

LHC Bar challenges Amend
F.P. Report

LAHORE: The Lahore High Court Bar has challenged the 26th Constitutional Amendment in Supreme Court. Hamid Khan has filed a constitutional petition of the LHC Bar in the apex court seeking the court to declare various clauses of the 26th Amendment as unconstitutional. Petitioner pleads to the court to declare section 7,9,10,12,13,14, as well as section 16,17 and 21 as unconstitutional.



@thefrontierpost

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

www.thefrontierpost.com

Vol. XXXIXI

No. 280

Regd. No. 241

RABI-US-SANNI 30 1446 -- SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 03 2024

PESHAWAR EDITION

12 PAGES

PRICE. 30



ISLAMABAD: Chief Justice of Pakistan, Justice Yahya Afridi in a meeting with other stakeholders on jail reforms.

CJP launches initiative for comprehensive jail reforms

F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: Chief Justice of Pakistan Yahya Afridi on Saturday launched initiatives for comprehensive jail reforms for effective prison system to ensure a fair legal framework.

A pivotal consultative meeting was held at the Lahore, presided over by the Chief Justice of Pakistan, Mr. Justice Yahya Afridi, with participation from the Honorable Chief Justice of the Lahore High Court, Ms. Aalia Neelum, Administrative Judge of the Lahore High Court, Mr. Justice Shams Mehmood Mirza, Secretaries of the Home and Prosecution Departments, Inspectors General of Police and Prisons departments, the Registrar, Supreme Court of Pakistan, the Secretary, Law and Justice Commission of Pakistan (LJCP), the Superintendent of Central Prison, Lahore, Ms. Saima Amin Khawaja, human rights activist attended the meeting, said a press release.

The discussion was also attended by members from both treasury and opposition political parties Mr. Ahad Khan Cheema, Senator and Ms. Khadijah Shah who have experienced imprisonment in jail. This session marked the inaugural discussion for developing National Jail Reform Policy, focusing on prison reforms and the welfare of inmates as part of a broader criminal justice reform strategy for Pakistan.

Chief Justice Afridi shared his vision for modernizing Pakistan's criminal justice system, stressing that a humane and effective prison system is essential to ensure a fair legal

framework. He noted that data collected by the LJCP reveals a deeply concerning situation nationwide, with 108,643 inmates housed in facilities with an authorized capacity of only 66,625. Punjab faces particularly severe challenges, with 67,837 prisoners confined in prisons built to accommodate just 36,365.

Further analysis shows that 36,128 of these are under-trial prisoners, many of whom have been awaiting trial for over a year, highlighting a critical issue for the justice system. Chief Justice Afridi emphasized the importance of addressing these urgent issues in Punjab, beginning a phased approach that will ultimately extend to the entire country. This strategic focus on Punjab underscores his commitment to impactful, sustainable reforms where it is most needed. This series of consultative meetings starts in Lahore—the capital of Punjab and the province with the most overcrowded prisons—and will continue across other cities in Pakistan to gather insights and build consensus on reform initiatives.

The agenda centered on the LJCP's proposal, a National Jail Reform Policy in alignment with international standards, including the Nelson Mandela Rules, Bangkok Rules, and Beijing Rules, to ensure humane and rehabilitative management across Pakistan's correctional facilities. This proposal received strong support from attendees, who considered a phased plan to promote alternative sentencing options and rehabilitation initiatives for under-trial prisoners. The participants also discussed the possibility of establish-

ing a Jail Reforms Committee, aimed at developing strategies to reduce overcrowding, enhance inmate welfare, and improve case processing efficiency.

Additionally, the Terms of Reference (ToRs) proposed for the National Committee will guide structured efforts to reduce under-trial detention, introduce case management improvements, and implement comprehensive rehabilitation programs. The Chief Justice of Pakistan constituted a sub-committee comprising Mr. Justice (R) Shabbar Raza Rizvi, Ms. Saima Amin Khawaja (Advocate), Senator Ahad Khan Cheema and Ms. Khadijah Shah to inspect the jails across the province and to give recommendations to streamline processes to address the high numbers of under-trial prisoners and promote alternative sentencing options, including community service and probation. Further commitments include expanding rehabilitative initiatives within jails, such as vocational training, mental health support, and educational programs to aid inmates in successful reintegration upon release.

Under the guidance of Chief Justice Afridi, and with the dedicated data collection and analytical support provided by LJCP, these initiatives are intended to bring about transformative, systemic improvements within Pakistan's prison system. By prioritizing humane treatment, rehabilitation, and efficient case management, this collaborative framework will set the stage for a sustainable and just prison system that upholds human dignity and fosters rehabilitation across the nation.

India denies Amit plotted anti-Sikh attacks

NEW DELHI (AFP): India on Saturday denied home minister Amit Shah had plotted to target Sikh activists on Canadian soil and said it had officially rebuked Ottawa over the "absurd and baseless" allegation.

Canada is home to the largest Sikh community outside of India, and includes activists for "Khalistan", a fringe separatist movement seeking an independent state for the religious minority carved out of Indian territory. Canadian officials said this week that Ottawa had traced a campaign targeting Canadian Khalistan activists to the highest levels of India's government and implicated Prime Minister Narendra Modi's powerful right-hand man.

"The Government of India protests in the strongest terms to the absurd and baseless references made to the Union Home Minister of India," foreign ministry spokesperson Randhir Jaiswal told reporters. "We had summoned the representative of the Canadian High Commission yesterday. A diplomatic note was handed over," he added. Jaiswal accused Canadian officials of deliberately leaking "unfounded insinuations" to the media to "discredit India". "Such irresponsible actions will have serious consequences for bilateral ties," he said.

Bilawal takes notice of Sahil's death

F.P. Report

LARKANA: PPP Chairman Bilawal Bhutto Zardari took notice of the incident of finding the body of young Sahil Solangi from the lockup of Waleed police station in Larkana city on Saturday.

Earlier, the police authorities expressed their displeasure over the incident which was declared as suicide. In this regard, the PPP Chairman Bilawal Bhutto Zardari has instructed the MPA Jameel Ahmed Soomro to stay keep in touch with the deceased family and provide justice to the relatives by transparently investigating the matter, after which the MPA Jameel Ahmed Soomro on the direction of the PPP Chairman Bilawal Bhutto Zardari, he expressed sorrow over the incident of Sahil Solangi while condoling with his father Saeed Solangi. He also offered Fateha for departure soul and expressed sympathy with deceased family.

On this occasion, he assured them complete justice. Waleed police arrested Sahil Solangi a 6 days ago, on the charge of pigeon theft and today, his dead body was found in the lock-up, which was declared as suicide by the police. However, on the instructions of Inspector General of Police Sindh, Deputy Inspector General of Police (DIG) Training was appointed as the investigating officer who recorded the statements of the police, the affected family and others.

4 terrorists killed in S Waziristan

F.P. Report

RAWALPINDI: Four Khwarij terrorists were killed in wee hours of Saturday in an intelligence-based operation (IBO) conducted by the Security Forces in general area Sarwakai, South Waziristan District on reported presence of khwarij.

The khwarij's location was effectively engaged by the Army troops during the operation, as a result of which, four khwarij were killed. "Sanitization operation is being carried out to eliminate any other Khwarij found in the area as the Security Forces of Pakistan are determined to wipe-out the menace of terrorism from the country," it further said.

Gandapur announces protest from 9th

F.P. Report

RAWALPINDI, PESH-AWAR: Chief Minister of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Ali Amin Gandapur, announced a protest against the government on November 9 in Swabi. Speaking to media outside Adiala Jail, he stated that this protest is necessary to rid themselves of the current government's policies. He said that there is no rule of law in the country, and Form 47 has been used by the government to create difficulties for them. He also emphasized that his workers are being arrested to put pressure on them, and obstacles are being placed in their pursuit of justice.

