaza to secure the release of around 100 Israelis captured by Hamas on October 7th last year. They care little or nothing for the 42,000 Gazans killed and more than 94,000 wounded by Israel’s war on Gaza or Israel’s policy of denying the besieged enclave food, medicine, and water. Most Israelis focus on the shock and humiliation of the Hamas raid and are not moved by Palestinian suffering inflicted by Israel in multiple breaches of international law and the Fourth Geneva Convention. Israeli liberal daily Haaretz columnist Gideon Levy calls Israel a country of “blood,” of bloodletting. Following the assassination of Hizbollah leaders Hassan Nasrullah, Levy castigated Israelis who celebrated, handed out chocolates. He pointed out that killing has resolved none of Israel’s problems. “The West Bank is on the verge of exploding; Israel is stuck in a ruined Gaza with no exit in sight, as are the hostages; Moody’s has downgraded the economy to the floor; the mass slaughter that began in Gaza is shifting to Lebanon. Half a million people have been displaced from their homes, on top of 2 million of (Palestinians) in the Strip.” Levy observed that Israel’s security situation is “shakier,” a regional war looms, the 60,000 Israelis displaced from the north by Hizbollah’s missiles and drones have no hope of return, and Israel’s international standing is lower than ever. He warned that the US will not back Israel “forever” if it wages war without end. Unfortunately, the region and the world have waited for years in vain for that auspicious day.

Oct. 7 anniversary about more than Israel’s national trauma

Oct. 7, 2023, has come to represent Israel’s most painful national trauma since its inception. For the majority of Israelis, it remains the longest and most horrific day of their lives. Hamas launched a carefully planned and meticulous offensive on southern Israeli military bases and civilian settlements, resulting in the deaths of about 1,200 Israelis and the abduction of 250 others, including foreign nationals.

That much is what Israel’s self-engrossed Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, who keeps reminding the world that the carnage of that day was the worst to befall the Jews since the Holocaust, wants to advertise. He wants to keep the world focused on the tragic events of that day. He wants to keep using the atrocities of that day to justify his perpetual war against Gaza and beyond.

That day, Netanyahu declared war on Hamas, the de facto ruler of the beleaguered Gaza Strip, which is home to more than 2.2 Palestinians. But it soon became apparent this was not a war on Hamas. A year has passed since the region’s most powerful army stormed into Gaza from land, air and sea. And what has been the outcome so far?

More than 41,000 Palestinians, mostly civilians, have perished in this most brutal and indiscriminate assault. The statistics are staggering: more than 16,000 children have been killed, 20,000 orphaned and more than 8,000 children are now amputees. More journalists, medics, doctors, academics and aid workers have been killed than in any war since the Second World War. More than 90 percent of Gaza’s population has been displaced multiple times. More than 70 percent of Gaza now lies in ruins.

And yet, one year on,

Hamas is not defeated and the remaining 101 Israeli hostages have not been freed. Netanyahu and his far-right partners have rejected all attempts to reach a ceasefire and return the hostages. The killing spree continues: schools, universities, hospitals and even designated safe areas are bombed on a daily basis.

Israel wanted to control the narrative from day one. It has banned foreign journalists from entering the enclave. It has attacked aid workers and UN employees. And yet Israeli officials have no answer to one central question: What does Israel want?

The West, led by America, has come to Israel’s aid and support, claiming that it has the right to defend itself. But to defend itself against whom? How does the killing of tens of thousands of Palestinians justify its right to protect itself? How does the wanton destruction of hospi-

tals, universities and schools explain that right? Netanyahu has drawn an image of the region where Israel is a victim fighting on multiple fronts against enemies that want to annihilate it. But he never mentions the core cause of that enmity: the occupation of the Palestinians. He never talks about building bridges with the Palestinians or ceding occupied lands to grant them their rightful independent state.

For Netanyahu, any party that rejects the Zionist land grab of occupied territory is a terrorist and is antisemitic. The UN and its secretary-general are antisemitic. The EU’s Foreign Policy Chief Josep Borrell is an enemy of Israel because he dares point to the suffering of Palestinians in Gaza and the West Bank. Anyone who opposes the Zionist settler-occupation is anti-

Osama Al-Sharif

semitic and an enemy of Israel.

Netanyahu has used the Oct. 7 attacks and the war on Gaza to fulfill a goal that is much more ambitious than destroying Hamas. His plans for Gaza and its population are far more profound than defeating Hamas. Otherwise, what is his occupation army doing in the West Bank? The level of devastation that Israel’s army is causing in Gaza and West Bank refugee camps reveals a more sinister intent, one that Netanyahu’s extremist ultrareligious and ultranationalist ministers are too eager to divulge.

Netanyahu has shifted his attention to Lebanon, all while doubling down on the hapless people of Gaza. The heavy bombings of southern Lebanon’s villages and hamlets, as well as of Beirut’s southern district, point to applying what can

only be described as the “Gazafication” of the perceived enemy. Garrison Israel is aiming to displace millions and create empty buffer zones around it.

And with an eye on dealing a lethal blow to Iran, Netanyahu hopes to nip any concept of resistance in the bud for generations to come, thus reshaping the region into what he calls “the new Middle East.”

In the meantime, Israel has waged another war on international law and the world order. It sees itself as a permanent victim of any attempt to hold it accountable for the war crimes and crimes against humanity it has perpetrated in Gaza, the West Bank and Lebanon. All edifices representing international law are inherently biased against it and are being manipulated by antisemites who seek its destruction.

In Netanyahu’s maverick view, Israel’s impunity is a sacred right that can

never be challenged. It is and always will be the quintessential victim that does no wrong. That position is summed up by Netanyahu telling the US Congress recently that there have been practically no civilian casualties in Gaza.

The new Middle East Netanyahu is trying to put together is one where Israel resides as the only regional power: the true and only heir to America’s decades-old dominion over the Middle East. In this dystopian world, Netanyahu can annex the West Bank and Gaza and conquer Lebanon, Syria and beyond.

In his new Middle East, the Palestinians get nothing and are displaced one more time, Israel receives the keys to the region as the proxy state of the US.

Of course, with such an overly narcissistic image of the future Israeli state, Netanyahu is failing to understand a region where Israel has existed for only

seven decades. What Netanyahu is inviting are perpetual wars and conflicts. His indifference to the lessons of history, culture and the geopolitical realities of the region will only bring fusillades of existential challenges.

Israel will never become a normal state in this region if it believes that never-ending wars are the solution and when the reality is that it is the last colonial-settler Western proxy in the Middle East.

Netanyahu wants to make the world believe that Oct. 7 was when everything started. But the pain and despair are not Israel’s alone. That ominous day marked the beginning of a genocidal war against the Palestinians — a war that still rages on with no end in sight. The harrowing question is this: Will we see the second anniversary of Oct. 7, with additional thousands of Palestinians killed?

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In brief

Pakistan to send football team to Russia

KARACHI (Monitoring Desk): In a surprising move, the Pakistan Sports Board (PSB) is planning to send a football team to Russia for a friendly match this month, after talks between the Pakistan Football Federation (PFF) and the Russian Football Union for an official friendly match failed to materialise. What makes this situation more intriguing is that the players are not being selected by the PFF — the official governing body of football in Pakistan. Instead, the PSB is assembling the team from what it refers to as "available resources". A senior PSB official confirmed to this correspondent that Pakistan will honour an invitation from the Russian government for a football match scheduled for October 11, 2024. "The invitation, issued by Russia's Minister of Sport, was sent through diplomatic channels, formally requesting Pakistan's participation in the friendly match to strengthen bilateral relations between the two nations," the official said. The PFF's Normalisation Committee had earlier expressed its inability to field a team for the match on October 11 due to the limited time available for preparation. "We had communicated our position to the Russian Football Union, and discussions were paused from that point," a PFF source told private channel. The source confirmed that Sheikh Rehan, the newly-elected president of the Islamabad Football Association (IFA), had sent an email to the PFF, informing them of the PSB's approach for the match and seeking the PFF's consent for participation. The source further clarified that the IFA and its affiliated clubs are registered with the PFF and are required to inform and seek approval from the PFF for such matches.

Hernandez receives two-game suspension

MILAN (AFP): Theo Hernandez has been suspended for two games for ranting at referee Luca Pairetto following AC Milan's dramatic defeat at Fiorentina, Serie A said on Tuesday. France full-back Hernandez was sent off after the final whistle of Sunday's 2-1 loss in Florence for having repeatedly aimed "seriously disrespectful criticism" at Pairetto. Hernandez, who wore the captain's armband on Sunday, will miss Milan's matches with Udinese and Bologna after the international break. His ban could have been longer as he had to be dragged back by Alvaro Morata following a thrilling match which featured three saved penalties including one taken by Hernandez. The aftermath of the defeat has created more unwanted controversy for Milan, who are five points behind league leaders Napoli after an inconsistent start to the season. Angry coach Paulo Fonseca told reporters that Christian Pulisic was Milan's designated penalty taker, but instead Hernandez took the ball for the first spot-kick in an attempt to score on his 27th birthday. Fonseca was further angered after Fikayo Tomori snatched the ball and handed it to his close friend Tammy Abraham for the second fluffed penalty. Milan are sixth in Serie A and have lost their first two Champions League games against Liverpool and Bayer Leverkusen.

