

PM back to Islamabad
F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif on Friday arrived here back after concluding his two-day official visit to Qatar. At Doha International Airport, Minister of State for Reconciliation Muhammad bin Abdulaziz Al-Khulaifi saw off the prime minister. The Ambassador of Pakistan to Qatar and senior diplomatic officials were also present.



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PM invites Qatari businessmen to invest in Pakistan

DOHA (APP): Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif on Friday met a delegation of the Qatar Businessmen Association (QBA) where he highlighted numerous opportunities in Pakistan's energy, infrastructure, and finance sectors, presenting the country as an attractive investment destination.

The QBA delegation, led by Sheikh Faisal Bin Qassim Al-Thani, comprised leading Qatari business figures, each representing influential sectors within Qatar's economy. The meeting was held during Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif's two-day official visit to Qatar aimed at discussing deepening economic ties and exploring new avenues for collaboration.

The meeting brought together key representatives from Pakistan and influential members of Qatar's business community, emphasizing shared goals for strengthening trade, investment, and economic partnerships. Notable QBA members present included Vice Chairman & CEO of Al Mana Group Saad Bin Omar Bin Hamad Al-Mana; Executive Director of Mannai Corporation Khalid Ahmed Al Mannai; Chairman MENA & Chief Country Officer of Deutsche Bank Salah Mohammed Jaidah; Chairman of Mansoor Jassim Al Thani Group Sheikh Mansoor bin Jassim Al Thani; CEO of Blue Salon Nabil Abu Issa; and Director of Sendian Group Yousuf Ebrahim Al-Mahmoud.

Each of these delegates expressed interest in Pakistan's economic landscape, particularly in upcoming projects in energy, technology, and infrastructure development. During the meeting, both sides explored potential collaborations that could drive job creation, innovation, and sustainable development in both countries.

Members of the QBA responded positively to the prime minister's invitation, indicating their interest in expanding their investments into Pakistan's

energy and infrastructure sectors. The importance of bilateral cooperation to bolster economic stability and growth within the region was underscored. Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Foreign Affairs Senator Mohammad Ishaq Dar, Minister for Defence Khawaja Muhammad Asif, Minister for Commerce Kam Kamal Khan, Minister for Finance and Revenue Mohammad Aurangzeb and Minister for Information and Broadcasting Attaullah Tarar were also present in the meeting.

Meanwhile, the leadership of Pakistan and Qatar agreed to deepen cooperation, explore new horizons to strengthen bilateral ties underscoring the importance of high-level exchanges to enhance mutual understanding.

The bilateral ties were discussed during the two-day official visit of Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif to Qatar where he met Amir of the State of Qatar Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad Al Thani and Qatari Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Sheikh Mohammed bin Abdulrahman Al Thani.

The two sides discussed key opportunities in a number of fields in Pakistan in the context of previous investment pledges. Key regional and global developments of mutual concern were also discussed, according to a joint statement issued by PM Office following the conclusion of his visit. Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif expressed his gratitude for the warm reception and generous hospitality, expressing his keenness to strengthen bilateral relations and develop existing cooperation to broader horizons.

The prime minister expressed his appreciation for the continuous support provided by the State of Qatar to Pakistan in various fields, and highlighted investment opportunities in vital economic sectors in Pakistan. The meeting focused on strengthening bilateral relations between the two brotherly

countries, with a particular emphasis on investment and trade, alongside discussions on cooperation in other fields.

The Amir of Qatar stressed the importance of fraternal relations between the two countries and the two sides' aspiration to enhance economic partnership, increase trade exchange, and promote investments. Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs Qatar Sheikh Mohammed bin Abdulrahman Al Thani also held a meeting with Prime Minister Shehbaz where the two sides discussed ways to enhance bilateral relations and explore various avenues of collaboration in the areas of economy, trade, investment and cultural exchange.

Prime Minister Shehbaz expressed his gratitude for Qatar's role in supporting economic development in Pakistan, praising the presence of a large Pakistani community in the State of Qatar that acts as a bridge linking the two countries. The Qatari prime minister stressed the importance of Pakistan as a strategic partner in the region, expressing the Qatari side's commitment to deepen bilateral economic ties to serve the common interests of the two countries.

The two sides discussed regional and global issues, stressing the importance of peaceful solutions and cooperative efforts to address current challenges. Prime Minister Shehbaz praised the diplomatic efforts and humanitarian initiatives of the State of Qatar to promote peace in the region, especially the role of the State of Qatar as a mediator regarding the Palestinian issue and its commitment to supporting efforts to establish security and stability in the region. During the visit, Prime Minister Shehbaz and Amir of Qatar visited the exhibition "Manzar: Art and Architecture in Pakistan from the 1940s to the Present" organized by the Qatar Museum.

Two MPA arrives in KP PA after release F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: Two members provincial assembly, Malik Liaquat and Anwar Zeb here Friday arrived at the assembly hall after their release by Islamabad police.

They were arrested by police during protest demonstration at D Chowk in Islamabad. The lawmakers were accorded warm welcome when they arrived at the Assembly hall with penal Speaker Idriss Khattak in Chair. Idriss Khattak also welcomed both the MPAs.

Meanwhile, the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Assembly with panel Speaker Idriss Khattak in Chair here Friday passed the KP Livestock Fooder Bill 2024. The Bill were presented by Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Minister for Livestock Fazal Hakeem Khan.

An amendment about combating livestock diseases introduced by Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP) Ahmad Kundi were also approved. Kundi later withdrew two amendments on the request of the minister. Under the law, the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Government would establish livestock centres to prevent communicable diseases in livestock at district level.

The animal infected by zoonotic diseases could not be slaughtered and the violator would be fined upto Rs 5000. A license authority to be headed by a director would be setup at each district that would issue license regarding purchase of fooder, its delivery and publicity besides take action against sale of poor fooders.

Qatar pledges to invest \$3b in Pakistan: Tarar

F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: Minister for Information, Broadcasting, National Heritage and Culture Attaullah Tarar on Friday said Qatar would make an investment of \$3 billion in diverse sectors which would have a significant impact on the national economy and ultimately benefit the masses.

A delegation from Qatar would soon visit Pakistan to materialize the investment pledge, said the minister while addressing a news conference which mainly highlighted the substantive economic gains, achieved by Pakistan with the recent visit of Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif to Saudi Arabia and Qatar. He congratulated the whole nation on the foreign policy and economic achievements made by Pakistan under the leadership of Prime Minister of Shehbaz Sharif who charted the country on path of economic progress.

The minister recalled signing of 27 Memoranda of Understanding (MoUs), amounting to \$2.2 billion investment, during the successful visit of a high-level Saudi delegation, led by Minister for Investment Sheikh Khalid Bin Abdul Aziz Al Faleh, a few weeks ago which included fruitful government-to-government and business-to-business meetings.

"In a follow-up of that visit, the prime minister has had very productive meetings in Saudi Arabia that also included his meeting with Saudi Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman on the sidelines of the eighth session of the Future Investment Initiative (FII) in Riyadh," Tarar noted. He said during the meeting, both sides reiterated to further strengthen the bilateral relations and enhance trade and investment in Pakistan.

Both countries have longstanding people-to-people relations which spanned over decades, he said lauding the hospitality extended by Saudi Arabia to the pilgrims from Pakistan during Umrah and Hajj. He said the prime minister had thanked Saudi Arabia for hosting Pakistanis for Hajj and its crucial role for Pakistan's deal with the International Monetary Fund (IMF).

During the recent visit of the prime minister, he said, delegation level talks were also

held between both the sides that led to increase in the number of MoUs from 27 to 34, while volume of investment has also been enhanced to \$2.8 billion. The minister said an additional investment of \$600 million would have a positive impact on the economy, and "we believe this is a major step towards attracting the foreign investment in mining, energy, agriculture, livestock, IT and Human Resource Development sectors of the economy."

He said the prime minister also spoke about the issue of Palestine at the conference in Riyadh, and condemned the oppression of unarmed Palestinians by Israel. PM Shehbaz Sharif had underlined the need for peace in Palestine which was imperative for global peace. The prime minister has been fighting for the Palestinian cause at international level which is being acknowledged domestically and globally, the minister noted.

As regards the visit of the prime minister and his delegation to Qatar, he said this has great importance for the bilateral relations of the two countries which was reflected by the joint statement issued upon conclusion of the visit. He said Qatar had hosted an art exhibition celebrating Pakistani artwork, putting up the masterpieces of Pakistani art on display from 1947 to the present. The exhibition featured renowned Pakistani artists and painters, including the acclaimed architect Nayar Ali Dada.

The prime minister, he said, had expressed his gratitude for Amir of Qatar Sheikh Tamim Bin Hamad Al-Thani and his sister Sheikhha Al-Mayassa bint Hamad bin Khalifa al-Thani for organizing such an exhibition in the honor of Pakistan. The relationship between Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif and the Emir of Qatar was further emphasized by the warm reception he received during his visit.

To a query, the minister said Pakistan's economy is on the path to stabilization, adding inflation has come down to 6.9 per cent. The country had received record remittances, while the Interest rate have also been reduced with the investment was pouring in. Pakistan had achieved fiscal surplus after 24 years, he noted.



DOHA: Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif being seen off by Qatar's Minister of State for Reconciliation, Muhammad bin Abdulaziz Al-Khulalaifi at airport.

Parachinar crisis deepens as highway still closed F.P. Report

PARACHINAR: Three weeks after the main road closure in Parachinar, severe shortages of food, fuel, and medicine have led to a worsening crisis. According to the hospital sources, another child has died due to the lack of timely medical treatment, increasing the death toll to 14 in the past three weeks.

Residents remain confined to their areas as the unrest continues. For five consecutive days, educational institutions have also remained closed, and internet shutdowns are causing difficulties for students attempting online classes. Social leader Mir Afzal Khan told the media that citizens have started a sit-in, pledging to continue until the main road is reopened, while MNA Hameed Hussain from the area has called for the road to be reopened and made safe for public transport.

Private Education Network Chairman Muhammad Hayat Khan reported that schools have been closed for five days due to fuel shortages. Students expressed frustration to the media, noting that the month-long suspension of 3G and 4G services is disrupting online classes.

Imran's bail plea fixed for hearing F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: The Islamabad High Court (IHC) has removed the Registrar's Office objections to the bail application of the PTI founder in the Toshakhana reference, directing the Registrar to schedule the case for hearing on Monday.

Justice Mian Gul Hasan Aurangzeb presided over the hearing, questioning the basis for the Registrar's objections and discussing the procedural nuances surrounding the bail application. During the proceedings, Justice Aurangzeb addressed the petitioner's counsel, Ayesha Khalid, who clarified that the bail application pertained to the Toshakhana 2 case.

5 schoolchildren among 9 killed in Mastung blast

F.P. Report

MASTUNG: Nine persons, including five school going children, were killed and 17 others injured in an IED blast near police mobile vehicle near Government Girls High School area of Mastung in Balochistan province on Friday.

According to police, improvised explosive device attached to a motorcycle detonated near police mobile vehicle near Government Girls High School area of Mastung, resultantly, nine persons, including five school going children, were killed and 17 others sustained injuries. Police and other law enforcement agencies cordoned off the area to prevent any incident. The bodies and injured were rushed to Nawab Ghous Bakhsh Raisani Memorial Hospital Mastung and District Headquarters Hospital Mastung for completion of necessary medico-legal formalities and treatment, respectively.

After providing initial treatment, eleven 11 critically injured were referred to Quetta for further treatment.

The injured referred to Trauma Centre Sandeman Provincial Hospital Quetta included Irfan, 35, Zaro Bangulzai, 55, Nadeem, 40, Haji Muhammad, 65, Muhammad Hamza, 28, Aminullah, 45, Akhtar Ali, 28, Dilbar 35, Abdul Razaq 14, Shahid Ali, 25, Zunaira, 5.

Meanwhile, acting President Syed Yousuf Raza Gillani and Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif have strongly condemned bomb blast at a Girls' High School in Mastung district of Balochistan, which resulted in the martyrdom of three children and a police personnel.

In their separate statements, they expressed deep grief over the death of children and a policeman in the incident. They also expressed condolence to the bereaved families, and prayed for granting fortitude to bear this loss. The Acting President, in his statement, reiterated the resolve to root out terrorism from the country. He said terrorists are the enemies of humanity and entire nation

stands united to support the security forces and law enforcement agencies to eliminate terrorism.

Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif, in his statement, expressed the determination to continue war till complete elimination of the scourge of terrorism from the country. He said the attack on a school exposes terrorists' animosity towards education in Balochistan.

Shehbaz Sharif said such cowardly acts of terrorists cannot undermine the nation's morale. He said such attacks can also not shake the unwavering resolve of the government for promotion of education and development in Balochistan. He said the whole nation feels proud of its policemen and soldiers for rendering sacrifices for the sake of the country.

The Prime Minister directed the authorities concerned to apprehend the perpetrators of the blast and award them exemplary punishment. He also instructed to provide the best medical treatment facilities to the injured.

Pak-Qatar stress need to enhance partnership: FO

F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan and Qatar have stressed the need to enhance mutual economic partnership, trade and investments. This was stated in a joint statement issued by the Foreign Office (FO) here on Friday after the conclusion of Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif's visit to Qatar.

During the visit, the Prime Minister met with Amir of the State of Qatar Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad Al Thani in Doha, where the Amir welcomed Shehbaz Sharif and accompanying delegation. The Prime Minister expressed his gratitude for the warm reception and generous hospitality, expressing his keenness to strengthen bilateral relations and develop existing cooperation to broader horizons.

He expressed his appreciation for the continuous support provided by the State of

Qatar to Pakistan in various fields, and highlighted investment opportunities in vital economic sectors in Pakistan. The meeting focused on strengthening bilateral relations between the two brotherly countries, with a particular emphasis on investment and trade, alongside discussions on cooperation in other fields.

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Besides, Qatari Prime Minister Sheikh

Mohammed bin Abdulrahman Al Thani held a meeting with Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif. In this meeting, the two sides discussed ways to enhance bilateral relations and explore various avenues of collaboration in the areas of economy, trade, investment and cultural exchange.

Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif expressed his gratitude for Qatar's role in supporting economic development in Pakistan, praising the presence of a large Pakistani community in the State of Qatar that acts as a bridge linking the two countries.

The Qatari Prime Minister stressed the importance of Pakistan as a strategic partner in the region, expressing his country's commitment to deepen bilateral economic ties to serve the common interests of the two countries.

Kamala, Trump rallying in Wisconsin in final US election push

WASHINGTON: Democratic presidential candidate Kamala Harris and her Republican rival, Donald Trump, are targeting key swing states in a final push to win over undecided voters as they continue to crisscross the United States before Tuesday's elections. The two contenders, who are locked in a tight race for the White House, will host duelling rallies on Friday night about 10km (6 miles) from one another in Milwaukee, the largest city in the battleground state of Wisconsin.

Milwaukee is home to the most Democratic votes in the state, but its conservative suburbs are where most Republicans live and are a critical area for Trump as he tries to reclaim the

state he narrowly won in 2016 and lost in 2020. Four of the past six presidential elections in Wisconsin have been decided by less than 1 percentage point, or fewer than 23,000 votes, and the race is just as tight this time around.

After appearing with music star Jennifer Lopez at a campaign event in Las Vegas, Nevada, on Thursday, Harris will tap musicians such as GloRilla, the Isley Brothers and Flo Milli in Milwaukee. Grammy award-winning rapper Cardi B, who has more than 200 million followers on social media platforms, was also due to speak at the campaign event. Trump, meanwhile, will return to the Fiserv Forum, the venue where in July he formally accepted his party's

presidential nomination at the Republican National Convention.

Earlier, he is expected to make a campaign stop in Michigan, in the Detroit suburb of Dearborn, home to a large Arab American community. Opinion polls, both nationally and in the seven closely divided battleground states, show the two candidates virtually tied with four days to go before election day. More than 66 million people have already cast early ballots.

Trump has focused his campaign on stirring fears about violence he blames on immigrants and pessimism over the economy. The former president continues to falsely claim his 2020 loss to President Joe Biden was the result of widespread fraud in multiple states,

and he and his supporters have spread baseless claims about this election in the key state of Pennsylvania. On Thursday, Trump stepped up his unfounded allegations that probes into suspect voter registration forms are proof of voter fraud. Some of his supporters also alleged voter suppression when long lines formed this week to receive mail-in ballots.

"This is sowing the seeds for attempts to overturn an election," said Kyle Miller, a strategist with the advocacy group Protect Democracy. "We saw it in 2020, and I think the lesson Trump and his allies have learned since is that they have to sow these ideas early." State officials and democracy advocates said the inci-

dents show a system working as intended. A judge extended the mail-in ballot deadline by three days in Bucks County, north of Philadelphia, after the Trump campaign sued over claims that some voters were turned away before a Tuesday deadline.

Election officials discovered potentially fraudulent registrations in Lancaster and neighbouring York counties, prompting investigations by local law enforcement. There is no evidence the applications have resulted in illegal votes. "This is a sign that the built-in safeguards in our voter registration process are working," Al Schmidt, Pennsylvania's top elections official, told reporters this week.

Harris, meanwhile, is running on

warnings about an authoritarian takeover, pledging to help the middle class and pushing back against Republican abortion bans and restrictions. An issue top of mind for voters is the economy, with many complaining about inflation and wages that do not keep up with rising prices.

Economists said the US economy is actually in robust shape, shrugging off the remaining impact of the coronavirus pandemic with low unemployment and strong growth. New figures on Friday, however, showed drastically lower job growth last month with only 12,000 new jobs created. Analysts largely attributed this to knock-on effects from hurricanes and a strike at the aerospace giant Boeing. — Aljazeera

Governor emphasizes role of business community

PESHAWAR (APP): The Governor Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Faisal Karim Kundi, highlighted the significant role of the business community and farmers in Pakistan's economic growth. He expressed a strong understanding of the challenges faced by these sectors in the province. He said this during a dinner hosted in honour of the Sarhad Chamber of Commerce and Industry. Leading the delegation were Group Leader Ghaznafar Bilour, President Fazal Mugeem, Senior Vice President Abdul Jalil Jan, and Vice President Shehryar Khan. They presented various

issues concerning federal departments to the Governor. Kundi assured them that addressing the problems of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa residents is among his top priorities, saying, "I will advocate for your issues as your lawyer." He emphasized that he would personally engage with relevant authorities to resolve federal issues faced by the business community, with the support of the Parliamentary Leader of the Pakistan Peoples Party, Ahmad Karim Kundi, who will advocate for their rights in KP Assembly. The Governor mentioned that Federal Minister

Musadiq Malik would soon visit Peshawar to work on a plan to address issues related to taxes and CNG. He proposed convening customs officials and representatives of the business community to collaboratively address the challenges they face. Kundi stressed the importance of promoting tourism in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa to enhance the province's economy and expressed his commitment to facilitating foreign traders' entry into the province. He plans to discuss the issuance of NOCs with officials from the Ministries of Interior and Foreign Affairs.

Addressing concerns about mismanagement, Kundi urged the provincial government not to use security as an excuse for inefficiencies. He emphasized the need to increase exports and expressed his intention to hold a meeting of the Special Investment Facilitation Council (SIFC) in Peshawar, as the province's interests have not received adequate attention. He highlighted the significance of the Chashma Lift Canal project, financed by Islamic banks, and shared his efforts to strengthen ties between Khyber Pakhtunkhwa traders and Saudi investors during the upcoming visit of a Saudi delegation next month. Kundi also stressed the importance of trade with Central Asia and called for initiatives to enhance business access through the Wakhan Corridor. He mentioned plans for the Governor of Tajikistan's Khatlon Province to visit Khyber Pakhtunkhwa to explore business opportunities. Furthermore, he announced efforts to expand health facilities similar to those available in Sindh and Punjab to Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, beginning with discussions among the provincial chief secretaries. The business community commended Governor Kundi for his dedication and efforts to address their concerns and improve the economic landscape of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa.



PESHAWAR: Chief Minister Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Ali Amin Khan Gandapur witnessing signing ceremony of power transmission line project at CM's House.

Kundi for reducing gas load shedding, pressure

PESHAWAR (APP): The Governor Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Faisal Karim Kundi on Friday directed the Sui Northern Gas Authority to focus on reducing gas load shedding, improving gas pressure, and other critical matters. He issued these directives during a meeting with Waqas Ullah Shinwari, General Manager of Sui Northern Gas here at Governor House, to discuss various gas-related issues in the province. Governor Kundi expressed concern over the ongoing gas load shedding, emphasizing that access to gas is a fundamental right

of the public and immediate actions are necessary for improvement. He instructed the General Manager to implement effective planning to ensure uninterrupted gas supply for residents during the winter months, thereby preventing any hardships. During the discussion on gas pressure issues, the Governor highlighted that low gas pressure is causing difficulties in the daily lives of citizens. He also issued directives to accelerate the expansion projects in Kotla Syedan and Korai, specifically addressing issues related to the TBS in Dera Ismail

Khan. The Governor called for significant reductions in gas load shedding across the province and stressed the need to maintain gas pressure. Furthermore, he urged the acceleration of gas supply expansion projects. Waqas Ullah Shinwari assured the Governor that practical steps would be taken to resolve these issues. He said that the Sui Gas team is working diligently to improve gas supply in various regions of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and will make every effort to serve the public effectively.

He mentioned plans for the Governor of Tajikistan's Khatlon Province to visit Khyber Pakhtunkhwa to explore business opportunities. Furthermore, he announced efforts to expand health facilities similar to those available in Sindh and Punjab to Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, beginning with discussions among the provincial chief secretaries. The business community commended Governor Kundi for his dedication and efforts to address their concerns and improve the economic landscape of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa.

AD&SJ sentences murderer to death penalty

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: Additional District and Sessions Judge (AD&SJ) has sentenced murderer for death penalty and imposed a fine of Rs. 1 million, along with 12 years additional imprisonment under additional sections, on Friday. The lawyer Syed Mubashir Shah argued that the culprit named Haris was charged with killing his elderly aunt, Bakht Zaree, and injuring her sister with an axe over a property dispute. According to the prosecution, on September 6, 2021, the accused entered the victim's house in Yar Hussain police station limits and attacked Bakht Zaree (65) and her sister with an axe, injuring both. The victims were rushed to the hospital, where Bakht Zaree succumbed to her injuries. The counsel for complainant stated that the incident occurred in broad daylight. The injured woman, Bakht Zaree, directly implicated the accused in the FIR. The accused had demanded a share in the property, which the victims refused, he argued. Police collected evidence from the crime scene, and medical records confirmed the accused's involvement. The court found the accused guilty and sentenced him to death penalty and imposed Rs. 1 million fine while 12 years additional imprisonment under additional sections.

Participating in PIA privatisation bid: Provincial govt expresses interest

PESHAWAR (INP): The Khyber Pakhtunkhwa government expressed interest in participating in the privatisation bid for Pakistan International Airlines (PIA). According to details, the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Investment Board wrote to Federal Minister for Privatisation Abdul Aleem Khan, expressing its intention to submit a bid. The letter was written on directives of Chief Minister Ali Amin Gandapur and read that the PIA is a national asset of immense importance. "The Khyber Pakhtunkhwa government is willing to offer a better

deal than the Blue World City," the letter read. The Privatisation Ministry announced on Thursday that only one bid of Rs 10 billion for a 60% share in the national flag carrier had been received during the final bidding process for the PIA privatisation. Only the real estate company Blue World City entered the bidding process, submitting an offer that was less than the government-imposed minimum price of Rs 85 billion, despite the government having pre-qualified six companies in June. As part of a \$7 billion

International Monetary Fund program, Pakistan wants to sell 51-100% of the debt-ridden PIA in order to raise money and overhaul state-owned businesses. Read More: PIA stake sale attracts sole bid below govt's expectations The bidder was urged to match the minimum bid, according to the Privatization Commission. Saad Nazir, the chairman of Blue World City, nevertheless, maintained its offer. "We wish the government all the best if they don't want to accept our bid," he said.

Govt to ensure teachers protection

F.P. Report PESHAWAR: The Islamia Collegiate School (ICS) Teaching Staff Association (TSA) president Kafeel Ahmed Khalil convened an emergency meeting of cabinet members to express concern over the current situation at Islamic College Peshawar, on Friday. The association strongly condemned the recent incident of students' disrespect towards teachers, vandalism in the Vice Chancellor's committee room, and disruption of the college's educational environment. The association urged the provincial government to take stringent action

against the students involved in the unfortunate incident. Restore a peaceful environment for teachers within the institution and prevent wastage of students' valuable time. The association appreciates the committee formed by the Higher Education department to investigate

the matter. TSA demanded protection for teachers and restoration of peaceful environment. They urged provincial government to take actions against involved students. The association welcomed constitution of Higher Education department's inquiry committee in this regard.