Furthermore, he mentioned that on November 9, a gathering will be held at the Swabi interchange, where the next course of action will be announced, and the final protest call will be given from Swabi.

Health sector govt top priority: Chief Minister of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Ali Amin Khan Gandapur, has termed health sector as one of his government's key priorities sectors, and said that efforts to strengthen healthcare facilities at grass

root level are underway by ensuring the efficient and effective use of available medical equipment's and human resources in these hospitals with the aim to ensure basic healthcare facilities to the people at local level and thereby reducing the patients load on teaching hospitals.

He stated that efforts are underway to improve the standards of public sector hospitals so that maximum public sector hospitals could be empaneled in Sehat Card program to make free healthcare services accessible to people everywhere in the province. Mr. Gandapur remarked that steps have been taken to address gaps and loopholes in Sehat Card scheme, prevent its misuse, and enhance its efficiency adding that these efforts have resulted in significant improvement in free treatment facilities under the scheme.

The Chief Minister shared these views while talking to a delegation of Insaf Doctors Forum who called on him at his office here the other day, and discussed with him matters related to the ongoing reforms in the health sector, improvements in service

delivery in public sector hospitals, and ways to address issues facing the doctor community.

The Chief Minister said that the provincial government was planning to include life insurance scheme in Sehat Card program which, he termed, as a unique program of social protection. Ali Amin Gandapur stated that his government is also planning to establish its own life insurance company to run all its social protection schemes on sustainable grounds adding that for the first time, bone marrow and liver transplant projects are also being launched in the province.

He said that the provincial government would welcome inputs from the medical community for improvement and reforms in health sectors, and asked the doctors to sit with the concerned quarters of health department, and bring forward doable proposals for integrating emergency and ICU services in all public sector hospitals of the province, and for improving the overall patients care systems in these hospitals for the benefit of patients at large.

PM for bringing Israel to justice for killing journalists

F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif on Saturday called upon the international community and various organizations to bring Israel to justice for the massacre of journalists in Gaza.

Despite international conventions, dozens of journalists in Gaza were deliberately killed to obstruct the truth, the prime minister said in his message on the occasion of International Day to End Impunity for Crimes Against Journalists. He emphasized that journalists from across the world including Pakistan work day and night to keep the world informed.

"Unfortunately, jour-

ists have to endure various dangers, hardships, and difficulties in pursuit of truth," he regretted. Besides working in peace, he said the journalists also risked their lives reporting even in conflict zones and during wars. These advocates of truth face restrictions, violence, threats, kidnappings, and even murder, he said adding "Without the protection of journalists, freedom of the press cannot be achieved".

"Our government has taken priority measures to ensure the protection and rights of journalists," he stated. The prime minister said Pakistani journalists had made immense sacrifices for democracy, adherence to the Constitution, and the rule of law. "The

Journalist and Media Workers Protection Act 2021 was passed to protect journalists and media workers."

PM Shehbaz said health insurance for journalists was also an important initiative of the federal government for their protection. "We are committed to preventing crimes against journalists, ensuring punishment for perpetrators, and safeguarding journalists in Pakistan," the prime minister assured. He emphasized that the Constitution of Pakistan guaranteed freedom of expression, freedom of the press, and access to information, and the government of Pakistan was dedicated to ensuring these rights.



PESHAWAR: Chief Minister of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Ali Amin Gandapur talking to a delegation of Insaf Doctors Forum.

Kyiv comes under heavy Russian drone attack

KYIV (AFP): Ukraine said on Saturday Kyiv had come under heavy drone attack overnight, as fresh explosions were heard in the capital and other regions were struck. "Unfortunately, the attack by Russian drones caused damage and casualties in various districts of Kyiv," President Volodymyr Zelenskyy said.

He said that the "constant terrorist attacks on Ukrainian cities prove that the pressure on Russia and its accomplices is not enough." AFP reporters heard new explosions in Kyiv on Saturday afternoon amid an air raid alert. In the morning Ukraine's air force said it had shot down 39 out of 71 drones launched from Russia overnight.

The drones targeted the Kyiv region sur-

rounding the capital, the Sumy border region as well as the central Kirovograd and Poltava regions. Twenty-one drones were lost and five returned to Russia, the air force said, adding that the drone attack was continuing. The air force said debris from downed drones had damaged houses and blocks of flats in four regions including Kyiv, Sumy and the Black Sea Odessa region.

Kyiv's military administration said that debris from air defenses shooting down drones fell in six districts of the capital, damaging blocks of flats and cars and sparking several fires in buildings that were extinguished. A policeman was injured, the administration said.

In the Kyiv region outside the capital, an 82-

year-old woman suffered head wounds from shrapnel, officials said. In a village near the southern city of Kherson, a 40-year-old woman was pulled dead from rubble after Russian troops fired artillery and four were injured including three children, the governor Oleksandr Prokudin said.

The health ministry said that a hospital in Kherson was struck, damaging two wards and a laboratory. The medics and patients were uninjured as they had taken shelter. Ukraine's military commander-in-chief Oleksandr Syrsky warned on Saturday that his troops on the ground were "holding back one of the most powerful Russian offensives since the beginning of the full-scale invasion."

7 killed in Buner road accident

F.P. Report

BUNER: A pick-up datsun has fallen into a deep ditch at Piazu Mor in Pandhir, a remote tehsil of Chaghorzai Union Buner, as a result three women and four men died on the spot, while two children and two men are seriously injured.

The names of the deceased are Bahtreen, Kahibullah, Zahir Shah, Msts Ramisha, Umira, Gul Miah, while the injured include Latif, Alia, Zakir and Zahir Shah. Local residents, took part in the rescue operations at the accident site and immediately sent the injured to DHQ hospital, while the bodies of the deceased were removed and taken to the road on stretchers and sent to their homes in vehicles.

The news has spread like a wildfire in the area and there is grief in the entire Chaghorzai tehsil. The local population has expressed grief and sorrow over the loss of precious lives due to bad roads, weak vehicles and carelessness and demanded of the district administration traffic police to follow the law to strictly follow the precautionary measures for safety.

Governor Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Faisal Karim Kundi on Saturday expressed grief and sorrow over a van accident in the Chaghorzai area of Buner District resulted in the loss of seven lives.

In his statement, the Governor conveyed his deep grief for the families of the deceased and extended his sympathies to those affected. He prayed for the elevation of the souls of the victims and offered heartfelt wishes for patience to their bereaved families. Governor Kundi wished for the early recovery of the injured, underscoring his solidarity with the relatives of those who lost their lives.

Ayaz nominates 5 members for Judicial Commission

F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: Speaker National Assembly Sardar Ayaz on Saturday nominated five members for the formation of a Judicial Commission for the appointment of Judges in the Higher Judiciary. Speaker of the National Assembly Sardar Ayaz Sadiq has written a letter to the Supreme Judicial Commission regarding forming a judicial commission to appoint judges in the higher judiciary.

The Speaker nominated the leader of the opposition in the National Assembly Omar Ayub Khan and Sheikh Aftab Ahmed of PML (N). Senator Farooq

Naek and Senator Shibli Faraz have also been nominated in the Senate while Roshan Khursheed Bharucha has been nominated as a woman member of the Judicial Commission by the Speaker NA.