Sadia becomes Pakistan's first to top ICC T20I ranking



PESHAWAR (Monitoring Desk): Pakistan spinner Sadia Iqbal became the first from her country to top the ICC Women's T20I Rankings when she briefly overtook long-time number one Sophie Ecclestone before finishing second among bowlers in the weekly update that is carried out on Tuesdays.

Ecclestone had started the ongoing ICC Women's T20 World Cup 2024 in top spot — which she had occupied since February

2020. Sadia drew level with her on 757 rating points after taking three for 17 against Sri Lanka in a Group A match on Thursday. Ecclestone slipped to second spot with 750 points two days later after going wicketless against Bangladesh in a Group B match.

Sadia's reign at the top was, however, limited to two days as Ecclestone grabbed two for 15 against South Africa to win the Player of the Match award and regain the top spot, ending the interesting neck-and-neck battle between the two left-arm spinners for the week.

Sadia became only the second Pakistan player to top the women's rankings. Former captain Sana Mir was top of the ODI bowling rankings in 2018-2019. There were other notable movements too after the England-South Africa match as South Africa openers Laura Wolvaardt and Tazmin Brits both attained career-best-equaling rankings after moving up two spots each.

Captain Wolvaardt reached third position after scores of 52 not out against the West Indies and 42 versus England, and Brits reached sixth position with scores of 57 not out against the West Indies and 13 against England.

Some other movements over the past week:

ICC Women's T20I Batting Rankings:

Suzie Bates of New Zealand is up two places to seventh. Harmanpreet Kaur of India is up four places to joint-12th. England's Danni Wyatt is up two places to joint-18th. England's Natalie Sciver-Brunt is up one place to joint-18th.

England's Amy Jones is up two places to 27th. Pakistan's Muneeba Ali is up one place to 35th. Pakistan's Nida Dar is up three places to 37th. South Africa's Marizanne Kapp is up six places to 44th. Pakistan's Fatima Sana is up 12 places to 63rd. ICC Women's T20I Bowling Rankings: Sarah Glenn of England is up one place to third. Ashleigh Gardner of Australia is up three places to sixth. Rabeya Khan of Bangladesh is up one place to ninth. Megan Schutt of Australia is up nine places to 10th. Charlie Dean of England is up two places to 11th. Nonkululeko Mlaba of South Africa is up nine places to 13th. Annabell Sutherland of Australia is up two places to 18th. Lea Tuhuhu of New Zealand is up five places to 22nd. Sugandika Kumari of Sri Lanka is up one place to 25th. Marizanne Kapp of South Africa is up eight places to 26th. Shreyanka Patil of India is up nine places to 29th. Sophie Molineux of Australia is up 20 places to 40th. Chamari Athapaththu of Sri Lanka is up five places to 42nd. Fahima Khatun of Bangladesh is up 13 places to 45th. ICC Women's T20I All-Rounders' Rankings: Amelia Kerr of New Zealand is up one place to third. Marizanne Kapp of South Africa is up two places to seventh. Fatima Sana of Pakistan is up six places to 12th.

Mahmudullah announces T20 retirement



NEW DELHI (AFP): Former Bangladesh captain Mahmudullah Riyad said Tuesday his remaining two T20 matches in India will be his last international appearance in the format, vowing to play out with a "good show."

The 38-year-old Mahmudullah, who quit Tests in 2021, is set to play his 140th T20 match for Bangladesh in the second game in New Delhi on Wednesday. The tourists need to win in the Indian capital to keep the three-match series alive, after they lost the opener by seven wickets in Gwalior.

"I am retiring from T20 cricket after the last game of this series," Mahmudullah told reporters. The final match of the series will be in Hyderabad on Saturday.

"I was pre-decided before coming here. I had a chat with my family and with my coach and captain," Mahmudullah added.

"It is the right time to move on from this format for me and the team as well and concentrate on the one-day game," Mahmudullah has been Bangladesh's warhorse after he made his international debut in 2007 in a one-day international against Sri Lanka in Colombo.

He has played 50 Tests, 232 ODIs and 139 T20 matches for his country

with over 10,500 runs across formats as a dependable middle-order batsman and 165 wickets with his off-spin.

"If we can play to our ability (in Delhi), then we could put up a good show," he said. Mahmudullah said he had "no regrets" in his 17-year career. "I have never ever regretted, at any stage at any point of my life, playing for Bangladesh," he said. "I have always been a team man." The veteran said the T20 team remains in good hands under skipper Najmul Hossain Shanto.

Mahmudullah's T20 exit comes soon after star all-rounder Shakib Al Hasan announced his decision to quit the format last month during the Test series, which the tourists lost 2-0.

India's left-arm quick Arshdeep Singh meanwhile said he was making the most of his opportunities in the national team without thinking much about the future. "My life mantra is to enjoy the present," Arshdeep, who made his India debut in 2022, told reporters.

"I want to do my best in all the formats wherever I get the opportunity," Arshdeep, who has claimed 86 wickets in 55 T20 internationals, played in India's T20 World Cup triumph in June.

PSB denies NOC to women's football team

KARACHI (Monitoring Desk): The participation of the Pakistan women's football team in this month's South Asian Football Federation (SAFF) Women's Championship is in doldrums as the Pakistan Sports Board (PSB) refused to issue a no-objection certificate (NOC).

The tournament is scheduled to be held from October 17 to 30 in Nepal.

In a letter sent to the Pakistan Football Federation (PFF), the PSB cited delays in submitting the request and the absence of the required signature from the chairman of the Normalisation Committee (NC). These issues led the PSB to decline the NOC request. The PSB had previously reminded the PFF on September 12 about the necessary protocols for obtaining the NOC.

However, the football federation's submission was not only delayed but also lacked the signature of the NC chairman. The PSB stated that such omissions made it impossible to process the application.

In the letter, the sports board noted: "Since the instructions issued by the PSB have not been followed, we regret to inform you that, due to time constraints and non-compliance with our procedural requirements, the PSB is unable to process the NOC request for participation in this event."

Sources within the PFF confirmed that the NOC request for the SAFF Women's Championship was submitted on September 16. However, the request was signed by NC member Shahid Khokhar instead of chairman Haroon Malik. The Pakistan women's football team is currently holding a training camp in Islamabad, with plans to depart for Nepal on October 12.



MULTAN: Pakistan batsman Saud Shakeel and Naseem Shah running between the wickets for a quick run for Pakistan as England's Brydon Carse slips on the field during day two of the First Test Match.

England 96-1 after Salman's century lifts Pakistan to 556

MULTAN (AFP): England finished the second day of the first Test in Multan on a solid 96-1 on Tuesday in reply to Pakistan's mammoth 556 that was boosted by a fiery century from Agha Salman.

The tourists lost stand-in skipper Ollie Pope for a second-ball duck before Zak Crawley and Joe Root steadied the innings with 64 and 32 respectively at stumps.

It was another tough day for bowlers as an unbeaten 104 from Salman and 82 by Saud Shakeel swelled Pakistan's total, which was set up by Shan Masood's 151 and Abdullah Shafique's 102 on Monday.

Pope, standing in for injured skipper Ben Stokes, was smartly caught by a leaping Aamer Jamal who plucked an upish pull shot off pacer Naseem Shah with one hand at mid-wicket. He had been drafted in to open the batting after Ben Duckett injured his left thumb taking a catch at the end of the Pakistan innings.

England need another 261 to avoid a follow-on — a task eminently achievable on a pitch offering no help to bowlers. Salman built on the good work of Shakeel and Naseem in the afternoon, reaching his third century with a single off spinner Jack Leach soon after the tea interval.

Salman, who also completed 1,000

Test runs during this knock when he reached 71, added a rapid 85 for the ninth wicket with Shaheen Shah Afridi, who scored 26. In all, Salman cracked 10 boundaries and three sixes in his 119-ball knock — surviving a catch by Chris Woakes when the third umpire declared the fielder's foot went beyond the rope.

"It's always satisfying to hit a century and contribute to the team's total," said Salman, who hoped the pitch would take spin in the next three days. "I think cracks will open on this pitch and that will help spinners. I see this as a result-oriented pitch as both the teams will go for a result."

Salman added an invaluable 57 runs for the seventh wicket with Shakeel, who was caught smartly by Root at slip off Bashir for 82. Shakeel hit eight fours. Leach was the most successful England bowler with 3-160, while Gus Atkinson finished with 2-99. Woakes, Shoaib Bashir and Root took one wicket apiece.

Pace bowler Brydon Carse took 2-74 on debut after trapping Jamal for seven. His first Test wicket was Naseem, caught at leg slip by Harry Brook before lunch for 33. Carse said England's bowlers were made to toil on an unresponsive pitch. "The last two days were immensely tough conditions for everyone out there," he said. "To be

PCB announces free entry on third, fourth day

MULTAN (Monitoring Desk): The Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB) on Tuesday announced free entry for spectators on Days 3 and 4 of the ongoing first Test match between Pakistan and England at the Multan Cricket Stadium.

The cricket board announced the decision through its social media accounts with a post stating "FREE entry to First-Class and General enclosures on Days 3 & 4 of the first Test at Multan Cricket Stadium!"