PESHAWAR: Ayesha Malik Advocate elected as Senior Member Executive KP Supreme Court Bar Association. Habib Qureshi elected Vice President Supreme Court Bar Association.

Food authority recovers unwholesome organ meat

PESHAWAR (APP): A team of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Food Safety Authority here Friday recovered 600 kilogram unwholesome liver meat during checking of vehicles on motorway toll plaza. The liver meat was later disposed of on dumping site of Water Sanitation and Services Peshawar. Fine was also imposed on driver of the vehicle. Similarly, food authority recovered 300 kilogram distasteful meat from a car on Kohat-Hungu Road. The meat was discarded and owner of car was fined. Provincial Food Minister, Zahir Shah Toru has appreciated performance of food authority and directed to expedite campaign against mafia involved in supplying harmful edible items.

KPRA collects Rs14.84 billion

F.P. Report PESHAWAR: The Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Revenue Authority (KPRA) has successfully collected Rs14.84 billion in the first four months of the financial year 2024-25, marking an impressive 40% growth compared to the same period last year. Last year it collected only Rs 10.58 billion in the first four months which shows Rs4.26 billion increase in the revenue. As per the details shared by the KPRA's media wing, the Authority has collected Rs11.25 billion from the sales tax on services, and Rs3.59 billion from the Infrastructure Development Cess (IDC). Last year, collections from sales tax on services amounted to Rs9.3 billion, while Rs1.28 billion was collected from the IDC, reflecting a 21% growth in sales tax on services and an astonishing 180 % growth in IDC. Director General KPRA, Fouzia Iqbal, commended the KPRA staff for their hard work and dedication, which contributed to this encouraging start. She expressed confidence that with continued efforts, not only would the annual target be met, but it would be surpassed by a significant margin. "If we maintain the same level of dedication and continue with our current approach, I am certain that we will exceed this year's target, and by the end of June, KPRA will once again shine like a star with its performance," she said. The KPRA team extends its gratitude to the taxpayers for their trust, confidence and cooperation. KPRA vows to continue its mission of "Towards Self Reliance". She also extended her gratitude to Chief Minister Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Ali Amin Gandapur, and Advisor to CM on Finance, Mr. Muzammil Aslam, for their support and guidance, which were instrumental in helping KPRA develop effective strategies to pave way for achieving its targets.

Police register case against 7 individuals

PESHAWAR (INP): The Khyber Pakhtunkhwa police registered a case under the Prevention of Electronic Crimes Act (PECA) 2016 against seven individuals for allegedly harassing and blackmailing a transgender person, Dolphin Ayan. The case was filed on the complaint of Dolphin Ayan, who accused the suspects of kidnapping and filming an obscene video in 2023. The complainant said that Imran and his accomplices took her at gunpoint in 2023 and filmed an obscene video. According to Dolphin Ayan, the suspects, including Imran, allegedly used the video for blackmailing and extortion.



PESHAWAR: Female journalist casting vote during election of Khyber Union of Journalist at PPC.

The key capabilities of a digital supply chain network

Ahmad Bin Sajid The global disruptions have laid vulnerabilities in supply chains, affecting manufacturers, suppliers, and consumers alike. In an interconnected global economy, a disturbance in one region can cause widespread ripple effect across industries. The resulting shortages of raw materials and transportation bottlenecks have forced companies to rethink their supply chain strategies, emphasizing the need to make them more resilient and responsive. One of the most striking examples of supply chain fragility was the semiconductor shortage that began in 2020. This shortage severely impacted industries reliant on these chips, particularly the automotive sector, which saw production delays and significant financial losses. This crisis underscored how the global

supply chain, often dependent on just a few key suppliers in specific regions, can easily falter when any disruption occurs. To tackle these weaknesses, companies must adopt integrated platforms that enable global demand-supply matching through unified planning and execution. A shift toward continuous and incremental planning, involving all trading partners, will also better prepare businesses to face unpredictable disruptions. This transformation requires technological advancements in how companies manage and operate their supply chains. Modern technology offers the tools needed to achieve this transformation. Data-driven systems, powered by artificial intelligence (AI), machine learning (ML), and the Internet of Things (IoT), allow companies to optimize supply chain operations in ways

that manual processes cannot match. AI, for instance, can analyze market trends and global events to predict disruptions in critical supply sources. This allows companies to take proactive steps, such as rerouting shipments, securing alternative suppliers, or adjusting production schedules, thereby avoiding major disruptions. Predictive analytics also enables companies to forecast future supply and demand shifts, which helps them mitigate risks before they escalate. In addition to these proactive measures, businesses must ensure end-to-end visibility in their supply chains. A unified platform can provide transparency, allowing companies to track products from their origin to the customer. This level of visibility helps monitor inventory levels, transportation routes, and the performance of trading partners, allowing busi-

nesses to promptly identify and resolve potential issues. By fostering transparency, companies can build more resilient supply chains that are better equipped to handle unforeseen challenges. The financial stakes involved in supply chain disruptions are enormous. According to data from McKinsey, supply chain shocks can erase up to 40% of a year's profits in just one month. This demonstrates how critical it is for companies to build resilience. Open communication and full collaboration with suppliers are essential in this regard. By sharing data and maintaining transparent relationships, companies and their suppliers can work together to identify and manage risks. For example, a supplier can inform a manufacturer about a potential delay due to weather disruptions or political unrest, allowing

the manufacturer to adjust production schedules accordingly. Some companies are also adopting advanced technologies like blockchain to strengthen their risk management frameworks. Blockchain can create secure, transparent records of supplier performance and risks, providing an immutable ledger that fosters trust and collaboration throughout the supply chain. By using such technology, companies can ensure that their supply chains are more reliable and secure, reducing the chances of disruption. Resilience in supply chains is not just about responding to disruptions; it's about being proactive in anticipating potential risks. The pandemic has shown that operational continuity is key to minimizing disruptions and maintaining customer trust. A fully digitized, end-to-end supply

chain network that connects all stakeholders in real-time is essential for fostering this resilience. Such a network allows companies to anticipate risks such as supply shortages, transportation delays, or shifts in consumer demand, helping them respond quickly and effectively. Building redundancy into supply chains is another important strategy. Diversifying the supply base across different geographical locations and using multiple suppliers for critical components can provide a buffer against disruptions. For example, if a natural disaster strikes one region, companies with diversified supply chains can rely on suppliers in other regions to maintain operations. Apple is one notable company that has employed this strategy, diversifying its supply base across several countries to reduce its reliance on China

for production. This approach helps mitigate risks related to political tensions, natural disasters, or other regional disruptions. Looking forward, businesses, consumers, governments, and investors are all calling for systemic changes in supply chain management to prevent future disruptions. Global companies are increasingly recognizing that traditional just-in-time inventory systems, which work well in stable times, are less effective in an era of frequent global disruptions. A survey by Gartner found that 87% of supply chain professionals plan to invest in supply chain resilience over the next two years, with a particular focus on technologies that enhance visibility, collaboration, and risk management. Consumer expectations are evolving as well. More than ever, consumers are demanding transparency in how companies manage their supply chains, especially regarding ethical sourcing and environmental sustainability. In response, companies are adopting stricter monitoring and reporting practices, often using supply chain transparency tools to track and report on the environmental and social impacts of their operations. In conclusion, the lessons from recent disruptions are clear: businesses must invest in building resilient, transparent, and adaptable supply chains. By leveraging advanced technology, enhancing collaboration across the trading partner ecosystem, and focusing on proactive risk management, companies can better manage potential risks and maintain continuity in times of crisis. Those that prioritize these innovations will be best positioned to remain competitive in an increasingly uncertain global marketplace.



In brief

Aunt arrested in murder case F.P. Report

MARDAN: The culprits allegedly involved in blind murder of 5-year minor girl has been traced down and held in police custody for further interrogation, on Friday. This was announced by Superintendent of Police Investigation Nisar Khan during a press conference along with other officers in Toru Mera-Sokai. A few days ago, 5 year girl Marjan went to play in neighborhood, but in the evening, it was found that her body was found lying in front of the house. The father of the victim, the plaintiff, Rehman Ali resident of Sokai Toru, filed a report of the murder of his daughter Marjan in the Toru police station against the unknown suspect/accused. Under the direction of DPO Mardan Zahoor Babar Afridi, an investigation team was formed under the supervision of SP Investigation and consisting of other police officers. The police team interrogated the accused by adopting modern investigative methods and professional strategies.

KP CS visits Bannu F.P. Report

BANNU: Chief Secretary (CS) Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Nadeem Aslam Chaudhry on Friday visited Bannu Division and chaired a meeting to review ongoing measures for the polio eradication campaign. The meeting was also attended by Inspector General of Police Akhtar Hayat Khan, Commissioner Bannu Division, Muhammad Abid Khan, Regional Police Officer Imran Shahid, Deputy Commissioner Bannu Abdul Hameed Khan, District Police Officers and other relevant officials. During meeting, participants were briefed about security status in Bannu Division and challenges faced in the polio eradication campaign. Addressing the meeting, Chief Secretary emphasized that polio prevention is a national responsibility urging departments and administration use resource for success of anti-polio campaign. He reiterated commitment of provincial government to maintaining law and order and said that each and every household should be visited to achieve targets of campaign.

Speedy truck kills one F.P. Report

SWABI: A pedestrian was killed and two others critically injured when a speeding truck hit them in Swabi district, Rescue 1122 informed on Friday. It said the truck loaded with sand hit the people when its driver tried to evade a TMA tax and accelerated the vehicle. A youth was killed on the scene while two others were critically injured and swiftly shifted to Shah Mansoor Medical Complex. The run-away truck was intercepted near Akora Khattak however, police said the driver managed to flee the scene leaving the vehicle on the road.

Ceremony held F.P. Report

JAMRUD: Under the Rights-Based Community stabilization project, certificate awarding and tool kits distribution of training completion 200 candidates was held in Shahkas, tehsil Jamrud, district Khyber last day. The training activity was organized by Best Pak and UNDP with collaboration of P&D Department, District Administration, Local Government, Social Welfare Department, Bara Rifle and Mohmand Rifle in which 200 locals (100-male,100-female) were trained in tailoring, solar and mobile repairing abilities.

PTI-P backs passage of 26th constitutional amendments

F.P. Report

LOWER DIR: The Pakistan Tahreek Insaf Parliamentary leader and former provincial finance minister Mufar Syed advocate has said the parliament will be strengthened after the passage of 26th constitutional amendments. Talking to local journalists at the Timergara press club, the former lawmaker said the PTI-P fully supported the passage of the amendments. He lauded the role of JUI-F chief Maulana Fazl ur Rehman, PML-N supremo Mian Nawaz Sahrif and PPP chairman Bilawal Bhutto Zardari for passing the 26th amendments. He said that all the credit went to Maulana Fazl ur Rehman as he succeeded to make the government's move a success. He said the passage of 26th amendment was not possible without the support of the JUI-F chief.

Bank Branch: The residents and pensioners of Munda on Friday staged a protest demonstration in front of the National Bank

Branch Munda against the shifting of the branch to Madyan Swat and demanded the NBP high ups to reverse the decision. Speaking on the occasion the residents and pensioners said that they had opened accounts in the NBP Munda branch in 2017 but now the branch was being shifted to the Madyan area of Swat which would create difficulty for them. They demanded of the NBP higher authorities to reverse the decision.

Meanwhile the branch manager Muhammad Daud told Dawn on contact that the bank authorities had issued a notification regarding the shifting due to continuous losses since 2017. He said the bank had been in profit for the last three months. The manager said that they received millions of rupees as remittance from abroad. He said the NBP had a total of 1300 branches across the country; the Munda branch stood at number 373.

Free helmets: The Lower Dir police on Friday distributed free helmets

among dozens of motorcyclists at Timergara on the directives of district police officer Salim Abbas Kulachi. The district traffic in charge Khan Nazar distributed the helmets. Talking to local journalists, Khan Nazar said that most of the youth were killed in road accidents because they did not use helmets. He said that the helmet prevented the riders from head injury. He asked all the bikers to use helmets.

NADRA office: The residents of Talash have complained that despite the approval of higher authorities, services at the Nadra office in Ziarat Talash were not started. Talking to local journalists at Talash here on Friday the area elders said that Talash had more than 200,000 population and the applicants had to visit Nadra offices at Gulabad or Timergara to get their computerized national identity cards and Form-B of their children. They demanded the concerned authorities to start services at the Talash Nadra office to the ease of local residents.

Govt commits to ensure public service delivery

Sahibzada Afridi

KOHAT: Commissioner Kohat Syed Motasim Billah Shah has said, if we have to take our country ahead, everyone must reform themselves and give up the habit of not working adding, for which it is necessary that everyone starts the process of self-accountability on daily basis.

He expressed these views while addressing a Seminar jointly organized by the NAB Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and District Administration Kohat on Friday as a chief guest. The topic of the Seminar was "Good Governance and Improvement in Public Service Delivery".

The seminar beside the Deputy Commissioner Kohat Abdul Akram and Director NAB Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Akhtar Ali

was also addressed by the District Khatib Mufi Shafiullah, Professor Dr. Kaleemullah of KUST and Vice Principal of Iqra Public School Kohat. The speakers openly spoke on the topic and gave useful suggestions. On this occasion, students of government and private schools also presented their speeches and tablu on the menace of corruption.

Deputy Commissioner Kohat in his address while stressing the need to start a Jihad against corruption from the classroom level to uproot corruption, said that the biggest responsibility in this respect falls on the teachers. He also announced the establishment of Reception Desks in all district offices for the convenience and guidance of the public.

Commissioner Kohat

said, unfortunately our goal from the educational institutions is only certificate or position while from the religious education and mosques is the obtaining of Jannat but the need is to focus on our routine affairs and spend our energies on the welfare and well-being of humanity.

He said that institutions alone cannot work to eliminate the scourge of corruption, but everyone will have to play its part in it. He said that there are 8760 hours in a year, but we waste 8000 hours by working only 760 hours, which is a tragedy. He said that corruption is a scourge that neither any civilized nor any constitution allows it. Therefore, to achieve a dignified place in the comity of nations, we must have to say goodbye to the corruption at all costs, he concluded.

Advisor promises to pay students exam fees

F.P. Report

HUB: The central senior leader of Pakistan Peoples Party, Spokesman of President Asif Ali Zardari and Provincial Adviser for Industry and Crafts Mir Ali Hassan Zehri has taken

actions after a school clerk in Zhob lost the examination fees of 878 female students in gambling. Taking notice of the situation, it has been said that the future of the students should not be damaged due to non-payment of fees on time.

He said that the clerk involved in the incident should be really punished so that no one can do such a heinous act in the future. Spokesperson President Asif Ali Zardari and Advisor to Industry and Crafts of Balochistan Mir

Ali Hassan Zehri announced to pay a fee of 25 lakh rupees in a personal capacity. It should be remembered that the school clerk in Zhob had lost lakhs of rupees of the examination fee of hundreds of students in gambling, after which a dire situation had arisen.

Mir Ali Hassan Zehri said that he does not want the educational activities of 878 students to be disturbed, he added that he will take all possible steps for the development and prosperity of Balochistan and for the better education of male and female students. He said that people who play with the future of students do not deserve any kind of concession and strict action will be taken against all the

elements who are part of this heinous act so that such incidents can be discouraged and any individual.

Mir Ali Hassan Zehri said that we will not let our children's future be ruined by incompetence. Meanwhile, in the public and educational circles, the announcement of Mir Ali Hassan Zehri paying the fee in his personal capacity is being highly appreciated. Public and educational circles say that with this good step of Mir Ali Hasan Zehri, there will be positive progress in the promotion of education and this act of his is a clear proof of his love for education and the students of Balochistan that he has secured the future of female students. So this is a good step.

Complexities of Kashmir conflict discussed

F.P. Report

BAGH: Speakers at a conference in Bagh, AJK, focused on the complexities of the Kashmir conflict, offering diverse perspectives on both historical and contemporary challenges.

The youth conference, held at Women's University Bagh under the theme "Indian Military Invasions, Aggression, and Illegal Occupation," was organized by the Institute of Dialogue, Development, and Diplomatic Studies (IDDDs) in collaboration with the Center for Integrated Social Sciences Research and Analysis (CISSRA). The event featured key discussions led by prominent speakers and academics.

Prof. Dr. Hameed Peerzada, Vice-Chancellor of Women's University

Bagh, opened the event by addressing delegates, faculty, and students. He stressed that the Kashmir issue extends beyond territorial claims, involving the fate of 12 million people whose future hinges on peace and stability within the region.

Dr. Waleed Rasool, Director of IDDDs and keynote speaker, presented a compelling research study detailing India's strategic political maneuvers since 1947. He highlighted the land-centric motives behind India's military presence in occupied Jammu and Kashmir, supported by quantitative data illustrating that the primary intent was to secure the territory strategically while neglecting the rights and aspirations of its people. Dr. Waleed Rasool noted that India's reliance on occupational forces reflects its prioritization of control over the territory rather than the welfare of its inhabitants.

Additional Registrar Mr. Zaffar Iqbal underscored the need to grasp India's diplomatic strategies to avoid arbitration and international mediation. He argued that while the pace of the movement may vary, maintaining a clear direction is vital for advancing Kashmir's aspirations.

Dr. Shahid, Head of the International Relations Department, echoed the importance of youth in the Kashmiri movement, urging them to stay informed on regional and global developments. The conference concluded with the presentation of shields and certificates to top paper presenters, recognizing their scholarly contributions that addressed the multifaceted dimensions of the Kashmir dispute.

INP



QUETTA: Students of Don Bosco School Quetta visiting Mehrgarh Museum. INP PHOTO by Ahmed Bhatti

Crackdowns against smoke emitting vehicle F.P. Report

TOBA TEK SINGH: The operations of District Regional Transport Authority Toba Tek Singh, we have taken actions across the district against vehicles emitting smoke, overloading vehicles, overcharging public services vehicles.

In which we checked 2887 vehicles and issued 118 challans for vehicles emitting smoke and impounded 466 vehicles and fined them around Rs 9,23000. Apart from this, we issued 154 challans and impounded 43 vehicles against those doing axle loading while imposing a fine of Rs.44,1000. In this way, 375 challans were issued and 105 vehicles were confiscated and fines of 42,0500 were imposed against those overcharging public services vehicles.

RTA said that all the fine money was deposited in the treasury of the Government of Punjab. Mohsin Riaz said that if transporters continue to violate traffic rules, action will be taken against them.

Govt commits for youth uplift F.P. Report

MARDAN: Member Provincial Assembly (MPA) Tariq Mehmood Aryani has said that physical development and better health, playing time is an important requirement. The youth will shine the name of the country and the nation through sports and education.

These views were expressed while speaking on the occasion of the colorful opening ceremony of the annual sports gala at Iqra School & College Katlang Road Mardan. On this occasion, Assistant Commissioner (AC) Mardan Shagufta Sarwar, Director Islamuddin, Iqra School & College Katlang Road Mardan, Principal Syed Nadeem Shah, Principal Iqra Garhi Kapura Imran Ali Khan, Principal Iqra Canal Road Mardan Khalid and sportsman Ali Gohar Lala-g and others also attended Addressed.

Speaking at the event, Member Provincial Assembly Tariq Mehmood Aryani said that I am extremely happy to know that in my constituency Syed Nadeem Shah Principal Iqra School & College Katlang Road Mardan is running such a big educational institution.

Appreciating the performance of the institution, he said that this institution is playing a key role in every respect. In the end, the principal of the institution Syed Nadeem Shah thanked all the distinguished guests and said that the vision of Iqra School & College Katlang Road Mardan is to provide quality education, moral training, exemplary discipline and co-curricular activities. Will keep trying on every front. He said that his institution will always strive for the all-round development of students and will continue to organize such programs for the promotion of sports.

Condolence reference in honour of Fauzia held

F.P. Report

LARKANA: A condolence meeting was organized by Shaheed Benazir Bhutto Medical University authorities in Chandka Medical College Larkana regarding the sudden death of Professor Dr. Fauzia Kashif. The family members also participated specially, the ceremony started with the recitation of the Holy Quran and prayers were requested for the forgiveness of Professor Dr. Fawzia Kashif and a minute of silence was observed.

On that occasion, Vice Chancellor Professor Dr. Nusrat Shah has been said that she was a sensitive person, she was my PG student, she had a desire to do something, her death is a gap that cannot be filled for the university, her death is not only for her family, but it is sad for the whole university, Professor Fozia Kashif can never be forgotten by us, Asghar Ali Sheikh said that Dr. Fozia was a good daughter, a good sister, a good mother, a good friend and a good wife.

It is a great loss, we have lost a good person today, Prof. Dr. Zamir Ahmed Soomro said that the Dr. Fawzia Kashif was an outstanding student from her student days, she was a socially active person, she was a great inspiration for her students. He lived a successful life in every

respect, Prof. Dr. Shahida Magsi, Prof. Dr. Shaista Hafaz, Prof. Shabnam Gul, Prof. Akliman Abro, PMA President Dr. Dayali Gul, Dr. Niaz Dahar, Dr. Afshan Bhatti and others also addressed the condolence meeting.

Through famous gynecologist Dr. Tarzan Abbasi, Brigadier Dr. Shahla Baqai, Dr. Razia, Dr. Azizalansa and the councilors of the College of Physicians including the Society of Gynecology of Pakistan also expressed their grief, a short documentary was shown, and everyone present in the event was moved.

In the event, Dean Prof. Dr. Muhammad Hanif Sheikh, Prof. Dr. Hakim Ali Abro, Prof. Sher Muhammad Sheikh, Prof. Yasmin Bhatti, Prof. Riyaz Sheikh, Prof. Imdad Ansari, Prof. Muhammad Saleem, Sheikh, Prof. Amanullah Abbasi, Prof. Qaimuddin Sheikh, Prof. Ghulam Abbas, Dr. Mukesh, Dr. Waseem Abbas, Dr. Shahid Soomro, Director Finance officer Muhammad Rafiq Sarki, Admin Officer Wahid Zaman and Security Incharge Sultan Ahmad Bhutto, including faculty, officers and Students participated in large numbers.

Fratricide committed over domestic dispute: In Ladhoo Kalhoro village near Larkana under the jurisdiction of Taluka police station, elder brother Zaheer

Kalhoro has shot and killed his younger brother Sadam son of Roshan Kalhoro, 38 years old.

On the other hand, after receiving the information, the police arrived and took the details of the incident and handed over the body to the relatives after the post-mortem. While talking to the media, the relatives of the deceased youth said that Zaheer had a bitter argument with his mother and brother about some problem at home, which made him angry. The accused shot and killed his younger brother and escaped.

Journalist's residence looted: Unknown thieves escaped from the house of young journalist Shoaib Khuahar near Chandaka Bridge, a famous area of Larkana, with valuable gold jewelry and household goods worth lakhs of rupees. Speaking to the media, the affected journalist protested and said that I was sitting outside the house in connection with work, while a few days ago the accused entered my house and escaped with valuable gold ornaments and household goods worth millions of rupees. I demanded from DIG(P) Larkana and SSP Larkana to return my stolen goods and to arrest the accused and bring them to justice, otherwise a protest movement will be started.

Nationalist politician Shaker Bunerai laid to rest

F.P. Report

BUNER: Nationalist politician and founder of Pakhtun Liberation Front, Shaker Bunerai, was laid to rest at native graveyard in Bajakta village Gagra tehsel Buner district on Friday. Late Shaker Bunerai passed away at the age of 84 on Friday morning in home bed after long illness. Thousands of political, social and religious personalities of the area, people of the village and family members participated in the funeral prayer.

The late Shaker Bunerai had said in a recent interview with this Journalist that he had been associated with nationalist politics

since his student life and participated in the movement against the state of Swat, which he said he regretted. According to him, at that time he became a part of the movement against the state from the platform of NAP and upheld important positions in the party until the leadership of Begum Naseem Wali Khan and was considered one of the most active and important leaders, but later had developed differences with the party. He was confirmed that he had left the ANP, which he was regretting.

Late Shaker Bunerai had said that after separating from the ANP, he formed his own party, the Pakhtun

Liberation Front, and handled the duties of the chair himself, but at the last moment, the Pakhtun Liberation Front was practically inactive and he used to support ANP, but he remained inactive. He just used to comment on politics and current affairs and continued to write analyzes and comments promoting political affiliation with newspapers. But in the last time when we were interviewed, he used to listen to political and journalist colleagues and complained of mental weakness along with physical weakness, most of the time spending in the Hujra and used to walk to his land where he was buried.