All nominations have been forwarded to the Secretary of the Judicial Commission. According to the 26th Amendment, five members of Parliament are to be included in the Judicial Commission. The nomination of names from the Parliament is on the basis of equal representation from both the government and the opposition. The Supreme Court has received all nominations.

Speaker of the National Assembly Sardar Ayaz Sadiq forwarded these names after consulting Chairman Senate Syed Yousaf Raza Gilani and all the parliamentary parties. The female member of the Judicial Commission, Roshan Khursheed Bharucha, hails from Balochistan and is a former Senator.

These nominations were made by the Speaker of the National Assembly as per sub-paragraph (viii) of clause (2) of Article 175A of the Constitution of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan, which permits the Speaker NA to nominate a woman or a non-Muslim to the Judicial Commission.

Air monitor records pollution level in Lahore

LAHORE (AFP): Air pollution in Lahore soared on Saturday more than 80 times over the level deemed acceptable by the World Health Organisation (WHO), with an official calling it a record high.

For days, Lahore has been enveloped by smog, a mix of fog and pollutants caused by low-grade diesel fumes, smoke from seasonal agricultural burning and winter cooling. The level of deadly PM2.5 pollutants — fine particulate matter in the air that causes the most damage to health — peaked at 1,067, before dropping to around 300 in the morning, with anything above 10 considered unhealthy by the WHO.

"We have never reached a level of 1,000," Jahangir Anwar, a senior environmental protection official in Lahore told AFP. "The air quality index will remain high for the next three to four days," Anwar said. The Punjab Environmental Protection Agency announced new restrictions in four "hot spots" in the

city. The next day, it also ordered all "Schools of Special Education" in Lahore to send their students, who had medical conditions that could get triggered by poor air quality, on a three-month compulsory leave from Friday.

As the Punjab Assembly continued the debate on smog and water scarcity issues in the province for the third day on Friday, members from the treasury as well as opposition suggested curbs on industrial and vehicular emissions, besides strict implementation of laws to check environmental pollution.

Tuk-tuks equipped with polluting two-stroke engines are banned, as are restaurants that barbecue without filters. Government offices and private companies will have half their staff work from home from Monday. Construction work has been halted and street and food vendors, who often cook over open fires, must close at 8pm. Smog is particularly pronounced in

winter when cold, denser air traps emissions from poor-quality fuels used to power the city's vehicles and factories at ground level.

Meanwhile, Punjab Information Minister Azma Bokhari said on Saturday that Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz will soon write a letter to the CM of Indian Punjab to jointly battle smog. Addressing a press conference in Lahore, Bokhari acknowledged that the air quality index of Lahore was on the rise, referencing a NASA report linking smog in Lahore to cross-border pollution from India. "India is not controlling the air pollution on its side of the border," the minister remarked, adding that Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz will soon write a letter to her Indian counterpart about taking collective measures to control smog. Bokhari also ruled out the chances of artificial rain without clouds, saying, "Can't waste money by conducting artificial rain without clouds."



Journalists enjoy freedom in Pakistan: Tessori

KARACHI (APP): The Sindh Governor Mohammed Kamran Khan Tessori, on the occasion of International Day of Ending Impunity for Crimes Against Journalists, said this year's theme reminded us of the need for strong measures to protect journalists.

He said today, we have to remember those journalists, who have sacrificed their lives to serve the truth.

The Governor Tessori said that the declaration of this day November 2 by the United Nations is a commitment to protecting journalists and bring those, who attack them to justice.

He was of the view that the role of journalists in the establishment and continuity of democracy is commendable. Tessori said that journalists have complete freedom in Pakistan and they were playing the role of eyes and ears in the society. He also condemned attacks on journalists in Gaza.

PU students win 1st position

LAHORE (APP): Punjab University Institute of Metallurgy & Materials Engineering (IMME) students have won 1st position in 'Engineering Innovation Award 2024' in a competition among the final year design projects of undergraduate students from all over Pakistan at the Pakistan Auto Show 2024.

The event was organized by the Pakistan Association of Automotive Parts & Accessories Manufacturers (PAAPAM) at the International Expo Centre, Lahore. PU students' outstanding project title was 'Data-Driven Prediction of Fatigue Strength in Heat-Treated 4140 Alloy Steel for Automotive Applications'.

Director IMEE Prof Dr Mohsin Ali Raza congratulated the talented team i.e. Huzafa Ejaz, Shahzaib Munir, Habiba Faisal and their supervisor Dr Waseem Amin for showcasing innovative research that highlights the transformative power of Data Science in Materials Engineering for Automotive Sector. He said that this accomplishment not only reflects their hard work and dedication but also underscores the commitment of PU IMME to foster innovation in the field of Metallurgy and Materials Engineering.

Man, two sons shot dead

LAHORE (APP): A man and two sons, who were going to court for a case hearing, were shot dead by armed suspects at the Sagian Bridge here on Saturday. The police said that they were going to court for an appearance when opponents opened fire on them. As a result, the three died on the spot.

They have been identified as Safdar, Yasir Safdar and Nasir Safdar.

According to the police, the victims were going to court in a rickshaw while the shooters were riding a motorcycle. Meanwhile, IG Punjab Dr Usman Anwar took notice of the incident and asked for a report from the CCPO Lahore. The IG Punjab ordered the SSP Operations Lahore to arrest the accused immediately.

1526 injured in 1444 RTCs

LAHORE (APP): Six persons were killed and 1526 injured in 1444 Road Traffic Crashes (RTCs) in all 37 districts of Punjab during the last 24 hours. Out of these, 688 people with serious injuries were shifted to different hospitals, while 833 victims with minor injuries were treated at the incident site by Rescue Medical Teams thus reducing the burden of Hospitals.

Furthermore, the analysis showed those 825 drivers, 73 underage drivers, 195 pedestrians, and 512 passengers were among the victims of road traffic crashes. The statistics show that 296 RTCs were reported in Lahore which affected 233 persons placing the Provincial Capital at top of the list followed by Multan 108 in with 109 victims and at third Faisalabad with 101 RTCs and 94 victims. According to the data 1299 motorbikes, 70 auto-rickshaws, 141 motor-cars, 37 vans, 11 passenger buses, 33 truck.

Ambassador of Italy meets Punjab CM

LAHORE (APP): Marilina Armellini, the ambassador to Italy, met with Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz and discussed the promotion of cooperation in tourism, textile, leather, marble, carpets and other sectors.

During the meeting, Chief Minister Punjab Maryam Nawaz offered Italy to increase olive cultivation in Chakwal. During the meeting, Italian investment in livestock and dairy projects in Punjab was agreed upon. The Italian ambassador lauded the public welfare projects in Punjab.

The two leaders discussed the promotion of cooperation in tourism, textiles, leather, marble, carpets and other sectors, while the measures related to the exchange of trade and cultural delegations were also discussed.

Speaking on the occasion, Punjab Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz said that the relationship between Pakistan and Italy should

be turned into a profitable economic relationship. Italian investors should come to Punjab. They will be given all possible facilities, she added.

The Chief Minister further said that the Punjab government wanted to increase cooperation with Italy in various fields, ease of work visa and the active role of Trade Commission are of key importance to increase trade. The Italian ambassador, Marilina Armellini, said that it was very nice to visit Pakistan, especially in Lahore.

CM message on International Day to End Impunity for Crimes Against Journalists: Punjab Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz Sharif has called for an end to violence and cruelty against those who champion the truth.

In her message on the International Day to End Impunity for Crimes Against Journalists being celebrated on Saturday, she

stated, "Violence against journalists is condemnable in every country, including Occupied Jammu & Kashmir and Palestine."

Emphasizing the significance of a responsible press, she remarked, "Freedom of the press is the foundation of democracy, and a free press is essential for a strong democratic society."