It's worth noting that Pakistan are currently in a dominant position against England as they have piled up a mammoth 515-8 at Tea on Day 2. Salman Ali Agha and Shaheen Shah Afridi will resume their innings at 79 and 13 respectively after the Tea.

able to pick up a couple of wickets today is rewarding." "It's been a tough graft but credit to the players for keep coming back." The remaining Tests are in Multan (October 15-19) and Rawalpindi (October 24-28).

Djokovic rolls Cobolli to make Shanghai Masters last 16



SHANGHAI (AFP): Novak Djokovic powered through to the last 16 of the Shanghai Masters on Tuesday, steamrolling Italian Flavio Cobolli 6-1, 6-2 in just over an hour.

The four-time Shanghai champion completely dominated 30th-ranked Cobolli, breaking him in the second and sixth games of the first set.

"I can't complain about anything in the game, I was able to play aggressively," Djokovic said. "I'm glad to be progressing through a tournament that has meant a lot to me in my career."

Fans waved Serbian flags and screamed in delight when the former world number one wrote part of his name in Chinese characters on a camera lens

at the end of the match.

Djokovic will next play Russian Roman Safullin, who upset American Frances Tiafoe in three tight sets. "I'm glad to finally play a match after three days of rain, it's been a hassle for a lot of players," Djokovic said.

- Sinner-Shelton rematch -

The last 16 has almost fallen into place after days of schedule disruption due to rain. Ben Shelton dispatched Spain's Roberto Carballes Baena 6-3, 6-4 to set up a Shanghai rematch with world number one Jannik Sinner of Italy.

The American knocked Sinner out of the tournament at the same stage last year. "(I have) great memories from that match last

year, I probably watched the tape of that a couple times so far this year, but, yeah, I'm really looking forward to it, that will be fun," Shelton said.

Sinner's chief rival Carlos Alcaraz, who beat him in the China Open final last week, will face veteran Gael Monfils. The 38-year-old Frenchman defeated his younger and higher-ranked compatriot Ugo Humbert 7-6 (9/7), 2-6, 6-1.

Stefanos Tsitsipas recovered from a lapse in concentration in the second set to beat France's Alexandre Muller 6-3, 7-5. The 26-year-old will meet world number five Daniil Medvedev in the next round. (Medvedev) likes courts like this. I feel like I'm getting better with time... What is missing is trying to get a good win under my belt," said the Greek, acknowledging his uneven recent form.

"In the past, I might have said some mean stuff about (Medvedev's) game, but... I think I was completely wrong in that. There's a lot of interesting things in his game that he brings that are very different from other players." World number 10 Grigor Dimitrov is through after beating Australia's Alexei Popyrin 7-6 (7/5), 6-2.

The Bulgarian will play Czech teenager Jakub Mensik, who already ended one top 10 player's hopes when he sent Russia's Andrey Rublev home last week.

Spain and Barcelona great Iniesta retires, aged 40

BARCELONA (Agencies): Spain World Cup winner Andres Iniesta has retired from playing at the age of 40.

Iniesta is widely regarded as one of the greatest players in history, thanks in part to the midfield partnerships he formed with Xavi Hernandez and Sergio Busquets for Spain and Barcelona. He earned 131 caps for his country, scoring the winning goal in the 2010 Fifa World Cup final and winning the European Championship in 2008 and 2012.

Speaking at an event in Barcelona, a visibly emotional Iniesta said he planned to go into coaching. "Being on the pitch is over," he said. "I can't stay away from football, it's my life and will continue to be my life." "Yes, all these tears we have shed these days are tears of emotion, of pride. They are not tears of sadness."

"They are tears of that boy from a small town like Fuentebilla, who had the dream of being a footballer and we achieved it after a lot of hard work, sacrifice, of never giving up, essential values in my life."

Iniesta spent the majority of his 22-year career at Barcelona after graduating from the club's La Masia academy. He made his senior debut in 2002 and went



on to win 29 honours, including nine La Liga titles and four Champions Leagues crowns.

One of his most memorable goals was a spectacular stoppage-time equaliser to knock Chelsea out of the 2009 Champions League semi-final, with Barcelona going on to beat Manchester United in the final.

In 2018 Iniesta joined Japanese side Vissel Kobe before moving to the United Arab Emirates to play for UAE Pro League side Emirates. He was runner-up in the 2010 Ballon d'Or and included in the Fifa Fifpro World 11 for nine successive years between 2009 and 2017.

Iniesta later revealed that he had battled depression shortly before the 2010 World Cup following the death of his friend,

Espanyol midfielder Dani Jarque. In a BBC Sport column in 2022, Iniesta said: "There was a time when the months were dark, after my friend Dani Jarque died in 2009, but it ended with a truly magical moment - me scoring the winner for Spain in the 2010 World Cup final."

"That is what I would tell any people who are struggling now - that the worst moment of your life can be followed by the most important moment in your life."

"The greatest player in Spanish football"

Argentina great Lionel Messi paid tribute to his former Barcelona teammate on social media. "One of the most magical teammates and one of those who I most enjoyed playing together," the Inter Miami forward said. "Andres Iniesta, the ball will miss

you and so will we. I wish you all the best, you are a phenomenon." Spanish football journalist Guillem Balague described Iniesta as the "The greatest player in Spanish football".

Speaking on the Football Daily Euro League's podcast, Balague said: "He is remembered for a couple of goals, the World Cup final goal and the semi-final goal against Chelsea. But he was a supplier and he did a lot of magical things on the hardest part of the pitch. He was so much more than a goalscorer."

"He was clinically depressed in the [2010] World Cup and was one of the first to open up about mental health issues. He is a lovely guy, and at Barcelona it is the dream he comes back one day. He will stay in football I think and will be greatly missed."

European football journalist Mina Rzouki said Iniesta "changed what we view as a great player".

She said: "He was not the quickest, wasn't the tallest but his speed of thought was like a robot in his head. Everything moved so fast in that brain, his dribbling, his moving in tight place."



In brief

Five arrested for possessing illegal arms

RAWALPINDI (APP): The Rawalpindi Police on Tuesday arrested five persons for possessing illegal arms from different areas of the district. According to a police spokesman, the Rata Amaral Police held two accused Ahsan Nazir and Mujahid for having a 30-bore pistol each. Similarly, the Civil Lines Police nabbed Imran Tariq and Samiullah with 30-bore pistols, while the Chontra Police held accused Taimoor Shahzad also with a 30-bore pistol.

IRSA releases 143,100 cusecs water

ISLAMABAD (APP): Indus River System Authority (IRSA) on Tuesday released 143,100 cusecs of water from various rim stations with inflow of 120,000 cusecs. According to the data released by IRSA, the 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 65,000 cusecs each. The water level in River Jhelum at Mangla Dam was 1208.25 feet, which was 158.25 feet higher than its dead level of 1,050 feet. The inflow and outflow of water was recorded 14,900 cusecs and 38,000 cusecs respectively. The release of water at Kalabagh, Taunsa, Guddu and Sukkur was recorded as 83,500, 69,100, 63,100 and 11,100 cusecs respectively. Similarly, from River Kabul, a total of 19,000 cusecs of water released at Nowshera and 3,500 cusecs released from River Chenab at Marala.

Dacoit's gang busted

RAWALPINDI (APP): The Civil Lines Police on Tuesday arrested a three-member dacoits gang and recovered stolen items from them. According to a Rawalpindi Police spokesman a domestic servant Sajid along with accomplices Khurram and Ali Raza stolen 3,000 pounds in cash, three expensive watches, a television, and other valuable goods from a house in the limits of Civil Line Police Station. The police used scientific methods and human intelligence traced the accused and took them in custody with the booty. The police registered cases against the accused and started investigations. Superintendent of Police Potohar, Nasir Nawaz, appreciated the Civil Lines police team for their swift action against the accused.

871 vehicles impounded

RAWALPINDI (APP): The Police continued its operation against the unfit Public Service Vehicles (PSVs) on the instructions of City Police Officer (CPO) Syed Khalid Hamdani for the last over 40 days. According to a police spokesperson, owners and drivers of some 7,002 vehicles were issued challans while 871 vehicles were impounded during the drive initiated 41 days ago against unfit PSVs. Fines amounting to over Rs 7.6 million were also imposed on violators during the period, the spokesperson said. He said the police's main focus is to ensure that PSVs were fit for driving, besides checking route permits, and inspecting driver licences. About 620 drivers were fined for not having valid licences, while 27 licences of drivers were due to their negligence. Some 47 cases were registered against the drivers and owners of the unfit vehicles, the spokesperson said. He emphasized that the measures being taken against the PSVs were aimed at ensuring safe travel for the public.

Pakistan, Azerbaijan relations grounded in deep rooted cultural: Gilani

ISLAMABAD (APP): Chairman Senate Syed Yousaf Raza Gilani on Tuesday said that Pakistan cherishes its fraternal relations with Azerbaijan which are grounded in deep rooted cultural and religious affinities. "Bilateral trade between the two countries has been witnessing a consistent increase in the last few years," the chairman Senate expressed these views in a meeting with ambassador of Azerbaijan to Pakistan Khazar Farhadov.

He emphasized the need to further boost the trade linkages as there is huge scope for expanding trade ties in diverse sectors. He said that both countries

enjoyed cordial relations at International forums which reflects the magnitude of love and respect that both the countries have for each other.