Admn imposes Rs68 fine on anti-smog violation

F.P. Report

HAFIZABAD: Officers of different departments imposed fine of Rs. 68 lakh to violations of Anti-Smog SOPs on smoke emitting brick kilns, factories, vehicles and burning of residues of crops while 3 brick kilns demolished, 18 brick kilns sealed and impounded 349 smoke emitting vehicles in the district Hafizabad during a special crackdown launched against smoke emitting vehicles, factories and burning of residues of crops.

This was stated in the meeting of District Anti-Smog committee held to

review Anti-Smog measures under Chairmanship of Deputy Commissioner Abdul Razzaq. Deputy Director Environment Protection Hafizabad Abdul Rauf informed the meeting that anti-smog teams were imposed Rs. 13 lakh fine to owners of bricks kilns, three brick kilns demolished, 18 brick kilns running without Zigzag technology sealed while Rs. 26 lakh fine was imposed on smoke emitting factories and a Rice Shaler was also sealed to spread pollution.

Deputy Director Agriculture Muhammad Yousaf collected Rs. 4 lakh

and 35 thousand fine from farmers to burn remains of paddy crop as well as two separate cases were also registered against landlords Nazir Ahmad and Nasrullah resident of village Dheranki Lalkay.

Secretary Road Transport Aqsa Riaz also imposed Rs. 26 lakh fine to smoke emitting vehicles and impounded 349 vehicles to violate anti-smog SOPs. Addressing the meeting DC directed the antismog squad and quick response teams to strictly monitor both sides of Motorway M-2 and Motorway M-4 for containing spread of smog.

Body of child retrieved from water pipe

F.P. Report

QUETTA: Body of four year old child was retrieved on Friday from the boring pipe of a water supply scheme in Anzergai Karez area of Chaman after 33 hours rescue operation.

According to rescue sources, body of a child namely Matuallah, 04, who had fallen into a boring pipe of a water supply scheme in Anzergai Karez area of Chaman, a city bordering neighbouring country Afghanistan, was

retrieved after 33 hours rescue operation.

Residents of the area said had the rescue teams of Provincial Disaster Management Authority-PDMA, Balochistan reached on time, the boy could have been retrieved alive.



Iranian Consulates in Germany ordered shut

BERLIN (AP): Germany ordered the closure of all three Iranian Consulates in the country in response to the execution of Iranian German prisoner Jamshid Sharmahd, who lived in the United States and was kidnapped in Dubai in 2020 by Iranian security forces. Sharmahd, 69, was put to death in Iran on terrorism charges, the Iranian judiciary said. That followed a 2023 trial that Germany, the US and international rights groups dismissed as a sham. The decision to close the Iranian Consulates in Frankfurt, Hamburg and Munich, announced by Foreign Minister Annalena Baerbock, leaves the Islamic Republic with only its embassy in Berlin. The German Foreign Ministry had already summoned Iran's charge d'affaires to protest against Sharmahd's execution. German Ambassador Markus Potzel also protested to Iranian Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi, before being recalled to Berlin for consultations. Sharmahd was one of several Iranian dissidents abroad in recent years either tricked or kidnapped back to Iran as Tehran began lashing out after the collapse of its 2015 nuclear deal with world powers including Germany. Iran accused Sharmahd, who lived in Glendora, California, of planning a 2008 attack on a mosque that killed 14 people - including five women and a child - and wounded over 200 others, as well as plotting other assaults through the little-known Kingdom Assembly of Iran and its Tondar militant wing. Iran also accused Sharmahd of "disclosing classified information" on

missile sites of Iran's paramilitary Revolutionary Guard during a television program in 2017. His family disputed the allegations and had worked for years to see him freed. Iran pushed back against Germany's protests. Araghchi wrote on social network X that "a German passport does not provide impunity to anyone, let alone a terrorist criminal." He accused Baerbock of "gaslighting" and wrote that "your government is accomplice in the ongoing Israeli genocide." Germany is a staunch ally of Israel and has sharply criticized Iranian attacks on Israel as tensions spiral over the wars in Gaza and Lebanon. The closure of consulates, a diplomatic tool Germany seldom uses, signals a major downgrade to diplomatic relations Baerbock said were "already at more than a low point." Last year, Berlin told Russia to close four of the five consulates it then had in Germany after Moscow set a limit for the number of staff at the German Embassy and related bodies in Russia. Iran's government "knows above all the language of blackmail, threat and violence," Baerbock said. "The latest comments by the Iranian foreign minister, in which he puts the cold-blooded murder of Jamshid Sharmahd in the context of German support for Israel, also speak for themselves." "We repeatedly made unmistakably clear to Tehran that the execution of a German citizen would have serious consequences," said Baerbock, adding that the cases of Germans held in Iran were a "central part" of a meeting she held with

Araghchi in New York a month ago. She said Berlin will continue with "tireless work" to get an unspecified number of other Germans released. EU foreign policy chief Josep Borrell said that "the execution of a European citizen is seriously harming relations between Iran and the European Union." "In view of this appalling development, the European Union will now consider targeted and significant measures," he said in a statement, without elaborating. Baerbock noted that the EU imposed a new set of sanctions in mid-October and that she is pushing for Iran's Revolutionary Guard to be put on a list of terror organizations. Sharmahd had been in Dubai in 2020, trying to travel to India for a business deal involving his software company. He hoped to get a connecting flight despite the coronavirus pandemic disrupting global travel. Sharmahd's family received their last message from him on July 28, 2020. It's unclear how the abduction happened, but tracking data showed that Sharmahd's cellphone traveled south from Dubai to the city of Al Ain on July 29, crossing the border into Oman. On July 30, tracking data showed the phone traveled to the Omani port city of Sohar, where the signal stopped. Two days later, Iran announced it had captured Sharmahd in a "complex operation." The Intelligence Ministry published a photograph of him blindfolded. Germany expelled two Iranian diplomats last year over Sharmahd's death sentence.

US calls on a silent China to use its sway over Russia

WASHINGTON (AP): The US and South Korea have called on China to use its influence over Russia and North Korea to prevent escalation after Pyongyang sent thousands of troops to Russia to aid Moscow's war against Ukraine. Beijing has so far stayed quiet. In a rare meeting earlier this week, three top US diplomats met with China's ambassador to the United States to emphasize US concerns and urge China to use its sway with North Korea to try to curtail the cooperation, according to a State Department official, who spoke on condition of anonymity. Secretary of State Antony Blinken said that the sides had "a robust conversation just this week" and that China knows US expectations are that "they'll use the influence that they have to work to curb these activities."

"But I think this is a demand signal that's coming not just from us, but from countries around the world," he said at a news conference in Washington with Defense Secretary Lloyd Austin and their South Korean counterparts. Liu Pengyu, spokesman for the Chinese Embassy in Washington, said in a statement that China's position on the Ukraine crisis is "consistent and clear." China strives "for peace talks and political settlement of the Ukraine crisis. This position remains unchanged. China will continue to play a constructive role to this end," Liu said. The US says 8,000 North Korean soldiers are in Russia near Ukraine's border and are preparing to help the Kremlin fight against Ukrainian troops in the coming days. China has yet to publicly comment on the move. Beijing has forged a "no limits" partnership with Moscow, and while it has also been a major ally for Pyongyang, experts say Beijing might not approve of the closer military partnership between Russia and North Korea because it sees it as destabilizing in the region. The Russia-North Korea partnership runs contrary to Beijing's goal for a peaceful Korean Peninsula, said Shi Yinhong, an international relations expert at China's Renmin University. Beijing is "aware of the complexity and danger of the situation," Shi said, noting that the "fact that China hasn't said anything yet on the military alliance agreement between North Korea and Russia indicates that China strongly disagrees with it."

Dennis Wilder, senior fellow for the Initiative for US-China Dialogue on global issues at Georgetown University, called Beijing's "radio silence" on North Korea's move "staggering." He said Beijing must find a balance between supporting Moscow and not angering the West, and that Chinese President Xi Jinping might "for his own sake ignore the whole thing." Xi has built a personal relationship with Russian President Vladimir Putin, and "he cannot see Putin fail," Wilder said this week at a panel discussion hosted by the Washington-based think tank Center for Strategic and International Studies. At the same time, Xi cannot anger the Europeans and Americans when his country's economy is struggling, Wilder said. "So he's not going to say anything publicly about this," Wilder said. Victor Cha, Korean chair at the Center for Strategic and International Studies, said at the same panel discussion that for China, "there's probably a combination of a little bit of exasperation, a little bit of panic and a little bit of they don't know what to do with regard to the current situation."

Brussels hopes to advance Ukraine, Moldova entry talks in 2025

BRUSSELS (AFP): The European Commission said it hopes to move entry talks with Ukraine and Moldova to the next stage "as soon as possible" in 2025, as part of a renewed enlargement push faced with the "existential threat" from Russia. In an annual update on the EU enlargement process, the commission also reaffirmed that Georgia's path to joining remained "de facto" halted without a change of course from its ruling party -- accused of steering Tbilisi back into Russia's orbit. Ex-Soviet Ukraine and Moldova opened European Union accession negotiations in June, setting them on a long -- and yet uncertain -- path towards membership that Russia has tried to block.

The commission said the task of screening how far laws in both Ukraine and Moldova comply with EU standards -- and how much work lies ahead -- was "progressing smoothly". Once complete, actual negotiations can begin on 35 subjects, from taxation to environmental policy -- grouped under what are known in enlargement jargon as "clusters". For both Ukraine and Moldova, the commission said it was "looking forward to the opening of negotiations on clusters... as soon as possible in 2025" -- subject to a green light from the EU's 27 member states. For Ukraine, the opening of talks in June marked the beginning of a protracted process that will likely take

many years -- and may never lead to membership. So far, Ukraine has won plaudits for kickstarting a raft of reforms on curbing graft and political interference, even as it battles the Russian invasion. "Ukrainians are fighting two battles at the same time," EU foreign policy chief Josep Borrell told a news conference. "One in the battlefield, a real war, and another striving to push the reforms needed to become member of the European Union." "We will support Ukraine on both fronts," he said. Moldova only narrowly voted in favour of joining the bloc in a referendum this month marked by allegations of interference by Moscow -- casting a shadow over the country's EU aspirations.

Two Mexican journalists shot dead

MEXICO CITY (Reuters): Two Mexican journalists were shot dead in less than 24 hours in western states, according to authorities, as the country faces a flare-up of violence in the region. A Mexican journalist was shot dead in the western state of Colima, the state persecutor's office told Reuters. Her name was Patricia Ramirez, also known by her nickname Paty Bunbury, and she worked as an entertainment reporter, according to the Committee to Protect Journalists (CPJ), a New York-based rights group. It was the second journalist shot dead in less than 24 hours in Mexico, ranked as one of the deadliest countries for journalists by press freedom groups, after the head of an online news outlet in Mexico was killed. The killings marked the first of a journalist under President Claudia Sheinbaum, who took office at the beginning of this month and has pledged to combat violence and crime. Mauricio Cruz was shot dead in the city of Uruapan, in the violence-plagued western state of Michoacan, according to the state prosecutor's office. Another person, who the prosecutor did not identify, was wounded in the shooting. Uruapan is known for brazen crimes such as beheadings stemming from fighting between drugs cartels or face-offs with law enforcement. Cruz's news outlet, Minuto X Minuto Michoacan, posted a tribute to the journalist on its Facebook page featuring his last live video recorded minutes before his death. While the nation has been rocked by a wave of violence, Sheinbaum has followed the work of her predecessor and mentor, former president Andres Manuel Lopez Obrador, stating that her government would not wage a new war on Mexico's drug cartels.



BEIRUT: Children in Lebanon have disrupted sleep, are haunted by nightmares, and struggle with headaches and loss of appetite.

Dozens of North Korean defectors caught by secret police ‘vanish’

SEOUL (Reuters): More than 100 North Koreans have gone missing after being caught by secret police while trying to defect from the isolated country or even for trying to call relatives in South Korea, a Seoul-based human rights group said. The Transitional Justice Working Group (TJWG) released a report detailing patterns of enforced disappearances through its study based on interviews with 62 North Korean escapees in South Korea. Tens of thousands of North Koreans have defected in the decades since the Korean War ended in 1953 with an armistice, with many of those caught or repatriated sent to prison camps or other detention facilities before being released. The group identified 113 people in 66 disappearance cases, including the cases in an archive run with other international organisations, as well as maps depicting transfer routes. Of the 113, 80%, or 90, were arrested inside North Korea and the rest in China or Russia, with about 30% disappearing since leader Kim Jong Un took power

in late 2011. Almost 40% of them went missing after being caught trying to flee the country, while 26% took responsibility for another family member's crime. Nearly 9% were accused of being in touch with those in South Korea or other countries. More than 81% vanished after being transferred to and detained by the Ministry of State Security (MSS), the North's secret police known as "bowibu", according to the report. An interviewee who defected to the South in 2018 from the Chinese border city of Hyesan said his friend was arrested by the MSS while trying to recover a Chinese mobile phone hidden in the mountains, and was now rumoured to have died. "Once (the MSS) finds call records with South Korea, they are considered serious offences," the interviewee was quoted in the report as saying. Kang Jeong-hyun, director of the project, said the report was intended to underscore enforced disappearances committed by the Kim regime as transnational crimes also

involving China and Russia. The report was published just days before the UN Human Rights Council is due to issue its five-yearly Universal Periodic Review on North Korea. The United Nations estimates up to 200,000 people are held in a vast network of gulags run by the MSS, many of them for political reasons. A 2014 UN Commission of Inquiry report said the prisoners faced torture, rape, forced labour, starvation and other inhumane treatment. Pyongyang has long denounced defectors as "human scum", and Kim has further tightened border controls over the past few years. The North's Korea Association for Human Rights Studies this month rejected a UN report on its human rights violations including forced disappearances, calling them "fabrications" and a conspiracy by the West to escalate confrontation and tarnish the country's image. Beijing has denied there are any North Korean defectors in China, instead describing them as illegal economic migrants.

Lebanese family killed in an Israeli strike on their home

BEIRUT (AP): The family WhatsApp group chat buzzed with constant messages. Israel was escalating its airstrikes on villages and towns in southern Lebanon. Everyone was glued to the news. Reda Gharib woke up uncharacteristically early that day, Sept. 23. Living a continent away in Senegal, he scrolled through videos and pictures shared by his sisters and aunts of explosions around their neighborhood in Tyre, Lebanon's ancient coastal city. His aunts decided to leave for Beirut. His father, mother and three sisters had no such plans. Then his father announced to the group that he had received a call from the Israeli military to evacuate or risk their lives. After that, the chat fell silent. Ten minutes later, Gharib called his father. There was no answer. The Gharibs' apartment had been directly hit by an Israeli airstrike. The family had no time to get out. Gharib's father, Ahmed, a retired Lebanese army officer, his mother, Hanan, and his three sisters were all killed. "The whole apartment was gone. It is back to bare

bones. As if there was nothing there," said Gharib, speaking from the Senegalese capital, Dakar, where he has been living since 2020. The Israeli military said it struck a Hezbollah site hiding rocket launchers and missiles. Gharib said his family had no connection to Hezbollah. The direct hit gutted their apartment, while those above and below suffered only damage, suggesting a specific part of the building was targeted. Gharib said it was his family's home. The strike was one of more than 1,600 Israel said it carried out on Sept. 23, the first day of an intensified bombardment of Lebanon it has waged for the past month. More than 500 people were killed that day, a casualty figure not observed in Gaza on a single day until the second week, said Emily Tripp, director of London-based Airwars, a conflict monitoring group. Israel has vowed to cripple Hezbollah to put an end to more than a year of cross-border fire by the Iranian-backed militant group that began the day after Hamas' Oct. 7, 2023, attack triggered the war in Gaza. It

says its strikes are targeting Hezbollah's members and infrastructure. But there are also hundreds of civilians among the more than 2,000 people killed in the bombardment over the past month - often entire families killed in their homes. Since then, the street where the Gharib family lived - an area of shops, residential buildings and offices of international agencies in Tyre's al-Housh district - has been battered with repeated airstrikes and is now deserted. Gharib, 27, a pilot and entrepreneur, moved to Senegal in search of a better future but always planned to return to Lebanon to start a family. He was close to his three sisters, the keeper of their secrets and best friend, he said. Growing up, their father was often away, so he and his mother took charge of family affairs. The last time he visited his family was in May 2023, when his sister Maya, an engineering student, got engaged. She had planned to marry on Oct. 12. But as tensions with Israel grew in September, Gharib's plans to come home for the wedding were uncertain. She told him she would put it

off until he could get there. After the strike, her fiancé, also an army officer, found her body and those of the rest of her family in a hospital morgue in Tyre. "She was not destined to have her wedding. We paraded her as a bride to paradise instead," Gharib said. On the day the wedding was to have taken place he posted pictures of his sister, including her wedding dress. His sister Rachaa, 24, was about to graduate as a dentist and planned to open her own clinic. "She loved life," he said. His youngest sister, Nour, 20, was studying to be a dietitian and prepping to be a personal trainer. Gharib called her the "laughter of the house." There is nothing left of his family now except for a few pictures on his phone and on social media posts. "I am so hurt. But I know the hurt will be hardest when I come to Lebanon," Gharib said. "Not even a picture of them remains hanging on the walls. Their clothes are not there. Their smell is no longer in the house. The house is totally gone." "They took my family and the memories of them."

Mexican fuel flows to Cuba as island faces blackouts

MEXICO CITY (AP): As Cuba grapples with blackouts and a deepening economic crisis, Mexico has sent nearly half a million barrels of crude oil and diesel in just a span of days, oil shipment data provided to The Associated Press showed. It comes at a time when shipments of Russian and Venezuelan oil that long kept the island afloat have largely petered out, leaving Mexico as one of Cuba's few lifelines. "Mexico now is key because Venezuela has dropped its supplies to Cuba, Russian oil it's nowhere to be seen," said Jorge Piñon, senior research fellow at the University of Texas at Austin's Energy Center, which tracks the shipments. "And so today, Mexico's oil deliveries to Cuba are extremely important." Approximately 412,000 barrels of crude oil from Mexico's state-run oil company, Pemex, arrived at the port city of Cienfuegos, according to data compiled by Piñon, who tracks shipments using oil tracking

services and satellite technology. An additional 67,000 barrels of what appears to be diesel were sent and are set to arrive in Santiago de Cuba early next week. The approximately \$31 million in fuel comes on top of at least \$300 million in fuel sent by Mexico to Cuba since the beginning of 2023, Piñon said. While such oil shipments were paused for six months at the height of campaigning for Mexico's presidential election, oil is once again flowing to Cuba under recently inaugurated Mexican President Claudia Sheinbaum. Sheinbaum appeared to confirm the recent shipments to Cuba, but said they were just a small fraction of the 1.6 million to 1.8 million barrels of oil Mexico produces in a day. "We are going to support Cuba," Sheinbaum said at her morning news briefing. "Even if they criticize it, we are going to show solidarity." Cuban authorities did not immediately respond to a request for comment about the oil shipments. The ship-

ment comes at a dire moment in Cuba, where large-scale blackouts left 10 million people - already reeling from a deepening economic crisis - without power for days earlier this month. Cuba's government has faced simmering frustrations and rare protests after it sharply hiked gas prices, further squeezing the pocketbooks of Cubans, who struggle to pay for the most basic food items, like eggs and chicken. The Cuban government blames the US economic embargo for its woes, but Cuba's power grid has been left in disrepair and the government has long failed to invest in alternative energies like solar power, despite a plethora of sunshine. As a result, Cuba's main source of power has been fossil fuels. It long depended on its regional ally Venezuela until aid disappeared as the oil-rich nation fell into crisis. In recent years, Cuba leaned on Russia, which was sending hundreds of millions of dollars in fuel just two years ago. That helped to alleviate

a massive shortfall in Cuba's supplies while simultaneously helping to ease the weight of international sanctions on Russia for its invasion of Ukraine. But much of that support has dried up despite Russian promises to send more aid. A 119,000-barrel shipment of Russian fuel in September was the first seen in months, said Piñon. Cuban Minister of Energy and Mines Vicente de la O Levy said in late October that the island is "in talks" with Russia, Venezuela and leftist ally Colombia, "which are in constant communication with us and are asking us to tell them how they can support us." Still, De la O Levy said in a post on X that the government would only have half of what was needed to keep the lights on during peak hours. While Mexico, a longtime ally of Cuba and fierce critic of US economic sanctions, has pledged to continue to help the island, it remains unclear if the oil being offered is a gift or is being sold at a reduced price.

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Cryptocurrency promoters on X amplify China-aligned disinformation

A group of accounts that regularly promote cryptocurrency-related content on X have amplified messages from Chinese official accounts and a China-linked disinformation operation covertly pushing Beijing's propaganda toward Western social media users known as "Spamouflage". Spamouflage accounts are bots pretending to be authentic users that promote narratives that align with Beijing's talking points issues, such as the COVID-19 pandemic, China's human rights record, the war in Ukraine and the conflict in Gaza.

The cryptocurrency accounts were discovered by a joint investigation between VOA Mandarin and DoubleThink Lab, a Taiwan-based social media analytics firm. DoubleThink Lab's analysis uncovered 1,153 accounts that primarily repost news and promotions about cryptocurrency and are likely bots deployed by engagement boosting services to raise their clients' visibility on social media. The findings suggest that some official Chinese X accounts and the Spamouflage operation have been using the same amplification services, which further indicate the link between the Chinese state and Spamouflage. Beijing has repeatedly denied any attempts to spread disinformation in the United States and other countries. A review of the accounts in the VOA-DTL investigation shows that the majority of the posts were about cryptocurrency. Users regularly repost content from some of the biggest cryptocurrency accounts on X, such as ChainGPT and LondonRealTV, which belongs to British podcaster Brian Rose.

But these accounts have also shared content from at least 17 Spamouflage accounts that VOA and DTL have been tracking. VOA recently reported on Spamouflage networks' adoption of antisemitic tropes and conspiracy theories. Spamouflage was first detected by the US-based social media analytic firm Graphika, who coined the name because the operation's political posts were interspersed with innocuous but spam-like content such as TikTok videos and scenery photographs that camouflage the operation's goal of influencing public opinions. All cryptocurrency accounts have reposted content from a Spamouflage account named "Watermelon cloth" at least once. A review of the account revealed that "Watermelon cloth" regularly posted content critical of social inequalities in the United States, the Ukrainian and Israeli governments, and praised China's economic achievements and leadership role in solving international issues. In one post, the account peddled the conspiracy theory that Washington was developing biological weapons in Ukraine. "The outbreak of the Russo-Ukrainian war brought out an 'unspeakable secret' in the United States. US biological laboratory in Ukraine exposed," the post said. X recently suspended Watermelon cloth's account.

Since Watermelon cloth's first posting in March 2023, its content has been reposted nearly 2,600 times, half of which were by the cryptocurrency accounts. Most of the remaining reposts were either by Spamouflage or other botlike accounts, according to data collected by DoubleThink Lab. The investigation also found that the cryptocurrency accounts' amplification on average almost tripled the view number of a post. All 1,153 cryptocurrency accounts have demonstrated patterns that strongly suggest they are bots instead of human users. They were created in batches on specific dates. On April 6 alone, 152 of them were registered on X. Over 99% of their content were reposts. A study of their repost behaviors on September 24 shows that all the reposts took place within the first hour after the original content was posted. Within each wave of reposts, all took place within six seconds, an indication of coordinated action. At least one such account offered engagement boosting services in its bio with two Telegram links for interested customers. VOA Mandarin contacted the service seller through the links but did not receive a response.

The cryptocurrency group has also promoted posts from Chinese official accounts, including several that belong to Chinese local governments, state media and at least one Chinese diplomat. The Jinan International Communication Center was the third most amplified account whose posts the cryptocurrency groups have shared. Its content was reposted over 2,200 times. The Jinan International Communication Center was established in 2022 to promote the history and culture of Jinan, capital of the Shandong province in Eastern China, to the rest of the world as part of Beijing's "Tell China's Story Well" propaganda initiative. A local state media account boasted in an article last year that Jinan was the third most influential Chinese city on X, which was then called Twitter.

Other Chinese cities, including Xiamen and Ningbo, and provinces, such as Anhui and Jilin, had their official accounts amplified by the cryptocurrency group. Other amplified accounts include Xi's Moments, a state media project propagating Chinese leader Xi Jinping's speeches and official activities; China Retold, a media group organized by pro-Beijing politicians in Hong Kong; and the English-language state-owned newspaper China Daily. Zhang Heqing, a cultural counselor at the Chinese Embassy in Pakistan, was the sole Chinese diplomat whose posts were promoted by the cryptocurrency group. DoubleThink Lab wrote in an analysis of the data and findings that Chinese official accounts and the Spamouflage operation have "likely" used the same content boosting services, which explains why they were amplified by the same group of cryptocurrency accounts. The Chinese Embassy in Washington, D.C., declined to answer specific questions about what appears to be a connection between the cryptocurrency group, Chinese official accounts and Spamouflage. But in a written statement, spokesperson Liu Pengyu rejected the notion that China has used disinformation campaigns to influence social media users in the US "Such allegations are full of malicious speculations against China, which China firmly opposes," the statement said.