CM Maryam Nawaz affirmed that journalists are vital defenders of social justice and the voice of the people. She commended those who expose cruelty, injustice, and falsehoods, underscoring her commitment to being a guarantor and advocate for press freedom.

She also stressed the government's responsibility to protect journalists' rights and expressed her determination to support homeless journalists in finding secure housing. "We stand with responsible and dignified journalists who pursue the truth and will ensure their rights are protected," she added.

Minister attends Ranjit Singh's anniversary

LAHORE (APP): Provincial Minister for Minority Affairs Ramesh Singh Arora stated that the relationship between the Sikh community and Pakistan is very strong.

He praised Chief Minister Punjab Maryam Nawaz Sharif for winning the hearts of minorities by announcing the issuance of special cards for minority communities during the Diwali celebration, as well as plans to increase the number of minority families and eliminate the distinction between minorities and majorities.

The Sikh community, along with the Christian and Hindu communities, paid tribute to Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz.

These remarks were made after cutting the cake for the 244th birthday of Maharaja Ranjit Singh. During the event, prominent leaders from the Muslim and Sikh communities, along with members of the Christian community, warmly welcomed the minister. Sikh leaders expressed their

confidence in the leadership of Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz and former Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif, cheering enthusiastically.

The provincial minister directed district administration officials to complete the renovation of Maharaja Ranjit Singh's Haveli by June 28. He paid rich tribute to Maharaja Ranjit Singh's contributions, stating, "For the first time, we are celebrating Maharaja Ranjit Singh's birthday, and historically, for the first time, the Chief Minister's House was opened for minorities during Diwali."

Additionally, Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif and Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz emphasized that there should be no distinction between minorities and majorities, he added. The minister announced that next year's anniversary celebrations will also take place at Maharaja Ranjit Singh's Haveli. Deputy Commissioner Naveed Ahmed informed the

minister that the renovation work will be completed at an estimated cost of Rs90 million, supervised by experts from the Walled City of Lahore and the Archaeology Department.

He further stated that the district administration was taking steps to promote tourism, inviting the global Sikh community to recognize Gujranwala as a peaceful district with many historical sites, including Gurdwara Aroori Sahib, Maharaja Ranjit Singh's Haveli, and the samadhis of Mahan Singh and Churr Singh. He also mentioned other historical sites in Wazirabad.

The event was attended by Deputy Commissioner Naveed Ahmed, Head of International Security Canada Sardar Kancharm Singh, Assistant Commissioner City Ikram Bin, and representatives from the Pakistan Sikh Gurdwara Parbandhak Committee, as well as police and other district administration officials.

Minister emphasizes digitization in healthcare system

LAHORE (APP): Punjab Minister for Primary and Secondary Healthcare, Khawaja Imran Nazir, reaffirmed the government's commitment to provide free medicines and test facilities to patients in hospitals, stating that this remains a top priority. He shared these remarks during his visit to THQ Hospital Sabzar on Saturday.

Khawaja Imran outlined the government's phased approach to healthcare reform, emphasizing that resources would be allocated to hospitals first, followed by a structured accountability process. "A robust system is being introduced to improve hospital conditions," he said, adding that a digital framework for patients' records is underway in government hospitals.

He announced a forthcoming digital system aimed at providing free CT scans and MRI tests across tehsil and district hospitals, enhancing accessibility for patients. He further noted that consultants and anaesthesia specialists are being deployed based on local demand in these hospitals.

During the visit, Khawaja Imran Nazir instructed the Health CEO to work with the hospital's Medical Superintendent, Dr. Shoaib, to present a detailed plan addressing doctor shortages and other challenges. He stressed the importance of strengthening the referral system to manage patient load more efficiently, particularly in teaching hospitals. "Local hospitals are being equipped with sufficient resources to ease the pres-

sure on larger facilities," he added.

During his tour, the minister also visited homes in the Sabzar area to administer polio drops to children as part of the government's anti-polio efforts. At THQ Hospital, he inspected various units, including helper, dengue, and polio counters, and reviewed the pediatric emergency, filter clinic, NCD, X-ray room, dental, and orthopedic units.

The minister engaged with patients and their families, asking about the provision of free medicines, and was pleased to find high satisfaction among attendees regarding the availability of free tests and medications. Health CEO Lahore, Dr. Zohaib Hassan, accompanied him throughout the visit.



KARACHI: Sindh Governor Kamran Tessori, CM Syed Murad Ali Shah, along with Consul General of Russian Federation Andrey V. Fedorov cutting cake on the occasion of the "People's Unity Day" ceremony.

Iranian delegation visits Bibi Pak Daman shrine

LAHORE (APP): A high-level Iranian diplomatic delegation, led by Vice Consul Hassan Naeimi, paid a respectful visit to the shrine of Bibi Pak Daman here on Saturday Lahore.

The delegation included Saki (Commercial Attaché), Hosseini (Third Consul), Sabit, Roohi, and Javadi.

The Iranian diplomats were warmly welcomed by Syed Waqar ul Hassan Naqvi, the Ambassador for Peace and Convener of Shia citizens Pakistan, along with the Manager of Bibi Pakdaman Shrine, Mirza Zahid Iqbal, Wajahat Hussain, and advocate Ali Raza. In anticipation of the visit, police had put in place robust security arrangements to ensure a smooth and secure environment.

As part of the visit, Syed Waqar ul Hassan Naqvi led a special prayer for peace in the Middle East, including Palestine and Lebanon.

The Iranian guests took time to engage with the local public, expressing their appreciation for the longstanding ties between Pakistan and Iran.

Pak-Russia bilateral ties developing rapidly: CG

KARACHI (APP): The Consul General of Russian Federation in Karachi Andrey V. Fedorov has said the bilateral cooperation among Pakistan and Russia was rapidly developing and high level contacts between leadership of both the countries had further strengthened it.

He said this while talking to APP and later on, addressing the "People's Unity Day" ceremony held here late Friday night at the Consulate General of the Russian Federation.

People's Unity Day, is being celebrated by people of Russia on November 4 every year to commemorate an unprecedented resilience of our nation, Fedorov said in his speech. Relying on a question regarding Russia-Pakistan ties and the SCO Summit, Andrey V. Fedorov said the relations between Russia and Pakistan were developing with passage of time and currently there was a trade volume of over \$ 2 billion between the two countries.

He said all members of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization are equal and

working together to save future of our children.

He said SCO was providing stability of the region and it was working well. Later on, addressing the ceremony, Andrey said "People's Unity Day" is the day when our country rose from the ashes and liberated itself from the Polish occupants during the so-called Time of Troubles.

He said at the end of the 16th century and the beginning of the 17 century,

Russia struggled through political chaos, Western intervention, impostors, famines and many other horrible events. Our civilization, culture and people were literally on the brink of extinction. And in that very moment in the year of 1612, an ordinary shopkeeper Kuzma Minin and a rich Duke Dmitry Pozharsky formed the people's volunteer militia that helped Russia to regain its true independence.

At the end of the time of troubles our nation learned many valuable lessons that have continued to pass through generations. Firstly, instead of another civil war

and internal strife of the elites Russians assembled a democratic Council from all regions and social classes to elect a new czar Mikhail Romanov, whose dynasty ruled Russia for more than 300 years. Referring to Pakistan-Russia relations, Andrey V Fedorov said in the recent years, bilateral cooperation of the two countries had rapidly developed.