He also expressed satisfaction that the highest level contacts between the two countries are going in the right directions and there is need to further explore avenues for bilateral cooperation through exchange of delegations.

He also emphasized frequent exchanges at parliamentary and other levels to enhance people to people contacts. The chairman Senate also expressed his well wishes for the people Parliament and leadership of Azerbaijan.

He also congratulated Azerbaijan on winning the bid to host COP29 in the beautiful city of Baku in November 2024. He said that Pakistan will participate in this important event in a befitting manner. He also expressed his well wishes to his counterpart and extended invitation to visit Pakistan at a convenient.

The Ambassador thanked the chairman Senate for the warm welcome. He also underscored the need for high level contacts and boosting cooperation in diverse sectors. He said that Pakistan is an important country for Azerbaijan and we desire to further expand ties in different arenas.

Foolproof security plans finalized for SCO Summit

ISLAMABAD (APP): Inspector General of Islamabad Police (IGP) Syed Ali Nasir Rizvi on Tuesday presided over a high-level meeting to discuss security arrangements for the upcoming Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) Summit.

According to a public relations officer, the meeting was attended by DIG Islamabad Syed Ali Raza, DIG Headquarters Dr. Syed Mustafa Tanveer, DIG Security Jawad Tariq, and other senior police officials.

During the meeting, the IGP was briefed by senior officers, and new responsibilities were also assigned.

The IG emphasized the need to strengthen the security of the delegations by effectively utilizing the advanced systems of Safe City Islamabad, he added.

"Well-prepared police teams will be deployed at all entry and exit points of the high-security zone," IGP Rizvi said, adding that search and combing operations will continue in residential areas surrounding the Red Zone.

Rizvi further stated that during the delegation's movement, major roads will be completely closed, and alternative routes will be provided at various intersections to ensure public convenience.

The IGP assured that the Islamabad Police will use all available resources to provide foolproof security to all delegations, making every possible effort to uphold the dignity and honor of the country.

Railways punishes 97 officials for corruption

ISLAMABAD (APP): Pakistan Railways has held responsible and penalized over 97 officials of the department on corruption charges during the last five years, as a part of its efforts to control malpractices.

"Several steps are being taken to control corruption in Pakistan Railways which include introducing ticket vending machines and online reservation of tickets to avoid black marketing," an official in the Ministry told APP.

The official said that Pakistan Railways has established a task team to keep watch on any irregularities and check the attendance of staff in the organization. He said the ticketless campaigns

through Special Ticket Examiners (STEs) groups and officers are being carried out on a daily basis in the divisions to check and charge the ticketless passengers with a penalty.

"The payment of pension is being carried out through online banking system to facilitate the pensioners as well as to eliminate the ghost pensioners from the department," he added.

He said all the auctions are transparently held through the designated committee and the deposited amount is being received through CDR duly verified by the concerned Divisional Accounts Officers (DAO).

The official said E-Kacheri as well as Khuli

Kacheri are held on a monthly basis to resolve the grievances of staff, pensioners, and the public.

He said that vigilance offices have been established over the system to control corruption and resolve any complaint received from the public and Railway staff.

The official said the regular performance review meetings are conducted to ensure the timely disposal of disciplinary cases of employees.

He said the focal persons have been nominated from all departments of Pakistan Railways to promptly resolve the complaints reported through the Prime Minister's Performance Delivery Unit (PMDU).

YPP launches membership nationwide for young leaders



ISLAMABAD (APP): President Youth Parliament of Pakistan Ubaid Qureshi on Tuesday emphasized the significance of this initiative and termed the YPP was a dynamic platform for young Pakistanis to amplify their voices on national and international stages.

In a statement, he said this membership drive will bring together the next generation of leaders committed in making meaningful and positive contributions to the socio-economic development of Pakistan.

The Youth Parliament of Pakistan (YPP) was excited to announce the launch of its nationwide membership drive aimed at harnessing the energy, passion, and innovative ideas of Pakistan's youth. The initiative presents a unique opportunity for young individuals to contribute in national progress and global dialogue, particularly on issues related to development and sustainability. These efforts align with Pakistan's commitment to the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), enhancing the country's presence on

the global stage.

The YPP, a leading platform that empowers youth to participate in civic activities, policy formulation, and advocacy at both national and international levels, was inviting applications from across Pakistan. The objective of the Youth Parliament was to bridge the gap between the young population of Pakistan and the policy-making process by fostering connectivity among various stakeholders.

Ubaid Qureshi further elaborated, "Young people will be engaged at the local and regional levels. We have seven regional chapters, including Azad Kashmir, Gilgit-Baltistan, Islamabad, Punjab, Sindh, Balochistan, and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. Youth from across the country can join as a 'General Member,' while those residing abroad can join as an 'Overseas Member,' by expressing their interest in a particular field of profession, committee, or cabinet."

He said that senior members will have the opportunity to be promoted to the Executive Council and

Alumni Board. We are also planning to establish an Advisory Board consisting of senior experts, including members of Parliament from different political parties, retired bureaucrats, technocrats, and representatives from other professional fields."

He further added the Youth Parliament of Pakistan was a legally registered entity under the Constitution of Pakistan. It was affiliated with the National Assembly Forum for Young Parliamentarians, the British Election Commission, and the United Nations, providing young Pakistanis the opportunity to represent a true and positive image of Pakistan at the international level."

This membership drive opens doors for aspiring youth leaders aged 18 to 35 from anywhere in the world to join a network of motivated individuals committed to social, economic, and environmental development. Interested individuals can enroll by registering online at <https://forms.gle/jSm6nZN5U5W1nE9gi8> before October 20, 2024.



ISLAMABAD: Chairman NDMA Lt. Gen. Inam Haider Malik addressing during NDMA held ceremony on resilience day at NDMA Headquarters in remembrance of 8th October 2005. —APP Photo

Saudi Arabia pledges continued support for Pakistan: Ambassador

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Ambassador of Saudi Arabia to Pakistan, Nawaf bin Said Al Malki on Tuesday underscored the enduring strength of Pakistan-Saudi relations during a signing ceremony for joint cooperation programmes between the King Salman Humanitarian Aid and Relief Centre (KSRelief) and the Government of Pakistan.

Speaking at the event, the ambassador expressed his pleasure in attending the ceremony, which formalized projects in education, health, recovery, and rehabilitation. He extended his gratitude to Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Affairs Minister Senator Mohammad Ishaq Dar for his government's cooperation, and

Assistant Supervisor General for Operations and Programs at KSRelief, Engineer Ahmed Al-Baiz along with the center's dedicated team.

Highlighting Saudi Arabia's continuous support for Pakistan, the ambassador emphasized the Kingdom's role in humanitarian efforts. "The KSRelief is at the forefront in the service of humanity and performs noble services to the brotherly country Pakistan and its people, standing by them through every thick and thin," he noted.

Al Malki reaffirmed the Kingdom's unwavering commitment to Pakistan, guided by the leadership of the Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques, King Salman bin Abdulaziz

Al Saud, and Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman.

"I would like to assure Pakistani brothers of the firm commitment of the Government of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, under the leadership of the Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques, King Salman bin Abdulaziz Al Saud, and Crown Prince and Prime Minister, Mohammed bin Salman bin Abdulaziz Al Saud, to always stand by Pakistan and elevate our brotherly relations to new heights," he added. Concluding his address, the ambassador expressed his well wishes for both of the nations and prayed for the peace, prosperity, and stability of both brotherly countries.

Crackdown on commission agents

ISLAMABAD (APP): In a decisive move against commission agents exploiting citizens outside government offices, the Islamabad Capital Territory (ICT) administration on Tuesday took a swift action against agents operating outside the Deputy Commissioner's (DC) office.

In a recent operation led by Assistant Commissioner (AC) Maheen Hassan, five agents were apprehended outside the DC office involved in illegal dealings with citizens, said the spokesman of ICT administration. The operation is part of a larger strategy aimed at eradicating the influence of civic agents, who often deceive citizens into paying for services that should be obtained directly from government offices, he added.

Deputy Commissioner Islamabad, Irfan Nawaz Memon, urged citizens to avoid relying on these unauthorized agents. He encouraged them to visit the offices directly for their required services, highlighting the ongoing efforts to clear government spaces of such illegal activities.

The DC further directed action against all agent groups operating outside government offices in Islamabad. He called on the public to cooperate with the district administration in reporting suspicious activities and avoiding middlemen. This coordinated effort is seen as a way to restore public trust in government institutions and ensure that services are delivered without interference. Director Excise & Taxation Department, Islamabad, Bilal Azam while talking to APP said.

October 8's grief still fresh, says Mushaal

ISLAMABAD (APP): Senior Kashmiri leader and wife of Chairman Jammu and Kashmir Liberation Front Yasin Malik, Mushaal Hussein Mullick, on Tuesday said that the haunting scenes of destruction caused by the October 8, 2005 earthquake are still vivid in her memory, even after 19 years.

In her message on the 19th anniversary of the catastrophic earthquake, she reflected on the immense devastation that unfolded that day, private

news channel reported.