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China's watching US election

Simone McCarthy

THE winner of the US presidential election could have a sweeping impact on the contentious relationship between the world's two largest economies and rival powers. But in China, where election news is filtered through heavily censored state and social media, the focus has been more on spectacle than substance - with a sense that no matter who wins, the tensions of the US-China relationship will remain. "To us ordinary Chinese people, whoever becomes the US president, whether it's candidate A or candidate B, it is all the same," Beijing resident Li Shuo told CNN in the lead-up to polls opening.

Part of the reason for that may well be a consensus in China - from policymakers down to regular citizens - that the die is cast for a US administration that wants to constrain China's rise on the global stage, regardless of whether Vice President Kamala Harris or former president Donald Trump wins. Trump's last term saw the Republican slap tariffs on hundreds of billions worth of Chinese goods, launch a campaign against Chinese telecoms giant Huawei and use racist language to describe the virus that causes Covid-19, which was first identified in China.

The past four years under President Joe Biden have seen a tone shift and effort to stabilize communication. But US concern about China's threat to its national security has only deepened, with Biden targeting Chinese tech industries with investment and export controls, as well as tariffs, while also appearing to sidestep longstanding US policy in how he has voiced support for Taiwan - a "red line" issue in the relationship with Beijing, which claims the self-ruling island democracy as its own. Meanwhile, people in China have seen their economic prospects dim as the country has struggled to fully rebound following its stringent pandemic controls amid a wider slowdown and property market crisis, among other challenges.

So, while the presidential campaigns are still playing across China's daily news coverage and online discussions, interest in the candidates and their policies appears muted compared with past US elections. "(It) doesn't matter who it is (that wins)," one social media user wrote in a popular comment on China's X-like platform Weibo. "Their containment of China won't ease."

As the campaigns unfolded over recent months, Beijing's state media has honed in on social discord and polarization in the US. In recent days, the top post under the "US election" hashtag on Weibo has been about American concerns over potential post-election violence. The post, by an arm of state broadcaster CCTV, cites survey data from US media.

A recent cartoon from state-owned newspaper China Daily circulated in domestic media showed the Statue of Liberty being crushed in the jaws of a dragon labeled "political violence." "All walks of life in the United States are highly nervous, and public opinion is in turmoil," reporters from state-run news agency Xinhua wrote in a recent dispatch, which also noted that "as political polarization and divisions in public opinion intensified in this year's US election, political violence has also intensified."

A magazine affiliated with Xinhua has alternately portrayed the elections as "lacking hope," being ultimately decided by "invisible forces" of power, like Wall Street. Some nationalist bloggers have published videos and posts at times gleefully playing up what they describe as the potential for a post-election American "civil war" - rhetoric echoed in chatter on social media platform Weibo, which is heavily censored and largely dominated by nationalist voices.

While picking up genuine concerns reported by American and international media in what has been a contentious and violent US election cycle, the coverage and conversation appears geared to telegraph the superiority of China's own political system. There, China's ruling Communist Party has an iron grip on political power and discourse. But despite the coverage, many in China have also keenly observed the democratic process - and pointed out the contrast to their own.

"There's no perfect system, but at least they allow people to question them,"

one social media user said on Weibo. Both Harris and Trump have been hot topics on Chinese social media platforms.

Harris appeared to be relatively unknown to Chinese social media users prior to becoming the Democratic candidate after Biden's July withdrawal from the race. Since then, many posts and videos on TikTok's sister video app Douyin have mocked the vice president, for example picking on her laugh - in line with what is often a chauvinistic tone on China's social media platforms and echoing comments made by Trump himself.

Some posted clips of Harris' speeches have a positive spin, however. Those point to her middle-class background and rise to the second-highest American office, a contrast to today's China where the top echelons are stacked with men who often hail from politically elite families. "This is a true ordinary person's story," read one comment with hundreds of likes posted under a video with a clip of a recent Harris speech.

Trump has at times captured tongue-in-cheek admiration across the Chinese internet. As president he earned the nickname Chuan Janguo, or "Trump, the (Chinese) nation builder" - a quip to suggest his isolationist foreign policy and divisive domestic agenda were helping Beijing to overtake Washington on the global stage. But after the tumult of the past eight years, Trump fever appears to have cooled.

"People are not optimistic about these two candidates ... as their image and abilities can't compare to those of past figures," said Wu Xinbo, director of the Center for American Studies at Shanghai's Fudan University. That's one reason why the level of Chinese public interest in this election appears lower than in the previous two votes, he said. "The second, and perhaps more important reason, is that many believe that regardless of who gets elected, US-China relations won't improve anyway," Wu told CNN. "This is also a significant backdrop."

Whoever wins the US race, Communist Party leaders likely expect there will be little improvement in tense ties, analysts said.

"Looking to the future, regardless of whether Harris or Trump becomes the next US president, the continuity in US policy toward China will almost certainly outweigh any potential major shifts," said Shi Yinhong, an international relations professor at Renmin University in Beijing.

Beijing is careful not to directly comment on any views of the election, but likely sees Trump as bringing more uncertainty - and thus risk - into the relationship. The former president has threatened upwards of 60% tariffs on all imports from China and is known for his volatile foreign policy. But Beijing could see benefit in that if it weakens US overseas partnerships, observers say. The Biden administration has sought to work more closely with allies in Europe and Asia to counter what it sees as the "most serious long-term challenge to the international order" - China, while Trump has repeatedly questioned traditional US alliances.

Chinese leaders will also be closely watching how a Trump presidency would handle the war in Ukraine - with Beijing likely wary of him taking steps to mend US relations with Russia and President Vladimir Putin, a critical ally for Chinese leader Xi Jinping on the global stage. The end of that war - which Trump has claimed he can quickly achieve - would also likely bring more US focus back to Asia-Pacific, which China doesn't want to see. But Trump is still seen in Beijing's policy circles as likely to drive a more fractious relationship with China than Harris would.

The vice president is expected to tread a similar path to that laid by Biden - maintaining pressure on China to limit the development of its technology and military, but trying to keep some exchange and dialogue open. "That means it will be a mixture of tension, friction, and some limited degree of exchanges and cooperation ... (while) Trump would present greater challenges to US-China relations. The main issue is that (Trump) handles US-China relations in an unconventional manner, lacking a sense of proportion and boundaries," said Wu in Shanghai. "The most you can say is that the challenges to the relationship will vary depending on who is in office."

CNN

What Venezuela's turn away from democracy means for US migration

Tirana Hassan

IN September, I went to the infamous Darién Gap. Over the last year and a half, more than 700,000 people have traversed this unforgiving slice of jungle that divides Colombia from Panama. It is so riddled with violence and rape that women there told me they have to travel with the morning-after pill.

About 68% of people crossing there are Venezuelans, heading north to seek safety. They are among the nearly 8 million who have fled their country in the last decade. One family I met at the gap had fled Venezuela years ago and resettled in Colombia, where the parents had jobs and the children attended school and received medical care. Before the Venezuelan presidential elections in July, it seemed things were looking up and the country might return to democracy. Buoyed by this possibility, the family sold everything they had in Colombia and traveled back home to cast their votes. "We thought things were going to change," the father told me.

They had reason to be hopeful. In October last year, the administration of President Nicolás Maduro and a coalition of opposition parties agreed to terms for free and fair elections in what was known as the Barbados Agreement. The day after the deal, the United States government offered to withdraw sanctions on Venezuelan oil, gas, sovereign bonds and gold. But Maduro reneged on the agreement and instead cracked down on his critics, detaining political opponents and human rights defenders, disqualifying opposition candidates and prosecuting critics on politically motivated charges. In January, the US restored some sanctions. Venezuela retaliated by refusing deportation flights from the US and Mexico.

Despite the fears leading up to the elections, 60% of registered Venezuelans turned out to vote. But hours after polls closed, the electoral council declared Maduro the winner and refused to release tally sheets and conduct audits required by law. A United Nations expert panel and the Carter Center questioned the result. Both verified that tally sheets published by the opposition were reliable, while the Carter Center noted that they proved that an opposition candidate, Edmundo González Urrutia, had won the election by a considerable margin.

Citizens organized mass protests across the country and were met with a brutal crackdown. Authorities and pro-government armed groups known as "colectivos" persecuted, killed and detained dissidents, protesters and even bystanders, some of them teenagers. Fearing for their lives, the members of the family I met were forced to flee their country again. Their journey took them from Caracas to Necoclí in Colombia, where they were living on the beach under makeshift tents that barely protected them from inclement weather. They

were stranded, trying to raise the \$350 per adult and \$150 per child charged by smugglers to cross the Darién Gap. "I have great trust in my God. But I don't know if he abandoned us," the father told me.

The US offer to soften sanctions to support the Barbados Agreement and restore rule of law in Venezuela was an important effort. Now that the transition appears to have failed, the US should do more to ensure respect for the will of the Venezuelan people, such as imposing fresh sanctions on Maduro's closest allies, including business people who support him, and using its diplomatic leverage over Cuba, which provides intelligence to Venezuela's repressive machinery. The US should also uphold the rights of migrants and asylum seekers fleeing the crisis in Venezuela. Instead, it has put Venezuelans in further danger and undercut their access to asylum. Washington has pressed Mexico and other governments to impose visa requirements, making it harder for Venezuelans fleeing their country to fly to Central or North America. For many, the only option left has been to travel by land - often across Colombia toward Central America, through the perilous Darién Gap.

Surveys indicate that hundreds of thousands more Venezuelans are considering leaving the country. The US should urgently reverse restrictions that force migrants into dangerous routes, stop outsourcing its migration controls to Mexico, Panama and other states with less capacity to consider refugee claims fairly, and avoid future deportations to countries where asylum seekers are likely to face abuse. In addition, it could demonstrate its commitment to the Venezuelan people by increasing the number of refugee resettlement grants to them. In fiscal year 2024, it admitted close to 13,000 Venezuelans and just over 25,000 people total from Latin America and the Caribbean, significantly less than the year's cap for the region. At the regional level, Washington should continue to establish and expand safe-mobility offices, which review resettlement requests in Colombia, Costa Rica, Ecuador and Guatemala and allow those eligible to fly to the US and other countries in a safe and orderly manner. The US government should also work with Latin American countries to create and strengthen legal pathways for protection, helping states in the region build capacity to process asylum claims and integrate Venezuelans.

The father of the family I interviewed in the Darién Gap told me that, despite looking for a "safe haven" in the US, they are holding on to the hope they can return home one day - to a country where their children can enjoy the safety and freedoms they did growing up. "I would like to go back to my Venezuela," he said.

The Los Angeles Times

Labour's plot to surrender Brexit is advancing

David Frost

LAST month, scientists told us they had discovered a mysterious "third state of existence" between life and death, in which cells can carry on existence for a time even when the organism is already dead. Could it be that here we have found the inspiration for Rachel Reeves's Budget?

For her Budget and her government have in their first hundred days killed off the British economic model as we know it. Such dynamism as we possess in future will come from habit and instinctual loyalty to making the country work. But the motor behind it is passing away.

The new driving force now is one which will make us an economy more like France, Germany, or Italy. However well they have done in the past, all these core European countries now suffer from a mix of similar difficulties: high taxation funding high benefits, notably pensions, as well as public serv-

ices; ossified employment markets; dated industrial structures and a huge bias against innovation; and of course high energy costs.

And so, according to the IMF, in 1995 these three economies collectively had a GDP per head of about 73 per cent of that of the United States. By 2018, that is, just before the pandemic collapse and recovery, that figure was down to 63 per cent, and it continues to fall. That's why, as I wrote yesterday, they shouldn't be benchmarks for this country.

The UK's performance has hardly been stellar but it has been better. In 1995 our GDP per head was 79 per cent of the US. In 2018 it was 78 per cent. The UK model, of something approaching US style innovativeness and flexibility, coupled with a somewhat less generous European style welfare state, did broadly keep up with the Americans. British voters could see this difference and it was one of the underlying

factors behind the vote to leave the EU in 2016. For all our economic policy-making failings thereafter, Brexit still mattered. Tory politicians had at least to pay lip service to "doing things differently" to continental Europe, and some, like Jacob Rees-Mogg, Liz Truss, and dare I say it, myself, actually meant it.

And it is still true. Making a success of Brexit depends on marking out a different path to core Europe, one of deregulation, of liberalisation, and of support for innovation; and of benchmarking ourselves against the best economies in the whole world, not just our nearest neighbours. That could now be happening if the Conservative ministers in power for the last couple of years had not proved so bad at politics as well as economics.

Instead Britain is now having a disaster inflicted upon it. This Labour govern-

ment is doing the exact opposite of what's necessary. Spending is now stuck at 44-45 per cent of GDP, five points higher than before the pandemic, and ten points higher than Blair's first term. Taxation is the highest it has ever been. And to judge by the Cabinet arguments before the Budget, all the pressure will be to push those numbers up in future.

We are on the way to those same core Europe tax and spend levels, with all the pathologies that come with them, putting us into a different world from the successful Europeans like Poland, let alone boom countries like Australia or Israel.

But tax and spend is not the only disaster. Look at everything else the government has done. It's unravelling all the employment law flexibilities introduced since 2010 and bringing back trade union rights. It's renationalising the railways. It's gum-

ming up the rental market even further. It's regulating the Premier League, one of our most successful industries. It's bringing in European-style corporatist bodies, Great British Energy or the so-called National Wealth Fund, whose job is "to catalyse investment into clean energy industries and support the delivery of the new Industrial Strategy", whatever that means. It will inevitably get captured by the green blob and deliver little of value to the broader economy.

The Government is doing all this, of course, because its leading members are believers in a socialist, redistributist, statist mentality. But it is also doing it because it's still mesmerised by Europe. It still thinks European countries hold the Holy Grail for economic policy-making. It likes European-style regulation. So it's preparing the ground for alignment with the EU on food and animal health, on product standards,

on asylum, and anything else it can get away with. Labour know they can't reinjoin now, but they want the task, when it comes, to seem as easy and natural as possible.

The impending decline this will cause is already sinking in. Labour's approval rates are collapsing. Voters sense that Starmer and Reeves are totally at sea. After all, successful governments get a grip in their first hundred days. Starmer has shown he has no capacity to steer the Whitehall machine or even run his own No 10. He and Reeves are now blithely destroying what's left of the free-market motor that, fairly successfully, drove the British economy. Yet they are quite incapable of understanding what they are doing or of changing course, and soon the consequences will become obvious. The truth is this Government has already failed. They just don't know it yet.

The Telegraph

OBR’s damning Budget verdict gives Tories ammunition for years

SELDOM has a budget come apart so quickly. It's not that Rachel Reeves will be forced to take farms out of her new inheritance tax scheme, although that may well come. Nor will Labour rebels force her to abandon any tax rises: a government with a majority as large as Keir Starmer's can do anything it wants. But her main claims - to be boosting growth, repairing the public finances and getting Britain working again - have been methodically and mercilessly shredded. The markets, it seems, have noticed.

The Chancellor's adversary is not anyone in the Conservative Party but Richard Hughes, a softly spoken American who runs the Office for Budget Responsibility (OBR). He has put each of her main arguments to the test. What will all of this borrow-and-spend really accomplish? Will those "working people" be better off? By the end of the 200-page report on her Budget, not much remains of the arguments with which Starmer and Reeves fought the last election.

Let's start with the most obvious: that "working people" don't suffer from an increase in employers' National Insurance. Companies, of course, cannot pay tax. Only people can. The OBR report doesn't just explain this but gives the breakdown: 75 per cent of this "employers' National Insurance" will be borne by workers in the form of lower wages and the rest in higher prices.

Once, this would have been a point made to a half-empty auditorium by a lonely free-market economist. Now, thanks to the OBR, it's mainstream. Reeves is

now being asked by national broadcasters whether workers will bear the cost of the National Insurance rise. She's having to accept that they will. This will likely be just the start of the tough questions she'll have to answer as the rest of the OBR report sinks in.

During the election, we were told that the first of Labour's five missions was to "secure the high-growth sustained growth in the G7". But the OBR finds no Reeves growth effect: not by the next election anyway. But it gets worse. Net migration is forecast to settle at an annual 350,000, equivalent to a city the size of Sunderland every year for the foreseeable. So GDP per capita will grow by a desultory of 1.2 per cent a year, on average, for the rest of the decade. The United States, by comparison, is expected to manage 1.7 per cent.

All this might be easier to swallow if accompanied by fiscal or social repair. One of Starmer's most ambitious and laudable goals is commitment to taking the employment rate to an all-time high of 80 per cent. This would need serious welfare reform and an end to the appalling practice of writing off thousands of people every day as long-term sick. But it seems this has also been abandoned.

Instead, tax rises have been concentrated on the low-paid. This will hit the overall employment rate, now forecast to go down even faster than before. To govern is to choose, and Reeves has gone for tax over employment. It will also be hard for the

Fraser Nelson

Chancellor to keep talking about putting public finances "on a sustainable footing" now that the OBR has shown that she is borrowing £140?billion more than the Tories had planned to. In today's debt markets, such fiscal irresponsibility carries a cost.

The OBR spells it out: her Budget will push up borrowing costs, bank rates and inflation - meaning she'll have to pay £5.5?billion in higher debt interest alone. It rises to £10?billion when factoring other the effects of raising rates.

The OBR even spells out a Reeves effect on mortgages. They'll go up if (as it explains) her debt splurge nudges up Bank of England rates. The impact sounds small, at a quarter-percentage point, but works out at £450 a year for the average borrower. Add the National Insurance increase and it leaves disposable incomes even lower than it had previously forecast. At this point, it starts to become hard to see who is being helped in this Budget.

But all such difficult decisions, Reeves argues, are necessary to give business the confidence to invest after years of Tory chaos. Here, the OBR is perhaps the most devastating: her tax take and state spending levels are so high as to "crowd out some private investment in an economy with little spare capacity." And not by a trivial amount, either: the biggest factor in the OBR's growth downgrade for 2029 is its fear that there will be less private investment than originally thought.

This is the precise opposite of what Reeves had promised. So

where does this leave us? For months, the Chancellor has pledged to take tough decisions to steady the financial ship, going all-out for growth.

Now, we see the pound falling and gilt yields shooting up towards Liz Truss levels as markets adjust for the possibility that, all along, there never really was a plan. Reeves might say (as Rishi Sunak sometimes did) that the OBR is too pessimistic. But she has gone out of her way to defer to its judgment, passing laws to increase its powers and using it as a stick with which to beat the Tories.

In government, the Tory ministers cursed the OBR's refusal to go along with their cheerful predictions. But now, the OBR has just given the Conservatives as much ammunition as they could ask for to point out flaws in Reeves's borrow-and-spend agenda. Its verdict should also give Labour early warning of economic failure - and give it a chance to start reforming.

The OBR's warning about "crowding out" (a phrase it repeats 16 times) makes a bigger point: more workers are needed to grow the economy. Perhaps four million potential workers are ready to come off benefits with the right package. Hammering the low-paid with taxes may turn out not to be the package. As Liz Kendall points out, Britain won't start growing again if people won't start working again: without welfare reform, there can be no serious growth. So Labour might change course. But if it doesn't, then the job of the new Conservative leader - who will be chosen by the party on Saturday - has just got a lot easier.

Trump is already poisoning trust in yet another US election

IF God was the vote counter, Donald Trump says he'd win in a landslide. The Republican nominee suggested on Thursday that divine intervention in next week's election would reveal him as the rightful winner of even Democratic bastions like California.

On one level, Trump's comment shows how his false election fraud claims have entered the outer realms of absurdity. But this goes beyond hyperbole. Trump - who altered reality for tens of millions of Americans by claiming he was cheated out of power four years ago - is creating a sinister threat to the 2024 election and spinning a legacy of fractured trust that could taint presidential votes long after he's left the stage. The election fraud claims that Trump most notably supercharged in 2020 to salvage his humiliation at losing to Joe Biden are already at high intensity this year. After laying out the darkest closing argument in modern American history, Trump is now increasingly turning to poisoning public confidence in the election. In New Mexico on Thursday, he falsely claimed the state was actually in his column in 2016 and 2020. "I believe we won it twice," he said. "If we could bring God down from heaven and he'd be the vote counter, we'd win this, we'd win California, we'd win a lot of states. ... You have just got to keep the votes honest."

In reality, Trump lost New Mexico twice, by 8 and 11 points, and his claims he could win Democratic strongholds like California but for vote fraud are wildly off base. But they are part of a clear and deliberate strategy that is unfolding before the eyes of millions of voters to create an impression that Tuesday's election will be fraudulent. This might seed ground for legal challenges if Trump loses, and it also serves to crank up fury among his supporters already primed by past false fraud claims. Trump is also working in conjunction with the conservative media machine to create an impression that his victory is a certainty and that a win for Vice President Kamala Harris and Democrats can only be the result of fraud. The ex-president's increasing efforts to shatter the credibility of the 2024 election, as an apparent Plan B if he loses, coincide with a widening effort by GOP officials and "Make America Great Again" activists to position to undermine any Harris victory in courts, local election jurisdictions and even in state legislatures.

Comprehensive recent reporting by CNN has detailed these schemes. For instance, an investigation published on Thursday showed that some of the same activists who tried to overturn Biden's victory in 2020 are building a step-by-step plan to undermine the results if Trump falls short again. Trump and Republican National Committee officials have increasingly floated claims about potential issues with mail-in ballots in Pennsylvania.

House Freedom Caucus Chairman Andy Harris, a Maryland Republican, said that "it makes a lot of sense" to allocate North Carolina's electoral voters before votes are tallied because of the risk that the aftermath of Hurricane Helene could make it hard for some voters to cast ballots. The congressman later said the comment was taken out of context, but it revived fears that some GOP state legislatures - acting on hyped-up claims of fraud or other reasoning - could ignore the will of voters and award election victories to Trump. Republicans have also made extensive efforts, including in the House of Representatives, to highlight what experts say is the almost non-existent problem of voting by non-citizens. In one case this week, Virginia Gov. Glenn Youngkin pushed an 11th-hour effort to remove 1,600 suspected non-citizens from the rolls despite concerns the move will sweep up and disenfranchise some American citizens. A divided US Supreme Court allowed it.

CNN reported Thursday that a misinformation microphone wielded by X

Stephen Collinson

owner and Trump supporter Elon Musk has become impossible for election officials in key battleground states to counter. This catalogue of challenges to the fairness of the 2024 election, taken together with Trump's increasing, bellicose claims of corruption, is creating a surreal new reality, given that the United States is the world's most important democracy and has long been regarded by outsiders as the gold standard of self-governance. There is nothing unusual about extensive litigation in election season by both parties, which maintain armies of lawyers to challenge voting arrangements, counting practices and even results

about our system. But again, we will have a free and fair, safe and secure election, in Pennsylvania, and the will of the people will be respected and protected." Trump's assaults on the probity of American elections have made clear that a cycle of pre-election attempts to crush public confidence in the results has become as much of a presidential election tradition as primary season, the conventions and the historic moment when TV networks call the eventual winner.

The ex-president's attempts to instill doubt in the system could also have a long-lasting legacy. Many polls show declining trust in the election system - and a new survey from CNN this week showed Trump's

Trump's intentions shone through a Truth Social post on Thursday in which he seized on incidents in Pennsylvania to claim that the results in the crucial swing state are fraudulent. The cases concern a potential irregularity in Lancaster County involving around 2,500 voter registration forms. In York County, election officials have declined more than 700 "questionable" voter registration applications and referred them to the district attorney's office for investigation, CNN's Danny Freeman reported on Thursday.

every election cycle. The 2000 election between then-Vice President Al Gore and Texas Gov. George W. Bush caused weeks of bitter legal fights over the close result in Florida, which was eventually resolved in the 43rd president's favor by the US Supreme Court. Gore conceded that election, thereby guaranteeing an uncontested transfer of presidential power - a step Trump refused to take four years ago.

Declining to accept the result of elections has not exclusively been a Republican transgression. Former Georgia gubernatorial candidate Stacey Abrams, for instance, refused to concede her race against Republican Brian Kemp in 2018, citing voter suppression allegations, though the Democrat did accept her rival was elected. But it is new to have a major presidential candidate slamming the fairness and legality of successive elections ahead of time and warning they will only accept results based on their arbitrary and often evidence-free evaluations of fairness. Trump's intentions shone through a Truth Social post on Thursday in which he seized on incidents in Pennsylvania to claim that the results in the crucial swing state are fraudulent. The cases concern a potential irregularity in Lancaster County involving around 2,500 voter registration forms. In York County, election officials have declined more than 700 "questionable" voter registration applications and referred them to the district attorney's office for investigation, CNN's Danny Freeman reported on Thursday.