The level and frequency of the high-level contacts between Russia and Pakistan have elevated dramatically since the last year, when we celebrated the 75th anniversary of the Establishment of Russia-Pakistan diplomatic relations, the Russian CG said and added that it was especially reflected on July 3 at the SCO Head of States meeting in Astana, on the sidelines of which Russian President Vladimir Putin met with Pakistani Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif.

He also referred the visit of the Deputy Prime Minister of Russia Aleksei Overchuk to Islamabad on September 18-19, Russia-Pakistan Trade.



Shaukat Khanum Memorial Cancer Hospital and Research Centre

A JCI Enterprise Accredited Organisation

Career Opportunities in SKMCH&RC, Peshawar

Shaukat Khanum Memorial Cancer Hospital and Research Centre (SKMCH&RC) is a specialist tertiary care cancer centre built and funded by charitable donations with a mission to provide the best possible cancer care to all patients. SKMCH&RC has a team of UK and US-trained physicians who provide state-of-the-art diagnostic, treatment and support services to patients. SKMCH&RC is pleased to invite applications for the following positions:

Medical Consultants:

- Consultant Anaesthetist
- Consultant Breast Surgeon
- Consultant Clinical & Radiation Oncologist
- Consultant Clinical Haematologist
- Consultant Head and Neck Surgeon
- Consultant Medical Oncologist
- Consultant Nuclear Medicine
- Consultant Orthopaedic Surgeon
- Consultant Paediatric Oncologist
- Consultant Pathologist
- Consultant Physician Critical Care & Pulmonary Medicine
- Consultant Physician Internal Medicine & Pulmonology
- Consultant Physician Internal Medicine & Gastroenterology
- Consultant Physician Internal Medicine & Infectious Diseases
- Consultant Physician Internal Medicine & Nephrology
- Consultant Radiologist
- Consultant Upper GI Surgeon
- Consultant Urologist

- Locum Consultant Anaesthetist
- Locum Consultant Breast Surgeon
- Locum Consultant Pathologist
- Locum Consultant Radiologist
- Locum Consultant Urologist
- Part Time Consultant Anaesthetist

Senior Instructors:

- Senior Instructor Anaesthesia
- Senior Instructor Breast Surgery
- Senior Instructor Clinical Haematology
- Senior Instructor Clinical and Radiation Oncology
- Senior Instructor Head and Neck Surgery
- Senior Instructor Medical Oncology
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- Senior Instructor Radiology

SKM Fellowships:

- Fellow in Anaesthesia
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Note: All Senior Instructor positions for Peshawar involve working at Lahore for two years, followed by two years of training overseas. For further details regarding the position and eligibility criteria, please visit our website on www.shaukatkhanum.org.pk

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Human Resources Department

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Hayatabad, Peshawar, Pakistan.

Tel: +92 91 5885000 Ext. 3538, 3541

Email: careers.peshawar@shaukatkhanum.org.pk



PAKISTAN COUNCIL OF ARCHITECTS & TOWN PLANNERS (PCATP)

HIRING OF A LAW FIRM FOR : PROVISION OF LEGAL SERVICES for "Bylaws Amendments"

Pakistan Council of Architects and Town Planners (PCATP), a Regulatory Authority for Architects and Town Planners intends to hire the services of a well-established and experienced law firm registered with Pakistan Bar Council and listed on active tax payer in FBR for provision of legal services in respect of splitting council to two separate entities/ councils.

2. The scope of work in accordance with the Clause 3(3) of PCATP Ordinance will be included but not limited to:

- Develop legal act/ bye-laws for the establishment of Pakistan Council of Architects (PCA) and Pakistan Council of Town Planners (PCTP).
- Process the approval of act, bylaws from Ministry of Housing and Ministry of Law, complete in all respect.
- Issuance of notification from Ministry of Law, Govt. of Pakistan.

Proposals developed according to scope of work mentioned above along with processing fee of Rs. 5000/- (Rupees five thousand only) (non-refundable) must reach to the undersigned at the address given below by November 13, 2024, 11:00 a.m. The Technical and Financial proposals will be opened on the same day at 11:30 a.m.

PCATP reserves the right to accept or reject any/all proposals.

PID(K)1335/2024

Ar. Muhammad Irfan Tariq,
Registrar PCATP,
Office Nos. 7-12, Usman center, D12 Markaz, Islamabad.
Ph. 051-615552-4, Email: registrar@pcatp.org.pk

KPCTA to setup KP Pavilion at Lok Mela Islamabad: CM Advser

PESHAWA (APP): Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Culture and Tourism Authority (KPCTA) has decided to set up KP Pavilion at Lok Mela, hoping KP diverse culture and vast tourism potential will bring more laurels for province.

Advisor to Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Chief Minister on Culture and Tourism Zahid Chanzeb has said that KP Pavilion would be established at the Lok Mela to showcase the province's diverse culture and tourism potential at the folk festival and clinch another award. He expressed these views while chairing a meeting held at the Conference Room of the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Culture and Tourism Authority.

KPCTA Director General Tashfeen Haider, Director Administration and Finance Omar Arshad Khan, Manager Events Haseena Shaukat and other officials also attended the meeting.

Chanzeb said Lok Mela would be held in Islamabad starting November 8-17. The KP, as well as Azad Kashmir, Gilgit-Baltistan and other provinces would set up pavilions to showcase their cultures and tourism potential of their respective provinces at the gala.

In the festival, artisans from various districts of KP would be given opportunity to set up stalls to showcase their skills and sell their handicrafts. Traditional rubab music and Kalash and Khattak dances would be the centre of attraction for tourists.

KPCTA DG Tashfeen Haider said that millions of local and foreign tourists visit the pavilion each year. More than 25 stalls displaying handicrafts and cultural items would be set up in the KP Pavilion.

Also, KP traditional foods such as Pinda, Chapli Kebab, Tikka Boti and Chicken Boti as well as Kalashi cultural dance and rubab music would be other features of gleeful gala.

The pavilion would also showcase videos and documentaries about various tourist destinations and traditional foods of the province, along with an information desk for tourists. The musical gathering at the KP Pavilion will take place on November 13 (Wednesday), featuring performances by KP artistes and singers.

Tashfeen Haider emphasized that the purpose of participating in the festival was to present a soft image of the province, and inform the world about its rich cultural and traditional heritage, and support the province's artistes.

The much-awaited annual Lok Mela will be held at the National Institute of Folk and Traditional Heritage (Lok Virsa) from November 8-17, presenting a diverse cultural extravaganza for the art lovers.

The event is being arranged by Lok Virsa, which is an autonomous cultural organisation working under the National Heritage and Culture Division. Preparations for the Lok Mela are underway to make it a success by adding all the attractions. As this year's festival will mark the golden jubilee celebrations of Lok Virsa (1974-2024), several new and innovative attractions are being added to the event. The objective is to promote Pakistan's indigenous folk heritage, strengthen national harmony and integration among all federating units through a cultural perspective and provide a much-needed platform to the master artisans, folk artistes, folk musicians and folk dancers to demonstrate their skills at the national level.



PESHAWAR: Chief Secretary Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Nadeem Aslam Chaudhry, inaugurating the 9th International Solar Energy Meet.

Govt to setup fund for education emergency program

PESHAWAR (APP): The Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Government has decided to setup Rs 3 billion fund for education emergency endorsement from which financial assistance would be provided talented students.

Muhammad Sahab Khan, senior planning officer at the Education Department told APP on Saturday that the fund would also be utilized for Education Card scheme, which would be initially launched in Upper and Lower Kohistan, Kolai Palas, Torghar, Upper and Lower Chitral, Tan, and Upper and Lower South Waziristan.

The official said all children attending the government schools in these areas will receive Rs1,000 per month. The beneficiaries would also get free admission in the registered private schools of their choice in these districts.