"It's been 19 years since the tragic earthquake, yet the horrifying images of entire towns and villages being wiped off the map in mere moments are still fresh in my mind. It is heartbreaking to remember how entire communities were erased in a matter of seconds," she expressed.

She recalled the widespread destruction of roads and buildings, noting that nearly 90,000 lives were lost, including around 19,000 children.

"Today, I pay tribute to the thousands of martyrs who lost their lives in this disaster," she said. Mushaal Mullick also prayed for the departed souls, asking Allah to elevate their status in the hereafter.

She highlighted the ongoing struggles faced by those who were displaced by the earthquake, noting that around 3.5 million people were rendered homeless. "We must make efforts to continue helping those affected by this tragedy," she urged in her statement.

BISP-NSU collaboration vital for skill training: Rubina

ISLAMABAD (APP): Chairperson of the Benazir Income Support Programme (BISP), Senator Rubina Khalid Tuesday emphasized collaboration between BISP and National Skills University (NSU) for providing international standard skills training to deserving individuals.

She was speaking during her visit to the NSU where she was received and welcomed by Vice Chancellor NSU, Dr Muhammad Mukhtar along with faculty members. During the meeting, Dr Mukhtar provided a detailed briefing to Senator Rubina Khalid on the various short courses offered by the university.

Senator Rubina Khalid emphasized the importance of collaboration between the BISP and the NSU to provide skills training that meets interna-

tional standards for deserving women and their families. This, she stated, would help them secure better employment opportunities in line with global market trends. On this occasion, Senator Rubina Khalid proposed to the Vice Chancellor the enhancement of skills training certifications in collaboration with the government of Germany.

She highlighted the high demand for skilled manpower in both local and international markets, stressing that to empower deserving individuals socially and economically, their skills must be certified to international standards. This would enable them to find employment more easily, increase their income, and lift their families above the poverty line. By doing so, they would not only reduce

their poverty but also contribute to the country's economy.

Senator Rubina Khalid also suggested to the university administration the inclusion of diplomas in hospitality management, housekeeping, paramedics, e-commerce, and digital marketing in the curriculum. She emphasized the need to teach trainees basic work ethics, cleanliness, and honesty, and stressed the importance of adopting these principles.

Later, Senator Rubina Khalid visited the university's IT and engineering labs, as well as other classrooms. She also planted a sapling in the university's lawn and prayed for the prosperity and development of the country. Speaking to female students at the university, she remarked, "You are the bright future of the country; always respect your elders."

Pakistan's strategic shift in disaster management after 2005 earthquake

ISLAMABAD (APP): Chairman National Disaster Management Authority (NDMA), Lieutenant General Inam Haider Malik on Tuesday emphasized Pakistan's National Vision for Proactive Disaster Management, highlighting the transformative shift from a reactive to a proactive disaster management approach.

The National Disaster Management Authority (NDMA) marked National Resilience Day with a full-day event at the National Emergency Operations Center (NEOC), NDMA Headquarters. This annual observance reflects Pakistan's solidarity with the victims of the 2005 earthquake and all those affected by past disasters, while reaffirming the nation's unwavering commitment to advancing disaster preparedness and building resilience against future crises, a news release said.

Chairman NDMA, Lieutenant General Inam Haider Malik highlighted the establishment of most modern National Emergency Operations Center, inaugurated by the Prime Minister on October 5, 2023, which is equipped by cutting-edge satellite feeds, advanced software, and AI tools. He apprised that the NEOC developed a futuristic National Common Operating Picture (NCOP), which enhances digital risk assessments, early warning systems, and preparedness strategies to safeguard Pakistan's future.

The event also featured messages by NDMA's global partners addressing critical issues for Pakistan's resilience, climate change and opportunities for Pakistan to explore COP29 avenue in November 2024.

They also emphasized the importance of gender equality and microfinance in empowering vulnerable

communities and enhancing their ability to recover from disasters.

In his closing remarks, NDMA expressed gratitude to the guests and distinguished speakers for their valuable insights and recommendations. He reiterated NDMA's commitment to fostering a disaster-resilient Pakistan, equipped to navigate future challenges with enhanced preparedness and a collaborative spirit.

This year's National Resilience Day brought together government officials, experts, and key stakeholders, generating meaningful discussions on climate finance, gender equality, and national resilience.

The event reinforced Pakistan's dedication to building a more sustainable and resilient future, honoring the memory of disaster victims while focusing on forward-looking strategies to protect the nation.

Export of petrol increased

KABUL (Ariana News): The export of petrol from Kyrgyzstan to Afghanistan in the first seven months of this year has increased substantially compared to the same period last year. According to Kyrgyzstan's Statistics Department, Bishkek exported more than 700,000 liters of petrol worth \$8.9 million to Afghanistan between January and July this year. Kyrgyzstan exported just over 19 thousand liters of petrol to Afghanistan in the same period last year.

The Frontier Post

Rabi-us-Sanni 05 1446 — Wednesday, October 09, 2024

IEA, Iran officials meet

KABUL (Ariana News): A number of visiting Iranian officials have met with officials of the Ministry of Transport and Aviation in Kabul to discuss the expansion of transport and transit services. Iranian officials say they are seeking to expand economic ties between the two countries and want to cooperate with Afghanistan in agriculture, livestock farming, mining and transit. Afghanistan has high quality agricultural products, and Iran is ready to help such products reach foreign markets.

China ready for expanded ties with Afghanistan



KABUL (TOLONews): The Chinese ambassador Zhao Xing said Afghanistan is a good neighbor for his country, and there has been significant progress in political relations with the interim government.

According to this Chinese official, they are ready for further political and economic cooperation with the interim government.

Zhao Xing, the Chinese ambassador to Afghanistan, said: "China is a neighbor and friend of Afghanistan, and we have always maintained our cooperation. We have had very good achievements and progress in the political field with Afghanistan."

Zabihullah Mujahid, the spokesperson for the Islamic Emirate, said the

economic relations between China and Afghanistan are beneficial for both countries and added that the interim government is working to expand these relations.

The spokesperson for the Islamic Emirate said: "China is an important regional economic power, and Afghanistan has good contacts with it. We are

working to expand the relations between the two countries because it benefits both."

Some political analysts believe that relations between the Islamic Emirate and China will help improve Kabul's relations with other countries.

Idris Mohammadi Zazi, a political analyst, said: "China can play a constructive role. If the relationship between the Islamic Emirate and China continues like this, it will reduce the gap between Afghanistan and the international community."

This comes after the sixth Moscow Format Consultative Meeting was held last week in Moscow with representatives from ten neighboring and regional countries, including China, Iran, and Pakistan.

The meeting highlighted the priorities of strengthening the "national reconciliation" process in Afghanistan, expanding regional engagement with the interim government, and combating terrorism and narcotics.

'Nearly 5,000 forced marriages prevented'

KABUL (TOLONews): The Ministry for the Promotion of Virtue and the Prevention of Vice said that it has prevented nearly five thousand forced marriages so far.

Saif-ul-Islam Khyber, the spokesperson for the ministry, said that forced marriages of girls in the country have decreased by 40%.

The spokesperson for the Ministry for the Promotion of Virtue and the Prevention of Vice said: "Since the Islamic Emirate came to power in Afghanistan, 4,720 forced marriages have been prevented by this ministry."

Saif-ul-Islam Khyber warned that legal action will be taken against those responsible if forced marriages of girls are not stopped.

He further said: "We can say that out of 100% of such incidents, this ministry has prevented around 20 to 35%."

Meanwhile, several religious scholar's state that forced marriage is not permissible in Islam and that people should avoid this undesirable practice.

Religious scholar Mohammad Mobarez said, "People should make efforts to be compassionate toward their children and avoid such undesirable customs. One of the practices that leads to oppression of children is forced marriage, which ruins their lives."

Religious scholar Sangeen Qadari said, "Forced marriage is not permissible in Islam, and whoever engages in it will not see good results. It also creates enmity between families. God created every person free, and each individual has the right to choose, a right given by God before anything else."

At the same time, the high costs of dowries in rural areas and expensive wedding ceremonies in luxurious hotels in the cities are considered other customs and challenges that hinder young people in the country, preventing some from being able to hold their wedding ceremonies.

Delays from checking imported fuel disrupting Afghan trade: ACCI

KABUL (TOLONews): The Afghanistan Chamber of Commerce and Investment said that the process of verifying the quality of petroleum products at the Islam Qala, Torghundi, and Aqina border crossings has slowed down, which has caused challenges for traders.

Jan Aqa Nawid, the spokesperson for the chamber, said that currently dozens of fuel-carrying trucks are stuck at the Herat customs.

According to the spokesperson, the delay in releasing the fuel trucks poses risks such as fire hazards.

Jan Aqa Nawid, told TOLONews: "They should conduct the quality test of the fuel products as quickly

as possible and release these tankers sooner so that they can reach the companies and fuel stations where they need to be distributed."

However, the Ministry of Finance said that the issues related to verifying the quality of petroleum products at Herat customs have been resolved, and efforts are ongoing to speed up the process.

Ahmad Wali Haqmal, the spokesperson for the Ministry of Finance, told TOLONews: "The technical issue that existed in the quality verification process at Herat customs has been resolved. Now, officials in this department are working in 16-hour shifts to control and process the incom-

ing fuel to the country, and they are working to prevent any limitations or delays."