Investigations are still pending and it's possible fraud could be unearthed. But Trump is already off and running without waiting for the facts. "We caught them cheating big in Pennsylvania. Must announce and prosecute, now! This is a criminal violation of the law. stop voter fraud!!" Trump wrote. "We are on them all this time! Who would have ever thought that our Country is so CORRUPT?" Incidents in Pennsylvania show how the vortex of conspiracy theories created by Trump about US elections become self-fulfilling.

The alleged violations were discovered, which ought to underline how secure American voting really is. But instead, every new glitch becomes grist for yet another false claim. Pennsylvania Gov. Josh Shapiro, a Democrat, told CNN's Kaitlan Collins on Wednesday that Trump's claims of cheating in the commonwealth were "more of the same" from the ex-president. "Donald Trump wants to, again, use the same playbook, where he tries to create chaos and stoke division and fear,

antics have left the electorate jaundiced about his likely conduct next week. Just 30% of registered voters think Trump would accept the results of the election and concede if he loses, while 73% say that Harris would accept an election loss. However, even if Americans may have concerns about their votes being counted, it's not stopping them from casting ballots. More than 60 million Americans have already voted ahead of Tuesday's election. And for all the tumult caused by Trump's refusal to admit defeat and attempts to steal power after the 2020 election, the system did, eventually, ensure that the rightful winner of the presidency ended up in the Oval Office. The ex-president's persistent and baseless claims of widespread fraud were thrown out by multiple courts at all levels including the Supreme Court.

Yet the longevity of a democracy rests on retaining the trust of the people. And if one of the candidates in a presidential election won't accept that principle, the essential bargain between the governed and those who govern, which lies at the heart of the republic, is at risk. For all America's deep cultural and ideological divides, there was always a sense that elections could provide at least a temporary resolution to national disputes. That mythical trust in democracy was partially fractured in 2020 simply because Trump refused to admit defeat and then laid the foundation of his subsequent presidential campaign on the false premise that he won.

Gabriel Sterling, the Republican chief operating officer for Georgia's secretary of state office, became a hero of democracy in 2020 with his clear denunciations of false fraud claims by the Trump campaign in his state. He is already warning that Americans need to recommit to bedrock values before next week's election.

"We have had a history of over 200 years of the person who comes up short shaking the hand of the person who won and moving on," Sterling told CNN's Jake Tapper on Thursday. One side, in perhaps the most fraught and portentous election in modern US history, will face this painful choice whenever this year's result becomes clear. Trump has already signaled he's unlikely to admit defeat whatever happens. And Harris, if she loses, will face the prospect of conceding to a rival she has called a fascist. But such dilemmas represent the essence of democracy. "We are going to have the most secure election in American history across the country, Georgia included," Sterling said. "We have to learn to accept outcomes."

Ethiopia’s drone massacres demand that US and world pay attention

IT was 7 a.m. on a Friday morning when a Turkish-made drone controlled by government forces slammed into a health center in the Ethiopian villages in Gojjam, in the Amhara region of Africa's second-most populous nation. Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed's regime says it's targeting Fano rebels in this northern region, but on this day the dead were civilians, including a nine-year-old child and a 70-year-old village elder.

This was one of the latest in a series of drone strikes that have shaken the Amhara Region this autumn - yet have been largely ignored by the outside world. Credible reports from the Ethiopian Human Rights Commission, the BBC and others say aerial attacks since the start of October have killed more than 200 civilians. Just four days after the health center was attacked, Fano leaders said a fresh round of attacks in different towns in Gojjam occurred, in and around an elementary school, when five separate drone strikes reportedly killed at least 13 farmers. Other attacks have also targeted schools as well as crowded marketplaces and civilian homes.

The October onslaught by forces loyal to Abiy - who incongruously won the Nobel Peace Prize in 2019 before intensifying ethnic and regional conflict across Ethiopia - is just part of an offensive in Amhara region that the prime minister has ominously dubbed "the final operation." It has also included door-to-door raids and targeted killings in a so far unsuccessful effort to push back the popular mass resistance led by Fano.

"The Ethiopian armed forces' brutal killings of civilians in

Amhara undercut government claims that it's trying to bring law and order to the region," the deputy Africa director of Human Rights Watch, Laetitia Bader, said earlier this year, before the violence intensified. "Since fighting began between federal forces and the Fano militia, civilians are once again bearing the brunt of an abusive army operating with impunity." The human rights abuses in Amhara Region are appalling, and so is the sound of silence from most of the world community, distracted instead by its attention to bloody conflicts from the Middle East to elsewhere in Africa while largely ignoring the ongoing slaughter in Ethiopia.

What greatly compounds this tragedy is that Abiy's campaign of ethnic cleansing, including his considerable drone purchases from a Turkish manufacturer, is most likely funded in part by the recent large rescue package from the International Monetary Fund and other Western aid. Those dollars were intended to stabilize Ethiopia not only by shoring up its troubled economy but creating the conditions for a lasting peace. Instead, it's already clear that this summer's four-year, \$3.4 billion bailout approved by the IMF, along with another \$1.5 billion in infrastructure aid from the World Bank and open doorways to other relief programs, has done exactly what human-rights groups and other critics have warned would happen: Replenish Abiy's coffers to fund his seemingly unending civil war machinery. That has only been exacerbated by the regime's increasingly close relationship with the United Arab Emirates, which has included the

Mesfin Tegenu

oil-rich Gulf nation offering considerable aid to the federal military.

To make matters worse, the one major condition that was imposed by the IMF - to stop artificially propping up its currency, the birr - has also had the effect that many feared of causing real, short-term economic harm. Now, concern that rapid inflation tied to the new monetary policies will further damage Ethiopia's manufacturing sector and other key industries is beginning to rattle foreign investors, who fear that financial problems will further unravel the country's weak social fabric. Just two months after the IMF's relief package and the floating of Ethiopia's currency, Chinese investors - who in recent years have competed with America and the West for influence in the Horn of Africa, thus propping up Abiy's ambitions - are starting to leave the country as they fear for its future.

"Ethiopia is facing serious difficulties," a key representative of Chinese business concerns in Ethiopia recently commented, referring both to inflation and the odds of an economic downturn but also the security concerns around the nation's ongoing civil wars.

Although Chinese sources have invested some \$5 billion in hundreds of Ethiopian projects in recent years, many are now looking instead to neighboring countries such as Kenya or Tanzania. This could accelerate a downward spiral. Belatedly and slowly, the international community is paying attention. Earlier this month, the United Nations Human Rights Council, meeting in Geneva - which included the United States

and the European Union - issued a statement expressing deep concern about the human-rights situation in Ethiopia and calling for accelerated peace efforts as well as the end to extrajudicial killings and other abuses.

That's a start, but the brightest hope for progress in Ethiopia remains stronger and smarter intervention from the United States and its allies, even after the blown opportunity to use their influence with the IMF and World Bank to impose conditions to rein in the Abiy regime. The American government can still call upon both its international clout and its decades of close ties with Addis Ababa to call for an immediate ceasefire and the start of meaningful negotiation.

What's more, the Biden administration and its successors have the ability to both sanction the worst human-rights abusers while increasing humanitarian aid to the millions in Ethiopia in dire need because of civil war, economic deprivation and drought worsened by climate change. Washington should not only work closely with allies in Africa and globally, but also with key regional leaders within Ethiopia and the considerable Ethiopian diaspora. The Ethiopian people are quite resilient, which has driven one of the world's great civilizations for more than 3,000 years - but it desperately needs partners. This crisis also presents an opportunity for the United States and allies to create a stronger bond around a shared interest in human rights, instead of a colonial outlook that encourages deadly tribalism. The ongoing slaughter of civilians in Gojjam and elsewhere is a plea for action, not more empty rhetoric.

The Hill

Yes, Bidenomics is working here in Pennsylvania

WHERE I come from, "the economy" isn't just about lines on a graph or numbers on a screen. It's about how much money people have in their pockets and how much their groceries cost. It's about how many shops are shuttered on their high street and whether they can afford to make the rent.

In Pennsylvania, when voters go to the polls next week, the economy will be weighing very heavily on their minds. Our state will probably decide who becomes the next president of the US, and how we vote will also be a test of Joe Biden's policies. The economy is one of the top issues for voters in our state. Many of them will be asking: am I in a better place now, compared with where I was four years ago?

I come from a family of steelworkers near Pittsburgh. My father was a steelworker in the city, and so is my son. I'm also a rep for United Steelworkers, one of the largest unions in our country. As you can imagine, the most important issue in town right now is the steel deal. The Japanese steelmaker Nippon has been trying to buy US Steel for the past year, and though the company has promised to honour US Steel's agreement with our union, we

have many reasons to be doubtful.

Not only is steel integral to our national security, raising questions about foreign takeovers, but there's nothing to stop the company from cutting union jobs a few years down the line. The CEO of US Steel stands to walk away with \$70m (£54m) if the deal completes. It's the same pattern that repeats again and again: the money stays at the top, while people at the bottom are forgotten about.

I'm glad that Kamala Harris has committed to blocking the sale. And I'm glad that the Biden administration has questioned the value of takeovers like these. Look at the Chips Act, or the Inflation Reduction Act: both were about spurring investment in our economy and building up productive capacity in the US. For too long, globalisation has meant a race to the bottom, with firms outsourcing labour and offshoring production to the places where it's cheapest. Most employees have been working harder but getting paid less: from 1973 to 2013, the hourly wage for a typical worker rose just 9%, while productivity increased by 74%. No wonder so many people are exhausted and struggling to keep their heads

JoJo Burgess

above water.

Here's the thing: Donald Trump says he gets it, but he doesn't. He talks about inflation killing our country under Biden, but he never says that record corporate profits are one of the drivers of inflation. He talks about the housing crisis, but then he blames the lack of affordable housing on immigrants. He is a master at spinning simple answers to complex problems, but he has no real solutions. I think most people are smarter than Trump gives them credit for. Most people have a sense that the reason daily life has become so expensive isn't just because of the war in Ukraine or supply-chain bottlenecks. It's because corporations got greedy, and started using inflation as cover to raise prices. If I can sell you a cup of water for \$10, why would I drop the price to \$7? The Democrat Pennsylvania senator Bob Casey has been campaigning explicitly on "greedflation".

It feels as though the message is cutting through, but I know plenty of steelworkers will still vote Trump, though almost all the unions have backed Harris. Where I live is rust belt territory. It's a place that once boomed on coal, steel and cars. It's a place that struggled to reinvent itself after

the decline of the manufacturing industries, and lost a lot of jobs. Since the pandemic, we've been suffering. I live in Washington, a town south of Pittsburgh, where I'm also the local mayor. I've seen how the shift towards working from home has damaged some of our small businesses, and how our healthcare workers suffered from Covid-19.

But I can also see the positives that "Bidenomics" has brought to our community, and I'm hoping these will cut through. One of the biggest complaints I hear now from residents is: "Why is there so much construction? We can't cross the road!" Thanks to a huge boost in federal spending, with the Inflation Reduction Act earmarking billions of dollars to support infrastructure projects, there are many more cranes than there used to be.

I always say, that's infrastructure money working for us. When the Fern Hollow bridge collapsed in Pittsburgh, it was rebuilt in record time. Pennsylvania is particularly well placed to benefit from federal investment because it's the second largest producer of energy in the US after Texas, and we need that climate spending if we're going to transition to a clean energy economy. I'm just hoping that other voters feel the same way.



PSX turns bullish, gains 1,893 points

ISLAMABAD (APP): The 100-Index of the Pakistan Stock Exchange (PSX) turned around to bullish trend on Friday, gaining 1,893.08 points, a positive change of 2.13 percent, closing at 90,859.85 points as compared to 88,966.77 points on last trading day.

A total of 465,865,841 shares were traded during the day as compared to 546,274,609 shares the previous trading day, whereas the price of shares stood at Rs23.089 billion against Rs24.117 billion on the last trading day.

As many as 430 companies transacted their shares in the stock market, 220 of them recorded gains and 156 sustained losses, whereas the share price of 54 companies remained unchanged.

The three top trading companies were Silk Bank Limited with 62,534,221 shares at Rs0.94 per share,

K-Electric Limited with 57,568,675 shares at Rs4.67 per share and WorldCall Telecom with 27,214,192 shares at Rs1.22 per share.

Unilever Pakistan Foods Limited witnessed a maximum increase of Rs572.11 per share price, closing at Rs19,161.11, whereas the runner-up was Siemens (Pakistan) Engineering with Rs58.62 rise in its per share price to Rs1,451.49.

Rafhan Maize Products Company Limited witnessed a maximum decrease of Rs158.40 per share closing at Rs7,541.60 followed by Sapphire Fibres Limited with Rs61.61 decline to close at Rs1,216.11.

Rupee gains 15 paise against dollar

Pakistani rupee on Friday appreciated by 15 paise against the US dollar in the interbank trading and

closed at Rs277.70 against the previous day's closing of Rs277.85.

However, according to the Forex Association of Pakistan (FAP), the buying and selling rates of the dollar in the open market stood at Rs277.25 and Rs278.75 respectively.

The price of Euro increased by 29 paise to close at Rs301.97 against the last day's closing of Rs301.68, according to the State Bank of Pakistan (SBP).

The Japanese yen came down by 01 paise and closed at Rs1.81, whereas a decrease of Rs2.97 was witnessed in the exchange rate of the British Pound, which traded at Rs358.05 as compared to the last day's closing of Rs361.02.

The exchange rate of the Emirates Dirham and the Saudi Riyal decreased by 04 paise and 03 paise to close at Rs75.60 and

Rs73.94 respectively.

Gold prices dip by Rs2,500 to Rs284,700 per tola

The price of 24 karat per tola gold decreased by Rs2,500 and was sold at Rs284,700 on Friday compared to its sale at Rs287,200 on last trading day.

The price of 10 grams of 24 karat gold also decreased by Rs2,144 to Rs244,084 from Rs246,228 whereas the price of 10 gram 22 karat gold went down to Rs223,744 from Rs225,709, the All Sindh Sarafa Jewellers Association reported.

The price of per tola silver decreased by Rs20 to Rs3,430 whereas that of ten gram silver went down by Rs17.14 to Rs2,940.67.

The price of gold in the international market decreased by \$25 to \$2,752 from \$2,777, the Association reported.



ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Industries and Production Rana Tanveer Hussain chairing 22nd Board of Directors meeting of SMEDA.

Shipping activity at Port Qasim

KARACHI (APP): Six ships, GFS Ruby, Tucapel, PH Giang Minh, KS Camellia, Ginga Hawk and Sevilla Knutsen scheduled to load/offload Containers, Rice, Steel Coil, Chemicals, and LNG berthed at Qasim International Container Terminal, Grain Terminal, Multi-Purpose Terminal, Engro Vopak Terminal and Engro Elengy Terminal respectively on Friday.

Meanwhile, three more ships, Singapore Bulker, Hafnia Topaz, and MT Bolan scheduled to load/offload Rice and Gas oil are also arrived at outer anchorage during last 24 hours.

Eleven ships were engaged at PQA berths during the last 24 hours, out of them five ships, GFS Ruby, Tucapel, KS Camellia, Zarrar Hanif, and Arkas are expected to sail on Friday.

Cargo volume of 189,543 tonnes, comprising 151,032 tonnes import cargo and 38,511 tonnes of export cargo carried in 3,237 Containers (1,600 TEUs Imports & 1,637 TEUs Exports) was handled at the port during last 24 hours.

Nine ships at Outer Anchorage of Port Qasim, out of them two ships, Da Qing Xia and Bolan are General Cargo and Gas oil are expected to take berths at MW-2 and FOTCO respectively on Friday.

MCCI appeals for 5% reduction

MULTAN (APP): The Multan Chamber of Commerce and Industry (MCCI) urged the government to reduce the policy rate by at least 5 per cent in the upcoming Monetary Policy Committee (MPC) meeting to support the business community and stabilise the economy.

The reduction would help create a better business environment in Pakistan, similar to other developing countries where policy rates are kept in single digit to encourage business growth and investment.

In a statement issued here, MCCI President Mian Bakhtawar Tanveer Sheikh said that the current high policy rate was proving to be heavy burden on industries, particularly small and medium enterprises (SMEs), which play a critical role in any country's economic growth and job creation.

He said, "Bringing the policy rate down to single digits is essential for creating a favorable business environment, enabling our businesses to compete globally.

Meanwhile, on year-on-year basis, the exports in October 2024 increased by 10.64 percent to \$2.975 billion from \$2.689 billion in October 2023.

The urgent need for AI-integrated education in Pakistan

Dr. Waseem Hassan

Pakistan's education system has long been criticized for several core issues: outdated content, an over-reliance on rote learning, inadequate infrastructure, and a lack of emphasis on research and innovation. At the secondary and tertiary levels, curricula often fail to engage students in critical thinking or problem-solving activities. Instead, students are encouraged to memorize facts and figures, with little understanding of the underlying concepts or their practical applications.

The world is witnessing a technological revolution driven by AI and machine learning. AI is rapidly becoming a cornerstone of the global economy, influencing everything from autonomous vehicles and personalized medicine to intelligent tutoring systems and AI-driven research.

Universities in Pakistan lag behind their global counterparts in producing research that addresses real-world problems. While some universities have taken steps to introduce computer science and information technology programs, these initiatives are often underfunded, poorly implemented, and lacking in scope. There is a notable absence of interdisciplinary programs that combine AI with other fields such as biology, healthcare, or economics—areas where AI is making significant strides globally.

For Pakistan, the current era presents a unique opportunity to address the shortcomings of its academic system by developing an AI-integrated curriculum (at school, college and university level). The benefits of such a curriculum are manifold, as it would provide students with the skills and knowledge necessary to excel in AI-driven industries, foster innovation, and research, and close the gap between academia and industry.

One of the most significant disadvantages of not adopting an AI-integrated curriculum is the risk of falling behind in global competitiveness. In the current global economy, countries that are investing in AI and technology education are positioning themselves as leaders in innovation and economic growth. Nations like China, the United States, and several European countries have already

integrated AI into their educational systems, producing a workforce that is proficient in these technologies.

International job markets are increasingly demanding skills in AI, data science, and automation, and Pakistan's workforce will be at a disadvantage if these skills are not developed locally. The result will likely be a "brain drain" as talented individuals leave the country in search of better opportunities, further exacerbating the talent gap within Pakistan.

AI is not just transforming industries like information technology or finance; it is also revolutionizing healthcare, agriculture, manufacturing, and education—sectors that are vital to Pakistan's economy. By failing to develop an AI-integrated curriculum, Pakistan risks missing out on the benefits that AI can bring to these key sectors.

For instance, AI has the potential to improve healthcare outcomes by enabling personalized medicine, predictive diagnostics, and automated drug discovery. In agriculture, AI can help optimize crop yields, manage resources efficiently, and reduce waste. In manufacturing, AI-driven automation can increase productivity and reduce costs. Without a workforce trained in AI, Pakistan will be unable to harness the full potential of these advancements, leaving it dependent on foreign expertise and technology.

The absence of a high-tech, AI-focused curriculum also stifles innovation and research. Universities are often the breeding grounds for new ideas, and a curriculum that fails to incorporate AI will hinder students and researchers from exploring cutting-edge technologies. This limitation will have a direct impact on Pakistan's ability to contribute to global scientific advancements.

Moreover, research and development (R&D) are key drivers of economic growth. Countries that invest in R&D—particularly in emerging fields like AI—are more likely to see the development of new technologies, industries, and jobs. By neglecting to foster an environment conducive to AI research, Pakistan risks falling behind in the global innovation race. This stagnation will have long-term consequences for the

country's economic and technological development.

Another significant risk of not developing an AI-integrated curriculum is the potential for widening social inequality. The digital divide—where access to technology and education is limited to a privileged few—is a growing concern in many countries, including Pakistan. Without proactive efforts to modernize the curriculum and make AI education accessible to all, the gap between the "haves" and "have-nots" will continue to widen.

Students from affluent backgrounds who have access to private education, online resources, and technological tools will continue to thrive, while those from disadvantaged backgrounds will struggle to keep up. This inequality will perpetuate cycles of poverty and limit social mobility, undermining efforts to create an inclusive and equitable society.

The job market of the future will be vastly different from what it is today, largely due to the impact of AI and automation. Jobs that are routine and repetitive are increasingly being replaced by machines, while new roles are emerging that require advanced technological skills. Without an AI-integrated curriculum, Pakistani graduates will be at risk of irrelevance in the future job market. They may find themselves unable to adapt to new technologies, leading to higher rates of unemployment and underemployment among educated youth.

As the world embraces digital transformation and AI, the need for a modern, technology-driven curriculum has never been more urgent. The disadvantages of not developing an AI-integrated curriculum are far-reaching and profound. Pakistan risks falling behind in global competitiveness, stifling innovation, and widening social inequality if it does not act swiftly to modernize its education system.

However, this moment also presents an opportunity for transformation. By investing in an AI-focused curriculum, Pakistan can prepare its youth for the future, foster economic growth, and position itself as a leader in innovation. The consequences of inaction will be long-lasting, but with the right approach, Pakistan can turn this challenge into an opportunity for progress.

Pakistan Southern Africa Trade Federation team held meeting

E.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: The trade delegation of Pakistan Southern Africa Trade Federation had a meeting at the SIFC Head office located in the Prime Minister's Secretariat Cabinet Hall in Islamabad which was presided over by Dr. Jahanzeb Khan, the Secretary Apex Committee of SIFC and the special assistant to the Prime Minister of Pakistan.

Others who attended the meeting include Ms. Humaira ZiaMufti, the Additional Secretary SIFC, Mr. Amir Mohiuddin, the Additional Secretary of



National Food security and research ministry, DG Africa Hasnain Yousuf Mofa, DG Board of Investment Zulfiqar Ali, Mr. Arif ullah, the Deputy Secretary.

The participants of the meeting discussed in detail the trade volume between Pakistan and Southern African countries, whereas the PSATF delegation led by its founder chairman Mr.

Muhammad Rafiq Memon suggested various key measures to the SIFC and other officials for enhancing the trade volume between Pakistan and Africa.

Weekly inflation slightly up for combined consumption groups

ISLAMABAD (APP): The weekly inflation, measured by the Sensitive Price Indicator (SPI), went up slightly by 0.10 percent for the combined consumption groups during the week ended on October 31, the Pakistan Bureau of Statistics (PBS) reported on Friday.

According to the PBS data, the SPI for the week under review in the above-mentioned group was recorded at 319.40 points as compared to 319.09 points during the past week.

As compared to the corresponding week of last year, the SPI for the combined consumption group in the week under review witnessed an increase of 14.45 per cent.

The weekly SPI with the base year 2015-16 =100 covers 17 urban centres and 51 essential items for all expenditure groups.

However, SPI for the lowest consumption group of up to Rs 17,732 witnessed decrease of 0.36 per cent and went down to 312.02 points from last week's 313.16 points.

The SPI for consumption groups of Rs 17,732 to 22,888 also decreased by 0.40 percent however for consumption groups from Rs 22,889-29,517 and Rs 29,518-44,175 it increased by 0.18 percent and 0.32 percent respectively.

The SPI for consumption group above Rs 44,175, decreased by 0.07 percent, according to PBS data.

During the week, out of 51 items, prices of 12 (23.53%) items increased,

12 (23.53%) items decreased and 27 (52.94%) items remained stable.

The items, which recorded a major decrease in their average prices on a week-on-week basis included tomatoes (11.02%), chicken (10.57%), onions (1.68%), bananas (1.42%), sugar (1.20%), pulse mash (0.98%), gur (0.69%) and wheat flour (0.43%).

The commodities which recorded a major increase in their average prices on week-on-week basis included eggs (3.40%), garlic (2.95%), lpg (1.92%), mustard oil (1.49%), pulse moong (1.27%), firewood (1.09%), vegetable ghee 1kg (1.08%), vegetable ghee 2.5kg (0.50%), potatoes (0.30%) and curd (0.20%).

On-year basis, the commodities that witnessed

decrease included wheat flour (31.76%), electricity charges for q1 (20.32%), chillies powder (20.00%), tomatoes (19.37%), diesel (17.05%), petrol (12.77%), rice basmati broken (8.09%), cooking oil 5 litre (7.45%), sugar (7.16%), bread (5.55%), eggs (3.93%) and washing soap (0.32%).