He said that about 40,000 children would benefit from this program in the first phase in KP and upon its success the facility would be extended to other districts.

Additionally, girls in grades 6 to 10 across the province would receive Rs 500 per month as an educational stipend, benefiting around 550,000 girls. Annually, about Rs 3.1 billion would be spent to be funded by the provincial government, he said, adding free textbooks and scholarships would also be provided under the Education Card, he said.

He said that the initiative would help increase students enrolment besides discourage drop ration in schools.

CS inaugurates 9th International Solar Energy Meet

F.P. Report

The event has attracted over 80 local and international companies specializing in solar technology and renewable energy solutions.

During his visit to the exhibition, the Chief Secretary toured the various stalls and engaged with representatives from participating companies.

He emphasized the importance of adopting environment-friendly and cost-effective energy sources, stressing that renewable energy, particularly solar power, is vital to addressing current energy challenges.

"This event is a significant step towards promoting alternative energy solutions, which align with our commitment to sustainable development and environmental preservation," said Chief Secretary Chaudhry.

He reaffirmed the government's dedication to supporting the growth of renewable energy sources, noting that the promotion of solar energy remains a top priority in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa.

Governor expresses grief over van accident in Buner

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Governor Faisal Karim Kundi on Saturday expressed grief and sorrow over a van accident in the Chaghurzai area of Buner District resulted in the loss of seven lives.

In his statement, the Governor conveyed his deep grief for the families of the deceased and extended his sympathies to those affected.

He prayed for the elevation of the souls of the victims and offered heartfelt wishes for patience to their bereaved families.

Governor Kundi wished for the early recovery of the injured, underscoring his solidarity with the relatives of those who lost their lives.

Meanwhile, Governor Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Faisal Karim Kundi congratulates the newly elected cabinet of the Khyber Union of Journalists on their annual elections.

Governor expresses best wishes for newly elected President Kashifuddin Syed and other cabinet members.

Governor said that the success of Kashifuddin Syed and the newly elected cabinet reflects the trust of the journalist community.

Governor hopes that the newly elected leadership of the Khyber Union of Journalists will fulfill the trust placed in them by the journalist community.

The role of the Khyber Union of Journalists in the welfare of journalists has been commendable, Faisal Karim Kundi added.

The elections of Khyber Union of Journalists were held at Peshawar Press Club the other day in which the panel of Unity Democratic Alliance won the polls with all of their candidates winning.

Senior journalist deprived of car

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: The crime rate in Peshawar is increasing with each passing day as the car of Ashraf Dar, Chief Editor of a local newspaper, was stolen in broad day light.

Senior journalist Ashraf Dar was deprived of his car in the area of Danishabad. FIR was registered at Town Police Station, Peshawar, and police have begun investigations. Ashraf Dar owned a VXR car, which was taken by an unknown thief.

KP leads the way with historic power transmission initiative: Saif

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: Advisor to the Chief Minister Khyber Pakhtunkhwa for Information and Public Relations, Barrister Dr. Saif, has announced that under the leadership of Chief Minister Ali Amin Gandapur, the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf led provincial government has once again taken the lead over other provinces by charting new paths for development.

In a groundbreaking move aimed at ushering in an industrial revolution, the provincial government has decided to establish its own power transmission line, making Khyber Pakhtunkhwa the first province in Pakistan to undertake such initiative.

The provincial government has entered into an agreement with a private company for the completion of this project, which will be executed at an estimated cost of 8 billion rupees and is expected to be completed within one and a half years.

This ambitious project aims to provide low-cost electricity to industries across the province, significantly boosting industrial growth and economic prosperity.

The first phase of the project includes laying a 40-kilometer transmission line from Matiltan to Madian in Swat.

Upon completion, the project is expected to generate 7 billion rupees in annual revenue for the province. Barrister Dr. Saif emphasized that the electricity produced in Swat will be directed to local industries as well as the national grid, thereby improving the overall energy supply.

Barrister Dr. Saif stated, "The completion of this project will mark a revolutionary shift in the energy and industrial landscape of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. It will not only strengthen the province's economy but also create new job opportunities, supporting sustainable growth and prosperity."

The initiative reflects the PTI government's commitment to innovation, self-sufficiency, and economic empowerment, positioning Khyber Pakhtunkhwa as a leader in energy infrastructure and industrial development.

Info advisor felicitates UDAP for winning KhUJ elections

Advisor to Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Chief Minister on Information, Barrister Dr. Saif has extended his heartfelt felicitations to Unity Democratic Alliance Panel (UDAP) and their newly elected cabinet on their victory in elections of Khyber Union of Journalists (KhUJ).

In a statement issued here Saturday, Barrister Dr. Saif commended the new leadership acknowledging their dedication and trust reposed in them by journalist community.

He highlighted the role of journalists in fostering democracy, promoting transparency and promoting voice of the public.

"I am confident that under your guidance, the journalistic community would continue to uphold highest standards of integrity and professionalism and advancing the cause of free and responsible journalism", he said.

CM aide expressed his best wishes to new cabinet and hoped for their success in leading KhUJ to new heights.



PESHAWAR: An elderly man busy in cleaning wood at his workplace near Charsadda Road. — INP photo

Peshawar's Ghandhara museum: A call for digital media projection to enhance cultural preservation

PESHAWAR (APP): The Ghandhara Museum in Peshawar, home to an unparalleled collection of ancient Buddhist art, continues to captivate visitors, yet there is a growing sentiment that its treasures deserve a broader digital presence imperative for economic prosperity.

This idea was articulated by Zar Lal, a sixth-grade student whose recent visit to the museum left her deeply inspired by the stories and artifacts that connect the region to its rich historical legacy.

Zar Lal, accompanied by her parents, explored the museum's intricate displays, including biographical panels that trace the life of Lord Buddha, founder of Buddhism.

"Seeing the rare artifacts and statues of Lord Buddha was like stepping into history," she reflected. Her visit underscored the museum's vital role in preserving Ghandhara art, which flourished between the 2nd century BC and the 6th century AD, making it a significant cultural hub in Southeast Asia.

With over 30,000 rare antiquities showcased, the Peshawar Museum is renowned not just for its Buddhist sculptures but also for its architectural beauty, a blend of Mughal and British colonial styles.

The museum has recently undergone extensive renovations, ensuring that its historical integrity remains intact while enhancing visitor experience.

However, amidst the celebration of its restoration, Zar Lal suggested that a digital outreach program could further elevate the museum's profile.

"By showcasing these treasures abroad through digital media, we can attract more religious tourists and archaeology enthusiasts to Pakistan," she proposed.

This sentiment reflects a growing recognition of the potential for digital platforms to broaden the museum's audience, making its treasures accessible to a global community.

The Peshawar Museum's restoration was crucial after it suffered damage from natural disasters. Now, its galleries, including the dedicated Buddha Gallery and the Buddha Savatta Gallery, draw visitors eager to engage with the artifacts that tell the story of Buddhism's early days.

The main hall, built in 1906 in memory of Queen Victoria, stands as a testament to the museum's historical significance.

Bakhtzada Khan, Assistant Director of Archaeology and Museums, said that renovation work, carried out by the Directorate of Archaeology and Museums, has transformed the museum into a vibrant destination for both local and international visitors, including monks and diplomats.

He said the building's colonial-era features have been meticulously preserved, allowing visitors to experience the unique architectural blend while learning about the region's cultural heritage.

As night falls, the museum's colourful lighting illuminates the exterior, creating a magical ambience that attracts evening visitors.