Abdul Shukor Hadawal, an economic expert, shared this view: "There is no doubt that the process of quality verification takes a long time—about 20 to 25 days of work, which affects our traders. They face increased taxes, and their business time is consumed."

Afghanistan imports most of its needed fuel from several Central Asian countries such as Uzbekistan, Turkmenistan, Russia, and Iran. In some cases, the imported petroleum products, due to poor quality, have been sent back to their country of origin.

One year after Herat earthquake, survivors still struggling



HERAT (TOLONews): A year has passed since the devastating earthquake in Herat. Several earthquake survivors told TOLONews that despite the passage of time, they have not yet overcome the grief of losing their loved ones, and their lives have not returned to normal.

Although homes and shelters have been built for many of the affected, survivors say that they have lost their agricultural and livestock livelihoods, and international aid has been cut off for several months.

Mina, who lost five members of her family in this tragic natural disaster, says her grief is still fresh. She told a TOLONews reporter, "My sorrow grows stronger each day. Every time I look at their photos, I become deeply distressed. Their grief burns like fire in my heart, and I cry day and night."

Abdul Zahir, a resident of the Zinda Jan district of Herat, spoke about the events of a year ago: "The two children who remain with us wake up in the middle of the night terrified of an earthquake. I comfort them, telling them to go back to sleep and that there is nothing to worry about. But they carry the fear in their hearts, and they are anxious. The women are also

very afraid and constantly worried about earthquakes."

The construction of a new home in his ruined village has somewhat eased Abdul Ghani's grief.

The forty-year-old man lives with his ten-member family in a house built by a charity. Abdul Ghani, a resident of Zinda Jan, said, "We spent two months of winter under a tent, and it was very difficult. Since these houses have been built for us, things have improved, and they are very good houses."

According to local officials in Herat, nearly 10,000 houses have been built for the earthquake survivors in the past year. Global aid organizations, charitable foundations, businessmen, and the interim government have contributed to the construction of these homes.

Ahmadullah Muttaqi, the head of Herat's Department of Information and Culture, told TOLONews: "Over the past year, various forms of assistance have been provided to the earthquake survivors, from building homes to providing clean drinking water as their wells had been damaged. We provided food for their livestock and even drilled water wells for them."

According to the sur-

vivors, most of whom are farmers and livestock herders, the earthquake severely damaged their agriculture and livestock industries, depriving them of their income sources.

For several months now, humanitarian aid from international organizations has been halted in the earthquake-affected villages, making life difficult for the survivors.

Ghulam Ali, a resident of Zinda Jan district, said: "It's been four or five months since we've received any aid—neither food nor clothing. Winter has arrived, and we don't have firewood, heaters, winter clothes, or food to eat."

Ghulam Hassan, another resident of Zinda Jan, said: "We have five sheep shared among five or six families, and we have nothing else. They provided some assistance, but we've used it all up."

During the continuous earthquakes of last year in Herat, more than twenty villages in the districts of Zinda Jan, Injil, and Kushk/Rabat-e-Sangi district were leveled. According to statistics, nearly 50,000 homes were either completely or partially destroyed. Over 1,000 people lost their lives, and nearly 2,500 others were injured.

Grape yield up, prices down in Faryab province, says farmers

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 Estanqal, 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 afs. But this year, they are selling for just 100 to 150 afs.

Estanqal 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 afs.

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 Taifi-type grapes for 250 afs but today I've got only 130 afs. 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 peo-

ple'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 this year.

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.

Badakhshan's Baharak residents face drinking water shortage



FAIZABAD (Pajhwok): Some residents of Dobandi village in Baharak district of north-eastern Badakhshan province say hundreds of families are facing a shortage of safe drinking water

and they consume river's water that cause several illnesses.

They urge the Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan and other organizations to help them find access to clean drinking water.

Maulvi Fazluddin, head of the general cluster in Dobandi village, told Pajhwok Afghan News that 1,600 families in the village lacked access to safe drinking water.

He added every family

received four 10-liter jerry cans of water after every two days, which did not meet their need, and the authorities they approached for help were yet to pay much attention to their problem.

Another resident, Nematullah, said, "We don't have safe drinking water; we use water from streams and rivers, which threatens our health, especially that of our children."

Habibullah, another resident, said they spent 450,000 afghanis from their pockets to purchase a water spring, but the government and aid agencies did not construct a pipeline from the spring to

their homes, leaving them with inadequate access to water.

These residents are urging the Islamic Emirate and national and international organizations to pay attention to their need of safe drinking water.

Meanwhile, Engineer Zabiullah Amiri, head of information and culture department, acknowledged the difficulties residents of Dobandi village face in accessing safe drinking water.

He expressed hope that relevant authorities would work with national and international organizations to provide drinking and agricultural water to these needy residents.

Paktika residents want opening of more CIC distribution branches

SHARAN (Pajhwok): Some residents of south-eastern Paktika have said that there were only two Computerized Identity Card (CIC) branches in this province and they could not get CIC easily because of the crowd and distance.

Local officials also acknowledged the problem and said efforts were underway to address the problem.

Baz Mohammad, a resident of Yahyakhelo district, told Pajhwok Afghan News that he came here along with his family to get CIC.

He said the distance between the CIC centre and their home was long and they would not be able to return in time, in addition, the fare of the bus was also high.

He said: "I came from

Yahyakhelo, we face many problems when we bring our female family members to get CIC, sometimes the vehicle breaks down and we could reach our turn or sometimes the official time is over, then we spend nights at a hotel or come multiple times to get a Tazkera."

Bilal, a resident of Giyan district, said they faced multiple problems when they wanted to get Computerized Identity Card.

He said: "It takes up to five hours to get to a CIC centre from Giyan district, one has to pay money for the rent because most people were poor and sometimes the applicants have to stay for one or two nights here."

Some other residents



also expressed similar complaints and asked the government to address this issue.

Mawlavi Faiz Mohammad Samim, head of the

National Statistics and Information Department, said: "We have one centre in Sharan and one in the Urgon district, we want to open a third centre in the

Khairkot district and in addition the Asan Khdmat section should be also opened which would help address most problems of the people."

WFP reports providing cash aid to 4m Afghans

KABUL (TOLONews): The United Nations World Food Programme (WFP) reported that it provided cash assistance to four million people in Afghanistan this year.

According to the report, half of the cash assistance recipients were women.

Meanwhile, the Ministry of Economy views the WFP's aid as impactful in reducing poverty in the country.

Abdul Rahman Habib, the spokesperson for the Ministry of Economy, told TOLONews: "Projects like cash aid, food-for-work programs, vocational training, and support for small

businesses, implemented by WFP, have created job opportunities and supported household economies, which are considered economically beneficial."

However, some needy families complain about not receiving humanitarian aid.

Abdul Shakir, who supports an eight-member family by selling dried figs from his cart, says he has received no assistance from any organization.

He told TOLONews: "Every day after praying, I go to 40 meters, load it with figs, and sell them. I earn 100 to 200 afghani, and it hasn't gone beyond that."

On the other hand, some economic experts criticize the way international organizations provide aid to Afghanistan.

Abdul Ghafar Nizami, an economic expert, told TOLONews: "NGOs' activities should be aligned with their own regulations."

Abdul Zahoor Madbar, another economic expert, added: "No matter how much foreign aid flows into Afghanistan, given the deteriorating situation we're experiencing, it may have short-term effects, but we need to focus more on infrastructure and growing a productive economy."



PESHAWAR: Chief Minister of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Ali Amin Gandapur addressing during Provincial Assembly session.

PHC approached for removal of Gandapur from CM office

Humayun Khan

PESHAWAR: A writ petition has been re-filed in the Peshawar High Court (PHC) seeking the removal of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Chief Minister Ali Amin Gandapur from office, on Tuesday.

Advocate Mian Aziz-u-Din Kakakhel re-submitted the petition after addressing objections raised by PHC Registrar's Office. The writ argued that Chief Minister Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Ali Amin Gandapur engaged in illegal activities in Punjab including inciting violence and disrupting public order.

The petition added that Gandapur has failed to uphold his oath as Chief Minister by violating the Constitution and laws. Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Chief Minister has encouraged public unrest and protests against the federal government, the writ argued.

The petitioner stated Chief Minister Ali Gandapur's actions aimed to pit the province against the federation. The writ pleaded for removal of Ali Amin Gandapur from Chief Minister office due to his unlawful actions.

PHC to direct authorities for immediate arrest of Gandapur in pending cases. The Governor and Election Commission to be directed for Gandapur's removal, the writ stated. PHC grants protective bails: Peshawar High Court single member bench of Justice Shakeel Ahmed granted protective bails to Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) parliamentarians named Senator Shibli Faraz and Shandana Gulzar till 8th November.

During hearing Justice Shakeel

PHC halts Anti-corruption department investigation against Mahmood Khan

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: A divisional bench of Peshawar High Court (PHC) comprising Justice SM Attique Shah and Justice Sahibzada Asadullah halted the anti-corruption department investigation against former Chief Minister Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Mahmood Khan while ordered respondents for submission of reply, on Tuesday.