The commodities which recorded an increase in their average prices on year-on-year basis included, gas charges for Q1 (570.00%), pulse gram (83.11%), pulse moong (39.09%), powdered milk (25.57%), beef (23.53%), onions (17.95%), garlic (17.55%), shirting (17.02%), cooked daal (15.14%), mutton (13.68%), georgette (12.81%) and ladies sandal (12.52%).

Exports increase by 13.45%

ISLAMABAD (APP): The exports from the country increased by 13.45 percent during the first four months of the current fiscal year as compared to the corresponding months of last year, Pakistan Bureau of Statistics (PBS) reported on Friday.

Exports during July-October (2024-25) were recorded at \$10.880 bil-

lion against \$9.590 billion during July-October (2023-24), according to PBS data.

On the other hand, imports into the country also went up by 5.17 percent by growing from \$16.977 billion last year to \$17.854 billion during the first four months of the current year.

Based on the figures, the

trade deficit during the months under review was recorded at \$6.974 billion against the deficit of \$7.387 billion last year, showing a decrease of 5.59 percent.

Meanwhile, on year-on-year basis, the exports in October 2024 increased by 10.64 percent to \$2.975 billion from \$2.689 billion in October 2023.

Why is there a lack of interaction between students and the teacher?

Aqsa Naz

In a New York public high school, a teacher faces numerous challenges, including managing large class sizes, preparing students for standardized tests, and accepting the responsibility of their assessment. The teacher struggles to address individual student needs due to the complete size of the class. Additionally, the teacher has observed that students hesitate to engage in discussions with their peers and feel uncomfortable sharing their ideas with the teacher, fearing that their classmates may mistreat them. As a result, students exhort ate from sharing. This, combined by the large class size, presents significant challenges for the teacher, who is unable

to accurately measure and address student surveys. Moreover, the student's hesitancy to communicate with the teacher hinders the creation of an effective learning environment in the classroom.

In Japanese culture, teachers are held in high regard, and a great deal of emphasis is placed on respecting them. Students often hesitate to ask questions, fearing what others might think, such as whether their parents have failed to teach them proper manners. In one incident in Japan, a student asked a question to the teacher, and the rest of the students perceived it negatively, leading to the student's humiliation. Even the teacher did not provide a suitable response. After this, the student was always afraid to

ask questions, fearing that the teacher might think they were being disrespectful or questioning the teacher's knowledge. As a result, the student never asked a question again. In my opinion, respecting teachers should be a priority for students, but the classroom environment should not be such that students are afraid to ask questions or speak up. Teachers should also avoid behaviors that intimidate students. In today's world, such teaching methods should not be used, as students should be encouraged to speak up, improving their communication skills and building self-confidence, which ultimately enhances their learning. Teachers should also encourage students to engage in discussions.

In today's world, interac-

tion is very important because by talking and being social, many of our difficulties can be eased, and our knowledge increases as well. This way, our personality develops, and we gain more confidence through interaction. People also get to know our perspective-what we think and what our opinions are. In my view, interaction is essential.

It also gives us the confidence to go to a new place. For instance, speaking about myself, I used to never talk to teachers or friends because it was a completely new environment for me. I was confined to just my home, school, and a few school friends. However, ever since I joined university and saw many people interacting confidently, I have also

gained courage. Now, I can confidently interact with teachers and others, which helps me gain a lot of knowledge, like new information and clearing up confusions with teachers. When these small issues are solved, it gives us the confidence to tackle bigger problems.

By interacting ourselves, we gain authentic knowledge. These days, we learn a lot from the internet, but we don't always know how much is true or false. Only after interacting with others or teachers do we realize how authentic the knowledge is. That's why interaction is so important. It also helps create emotional bonds with others, build trust, and strengthen relationships. Through interaction, we can understand people's behavior and

authenticity from their expressions.

Another reason interaction has decreased is that there are more students now, and the course load is heavy. As a result, teachers are mostly focused on completing the syllabus quickly, leaving students hesitant to ask questions, fearing the teacher might get upset. I've noticed that when it comes to covering the syllabus, teachers often mention time constraints and the competitive nature of exams, meaning there's a lot to cover in a short time. Because of this, students don't interact as much, and many things remain unclear for them.

To address these challenges, schools should organize sessions or programs for both teachers and students so they can under-

stand and emotionally support each other. This would help bridge the gap and ensure that education is received in an authentic way.

Teachers themselves should also take initiatives for students who struggle with interaction, such as providing counseling to help them share their problems. This will make their learning more effective.

Another important point is that teachers should reach out to the student's parents regarding this matter so that they can help their children develop self-confidence.

Parents should focus more on their children's needs, ensuring their learning is proper and that students can focus on their education without hesitation or issues.

Court Notice

In the Court of Afshen Civil Judge VII/Alaqa Qazi Buner at Daggar, Suit No. 298/1. Institution 2023. Date of hearing 4/11/2024. Mustaqem Khan Vs Mst Bashmala etc. Notice to No. (2) Mst Zalam Jan widow of Nawar, (3) Said Bahadur, (4) Said Qadar, (5) Mer Bahadur, (6) Bakht Bahadur sons of Nawar, (7) Mst Rajmeena, (8) Mst Yasman, (9) Mst Kamena daughters of Nawar Khan, (10) Mst Hazrat Bibi widow of Sher Bahadur, (11) Ali Bahadur, (12) Nor Bahadur, (13) Khan Qadar, (14) Said Qadar, (15) Mian Qadar sons of Sher Bahadur, (16) Mst Wezana, (17) Mst Miraja Bibi, (18) Mst Gul Tana, (19) Mst Riasat, (20) Mst Gul Bibi, (21) Mst Fazelat daughters of Sher Bahadur, (22) Khan Bahadur s/o Said Baz Khan, (26) Alam Lhan s/o Shamroz, (31) Firdos, (33) Mst Zer Jan d/o Ayaz Khan, (34) Sirat Khan s/o Alam Khan resident of Ambela, Tehsil Mandanr, District Buner. Whereas, in the above mentioned case the mentioned defendants cannot be served in the ordinary way, it is, therefore, proclaimed that if the said defendants will/shall not appear personally or through dually authorized agent or pleader in the court at 8:00 a.m. dated 4/11/2024 the proceeding will be taken ex-parte. Given under my hand and seal of this Court.



In brief

Man City face 'emergency': Guardiola

LONDON (AFP): Pep Guardiola says Manchester City face an "emergency" in certain positions as he grapples with a punishing injury list ahead of Saturday's trip to Bournemouth. City went into Wednesday's League Cup tie at Tottenham without six first-team players, with Rodri, Oscar Bobb, Kevin De Bruyne, Kyle Walker, Jeremy Doku and Jack Grealish all sidelined. They lost defender Manuel Akanji with a calf issue in the warm-up and forward Savinho was taken off on a stretcher midway through the second half with what appeared to be a swollen ankle. City manager Guardiola said after the 2-1 defeat that he had just 13 senior players available – the team ended the match in London with a clutch of academy graduates on the pitch. Speaking at his pre-match press conference on Friday Guardiola, whose team are one point clear of Liverpool at the top of the Premier League, said he had "many doubts" ahead of the Bournemouth game. "We have a lot (of injuries) in certain departments and certain positions, but it is what it is," he said. "I am pretty sure, like I have said many times to the team, 'Guys, try not to feel sorry for ourselves,'" Guardiola said he was being forced to use academy players during the crisis. "We are using them because we are in an emergency in certain positions," he said. "But yes, some of them we trust them, like in the past, to help us. "That is why the academy is there. Not ideal, but when the situation demands. Yes, we don't have another option." Guardiola said the lengthy injury list did not make it more likely that the club would dip into the transfer market in January as he could have a fit squad by then, with the exception of long-term absentee Rodri.

Scott breaks British record

Singapore (Agencies): Duncan Scott broke the British record by two and a half seconds as he claimed gold in the 400m freestyle at the short course World Cup event in Singapore. The Scot finished in three minutes 34.46 seconds to break the previous record set by James Guy in 2014 and move up to second in the all-time list. The 27-year-old took gold ahead of American Kieran Smith and Pan Zhanle of China. "The 400m free is still an event I'm learning," Scott said. "And I don't really have any fear about what's going to happen. And, yeah, I'm really happy with that." Scott finished second in the men's 200m short course medley behind Leon Marchand, who raced to victory in a world record time of 1:48.88. The Frenchman broke Ryan Lochte's 12-year-old record by 0.75 seconds and was more than two seconds clear of Scott, with Alberto Razzetti of Italy third. Scott will also race in the 200m freestyle in Singapore, the third and final meet of this year's World Cup. Marchand earlier became just the second man, after Caeleb Dressel, to break 50 seconds in the 100m individual medley. Marchand, who won four gold medals at the Olympics in Paris during the summer, swam 49.92 to move up to second on the all-time list. American Kate Douglass broke her own world record set just last week in the 200m breaststroke. Douglass swam 2:12.72, one and a half seconds quicker than the record she set at the World Cup meet in South Korea.

Hong Kong Sixes
Asif Ali's blitz powers Pakistan to victory over India

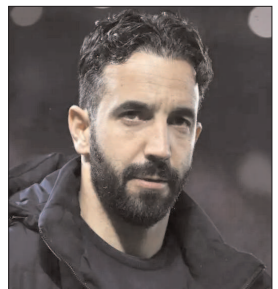
HONG KONG (Monitoring Desk): Asif Ali scored a blistering half-century to steer Pakistan to victory over India in the ongoing Hong Kong Cricket Sixes tournament here at Tin Kwong Road Cricket Ground on Friday. Pakistan successfully chased the 120-run target without losing a wicket and qualified for the quarter-finals after topping Group C. Asif Ali played a whirlwind knock of 55 runs from 14 balls, which featured two fours and seven sixes. His opening partner Mohammad Akhlaq struck 40 off 12 with the help of three fours and four sixes. Pakistan captain Faheem Ashraf joined Akhlaq after Asif retired and smashed 22 runs from five balls to steer his side to victory over India.

Earlier in the day, Pakistan defeated the United Arab Emirates (UAE) by 13 runs after setting a target of 129. Asif Ali and Mohammad Akhlaq both scored half-centuries to help Pakistan post an imposing total without losing a wicket. Akhlaq smashed 52 off 15 with six maximums, while Asif struck 50 off 14, laced with seven sixes. While defending 128, Pakistan bundled UAE for 115 as Asif Ali and Aamir Yamin took two wickets each. For the unversed, A total of 12 teams are participating in the highly-anticipated tournament, making its return after a six-year hiatus. The tournament will run from November 1 to 3, 2024. Hosts Hong Kong along-

side New Zealand and former champions South Africa are placed in Group A while Group B features Australia, England and Nepal. Fierce rivals Pakistan and India are drawn in Group C, accompanied by the United Arab Emirates (UAE), whereas, Group D is comprised of Bangladesh, Oman and Sri Lanka. South Africa and England lead with the most Hong Kong Sixes titles, each winning five. Sri Lanka, Australia, India, and the West Indies have each won one title. Pakistan since the inception of the Hong Kong Cricket Sixes in 1993 have won the tournament four times, while it has remained runners-up of the event five times, which includes qualifying for the final of the last edition held in 2017.

Manchester United appoint Amorim as head coach

LONDON (Agencies): Manchester United have appointed Ruben Amorim as their new head coach. The 39-year-old Portuguese, who will move to Old Trafford from Lisbon club Sporting on 11 November, has signed a contract until June 2027. Former United striker Ruud van Nistelrooy, who took charge on an interim basis after Erik ten Hag was sacked on Monday, will stay on for the club's next three fixtures. Amorim is the sixth permanent manager United have appointed since Sir Alex Ferguson's 26-year reign ended with his retirement in 2013. In a statement, the club said that "Ruben is one of the most exciting and highly rated young coaches in European football". Sporting confirmed in a statement that United have agreed to pay 11m euros (£9.25m) to trigger a release



clause in Amorim's contract. Amorim's first fixture in charge of the Red Devils is set to be on 24 November, after the international break, in the Premier League against newly promoted Ipswich. His first home game will be against Norwegian side Bodo/Glimt in the Europa League on 28 November, with a league game against Everton the following weekend. United will announce who will be on Amorim's coaching staff at a later date. Amorim could bring as many as five coaches with him. Carlos Fernandes, 29,

and Adélio Candido, 28, have been with Amorim since he started out as a manager with Casa Pia in 2019. Emanuel Ferro, goal-keeping coach and sports scientist Paulo Barreira are others who might also move to Old Trafford. After losing against rivals Porto in the Portuguese Super Cup on 3 August, Amorim has guided the side he led to last season's Primeira Liga title through a 14-game unbeaten run. Amorim is due to be in the dugout on Friday when Sporting host Estrela in a league game (20:15 GMT). Sporting are also at home in the Champions League on Tuesday when they play Manchester City. Amorim's last game in charge is set to be against former club Braga in the league on 10 November, before European top-flight football pauses for Nations League games.

Darren appointed Lahore Qalandars head coach

LAHORE (Cricinfo): Darren Gough has been appointed head coach of Lahore Qalandars. His first assignment with the franchise will be the Global Super League (GSL) in Guyana, which starts on November 26. The appointment is understood to be a prelude to a more permanent role in Qalandars' stock competition: the PSL. Aaqib Javed, who served as head coach and director of cricket operations for Qalandars for eight years, quit last month to focus on a new role at the PCB with Pakistan cricket: he is now a member of the selection committee for the Pakistan men's national team. Qalandars won back-to-back PSL titles in 2022 and 2023 before stumbling this year, finishing bottom. Aaqib's departure left a vacancy at the franchise, one they wish to ensure is filled well before the PSL begins in April next year. Gough, who retired in 2006 as England's leading ODI wicket-taker (and is still No. 2 on the list behind James Anderson) is understood to be keen on the role,



with the GSL seen as a useful opportunity to allow him to get his feet under the table before a permanent decision is made. "It's an absolute honour to have been asked by the Lahore Qalandars to be the head coach for the upcoming Global Super League in Guyana," Gough said in a statement. "I'm really excited about this opportunity because I've been fortunate to work with the Qalandars in Lahore on several occasions, assisting with their PDP [player development programme]. "We know that Lahore Qalandars are all about giving young players opportunities they've never had before – developing their skills and shaping them into players who can go on to represent the Qalandars,

and hopefully make Pakistan cricket proud." Gough most recently served as managing director at his old club, Yorkshire, after being appointed in December 2021 following the racism allegations that rocked the club. He parted ways with Yorkshire in March this year. Before that, he had a stint as England's bowling consultant in 2020. Not long after Gough joined Yorkshire in 2021, the club launched a partnership with Qalandars aiming to "nurture talent [by] reducing barriers to entry" following the racism crisis. Sameen Rana, co-owner of Qalandars, said Gough's vision aligned "seamlessly with our commitment to player development", referring to the appointment as an embarkation on "a new journey". The GSL will be contested by five teams. Qalandars are joined by Hampshire Hawks from the T20 Blast, Rangpur Riders from the BPL, Victoria from Australia, as well as the hosts, Guyana Amazon Warriors. The final will take place on December 7.

Sabalenka and Swiatek in No.1 showdown at WTA Finals

Riyadh (AFP): Aryna Sabalenka and Iga Swiatek are all set to battle for the year-end number one ranking, which will be decided at the week's WTA Finals which get underway in Riyadh on Saturday. Sabalenka "unexpectedly" recaptured the top spot last week after Iga Swiatek dropped points for not fulfilling mandatory tournament requirements this season, and enters the competition in Saudi Arabia as the number one seed. The Belarusian however is more concerned about concluding the year at the summit of the rankings, and wants to avoid last season's

scenario, where she surrendered the position in the closing week of her campaign as Swiatek clinched the WTA Finals title. Sabalenka has had an incredible 2024, which included two Grand Slam title runs at the Australian Open and US Open. She secured a third consecutive Wuhan trophy last month and said she was surprised when she learned she had snatched the world number one ranking from Swiatek before the WTA Finals. "I was like, 'How, what happened? Where did she lose those 100 points?' I didn't expect that," Sabalenka told reporters in

Riyadh on the eve of her Saturday opener against Zheng Qinwen. "I woke up that morning and my boyfriend was like, 'Congrats, you became world number one', I was like, 'What? I didn't do anything', kind of like in that moment. I was like, 'Whatever, I'll take it.'" Sabalenka holds a comfortable 1,046-point advantage over her Polish rival in the rankings, which means Swiatek must defend her WTA Finals title to have any chance of clinching the year-end number one spot. "I want to finish the year as number one, then I'll be okay."



MUMBAI: Yashasvi Jaiswal attempts a reverse sweep, and loses his stumps, India vs New Zealand, 3rd Test, 1st day.

Blind Cricket T20 World Cup schedule announced

ISLAMABAD (APP): The World Blind Cricket Council (WBCC) has announced the schedule of the 4th edition of the Blind Cricket T20 World Cup to take place in Lahore and Multan from November 23 to December 3. According to the President World Blind Cricket Ltd, Syed Sultan Shah, the mega event will feature blind cricket teams of Pakistan, India, Sri Lanka, Bangladesh, South Africa, Nepal and Afghanistan. The Indian team will be defending their title in the extravaganza. The opening match of the tournament will be played between South Africa and hosts Pakistan on November 23 at the Ghani Institute of Cricket Ground, DHA, Lahore while traditional rivals, India and Pakistan, will face each other on November 25. The arrival of all participating foreign teams will be completed by November 21 and the opening ceremony of the World Cup will be held on November 22 in Lahore. The iconic city of Lahore will host 15 matches of the event, including the opening match, while the historical city of Multan will host 9 matches, including both semifinals and final.

Pakistan, Saudi Arabia teams to play friendly match

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Saudi Arabian Football Federation (SAFF) has invited Pakistan for a friendly match between their senior women's national teams. The SAFF proposed hosting the match between the Saudi and Pakistan Women's Senior National Teams during their training camp in Qatar, scheduled within the upcoming FIFA match window from November 25 to December 7, said a press release. The match will take place on December 7, in Qatar. The Pakistan Football Federation (PFF) Normalization Committee has begun preparations and further details will be shared in due course.

Pak cueists qualify for World Snooker C'ship

ISLAMABAD (APP): Pakistani cueists Asjad Iqbal, Awais Ullah Muneer, Muhammad Naseem Akhtar and Muhammad Asif have qualified for the IBSF World Snooker Championship 2024 beginning Saturday at Doha, Qatar. According to details, World Qualifier Stage 1 (Last Chance) Last 16 Round results, Asif beat Asjad 4-2 (78-32, 08-84(76), 88(53)-08, 86(52)-63), 04-78(69), 80(64)-25) while Thaha Irshath of Sri Lanka outplayed Ahsan 4-3 (110-46, 17-70, 66-02, 33-52, 76(50)-46, 11-56, 57-47). After the qualify round, Asif has qualified for men World Championship. As IBSF had one extra entry so Asjad also made it for the best performance of stage 1.

Kohli fails as India slump in chaotic 10 minutes in third Test

MUMBAI (AFP): With Virat Kohli run out for four, India were in deep trouble at 86-4 in their reply after spinners Ravindra Jadeja and Washington Sundar helped bowl out New Zealand for 235 on day one of the third Test on Friday. Around 15 minutes before stumps, India were cruising at 78-1 but a rapid fall of wickets turned their fortunes around as New Zealand scented the chance of a clean sweep -- they sealed their first-ever Test series triumph on Indian soil last week with victory in the second match in Pune. The hosts trailed New Zealand by 149 runs at the close of a fast-paced day one at Mumbai's Wankhede Stadium, where the pitch offered early turn to the spinners. Shubman Gill, on 31, and Rishabh Pant, on one, were batting at the close after New Zealand's Mumbai-born spinner Ajaz Patel struck twice in two balls in a chaotic end to the day. Ajaz bowled Yashasvi Jaiswal for 30 while attempting a reverse sweep, and then India's ploy of sending a nightwatchman failed as Mohammed Siraj fell, trapped lbw on the next ball. Siraj also burned a review. New Zealand's biggest cele-

bration, however, came in the next over when a direct throw from Matt Henry at mid-on ran out Kohli for four, the Indian talisman setting off for a reckless single. Jadeja told reporters that "everything happened in 10 minutes", and the team "did not get time to react". "We cannot blame any individual. Everyone makes some small mistake," he added, saying the team must "build partnerships" to not only close in on 230, but "to go beyond that." "Build pressure" Skipper Rohit Sharma was the first to go, when he edged a delivery from pace bowler Henry to be caught at second slip for 18. The left-handed Jaiswal and Gill put on 53 to resist the opposition spinners, but Ajaz broke through. New Zealand top-scorer Daryl Mitchell, who hit 82, said he expected day two "will be a big session", and that the visitors were hoping to "take a few more" wickets on Saturday morning. Mitchell said New Zealand were "lucky to build some pressure", and that the match was still "evenly-balanced". New Zealand batsmen Will Young made 71 and Mitchell hit his 12th Test

half-century after the tourists elected to bat first. Jadeja bagged 5-65 with his left-arm spin. Off-spinner Sundar took four -- including the final two batsmen, Mitchell and Ajaz -- to wrap up the innings in 65.4 overs in the final session. Mitchell attempted to anchor the innings after an 87-run fourth-wicket stand with Young before Sundar got him out. In the humid heat, Mitchell needed regular drinks and ice packs during his 129-ball knock, which included three fours and three sixes. Jadeja struck regular blows and took two wickets in one over twice in the innings, to register his 14th five-wicket haul in Tests. That included having Young caught at slip before bowling wicketkeeper Tom Blundell for a duck a few balls later. Devon Conway was out for four before New Zealand skipper Tom Latham, who made 28, and Young attempted to build the innings in a partnership of 44 for the second wicket. Off-spinner Sundar came around the wicket to dismiss the left-handed Latham, before then bowling left-handed Rachin Ravindra -- who leads the batting charts in the series with 252 runs -- for five.

Conquerors and Strikers qualify for women's U19 final



LAHORE (Monitoring Desk): Samiya Afsar struck a brilliant half-century in Conquerors 73-run win over Invincibles while Strikers' Tayyaba Imdad picked up four wickets in her team's crucial seven-wicket win over Challengers in the 10th round of the National Women's U19 Tournament at the LCCA Ground, Lahore on Friday. Conquerors remained unbeaten in the tournament with eight wins while Strikers managed four wins out of eight games, edging Challengers on net run-rate to finish second on the points table and qualify for the final. In the first match of the day, after Invincibles opted to bowl first, Conquerors opening batters, Komal Khan (42, 42b, 5x4s) and Samiya (51, 41b, 7x4s) put on a 93-run partnership. Laiba Nasir (15, 19b, 2x4s), Aqsa Habib (15 not out, 12b, 1x4) and Ravail Farhan (12 not out, 8b, 1x4) were the other contributors as Conquerors scored 144-3 in 20 overs. In turn, Invincibles managed 71-7 in their 20 overs as only Manahil Rafiq (15, 23b, 1x4), Wasifa Hussain (13, 26b) and Laiba Kareem (11 not out, 25b) reached double figures. Quaratulain picked up three wickets while Fatima Khan, Laiba

Nasir and Minahil Javaid dismissed one batter each. In the second match, a must-win contest for both the teams, Challengers were bowled out for 49 in 18.2 overs as Tayyaba returned figures of 4-11 in her four overs. In reply, Strikers, who needed to chase the target in 17.3 overs or less to qualify for the final, reached the target in 10.4 overs with skipper Zoofishan Ayyaz top scoring with unbeaten 12 off four balls hitting three fours. The first ball of the 3 November final between Conquerors and Strikers is expected to be bowled at 9am with the toss taking place at 8.30am at the LCCA Ground, Lahore. Scores in brief: 19th Match -- Conquerors beat Invincibles by 73 runs. Conquerors 144-3, 20 overs (Samiya Afsar 51, Komal Khan 42; Taskyn Fatima 1-16) Invincibles 71-7, 20 overs (Manahil Rafiq 15, Wasifa Hussain 13; Quaratulain 3-10) Player of the match -- Samiya Afsar (Conquerors) 20th Match -- Strikers beat Challengers by seven wickets. Challengers 49 all out, 18.2 overs (Qamrosh Farhan 18; Tayyaba Imdad 4-11) Strikers 50-3, 10.4 overs (Zoofishan Ayyaz 12 not out; Sheher Bano 2-18) Player of the match -- Tayyaba Imdad (Strikers).