The galleries feature diverse artifacts, including ancient Waziristan tribal dresses, primitive cooking tools, and weapons used during the fight for independence, making it a rich tapestry of history.

Zar Lal's enthusiasm for the museum reflects a broader hope among local stakeholders for enhanced visibility of Peshawar's cultural gems.

The call for digital media projection aligns with global trends in cultural preservation, where technology plays a pivotal role in storytelling and audience engagement.

The experts said Peshawar Museum stands as a beacon of Ghandhara heritage, embracing digital media could unlock new opportunities for cultural tourism, ensuring that the stories of Lord Buddha and the artistry of the Gandhara period resonate far beyond its walls.

As the museum continues to attract a diverse audience, the integration of modern technology could further enrich the experience, allowing the treasures of Peshawar to inspire and educate future generations around the world.



In brief

Govt commits to empower LG system F.P. Report

BANNU: Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf has fulfilled promises of devolution of power to the people at the grassroot level by empowering local government system. Tehreek-e-Insaf has not given anything by abolishing the obsolete system and relieving the people of the Patwar and police station culture. No one can compete with the performance of the provincial government. It is providing 11 lakh rupees annually to every citizen only for the purpose of health. These views were expressed by the provincial leader of Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf, Chairman Basiah Khel Malik Sherif Zaman while addressing the development projects and reception events in different areas. President of the Association Malik Amjad Khan was also present and said that the work on several development projects with the funds of the provincial government is going on rapidly in Basiah Khel Surani and steps are being taken on a war footing to ensure the provision of better services despite the limited resources. He said that Tehreek-e-Insaf has transferred the power to the people at the grass-roots level by holding municipal elections across the province, which not only solves the problems of the people at the grass-root level, but also the backward areas are in the race for development. The credit goes to PTI.

Sports competitions F.P. Report

HAFIZABAD: Sports competitions under 'Khalita Punjab Programme' of Chief Minister Punjab Maryam Nawaz Sharif have been kicked off in Hafizabad. Deputy Commissioner Abdull Razzaq inaugurated sports competitions at Sports Gymnasium. ADCG Hamdullah, Chief Executive Officer Education Madam Nazia Shazadi, District Sport Officer Nabila Cheema, Deputy Director Colleges Professor Azhar Janjua, Principal Government College for Women Shamila Yaseen, other officers, sportsmen, students and other spectators also attended the inaugural ceremony. While talking on this occasion, DC said that 'Khalita Punjab Sports Programme' was a big event of sports in the history of the Punjab and it would be helpful to promote sports activities in the province besides provision of positive recreational opportunities to people. Sports competitions will attract youth towards positive activities and to avoid social evils, he added. DO Sports told that more than 10 different sports competitions would be held during 'Khalita Punjab Sports Competitions in the district.

FC organizes convention

TURBAT (INP): A Convention was organized in Turbat under the auspices of FC Balochistan (South) at Government Girls Cadet College Turbat to create awareness among the women about deadly and contagious diseases like breast cancer. Posters and banners were also displayed at different places in Turbat city to create awareness about this disease under awareness campaign about breast cancer. Students from various colleges participated in the convention, in which a question and answer session on breast cancer was held, while a detailed briefing was also given about the disease.



QUETTA: A polio worker administering anti-polio drops to a child during anti-polio vaccination campaign.

DPO vows to bring killers of cop to justice

F.P. Report

MARDAN: District Police Officer (DPO) Mardan, Zahoor Babar Afridi on Saturday visited to the residence of Shaheed police constable Iqar Syed and offered Fateha. He con- doled with members of the bereaved family.

Talking with the family, he said that police investigators were directed to arrest the culprits soon. He said police force was standing with the Shaheed police constable who was shot dead yesterday by unknown gunmen in this hour of grief. The DPO said police force rendered great sacrifices in war against terrorism and their sacrifices would go no waste.

Paramedics threaten to protest in favor of their demands: The President of Paramedical Association DHQ Hospital, Taj Muhammad, has warned that if the government does

not solve the legitimate problems of the association, it will be boycotted from the upcoming polio campaign and the services of the hospitals will also be stopped as a protest while talking to journalists here on Saturday.

President Paramedical Association Taj Muhammad said that since longtime paramedics have put a charter of demand in front of the government for the solution of which promises are made every time, so we are still struggling to solve our legitimate demands.

They are forced to stumble, he said that the patronage of the provincial government will implement all the measures to solve the problems. Others will boycott the polio campaign in the coming month and services in hospitals will also be stopped in protest.

Abrar Umarzai elected for syndicate: Transport

In-charge Abdul Wali Khan University Mardan (AWKUM) Abrar Hussain Umarzai has been elected to the university's Syndicate for a term of three years. The Syndicate election, held recently, saw Umarzai secure his position as a representative within the university's highest governing body.

According to Registrar's office released an official notification of his election, highlighting the university's continued commitment to fostering effective administrative leadership. With this role, Umarzai, who has also previously served as Deputy Provost at AWKUM, will participate in decision-making on critical academic and operational matters for the university. His election reflects the trust of his colleagues and the university community, anticipating that he will bring fresh perspectives to the Syndicate.

Jammu Martyrs' Day to be observed on 6th

F.P. Report

MUZAFFARABAD: To pay tributes to the martyrs of Jammu, 6th November will be observed as Jammu Martyrs' Day. During the first week of November 1947, Dogra Maharaja Hari Singh forces, Indian army and Hindu extremists martyred lakhs of Kashmiris in different areas of Jammu region when they were migrating to Pakistan.

A prestigious event will be held in Muzaffarabad under the auspices of Jammu and Kashmir Liberation Cell and All Jammu Refugees Welfare Association in which ministers of Azad Jammu and Kashmir, leaders of political parties, leaders of All Parties Hurriyat Conference and people from all walks of life will participate.

Director of Kashmir Liberation Cell, Raja Muhammad Aslam Khan, speaking to the delegation of All Jammu Refugee Welfare Association, said in October and November 1947, Dogra forces, RSS, Sikh and Hindu groups martyred lakhs of Muslims of Jammu and forced them to migrate to Pakistan.

He said in the first week of November 1947, around 880,000 innocent Muslims of Jammu were martyred by the Dogra administration and the goons of the Hindu extremist organization, Rashtra Yeh Sevaks Singh, on the pretext of bringing them safely to Pakistan. He said that the sacrifices of Jammu martyrs will not go waste and Kashmiris will definitely get their birthright to self-determination.

UoT extends admissions deadline

F.P. Report

TURBAT: The University of Turbat (UoT) has extended the application submission deadline for spring 2025 admissions to various undergraduate and graduate programs until November 8, 2024.

According to the details, the last date for admission to the various undergraduate programs including Associate Degree in Business, BBA, BS in Commerce, Economics, Political Science, Sociology, Balochi, English, Chemistry, Computer Science, Botany, Biotechnology, Biochemistry, LLB, B.Ed., and graduate programs including PhD in Balochi, and Biochemistry has been extended until 8th, 2024.

KP govt spends huge amount on education

F.P. Report

LOWER DIR: The Pakistan Tahreek Insaf MPA Muhammad Azam Khan has said the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa government is spending a huge amount on provision of quality education at public sector schools. He was addressing a function as chief guest after distributing school uniforms among 22 selected orphan children at government high school Rani here on Saturday.

District education officer Inayatullah Khan, University of Malakand's professor in Zoology Attaullah, former tehsil nazim Hujaj Khan, Abdul Haq advocate and principal of the school Haroon ur Rashid also spoke on the occasion. The uniform was arranged by the school for orphan children reading at the facility.