The counsel Sultan Muhammad Khan and Babar Khan Yousafzai advocates argued that the petitioner is chairman Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf Parliamentarian (PTIP) and added that the probe is politically motivated and aimed at harassing him. The lawyers informed that Mahmood Khan served as Chief Minister from 2018 to 2022, he remains an influential figure in provincial politics. The petitioner received a notice on 3rd September, 2024, from the Anti-Corruption Department, summoning him for questioning in Inquiry No. 45. His lawyers argued that the inquiry targets his tenure as Minister, which ended a decade ago. The counsel argued that the inquiry is initiated unconstitutionally while the Anti-Corruption Establishment lacks jurisdiction. Mahmood Khan had already cooperated in the investigation, they lawyers argued. PHC's divisional bench restrained Anti-Corruption Establishment from taking further action against Khan while ordered Director Anti-Corruption and Circle Officer Anti-Corruption Peshawar for submission of reply.

Ahmad observed that the situation in the country is causing harm to our society. He added that roads were blocked and people faced difficulties for consecutive three days.

Justice Shakeel Ahmad remarked during bail pleas of PTI's parliamentarians that today's opposition becomes tomorrow's government, and today's government becomes tomorrow's opposition. It's better for the country and people if you resolve issues through dialogue in Parliament, Justice Shakeel added.

Moreover, Justice Shakeel Ahmad further observed that as long as you don't tolerate each other, matters

won't improve and inquired from Senator Shibli Faraz that you come from an educated background; you have a greater responsibility. However, Shandana Gulzar said that when we go to Parliament, we're ousted. In the meantime, Justice Shakeel Ahmed observed that both sides should show tolerance and acknowledge right and wrong.

PTI Member National Assembly Shandana Gulzar said that we received protective bail for a month, but fear more cases will be filed while talking media personnel. These actions are aimed at constitutional amendments, she added.

Russian forces enter key Ukrainian town of Toretsk

KYIV: Russian forces have reached the outskirts of the long-contested strategic town of Toretsk in eastern Ukraine. The Ukrainian military confirmed that fighting was taking place in the town. Toretsk is the latest key location that Russian troops have reached in recent weeks as they advance Moscow's bid to take control of the Donetsk region.

"The situation is unstable, fighting is taking place literally at every entrance (to the city)," Anastasiia Bobovnikova, spokesperson of the Operational Tactical Group "Luhansk" told Ukraine's national broadcaster. "The Russians have entered the eastern outskirts of the city." Russian officials have yet to comment on the development. A mining town close to the areas of Donetsk region captured by Russian-backed separatists in 2014, Toretsk has sat on the front line for a decade.

Moscow's forces have been advancing towards the town since August, steadily winning surrounding villages with infantry aided by the increased use of highly destructive guided bombs. Toretsk was previously home to more than 30,000 residents and reports suggest that thousands remain in the area. Ukrainian military analysts warn that if Toretsk, which sits on elevated terrain, were to fall, Moscow could block Ukrainian supply routes to the front line.

Last week, Russian forces took full control of the strategic hilltop town of Vuhledar, a development that Moscow had long seen as a major step towards incorporating the entire Donetsk region. Russia declared the annexation of four regions in eastern Ukraine – Donetsk, Kherson, Luhansk and Zaporizhia – in 2022, despite lacking full control of any of them. According to the Ukrainian general staff, heavy fighting has also been raging on the front between Pokrovsk and Kurakhove.

Ukraine's military said that its forces repelled 30 attacks on the Pokrovsk front over the previous day as Russian forces pushed towards the villages of Mykolaivka and Selydove. With superior numbers and resources, Moscow's troops have since August advanced at their fastest rate in more than two years, with little letup, despite Ukrainian forces mounting a surprise incursion into Russia's Kursk region.

Ukraine's President Volodymyr Zelenskyy has ordered military leaders to do "everything that can be done" to minimise Moscow's advance along the front line. Kyiv has called for Western powers to supply more long-range weapons to help it stop Russian attacks and attempt to force peace, at what is seen as a crucial moment for the Ukraine war ahead of the US elections. Leaders of Ukraine's main allies, including US President Joe Biden, are set to meet at a US base in Ramstein, Germany. — Aljazeera

RAW agent arrested

F.P. Report

KARACHI: In a recent development, the Special Investigation Unit (SIU) of Sindh police has reportedly arrested a suspect allegedly affiliated with the Indian spy agency Research and Analysis Wing (RAW) from Karachi's Mauripur area, says in media reports.

The Senior Superintendent of Police – Shoaib Memon – confirmed that the accused, identified as Muhammad Saleem, is affiliated with the Indian spy agency RAW and was apprehended near Fish Chowrangi on Manora Road, Karachi. Authorities recovered a hand grenade, a bomb, a launcher, and a pistol from Saleem, along with service cards from multiple departments.

SSP Memon revealed that the accused possessed passports and identity cards under different names to deceive the security agencies meanwhile, the maps of Manora and Chinaport were also seized from the possession of the arrested agent. The recovered passports indicate that Saleem had traveled between Pakistan and India via Nepal on several occasions. After the recovery of the illegal weapons and other anti-Pakistan evidence, a total of three cases have been registered against the arrested individual.

KP govt takes steps for security of Chinese nationals

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: A high-level meeting was held under the chairmanship of Chief Minister Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Ali Amin Khan Gandapur, on Tuesday at the Chief Minister's House and took stock of the security arrangements for Chinese nationals and other foreigners working in the province, in the context of the recent terrorist attack on a convoy of Chinese engineers in Karachi.

Important decisions were made after detailed deliberations on the future course of action to ensure foolproof security for Chinese nationals working on various development projects in the province. The Chief Secretary, Nadeem Aslam Chaudhry, Inspector General of Police, Akhtar Hayat Khan Gandapur, Additional Chief Secretary Home, Muhammad Abid Majeed, and other senior officials of relevant institutions attended the meeting. Divisional commissioners and regional police officers also attended the meeting via video link.

In the meeting, it was decided to immediately purchase additional vehicles required for the security of Chinese nationals. If necessary, helicopters, including those of the provincial government, and hired helicopters, would be utilized for their movement, the meeting decided.

The Chief Minister said that the provincial government highly values China's cooperation in the development of the province. He emphasized that Chinese engineers play a crucial role in implementing key development projects in both the country and the province. He reiterated that there would be no compromise on the security of Chinese engineers working on development projects in the province.

The Chief Minister was given a detailed briefing by the concerned authorities regarding the security arrangements for Chinese nationals working in the province, issues, and challenges. It was informed that there are a total of 24 development projects in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa where Chinese nationals are working. A special security unit has been established to ensure the security of these Chinese nationals, and a total of 8,578 personnel have been deployed for their security.

These personnel are responsible for guarding the workplaces, residences, and movement of Chinese nationals as well.

Additionally, a Foreign Security Dashboard is fully operational to oversee the security of Chinese nationals and other foreigners.

Addressing the meeting, the Chief Minister stated that the security of Chinese nationals working in the province is of utmost importance to the provincial government, and there will be no compromise on it. He made it clear that negligence or laxity in ensuring the security of foreign nationals would not be tolerated. He urged all relevant authorities to diligently perform their duties in this regard. The Chief Minister directed that coordination between the relevant institutions regarding the security of Chinese nationals should be further improved.

He further directed that relevant commissioners, regional police officers, and the special security unit should hold at least two meetings every week regarding the security arrangements for Chinese nationals, conduct a weekly security audit, and take necessary measures to improve security in the light of audit. He also directed that reports of these meetings be sent to the Inspector General of Police, Chief Secretary, and the Chief Minister's Secretariat.

Furthermore, the Chief Minister instructed that road clearance and other security measures for the movement of Chinese nationals should be ensured in all respects. District police officers and officials from the Special Branch must ensure visibility of all foreign nationals present in the province.

Any foreign national found without an NOC or necessary documents should be sent back. Coordination with landing points should be maintained to obtain information about the visit plans of foreign nationals, while checkpoints should be established on motorways to check the NOCs of foreign nationals. The Chief Minister maintained that he would personally hold meetings to review the security arrangements for Chinese nationals and other foreigners in the province. He added that the federal government should also provide resources for bulletproof vehicles to ensure the security of Chinese engineers working on development projects in the province. The Chief Minister instructed the relevant officials to formally send a letter to the federal government's concerned authorities in this regard.

Israeli strikes kill dozens in Gaza

GAZA: Dozens of Palestinians have been killed in Israeli strikes on northern and central Gaza as the besieged territory marks the grisly anniversary of the start of Israel's war. At least 56 Palestinians were killed during strikes, the Health Ministry in Gaza said, although the number of deaths reported by sources vary.

The casualties brought the overall death toll since the war was launched following Hamas's attack on Israel on October 7 last year to 41,965. The ministry added that 97,590 others have been injured. At least 30 people, including six children and two women, were killed near the central city of Deir el-Balah overnight, Al-Aqsa Martyrs Hospital reported, after houses in the Bureij refugee camp were struck.

Medical sources told Al Jazeera that Israel's military had killed 43 Palestinians across the enclave on Tuesday. The

figure included seven people killed during an attack on the Jabalia refugee camp in northern Gaza. The Israeli army has placed Jabalia under siege for the last several days, in tandem with stepping up its attacks on northern Gaza to a level not seen in months, according to our team on the ground.