Babar Azam honoured at MCG with bat displayed alongside cricket icons

KARACHI (Monitoring Desk): Pakistan's former captain Babar Azam has joined the ranks of cricketing legends as his bat is now showcased in the prestigious Long Room at the Melbourne Cricket Ground. This exhibit already features bats donated by icons such as Don Bradman, David Boon, Jack Hobbs, and Brian Lara. The MCG management extended a special invitation to Azam, asking him to contribute the bat he used during Pakistan's 2022 T20 World Cup final clash against England, which he accepted. Reflecting on the honour, the much-acclaimed batter said that playing at the MCG, one of the world's most celebrated cricket venues holds a deep personal significance. "Honestly, it is an honour for me, and this means a lot to me because I played a World Cup final using this bat," Azam said after donating his equipment at MCG long room on Friday. "I have many good memories here at the MCG [...] it is one of the best grounds of my career. Having my bat placed here alongside those of great players is truly a privilege." His gesture resonates with cricket history at the MCG, where legendary cricketers from Australia and other countries have contributed their bats to the exhibit. Babar recently stepped down as Pakistan's white-ball captain and was replaced by Mohammad Rizwan. He was also dropped from Pakistan's test team for the two Tests against England.



In brief

IRSA releases 117,500 cusecs water

ISLAMABAD (APP): Indus River System Authority (IRSA) on Friday released 117,500 cusecs water from various rim stations with inflow of 63,900 cusecs. According to the data released by IRSA, water level in River Indus at Tarbela Dam was 1528.30 feet and was 130.30 feet higher than its dead level of 1,398 feet. Water inflow and outflow in the dam was recorded as 33,500 cusecs and 55,000 cusecs respectively. The water level in River Jhelum at Mangla Dam was 1186.60 feet, which was 136.60 feet higher than its dead level of 1,050 feet. The inflow and outflow of water was recorded 5,900 cusecs and 38,000 cusecs respectively. The release of water at Kalabagh, Taunsa, Guddu and Sukkur was recorded as 58,800, 43,200, 36,500 and 6,200 cusecs respectively. Similarly, from River Kabul, a total of 13,700 cusecs of water released at Nowshera and 4,200 cusecs released from River Chenab at Marala.

ITP launch drive against parking violators

ISLAMABAD (APP): Islamabad Traffic Police (ITP) has launched a campaign against those involved in parking their vehicles wrongly and creating problems in smooth flow of traffic by occupying footpath areas. During the ongoing Year, the Islamabad Police also issued more than 93,459 fine tickets to those involved in wrong parking while several vehicles were impounded at police stations for not vacating footpath areas, a public relations officer told APP on Friday. Chief Traffic Officer (CTO) Muhammad Sarfraz Virk, directed all Zonal DSPs to ensure the implementation of traffic laws and take action against those involved in creating problems for traffic discipline in the city. CTO Virk said that it is the right of pedestrians to use footpaths and no parking would be allowed there. Vehicles should be parked at lots specified at shopping centers while awareness campaigns should be launched to educate citizens, Virk said. CTO said that it is our top priority to ensure convenience for road users by maintaining traffic discipline and every possible effort would be made for the purpose. He said that special squads have been constituted for the purpose of removing illegal parking and vacating footpaths while indiscriminate action would be taken against violators. The operation would be extended to other areas of Islamabad to ensure smooth traffic flow.

Police taking strict action against unfit PSVs

RAWALPINDI (APP): Rawalpindi district police on the directives of City Police Officer (CPO) Rawalpindi Syed Khalid Hamdani are taking strict action against unfit Public Service Vehicles (PSVs). According to a police spokesman, Police under special campaign launched in Rawalpindi district issued challan slips to 9532 PSVs and impounded 1335 during 67 days. He informed that during a special campaign launched against unfit vehicles, police challaned over 9532 and imposed fines amounting to over Rs 10 million on the rules violators. He said that Police were taking action in accordance with the law against unfit PSVs, checking route permits and licenses of the drivers. Legal action was taken against 774 drivers for driving vehicles without licenses, he added.

KP govt's focuses on Politics not governance: KP Governor

ISLAMABAD (APP): Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP) Governor Faisal Karim Kundi said on Friday that the KP government has prioritized political activities over addressing the province's pressing issues.

In an interview with a private news channel, he highlighted the province's growing instability and the government's inadequate response.

"The provincial govern-

ment has failed to ensure peace in the region," Governor Kundi stated.

Chief Minister Ali Amin Gandapur was solely engaged in political gatherings and protests, showing little interest in addressing the province's core issues, he added.

Governor Kundi said that the federal government should prioritize establishing peace, as the people of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa have

made immense sacrifices for stability. He said that without immediate intervention, peace and stability in the province would be at continued risk.

He further said that sustainable peace would enable significant growth and development opportunities within the province.

When asked about the potential for the governor's rule in KP, he dismissed any such possibilities.

Muqam extends greetings to GB people on Independence Day

ISLAMABAD (APP): Federal Minister for Kashmir and Gilgit-Baltistan Affairs, SAFRON Engineer Amir Muqam, on Friday extended heartfelt felicitations to the GB people on the 77th Independence Day of Gilgit-Baltistan.

In his special message for Independence Day, Engineer Amir Muqam remarked that the people of Gilgit-Baltistan were uniquely honored to celebrate their independence twice: first on August 14

and again on November 1. This day marks a significant milestone in Gilgit-Baltistan's history when the region gained independence and formally joined Pakistan.

Engineer Amir Muqam called for remembrance of the people of Indian illegally occupied Jammu and Kashmir and Palestine on this auspicious day, recognizing their decades-long struggle for the self-determination.

He expressed gratitude

to Pakistan's armed forces for protecting the country's borders and sovereignty.

The Federal Government prioritized Gilgit-Baltistan's development, recognizing its importance in the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC), he said.

Engineer Amir Muqam emphasized the region's potential for tourism, and vowed to promote the sector. He also assured continued efforts for Gilgit-Baltistan's progress side by side GB government.

ANF seizes 45 kg drugs in nine operations

RAWALPINDI (APP): Anti-Narcotics Force (ANF) while conducting nine operations recovered over 45 kg drugs worth Rs 4.5 million and arrested nine accused, said an ANF Headquarters spokesman on Friday.

He said 100 grams hashish, 40 grams ice and 30 grams intoxicated tablets were recovered from an accused arrested near Jadon Hotel in Mansehra.

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

670 grams heroin-filled capsules were recovered from a passenger going to Sharjah at Lahore Airport.

4 grams cocaine and 10 grams weed were recovered from a parcel sent from the UK at a courier office in Rawalpindi.

24 kg hashish was recovered from Kohat road, Peshawar and 14.4 kg hashish was recovered from two suspects netted near Bypass Chowk in Jhang.

2.4 kg hashish was recovered from an accused held near Mandi Mor in

Islamabad.

3.4 kg hashish was recovered from a drug dealer arrested near Main GT Road in Rawalpindi.

650 grams opium was recovered from two suspects near Main GT Road, Attock.

115 grams heroin was recovered from an Afghan national arrested near Torkham border. Cases under the Anti-Narcotics Act have been registered against the arrested accused and further investigations are under process.



ISLAMABAD: Gypsy men searching valuables from garbage dump at Khanna Pul. —APP Photo

CDA Chairman unveils plan to resolve water challenges

ISLAMABAD (APP): Capital Development Authority (CDA), Chairman Muhammad Ali Randhawa on Friday emphasized the urgency of coordinated efforts among all stakeholders to resolve the critical water challenges facing the city.

The CDA chairman convened a meeting to address the pressing issues surrounding water resource management in Islamabad.

The meeting was attended by senior officers from CDA and representatives from WASA Rawalpindi, WAPDA, Rawalpindi Cantonment Board (RCB), and other relevant departments.

Chairman CDA, Muhammad Ali Randhawa stated that this meeting marked the road map for the newly established "Islamabad Water" agency after the recent approval from the cabinet.

The Director General

(Water Management Wing), CDA presented a comprehensive administrative and financial overview of the city's water resources and outlined the existing shortfall. He highlighted the disparity in water distri-

bution from Khanpur Dam and urged to undertake corrective measures to ensure equitable distribution.

The Chairman, CDA directed to carry out a joint survey by KPK and Punjab irrigation departments, RCB, WASA Rawalpindi and CDA of the 18 km distribution canal from the Khanpur Dam to address water leakage, water theft, and overuse of the share while WAPDA would lead the survey. Each department will survey its designated section of the canal.

The meeting also discussed the need for separate electricity meters for RCB, WASA, and CDA, taking this matter up with IESCO for swift action. Both RCB and WASA Rawalpindi committed to resolving outstanding dues with CDA to clear old liabilities urgently.

In addition, a plan for a having dedicated raw water pipeline from Khanpur Dam to reduce unauthorized water abstraction/theft was discussed, with stakeholders agreeing to share the pre-feasibility costs. The meeting also focused on future mega water projects, including the Indus River/Tarbela Dam water conduction proj-

ect to address long-term water shortages in Islamabad and Rawalpindi.

The Cherah Dam Project, being executed by the Govt. of Punjab on a 50% water and cost-sharing basis with CDA, has been going under a detailed designing and estimation phase; while WAPDA has been requested for pre-feasibility studies for Chinot and Shahdara Dams.

As far as the Dotara Carryover Dam is concerned, its pre-feasibility is already underway through WAPDA.

Chairman Randhawa directed the CDA Member of Technology and Digitalization to introduce IT interventions, including e-based governance, e-billing, and net metering, to enhance the efficiency and transparency of water resource management.

Additionally, concerns over water contamination at Khanpur Dam were raised, and urgent steps are being planned to make drinking water safe for Islamabad residents. The meeting concluded with a commitment from all stakeholders to resolve outstanding issues collaboratively and work toward a sustainable water supply for Islamabad.



ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Interior Mohsin Naqvi chairing a meeting in CDA Headquarters Islamabad. —APP Photo

Dengue affects 131 more patients

RAWALPINDI (APP): Dengue fever's consistent acceleration has added 131 new patients during last 24 hours.

According to the details released by the District Health Authority Rawalpindi on Friday, majority patients includes 47 from Pothohar Town Peri Urban areas while 36 from Rawalpindi Cantt Board localities and 12 patients were reported from Municipal Corporation areas.

Specialized dengue wards established in various allied hospitals contain 290 patients under treatment including 84 patients are admitted in Holy Family Hospital, 80 in Benazir Bhutto Hospital, 42 in Rawalpindi Teaching Hospital, 25 in Fauji Foundation Hospital and 25 patients are under treatment in different private hospitals.

Since January this year, as many as 4839 patients have been diagnosed with dengue fever.

Financial penalties/fine on dengue SOPs violators has reached Rs. 21.48 million. Besides imposing financial penalties, 5179 cases have also been registered against the violators. The data shows dengue fatalities remain 11 in the district.

Accused involved in rape case arrested

ISLAMABAD (APP): Islamabad Capital Territory (ICT) Police have successfully apprehended an accused involved in a case of sexual abuse and obtained his remand from the relevant court for further investigation.

A public relations officer told APP that, on 24 October 2024, the Bhara Kahu police team received a report from a victim's father who stated that his son was sexually assaulted by an accused. Upon receiving the information, the Bhara Kahu police team registered case No.581/24, he said.

Senior police officers took immediate notice of the sexual abuse case and directed the officers to apprehend the culprits on a priority basis, he said adding that a specialized police team was formed under the supervision of the SSP Investigation, he added.

He said that the special sexual offences investigation unit (SSOIU) and Bhara Kahu police teams utilized all scientific and technical resources and successfully apprehended the accused namely Mohsin involved in this case.

The police teams also obtained a physical remand of the accused, and further investigation is underway. The police team is also trying to get an accomplice of the accused.

Senior police officers appreciated the performance of the police team and emphasized that crimes of this nature against women and children are utterly unacceptable and that those responsible will be held accountable to the fullest extent of the law.

Major interchange projects set to launch in Capital

ISLAMABAD (APP): On the special instructions of Federal Interior Minister Mohsin Naqvi two mega projects will be launched to solve the long-standing traffic problems in Islamabad, providing great convenience to the citizens of Islamabad and other cities.

The foundation stone of Serena Chowk Interchange and F-8 Exchange Chowk Interchange projects will be laid on November 5. Serena Chowk Interchange will be completed in just 3 months instead of 10 months, with two underpasses and connecting roads.

F-8 Exchange Chowk Interchange will be completed in just 4 months instead of 12 months, with one flyover, one underpass, and connecting roads.

The Interior Minister has directed the Capital Development Authority (CDA) to complete the projects within the stipulated time frame. The CDA had earlier set a deadline of 10 months for Serena Chowk Interchange and 12 months for F-8 Exchange Chowk Interchange.

Mohsin Naqvi has approved the alternative traffic plan before the start of construction work.

He chaired an important meeting at the CDA, where the layout plans of Serena Chowk and F-8 Exchange Chowk Interchanges were reviewed.

Interior Minister directed that the relocation of various service lines from the interchange site be completed as soon as possi-

ble, and the projects be completed within the stipulated time frame by working 24/7. He emphasized the need for the best traffic management to maintain traffic flow, and a special unit has been formed for duty on the projects. He said that the special unit's personnel will be deployed 24/7 around the projects to maintain traffic flow.

Mohsin Naqvi also directed comprehensive planning to improve traffic flow at Faizabad Interchange. He was given a detailed briefing on the construction of Serena Chowk and F-8 Interchanges, and Chief Traffic Officer Islamabad Sarfraz Virk briefed him on the traffic plan during the construction work.

Govt to utilize all resources for Balochistan's development: Ahsan

ISLAMABAD (APP): Minister for Planning, Development, and Special Initiatives, Ahsan Iqbal Friday said that the Federal Government was committed to utilising all resources for the development of the Balochistan province.

Responding to a question during the ongoing 343rd session of the Upper House, he informed that a total of 200 PSDP projects were underway in Balochistan, with an esti-

mated cost of 1429 billion rupees.

He said an amount of 130 billion rupees had been earmarked for the PSDP in 2024-25 while more allocation of funds would be ensured for the uplift of the Balochistan projects.

However, he stressed the importance of improving the administrative capacity of provinces for better service delivery of funds and resources after

allocations.

Meanwhile, Minister for Industries and Production, Rana Tanveer Hussain replying to a question told the House that restructuring of the Utility Stores Corporation was underway to make it more viable in terms of business and its day-to-day operations.

The Minister said that during the restructuring, the rights of the utility Stores' employees would be safeguarded.

No change in bank hours; security measures enhanced: Police

ISLAMABAD (APP): Islamabad Capital Territory (ICT) Police on Friday clarified that no instructions have been issued to alter the operating hours of banks, and all banks continue to function per their usual schedule.

A public relations officer told APP that, ICT Police emphasized that recommendations have been provided to financial institutions to strengthen their security protocols.

He said these suggestions aim to enhance security within banks and financial institutions across the capital, especially in light of the recent spike in bank robberies over the past few days.

The ICT police have reaffirmed that they are actively implementing measures to support the safety of financial institutions and to address security concerns following

these incidents.

In light of recent incidents, the Islamabad Police are actively working on measures to improve security for all financial institutions," the public relations officer added.

Authorities reminded citizens that verified information and updates will be officially released through the Public Relations Branch of the Islamabad Police, he added.

Jabbar's books "Streams" and "Shade & Light" launched

ISLAMABAD (APP): Former senator and federal minister Javed Jabbar with an illustrious carrier in writing, media, film-making and voluntary services unveiled two more books, "Streams" and "Shade & Light" at a ceremony held at Islamabad Policy Research Institute (IPRI) on Friday.

The ceremony was attended by book-lovers, academicians, diplomats, retired services personnel and notables of the city, said a press release.

Javed Jabbar, in his remarks, said that solutions to media ills are practical, and are in need of being explored. He said that books are all about being nostalgic, as the art of communication is in writing it as an ideal form of solitude. "It's all about communi-

cating with yourself as you involve in writing," the celebrated writer of 21 books to this date observed.

He said that the intrinsic value of content matters and not likes or dislikes of readers. He threw light on the evolution of Pakistani society and as to how it has struggled to keep the passion of word and thought alive.

The book "Streams" brings together selected writings from 2016 to 2023 on media, Europe, USA, environment, development, culture and society. It includes new, original explorations of media and content in an insightful essay titled: "Knowledge and Knowledge".

Likewise, the book "Shade and Light" presents selected writings from the same era on aspects of the

remarkable life and legacy of the Founder of Pakistan, reflections on diverse aspects of ideology, national identity, security, and on international affairs, including Pakistan's relations with Bangladesh, India, and on terrorism, extremism and radicalism.

Eminent writer and celebrated poet Harris Khalique, in his comments, said that Streams opens a new window into understanding contemporary Pakistan, and is a must read.

Former Resident Editor Dawn, Arifa Noor also spoke on the occasion and underscored the need for rekindling the habit of reading, and praised the author for consistently keeping alive the passion of energetic writing that remains relevant for times to come.

Envoy attends exhibition

KABUL (BNA): The Islamic Emirate Embassy in Doha has announced that Dr. Mohammad Naeem, the acting Ambassador of Afghanistan to Qatar, participated in the "One Book, One Community" exhibition in response to an official invitation from Qatar's Ministry of Foreign Affairs. The event, hosted at the Katara Cultural Village, was dedicated to raising awareness about the severe hardships faced by the Palestinian people and exposing the ongoing atrocities they endure.

Cancer cases surpass 50%

KABUL (TOLONews): Amid Breast Cancer Awareness Month, the technical head of the National Cancer Control Program said that breast cancer ranks among the top ten most common cancers in the country. Khalid Khalilzai reported that in 2023, 1,283 patients with breast cancer visited this center for treatment. Among patients with ten types of cancer in the country who visited the program's treatment center last year, 50.9% were breast cancer patients.

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

Key sections of Kabul-Kandahar Highway paved

KABUL (TOLONews): The Ministry of Public Works reported the completion of asphaltting on four sections of the Kabul-Kandahar Road.

This highway is a crucial route for transporting commercial goods and passengers between the central and southern regions.

A spokesperson for the ministry said that the asphaltting work on four sections of the Kabul-Kandahar highway, covering 102 kilometers, which began last year by the ministry, is now complete, and asphaltting on other sections is also ongoing.

Mohammad Ashraf Haqshinas, spokesperson for the Ministry of Public Works, said: "The primary reconstruction work of the Kabul-Kandahar major highway, which started last year, has now completed over four sections

with more than 102 kilometers of paving, and work on the remaining sections continues."

Abdul Zahoor Madbar, an economic analyst, commented on the matter, saying: "The more standardized the transportation system is, the more costs decrease, allowing timely arrival at destinations. Overall, it can have a positive impact on public welfare, the economy, and the growth of a country and society."

Meanwhile, the Chamber of Commerce and Investment, noting the importance of the country's highways for economic development, emphasizes the need for their standard reconstruction and construction.

Khanjan Alokozai, a member of the Board of Directors of the Chamber of Commerce and Inve-

stment, said: "Roads are essential for ground transport, and the better and more standardized a road is, the longer it lasts without damage, positively impacting transportation and reducing trade costs, thereby boosting commerce."

Qutbuddin Yaqubi, another economic analyst, said: "Roads paved according to international standards can play a vital role in trade exchanges and create employment opportunities within the country."

Previously, officials from the Ministry of Public Works, noting the importance of the Kabul-Kandahar highway, said that the reconstruction work on this highway has been divided into 13 sections and is progressing rapidly, with completion expected by the end of the current solar year.

DAB plans to set up electronic payments

KABUL (Ariana News): Da Afghanistan Bank (DAB) officials say they first plan to set up electronic payments in large stores and oil stations in Kabul city and then in other big cities of the country.

DAB officials stated this system of payment can prevent the physical transaction of money.

They added that with electronic payments money circulation is prevented and the value of the afghani currency increases.

"Our effort is to have these machines in stores and oil stations in the first stage so that citizens can pay their transactions electronically," said Haseebullah Noori, DAB spokesman.

Meanwhile, some industrialists said that when electronic payments become common, this will also increase business and on the other hand, services will be accelerated.

"This system has many benefits. One is that physical money is not used and the second is that it creates a facility for people. Thirdly, these funds are kept and consolidated in the country's banks, and the banks can invest in Afghanistan," said Abdul Jabbar Safi, director of the Association of Industrialists.

DAB stated it will expand electronic payments first in the capital and then in big cities. Currently, the majority of transactions within the country are done with physical money.

However, this is not the case in other countries and all financial transactions are done through banks and electronic payments.

Schools in Chaharbulok sans buildings

M A A R - I - S H A R I F (Pajhwok): Some students in the Chaharbulok district of Balkh province have complained about the shortage of teachers and non-availability of school buildings and drinking water.

Lutfullah, a student of Imam Fakhruddin Razi School in the Shaitai village, told Pajhwok Afghan News their school is without a building and faced with a shortage of teachers.

He said: "We have a shortage of teachers, the number of teachers should be increased, we want water wells and school buildings to be built, because we study under tents in hot and cold weather."

Ahmad Navid, another student of same school, said due to the shortage of teachers and non-availability of building the students of three classes studied in one tent. "Our school is primary, intermediate school is 10 kilometres away from our village, students like me could not complete school."

Naseba, another student, also complained against the shortage of teachers and non-availability of building and asked the government to address their problems.

Shah Mohammad, the principle of Imam Fakhruddin Razi School, complained about the shortage of teachers and said this school was without building. He said: "Our school does not have a building, we only have three teachers in the whole school who teach all the classes, lack of clean water, toilet, stationery, books are also our main problems."

Chaha Bulok District Education Director Hameedullah Hamasi said there were 48 primary, intermediate and high schools in the district out of which nine were without building and the building of four schools are half completed.

District Chief Ghulam Dastagir Jalali acknowledged the problems faced by the students and said efforts were underway to address these problems.

He said: "There are many problems in Chaharbulok district, some schools do not have buildings, some schools that have buildings do not have a wall around them, many others study at home or do not have access to clean water."

Afghan women's rights:

Islamic Emirate rejects UN women's report

KABUL (TOLONews): The Islamic Emirate has rejected the report from the United Nations Women's division, calling it disconnected from reality.

Zabihullah Mujahid, spokesperson for the Islamic Emirate, said that such reports are based not on information from within Afghanistan, but rather on external propaganda sources.

Mujahid said: "Our response to this report is that, unfortunately, this survey is not accurate. Such views are often based not on information from within Afghanistan but on certain propaganda from groups outside the country or from people who have left the country. We have many women in Afghanistan who are involved in business and other productive work, achieving progress in their fields. Women are also active in various sectors within the government framework."

Earlier, the UN Women division claimed in a report that women in Afghanistan are moving toward an increasingly restrictive



environment concerning their rights.

A part of this 13-page report states that the caretaker government has imposed restrictive directives violating women's rights across all sectors. Findings from consultations with several Afghan women show that over the past 12 months, around 79% of female respondents were denied access to public places such as parks and health centers.

The report further stated that a significant number

(69%) of female respondents noted that they do not feel safe when they step outside their homes. The respondents mentioned a notable change in the societal perspective on girls' education, both at the primary (47% of women respondents) and secondary levels (65% of women respondents).

Approximately 79% of women said that they had not utilized any formal dispute resolution institutions in the past year.

"As human beings,

women have a set of rights granted by God that no one can overlook," Alamtab Rasouli, a women's rights activist, told TOLONews.

Another section of the report highlights that 57% of women and 34% of men expressed concern about the decline in their financial situation over the past quarter and criticized the presence of discrimination in the hiring process across various sectors—concerns that the Islamic Emirate had previously denied.

Team of doctors from Canada, including Afghans, treat Cancer

KABUL (TOLONews): A joint team of Afghan and Canadian doctors has arrived in Kabul from Canada to treat cancer patients.

These doctors reported that they have performed complex chest surgeries at Aliabad Teaching Hospital.

Ahmad Shah Ashrafi, who has worked in chest surgery in Canada for more than two decades, is now in Kabul and, along with a six-member team of doctors, is engaged in complex chest surgeries at Aliabad Teaching Hospital. Doctor Ashrafi said that the purpose of this team's visit is to treat cancer patients and collaborate with Afghan doctors.

Ahmad Shah Ashrafi told TOLONews: "I have always wished to come to Afghanistan; I have always wanted to serve my country and my people. Our main goal is the exchange of knowledge, not only to teach but also to learn from Afghan brothers and sisters working in the medical and healthcare fields."

Ahmad Shah Ashrafi's Canadian colleagues expressed their happiness about visiting Kabul, adding that they have shared valuable experiences in various fields with Afghan doctors.

Angela Babok, an ICU specialist, said, "I have always wanted to come back, so this is kind of a dream come true for me, to come back to my country, and to be able to help colleagues

and to share knowledge."

Dorothy Saliga, a nurse, told TOLONews: "My purpose in coming to Afghanistan is to treat Afghan patients and to share what I have learned in esophageal cancer surgeries with Afghan doctors."

Jane Glynis, an anesthesiologist who has also come to Afghanistan, said, "I am honored to be here, serving Afghan patients, extending a helping hand to Afghan doctors, and continuing to collaborate with Afghans."

Meanwhile, officials at Aliabad Teaching Hospital welcomed the team's arrival in Kabul and encouraged other doctors to participate in treating Afghan patients.

Abdul Manan Bawari,

Director of the Comprehensive Cancer Center at Aliabad Teaching Hospital, told TOLONews: "Our specialists, doctors, nurses, and anesthesiologists received training in various areas during this ten-day training, which is a significant achievement for us."

Lis Hamidi, a technologist, said: "It is one hundred percent successful. The advanced equipment Dr. Ashrafi brought is very modern and quite valuable."

Previously, some Afghan doctors residing in other countries also returned to Afghanistan, participating in the treatment of children with cleft lips and palates, and other patients, free of charge.

Russian FM awards head of Afghan Business Center

KABUL (Ariana News): Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov has awarded Mohammad Nadir Shah Juma Khan, Chairman of the Afghan Business Center Council, the Order of Honor for his significant contributions to fostering friendship between the peoples of Russia and Afghanistan, according to a statement released by Russia's Foreign Ministry.

"On October 30, Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Viktorovich Lavrov met with Mohammad Nadir Shah Juma Khan, Chairman of the Afghan Business Center for Cultural and National Initiative 'Partnerships,'" stated the ministry.

During the ceremony,



Lavrov presented him with the Order of Honor in recognition of his outstanding personal efforts

in promoting friendship and cooperation between the Russian and Afghan peoples.

This honor was conferred by a decree from Russian President Vladimir Putin, published earlier.

Carpet sellers report declining sales

KABUL (Amu TV): Afghanistan's carpet industry, long a hallmark of the country's rich artisanal heritage, is facing a sharp downturn over the past three years, according to local carpet traders and artisans.

Traders report that without support or export initiatives, Afghanistan's domestic market and export trade in handwoven carpets have stalled.

Many sellers told Amu that Afghan carpets, which are globally recognized for their intricate designs, are now often sold at low prices to Pakistan, where they are rebranded and exported internationally under the Pakistani label.

"A unique feature of Afghanistan, these handmade carpets have always stood out in regional and global markets," one carpet dealer explained. Afghan carpets have historically been prized as one of the nation's top export products.

Hazrat Shah, a carpet seller, lamented the lack of government action: "Our domestic carpets have faced neglect, and no one has paid attention. Go ask any shop owner—yes, the Afghan carpet industry is in

decline." Some traders criticized the Taliban's apparent indifference, warning that Afghan carpets are losing their previous markets and that without intervention, this traditional industry could collapse entirely.

"We have no sales, no market," said Gul Agha, another carpet vendor. "If we had access to global markets, our exports would improve."

Taliban, however, claim that they exported \$9 million worth of Afghan

handwoven carpets in the first six months of the current solar year, though traders argue that the reality on the ground tells a different story.

The Afghan Carpet Weavers' Union estimates that around 80% of Afghanistan's carpet production is exported to Pakistan at minimal prices, where it is then resold internationally under Pakistani branding due to insufficient support and resources within Afghanistan.



Kabul, Moscow talk trade, economic relationships



KABUL (Pajhwok): Acting Minister of Commerce and Industries Nooruddin Azizi during a meeting with Russian Ambassador Dmitry Zhimov discussed the expansion of the economic and trade relationship between the two countries, a statement said.

The Ministry of Commerce and Industries in a statement said that the two sides

discussed the purpose of consolidating and expanding the economic and trade relations between the two countries in relation to the establishment of a joint working group, trade and economic cooperation, the holding of the Afghan-Russian trade forum, Afghanistan's readiness to participate in the international corridor and the

North-South transit.

The launch of projects considering the common interests of the two countries, investment opportunities in the mining, agriculture, energy, water and industry sectors in Afghanistan, constructive interaction and the continuation of the expansion of economic relations have been discussed by both sides.

Private sectors sign contracts worth \$100m

KABUL (Ariana News): Private sectors of Afghanistan and Kazakhstan have signed contracts worth \$100 million during the visit of an Afghan delegation to Almaty recently, the Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan (IEA) announced.

The agreements include the export of more than 2,000 tons of dried fruit, the export of fresh fruit, including pomegranates, and the export of cotton, Zabihullah Mujahid, a spokesman for the Islamic Emirate, said on X.

Mujahid said that the Islamic Emirate delegation during its recent visit to Kazakhstan signed a "road

map of cooperation between Afghanistan and Kazakhstan in the fields of trade, industry, mining, energy, logistics, agriculture, telecommunications, health, higher education and humanitarian aid."

He said Kazakhstan also assured that it would provide more facilities for the transit of Afghan goods to China and other countries through Kazakhstan.

The allocation of an area "as a logistics center for Afghan goods" in the port of Khargos was also part of the agreement between the two sides to facilitate the unloading and loading of

Afghan traders' goods.

The spokesman of the Islamic Emirate also said that Kazakhstan will participate in the construction of the Torghundi-Herat, Kandahar-Spin Boldak and Mazar-e-Sharif-Kharlachi railway projects.

Mujahid added that Kazakhstan will also participate in the establishment of a trade and transit center in Herat province, which will be used to store and finance trade and transit goods. Meanwhile, Kazakhstan has agreed to establish permanent expo centers for the sale of Afghan goods in various cities of Kazakhstan.

5 executed in retribution cases since IEA rule



KABUL (TOLONews): Atiqullah Darwish, the Chief of the Criminal Division of the Supreme Court, said that since the Islamic Emirate returned to power, five retribution sentences of execution have been implemented across the country.

During a meeting in Panjshir province, he said that approximately 30 additional retribution sentences have been issued by the country's courts and will be

carried out upon approval by the leader of the Islamic Emirate.

The Chief of the Criminal Division of the Supreme Court said, "Five retribution sentences of execution have been carried out, and nearly 30 other cases are finalized and will be enforced after leadership approval."

The governor of Panjshir also emphasized the need to update the Islamic Emirate's criminal laws,

saying that these changes aim to reduce crime and create deterrent punishments for offenders.

Mohammad Agha Hakim, governor of Panjshir, said: "Afghanistan's Islamic Emirate should renew criminal laws in a way that punishments for criminals serve as a lesson for others, without leniency toward offenders. This approach will help us better control crime and criminals."

Abdullah Sadid, head of the Panjshir Appeals Court, said: "About 12 criminal cases have been processed, with punishments carried out for seven of them. One case was resolved in court, two were sent for approval by the Supreme Court, and two retribution cases are pending, as both parties are seeking reconciliation."

According to the Chief of the Criminal Court of the Supreme Court, Sharia law is applied uniformly across the country.

N Korea pledges to stand by Russia until win in Ukraine

SEOUL: North Korea will back Russia until it achieves victory in Ukraine, Foreign Minister Choe Son Hui said in Moscow as the United States warned thousands of Pyongyang's troops were at the Ukrainian border and could soon be deployed into combat.

In her meeting on Friday with Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov, Choe also accused the US and South Korea of plotting a nuclear strike against her country. "Our traditional, historically friendly relations, which have travelled the tested path of history, today... are rising to a new level of relations of invincible military comradeship," she said, praising the role played in this by North Korean leader Kim Jong Un and Russian President Vladimir Putin.

She said North Korea had no doubt that under Putin's "wise leadership" the Russian army and people would "achieve a great victory in their sacred struggle to protect the sovereign rights and security interests of their state". "And we also assure that until the day of victory we will firmly stand alongside

our Russian comrades," Choe said.

Lavrov spoke of the "very close ties" between the two countries' militaries and said this enabled them to solve important security tasks together. The two did not address statements by leaders in Ukraine, South Korea and their Western allies that Pyongyang had deployed some 10,000 North Korean soldiers to Russia to fight in Ukraine.

On Thursday, US Secretary of State Antony Blinken said as many as 8,000 North Korean soldiers were in the Kursk region, where Ukrainian troops crossed the border into Russia in a surprise incursion in August, and that he expected them to go into combat against Ukraine in the coming days. "We are deeply grateful to our Korean friends for their principled position regarding the events that have now unfolded in Ukraine as a result of the West's course of advancing NATO to the east and encouraging an openly racist regime to exterminate everything Russian," Lavrov said.

Choe told Lavrov that the situation on the Korean

Peninsula could become "explosive" any moment, given the threats from Washington and Seoul, but did not provide any evidence to back her allegations. She said North Korea needed to strengthen its nuclear arsenal and perfect its readiness to deliver a retaliatory nuclear strike if necessary.

On Thursday, Pyongyang confirmed it launched a new intercontinental ballistic missile (ICBM) towards waters off its eastern coast in what was the longest flight time yet for a North Korean missile, authorities in South Korea and Japan said, raising fears of advanced weapons development by the reclusive nation. Kim was present at the missile test launch and issued a warning to his enemies as he described it as an expression of his country's resolve to respond to external threats to North Korea's security, the official Korean Central News Agency (KCNA) reported. On Friday, North Korea boasted that the ICBM it test-launched was "the world's strongest missile" and identified it as Hwasong-19. — Aljazeera

Japan, EU announce security partnership

TOKYO: Japan and the European Union have announced a security and defence partnership, as they seek to step up military ties amid growing tensions with China, North Korea and Russia. "We live in a very dangerous world," EU foreign policy chief Josep Borrell told reporters in Tokyo on Friday, alongside Japanese Foreign Minister Takeshi Iwaya.

"We live in a world of growing rivalries, climate accidents and threats of war. And there is only one antidote to this challenging world, which is partnerships among friends," Borrell added, announcing the security partnership. The agreement is the first that the EU has concluded with an Asia Pacific country, the two officials said. "It is an historical and very timely step given the situation in both of our regions," Borrell said.

The EU official is in Tokyo as part of an East Asia tour that includes South Korea, where he will also hold a strategic dialogue, underscoring the EU's increasing engagement with the Asia Pacific region, as China and Russia step up joint military activities and North Korea sends troops to Russia. Their talks came a day after North Korea test-fired what is believed to be a new type of ICBM-class ballistic missile.

Borrell and Iwaya also shared "grave concern" about Russia's deepening military cooperation with North Korea, including the North's troop deployment to Russia and arms transfers between the two countries, according to an EU statement. The two officials reiterated their commitment to supporting Ukraine and condemned Russian aggression. Japan, under a new security strategy adopted in 2022, has been rapidly accelerating its military buildup through its alliance with the United States, its only treaty ally, and other partners, including Australia, the United Kingdom and a number of European and Asia Pacific countries, to deter an increasingly assertive China. — Agencies



MASTUNG: Officials inspecting a damaged vehicle after bomb blast.

Senate body agrees to raise number of SC judges to 25

F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: Amid opposition from the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) and Jamiat-Ulema-e-Islam Fazl (JUI-F), the Senate Standing Committee on Law and Justice agreed to increase the number of Supreme Court judges to 25 in order to clear the backlog of cases.

The meeting, presided over by Senator Farooq H Naek, agreed to increase the sanctioned strength of SC judges to 25, including chief justice of Pakistan. During the committee's meeting, the former ruling party and JUI-F lawmakers strongly opposed the decision, with PTI Senator Hamid Khan saying that they have strong reservations over such legislation. "Such a method to appoint SC judges is an attack on judicial independence," he said.

JUI-F Senator Kamran Murtaza, in a statement, said the legislation was meant to appoint "favourite judges" in the top court. "After Oct 25, the judges are working in a smooth manner [...] There is no need to increase the sanctioned strength," he added. However, Pakistan People's Party (PPP) Senator Shahadat Awan emphasised the need to raise the number SC judges to at least 21.

Speaking to Geo News, Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) Senator Khalid Tahir said that Senator Abdul Qadir had presented the private member bill, seeking increased SC judges' strength. During the meeting, he said, the majority of members of the Senate Standing Committee

supported enhancing the number to 25 for "speedy justice".

He pointed out that more than 60,000 cases were pending in the apex court, while also stressed the need to increase number of judges in the high courts. On the other hand, JUI-F Senator Murtaza said that he and PTI's Hamid opposed the bill, adding that the bill is an attack on "independent judiciary". He asked the government not to change the principles, which he says, will give the impression of appointing favourite judges.

"By introducing such legislation, you [the government] are trying to further intensify division [in the judiciary]," he said. Recently, a full court meeting — chaired by newly-appointed CJP Yahya Afridi — was informed that 59,191 cases were currently pending in the apex court.

Earlier in September, an independent senator from Balochistan, Mohammad Abdul Qadir tabled a bill in Upper House of Parliament, seeking an amendment to the Supreme Court (Number of Judges) Act, 1997 to increase the number of top court judges to 20 sans the chief justice. He sought the increase in the number of top court judges from 17 to 21 as "more than 53,000 cases" pending in the apex court.

Federal Minister for Law and Justice Azam Nazeer Tarar also backed the legislation and suggested forwarding the new bill to the relevant committee. Tarar, while address-

ing the Senate session, endorsed the points raised by Senator Qadir, saying several cases pertaining to capital punishments still awaiting verdicts since 2015. "A person spent 34 years in jail due to a pending appeal before the top court," he added.

It is noteworthy to mention here that in a bid to reduce pendency of the cases, two retired judges — Justice (ret'd) Tariq Masood and Justice (ret'd) Mazhar Alam Miankhel — had been appointed as ad hoc judges to the apex court for a period of one year in July. Meanwhile, The News reported that the government has decided to defer the introduction of a key bill — seeking to amend the Supreme Court (number of Judges) (Amendment) Bill, 2024 — in National Assembly.

The bill is now likely to be taken up by the House on the private members day on upcoming Tuesday. PML-N MNA Danyal Chaudhry will move the bill as a private member and the same will be supported by members on treasury benches. The proposed legislation which requires a simple majority to sail through the House will seek an increase in the number of judges of the Supreme Court of Pakistan.

The development came as the ruling coalition continues to bring reforms in the country's judicial structure with the latest being the 26th Constitutional Amendment — which changed the procedure for the appointment of the CJP, fixed the post's tenure, and formed constitutional benches.

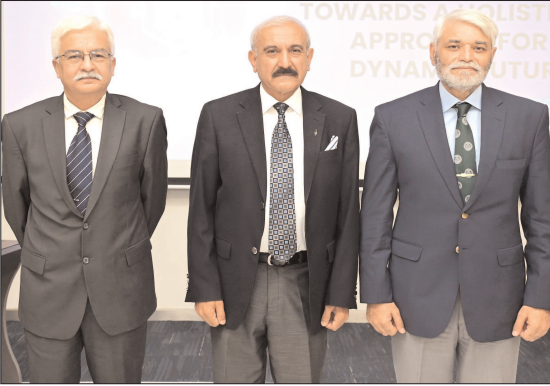
Need for adaptable security strategies stressed

F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: The Centre for Aerospace & Security Studies (CASS), Islamabad, conducted a special session under its Catalyst Conversation Series on 'Comprehensive Security 2.0: Towards a Holistic Approach for a Dynamic Future' with Major General Muhammad Khalil Dar (Retd), Vice Chancellor of Lahore Garrison University, for a critical examination of evolving national security challenges.

Air Marshal Zahid Hussain (Retd), Director (National Security) at CASS and moderator of the Catalyst Conversation, initiated the discussion by underscoring the complex, interconnected nature of modern national security challenges. He outlined how geopolitical tensions, cybersecurity threats, and domestic issues like terrorism and social unrest had diversified the national security landscape. Introducing the session's key aims, he hoped it would not only clarify how the concept of 'national security' had evolved historically and globally, but also promote public awareness of contemporary security issues, particularly the crucial role citizens play in supporting security initiatives.

In his keynote address, the distinguished Speaker, Major General Muhammad Khalil Dar (Retd), highlighted that national security is far more than military power alone; it encompasses



a comprehensive approach that spans historical turning points, global alliances, and modern cyber threats. Reflecting on landmark events like the French Revolution and World Wars, he discussed how these pivotal moments redefined sovereignty, power-sharing, and the foundations of comprehensive national security. His insights underscored a need for adaptable security strategies to address today's multidimensional challenges.

Major General Dar further explored how countries are developing cyber resilience through both defensive and offensive strategies, emphasising the role of citizen engagement in enhancing digital security. He shared practical advice on cyber hygiene, advocating for strong password management, regular software updates, and caution against phishing tactics.

Furthermore, he recommended adopting international security strategies to create flexible frameworks that address evolving threats. By advocating a

comprehensive security model, he stressed the importance of cooperation among government, institutions, and the public to build a resilient and secure future.

In his Concluding Remarks and Vote of Thanks, Air Marshal Javid Ahmed (Retd), President CASS-Islamabad, highlighted the shifting dynamics of modern warfare, sharing how mini-alliances now engage in a range of strategies beyond traditional combat. He noted the increasing role of economic sanctions and trade wars as powerful tools, alongside kinetic warfare, which has evolved since World Wars I and II. According to him, today's adversaries utilise advanced satellite surveillance to gain full visibility of target areas, transforming warfare into a high-tech arena where intelligence and precision play critical roles. This shift, he concluded, reflects the changing landscape of global security, where technology and alliances are redefining national security and conflict management.

Spain flood death toll hits 205

MADRID (Reuters): Spanish rescuers opened a temporary morgue in a convention centre and battled to reach areas still cut off on Friday as the death toll from catastrophic floods rose to 205 people in Europe's worst weather disaster in five decades.

In Valencia, the eastern region that bore the brunt of the devastation, about 500 soldiers were deployed to hunt for people who are still missing and help survivors of the storm, which triggered a fresh weather alert in Huelva in southwestern Spain. Officials said the death toll is likely to keep rising. It is already Spain's worst flood-related disaster in modern history and the deadliest to hit Europe since the 1970s.

In Alfafar, a suburb outside the city of Valencia, Spain's third-largest, drone footage showed the tangled wreckage of dozens of vehicles strewn across rail tracks. "It's all destroyed, shops, supermarkets, schools, cars," said local resident Patricia Villar. Close by, a boat that had been carried by the floodwaters lay on a muddy street corner. Emergency services working to clear cars piled up at the entrance of a flooded underpass in the suburb feared finding more trapped bodies.

"We're trying to remove vehicles bit by bit to see if there are victims," one rescue worker told state television. "We don't know." With about 75,000 homes still without electricity, firefighters were siphoning petrol from cars that had been abandoned in the floods to power generators to get domestic supplies back on. "We're going from car to car looking for any petrol we can find," said one firefighter who had travelled to Valencia from the southern region of Andalusia to assist rescue efforts, carrying a plastic tube and empty bottles to collect the petrol from the cars' tanks.

A year of rain fell in just eight hours on Tuesday night, destroying roads, railway tracks and bridges as rivers burst their banks. The flooding also submerged thousands of hectares of farmland in the region, which produces nearly two-thirds of citrus fruit in Spain — the world's top exporter of oranges. "The magnitude of the catastrophe has no precedent," Transport Minister Oscar Puente told local television.

47 Palestinians killed overnight in Israeli strikes in Gaza

GAZA (Reuters): Forty seven Palestinians were killed and dozens injured, most of them children and women, in overnight Israeli bombardment of the city of Deir Al-Balah, the Nuseirat camp and the town of Al-Zawayda in the central Gaza Strip, the Palestinian news agency Wafa reported on Friday.

The Gaza war began after Hamas-led militants attacked Israel on Oct. 7, 2023, killing some 1,200 people and taking 251 hostages back to Gaza, according to Israeli tallies. Israel's subsequent assault on Gaza has killed more than 43,000 Palestinians and reduced most of the enclave to rubble, Palestinian authorities say.

At least 46 Palestinians were killed in Israeli military strikes across the Gaza Strip on Thursday, mostly in the north where one attack hit a hospital, torching medical supplies and disrupting operations, the enclave's health officials said. Israel's military has accused the Palestinian militant group Hamas of using Kamal Adwan Hospital in Beit Lahya for military purposes and said "dozens of terrorists" have been hiding there. Health officials and Hamas deny the assertion.

The health ministry in the Gaza Strip called for all international bodies "to protect hospitals and medical staff from the brutality of the (Israeli) occupation." Medical charity Médecins Sans

Frontières (MSF) said on Thursday that one of its doctors at the hospital, Mohammed Obeid, had been detained last Saturday by Israeli forces. It called for the protection of him and all medical staff who "are facing horrific violence as they try to provide care."

Meanwhile, more than a year into a war that has ricocheted across the Middle East, Israeli troops are still battling Hamas in the most heavily destroyed and isolated part of the Gaza Strip. In northern Gaza, Hamas militants carry out hit-and-run attacks from bombed-out buildings. Residents say Israeli forces have raided shelters for the displaced, forcing people out at gunpoint. First responders say they can barely operate because of the Israeli bombardment.

Since its Oct. 7 attack into Israel that sparked the war in Gaza, Hamas has taken heavy losses. The recent killing of its top leader, Yahya Sinwar, was viewed as a possible turning point, yet the two sides do not appear any closer to a ceasefire, and Hamas, which still holds scores of hostages, remains the dominant power in Gaza. The conflict has drawn in militants from Lebanon to Yemen, and their key sponsor, Iran, has inched closer to all-out war with Israel. But in northern Gaza, the war seems stuck in a loop of devastating Israeli offensives, followed by Hamas fighters regrouping.

Israel is once again ordering mass evacuations, severely restricting aid despite global outrage and raiding hospitals it says are used by militants. In the northern border town of Beit Lahya — one of the first targets of last year's ground invasion — two Israeli strikes this week killed at least 88 Palestinians, including dozens of women and children. The military said its target was a spotter on the roof.

As the war grinds on, Israel is resorting to ever more draconian measures. There is even talk of adopting a surrender-or-starve strategy proposed by former generals. On Monday, Israel passed legislation that could severely restrict the UN agency that is the largest aid provider in Gaza despite protests by the United States and other close allies. It accuses the agency of allowing itself to be infiltrated by Hamas, allegations denied by the UN. Israel launched its latest offensive in northern Gaza in early October, focusing on Jabaliya, a crowded, decades-old urban refugee camp where it says Hamas had regrouped. Hamas-led militants killed some 1,200 people, mostly civilians, and abducted another 250 that day. Israel's offensive has killed over 43,000 Palestinians, according to Gaza health authorities, who do not say how many were combatants but say more than half were women and children.

Lebanon PM says expanded strikes suggest Israel's 'rejection' of truce

BEIRUT (AFP): Lebanon's Prime Minister Najib Mikati on Friday criticized Israel's "expansion" of its attacks on his country, saying they indicated a rejection of efforts to broker a truce after more than a month of war.

"The Israeli enemy's renewed expansion of the scope of its aggression on Lebanese regions, its repeated threats to the population to evacuate entire cities and villages, and its renewed targeting of the southern suburbs of Beirut with destructive raids are all indicators that confirm the Israeli enemy's rejection of all efforts being made to secure a ceasefire," Mikati said. Mikati's statement came a day after Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu met visiting US officials to discuss a possible deal to end the war in Lebanon.

The Lebanese premier added that Israel's diplomatic behavior suggested it was rejecting a ceasefire.

The office of Lebanese caretaker prime minister Najib Mikati on Friday

denied that the US had asked Lebanon to declare a unilateral ceasefire, after two sources told Reuters that a US envoy had made the request to inject momentum into stalled talks on a deal to end hostilities between Hezbollah and Israel.

In a statement to Reuters, Mikati's office said the government's stance was clear on seeking a ceasefire from both sides and the implementation of UN Security Council Resolution 1701, which ended the last round of conflict between the two foes in 2006. "Israeli statements and diplomatic signals that Lebanon received confirm Israel's stubbornness in rejecting the proposed solutions and insisting on the approach of killing and destruction," Mikati said in a statement.

Since fighting in Lebanon escalated on September 23, the war has killed at least 1,829 people in Lebanon, according to an AFP tally of health ministry figures. On Wednesday, Mikati said US envoy Amos Hochstein had signalled during

a phone call that a ceasefire in the Israel-Hezbollah war was possible before US elections are held on November 5. The same day, Hezbollah's new leader said the group would agree to a ceasefire with Israel under acceptable terms, but added that a viable deal has yet to be presented. During talks on Thursday, Israeli leader Netanyahu told US envoys Amos Hochstein and Brett McGurk that any Lebanon deal must guarantee Israel's longer-term security.

Meanwhile, the World Health Organization said Friday it is deeply concerned about Israeli attacks hitting health care workers and facilities in Lebanon, in its war against Hezbollah. "We are really, really concerned, deeply concerned, about the rising attacks on health workers and the facilities in Lebanon, and we are again and again and again emphasizing that health care is not a target; health workers are not a target," WHO spokeswoman Margaret Harris told a media briefing in Geneva.