The Israeli army reported that it had killed at least 20 armed Palestinian fighters in northern Gaza. It also reported continuing fighting in central and southern Gaza. The information could not be independently verified. Al Jazeera's Tareq Abu Azzoum, reporting from Deir el-Balah, called the scenes at Al-Aqsa Hospital "devastating".

"Bodies were lined up on the ground with family members expressing a great deal of grief and agony," he said. "Palestinians continued to live in the Bureij camp – despite Israel ordering them to flee because it would be an 'active military zone' – as they had

nowhere else to go." Video obtained by Al Jazeera's team on the ground in Gaza shows a group of displaced people in Jabalia, coming under heavy gunfire by Israeli soldiers.

The video shows the group, which was in the process of evacuating Jabalia towards the western part of Gaza City, running in terror. The video also shows many wounded. One man was bleeding from the abdomen as people tried to help him walk. Another, a little girl, is shown bleeding from the neck as she is bandaged in the back of an ambulance. Although Israel has put a significant focus on attacking Hezbollah in Lebanon, its military is maintaining its efforts to fulfil the demands of its political masters to wipe out Hamas – a task that most analysts suggest is unrealistic. Al Jazeera's Abu Azzoum reported that the Israeli army is "systematically working to empty northern Gaza". — Aljazeera

Israel targets Beirut, Hezbollah hits Haifa

BEIRUT: The sounds of Israeli missiles raining down on the southern suburbs of Beirut and Hezbollah missiles striking the city of Haifa and its surroundings overshadowed all political calls for an end to the war on Tuesday.

This conflict, now entering its second year, has resulted in over 2,000 casualties, thousands of injuries, the destruction of approximately 50,000 houses, and the displacement of more than 1 million Lebanese from their villages in the south and Bekaa Valley, as well as from the southern suburbs of Beirut.

The Israeli military expanded its ongoing aerial surveillance of Beirut's airport and its monitoring of land crossings with Syria to include maritime oversight.

This development follows a recent warning issued by Israeli army spokesperson Avichay Adraee, advising "vacationers and individuals present on the beach, as well as those using boats for fishing or other purposes from the Al-Wali River line toward the far south, to refrain from being in the sea or on the shore from this point forward until further notice." He announced that the Israeli military "will soon take action in the

maritime area against Hezbollah activities."

Israeli warships have aggressively engaged in attacks on coastal towns in the southern region, particularly targeting the town of Naqoura, which serves as the headquarters for forces of the UN peacekeeping mission in Lebanon, UNIFIL. The Israeli army announced in the morning "the elimination of Suhail Hussein Hussein, the head of the Hezbollah command structure, in an airstrike that targeted him in the southern suburbs of Beirut."

Adraee said: "Hussein was targeted in a precisely executed airstrike in Beirut. The unit he leads is a logistical unit focused on the manufacturing of precision-guided missiles, as well as the storage and transportation of combat resources within Lebanon." In the morning, the Israeli army announced the commencement of "limited ground operations against Hezbollah in the western sector of southern Lebanon."

Field reports indicated an Israeli attempt to penetrate the Lebanese border town of Maroun Al-Ras. The Israeli army announced that "30 soldiers were killed in the last 24 hours

on the northern border with Lebanon." UNIFIL forces disclosed that they rejected repeated requests from the Israeli side to vacate their positions in the area of their deployment along the border, insisting on the continuation of their operations in accordance with Resolution 1701.

They reported on "activities conducted by the Israeli army near the mission site 6 – 52, southeast of Maroun Al-Ras in the western sector within Lebanese territory," expressing "serious concern." They described the events as "extremely serious developments" and said "it is unacceptable to jeopardize the safety of peacekeeping forces while they are carrying out their mandated tasks from the Security Council." UN Special Coordinator for Lebanon Jeanine Hennis-Plasschaert and head of UNIFIL Gen. Arnoldo Lazaro said in a statement: "It has been a year since our repeated calls for restraint, the protection of civilians, adherence to international humanitarian law, a return to ceasefire, and engagement in a political process based on the implementation of Resolution 1701 have been disregarded." — Arab News

NK troops fighting for Russia in Kyiv: Seoul

SEOUL: North Korean soldiers appear to be fighting alongside Russian troops in Ukraine, according to Seoul's defence minister. Kim Yong-hyun told South Korean politicians on Tuesday that it was "highly likely" that six North Korean officers were killed in a Ukrainian missile strike near Donetsk on October 3, as reported by Ukrainian media last week.

The suggestion comes amid strengthening ties between Pyongyang and Moscow. North Korea has rebuffed accusations that it is supplying arms to Russia's forces for use in its invasion of Ukraine. "We assess that the occurrence of casualties among North Korean officers and soldiers in Ukraine is highly likely, considering various circumstances," Kim said, adding that Seoul expects Pyongyang to send more troops to support Russia's war effort.

"The issue of deploying regular troops is highly likely due to the mutual agreements that resemble a military alliance between Russia and North Korea," he noted. North Korean leader Kim Jong Un and Russian President Vladimir Putin in June adopted a comprehensive strategic partnership that includes a mutual defence pact.

South Korea, backed up by the United States, claims that Pyongyang has become a major supplier to Russia of weapons being used in Ukraine. The two countries have denied the allegations. Analysts have warned that a recent increase in production and testing of artillery and cruise missiles by North Korea could be in preparation for further shipments to Russia.

North Korea is barred by United Nations sanctions from any tests using ballistic technology. However, in March, Moscow used its UN Security Council veto to effectively end UN monitoring of violations, a move for which Pyongyang specifically thanked Russia. — Aljazeera

Imran, wife's meeting ban violation of HRs: Saif

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: Barrister Dr. Saif, Advisor to the Chief Minister of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa on Information and Public Relations, has condemned the Federal government's decision to ban meetings with PTI Chairman Imran Khan and his wife Bushra Bibi with their legal counsel, family members, and political leaders, calling it a "gross violation of human rights." He argued that the restrictions reflect the government's fear that Khan could organize his workers for new protest strategies or rally lawyers to challenge unconstitutional amendments.

Dr. Saif accused the government of being "terrified," stating that even Bushra Bibi has been placed under the same restrictions. He urged the ruling coalition to "come to its senses" and halt further

violations of human rights. He also pointed out that the current administration has illegally detained members of the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa provincial cabinet and unjustly imprisoned PTI workers, which he says amounts to an attack on the very pillars of democracy.

The advisor criticized the ruling Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N)-led federal and Punjab government, claiming that the Sharif family has sunk to new lows in their efforts to hold onto power. He also issued a warning that the "state-sponsored oppression and brutality" will not go unaccounted for.

In response to accusations of misusing government resources, Dr. Saif said that it's standard protocol to provide rescue and fire brigade services at every rally, regardless of

the political party. He issued a direct challenge to PML-N and other opposition parties to hold a rally in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. "We will not only grant them permission for the rally but also provide them with a venue and all necessary facilities. I can assure you, though, that they will not be able to gather even a quarter of the crowd that PTI attracts," he asserted.

Dr. Saif also noted that while the opposition accuses PTI of misusing state resources, it was, in fact, the Federal and Punjab government that used public funds to create a "container fortress" to block off Islamabad and parts of the motorway. "Were those containers paid for out of the Sharif or Zardari family's personal funds? If so, then fine," questioning the double standards of the current administration.

No polls before reforms in Bangladesh: Yunus

DHAKA (AFP): In a major development, Bangladesh's interim leader Muhammad Yunus has refused to give a timeframe for elections before electoral reforms in the country. The Nobel Peace Prize winner was appointed the country's "chief advisor" after the student-led uprising that toppled ex-premier Sheikh Hasina in August.

The 84-year-old microfinance pioneer is helming a temporary administration, to tackle what he has called the "extremely tough" challenge of restoring democratic institutions. "None of us are aiming at staying for a prolonged time," Yunus said of his caretaker government, in an interview published by the Prothom Alo newspaper.

"Reforms are pivotal," he added. "If you say, hold the election, we are ready to hold the election. But it would be wrong to hold the election first." Hasina's 15-year rule saw widespread

human rights abuses, including the mass detention and extrajudicial killings of her political opponents.

More than 600 people were killed in the weeks leading up to her ouster, according to a preliminary United Nations report which said the figure was likely an underestimate. Her government was also accused of politicising courts and the civil service, as well as staging lopsided elections, to dismantle democratic checks on its power. Yunus said he had inherited a "completely broken down" system of public administration that needed a comprehensive overhaul to prevent a future return to autocracy.

"Reforms mean we will not allow a repetition of what happened in the past", he added. Yunus also batted away criticism at the numerous politicians, senior police officers and other Hasina loyalists arrested on

murder charges after her government's ouster. The arrests have prompted accusations that Yunus' caretaker government would hold politicised trials of senior figures from Hasina's regime.

But Yunus said it was his intention that any criminal trials initiated against those arrested would remain free from government interference. "Once the judicial system is reformed, then the issues will come forward, about who will be placed on trial, how justice will be carried out," he said. At least 25 journalists – considered by Hasina's opponents to be partisans of her government – have been arrested for alleged violence against protesters since her downfall. Press watchdog Reporters Without Borders has condemned those arrests as "systematic judicial harassment". But Yunus insisted he wanted media freedom.