The MPA said the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa government was taking every possible measure to overcome shortage of teachers and other missing facilities at government schools in the province. He said that he would try to construct additional classrooms and washrooms for students at GHS Rani. The Lawmaker said that education was key to success and those nations were leading the world which had developed their education system. Honorary shields were awarded to the guests on the occasion.

Speaking on the occasion the DEO lauded the efforts of the school and said that it was the collective responsibility of the society to support orphan and poor children. He asked teachers to educate the new generation through modern teaching methodology. The DEO said the teachers and parents should focus on students' learning and character building.

Meanwhile the acting chairman, Board of Intermediate and Secondary Education (BISE) Malakand Muhammad Nasim Khan on Saturday visited different examination centers of SSC annual II exam at Thimergara, Balambat, Talash, Khall and Chakdara. Talking to local journalists at Thimergara the official said the exam had entered its final stage. He said the papers would be marked through subject specialists in order to make the paper checking justified and transparent. He said the SSC and HSSC examinations under the boards were being held on students learning outcome basis, so the students should be cleared about the concept instead of rote.

Three-day international chemistry conference concludes at University of Malakand: A Three-day 22nd International and 34th National Chemistry Conference, 2024 concluded at the University of Malakand (UoM) here on Friday. This year's theme of the conference was "Chemistry for Sustainable Life" which was organized by the Department of Chemistry, UoM under the auspices of

Chemical Society of Pakistan in collaboration with Higher Education Commission, ORIC, BIC and Youth Development Center of the varsity.

The UoM Vice Chancellor, Prof Dr Rashid Ahmad, chairperson, department of Chemistry Prof Dr Sultan Alam Kakakhel and president Chemical Society of Pakistan Prof Dr Raza Shah, President along with guest speakers from different universities of Pakistan including QAU Islamabad, GC University Faisalabad, University of Sargodha, University of Punjab, Gomal University, Dera Ismail Khan, Fatima Jinnah Women University, Rawalpindi, University of Peshawar, Islamia University Bahawalpur, faculty members and students of department of Chemistry, UoM attended the concluding session.

The UoM, VC Prof Dr Rashid Ahmad presented souvenirs to the guest speakers and distributed certificates among the organizers for their outstanding contributions in the conference. The VC, UoM pledged to harness the role of chemical sciences in achieving sustainable development goals and build a thriving future for the next generation of chemists. Besides, he also announced that the next chemistry conference would be held under the auspices of Chemical Society of Pakistan at GC University Faisalabad in October, 2025 tentatively.

The conference was inaugurated at the UoM main Convocation Hall here on Wednesday last. Prof Dr Attaur Rahman, former Chairman HEC was Patron in Chief, UoM vice chancellor Prof. Dr. Rashid Ahmad was patron, Prof. Dr. Sultan Alam was Chief Organizer, Dr. Muhammad Sadiq acted as Deputy Chief Organizer, Dr. Mumtaz Khan as Focal Person and Dr. Mian Muhammad as Secretary of the conference.

Prof. Dr. Muhammad Rasul Jan; Professor Emeritus was chief guest of the inaugural session of the conference. The chief guest while addressing the conference discussed various opportunities for chemists and challenges they face globally and nationally. He hailed all those who strived and made this event a successful one. Hon. Vice Chancellor, University of Malakand; Prof. Dr. Rashid Ahmad while delivering inaugural address welcomed all the distinguished guests, researchers and scholars to the event and hoped that their participation will prove productive for all the stakeholders. Prof. Raza Shah; President Chemical Society of Pakistan, and Chief Organizer Prof. Dr. Sultan Alam also addressed the august audience of the event. Speakers and delegates from around the country reached the University of Malakand to participate in this event. Souvenirs were distributed among the guests and organizers of the conference.

Provision of safe reproductive healthcare must be a priority

F.P. Report

QUETTA: "It is imperative that health facilities nationwide integrate contraceptive and post-abortion care services. Lack of counseling is a major contributor to unsafe abortions, so it's essential to educate people about contraceptive options and make them widely accessible," stated Dr. Azra Fazal Pechuho, Minister for Health and Population Welfare, Sindh.

Dr. Pechuho was speaking at the Karachi launch of the Population Council and Guttman Institute's report, "Safeguarding Women's Health: Trends, Inequities, and Opportunities in Pakistan's Abortion and Post-Abortion Care Services."

Dr. Pechuho highlighted the need to significantly increase the number of community health workers, underscoring how this shortage affects the quality and reach of healthcare. She also raised concerns about the National Finance Commission (NFC) Award, suggesting that it should better incentivize health and population welfare improvements by rewarding provinces with strong health indicators with legislative representation.

Dr. Pechuho further noted that Pakistan's policies on linking abortion with maternal health need alignment with World Health Organization guidelines to enhance the quality of care.

"Rising maternal mortal-

ity due to unsafe abortions is a pressing issue, and accessible, safe reproductive healthcare must be a priority," she added. The event presented findings from the Population Council's national study, which highlights critical gaps in Pakistan's reproductive healthcare. The study estimates that in 2023, 66 per 1,000 women of reproductive age (15-49) had an induced abortion. Of these, 21-30% faced complications, underscoring serious shortfalls in post-abortion care. Although the rate of abortion-related complications declined from 13.9 per 1,000 in 2012 to 11.7 in 2023, disparities remain, with rural and low-income women at greater risk of complications than their urban, wealthier counterparts.

The report is especially timely as Pakistan faces significant reproductive health challenges, with a population growth rate of 2.55% annually and stagnant contraceptive use. Approximately 17.3% of women report an unmet need for family planning, leading to high rates of unintended pregnancies and unsafe abortions. Dr. Zeba Sathar, Country Director of the Population Council, stressed that while Pakistan has made healthcare advancements, ensuring women's access to family planning and safe reproductive health services remains critical. "Empowering women with access to family plan-

ning and safe healthcare services is key not only to better health outcomes but also to broader social and economic progress," she remarked. The event included a panel discussion, "Safeguarding Women's Health in Pakistan," moderated by Dr. Yasmeen Sabeeh Qazi, CEO of QZ Catalyst, Esteemed panelists, including Prof. Dr. Azra Ahsan, President of the Association for Mothers and Newborns (AMAN), Prof. Dr. Nusrat Shah, Vice Chancellor of Shaheed Mohtarma Benazir Bhutto Medical University; Dr. Bushra Liaquat, Head of Department at Kohi Goth Hospital Karachi; and Ms. Sara Malkani, Reproductive Health Rights Legal Advisor, discussed barriers to reproductive healthcare and the stigma surrounding abortion. They emphasized the importance of education, healthcare reform, and policy advocacy to create a safer, healthier environment for women.

Dr. Zeba Sathar, Country Director of the Population Council, stressed that while Pakistan has made healthcare advancements, ensuring women's access to family planning and safe reproductive health services remains critical. "Empowering women with access to family planning and safe healthcare services is key not only to better health outcomes but also to broader social and economic progress," she remarked.

Kallar Kahar salt range: A perilous segment of Motorway

Shah Asad Khan

THE Islamabad-Lahore Motorway, commonly known as M-2, was inaugurated in 1997 and serves as a flagship project that has transformed Pakistan's road infrastructure. This motorway has revolutionized travel and transportation, making them more accessible and cost-effective. However, amid its many advantages, M-2 harbors significant dangers, particularly in the Kallar Kahar Salt Range—an area that requires urgent governmental intervention.

The 10-kilometer stretch through the Kallar Kahar Salt

Range, once known for its stunning landscape, has unfortunately become notorious for frequent accidents. The region's captivating salt formations and tranquil vistas are now overshadowed by a grim reality: a high incidence of accidents and fatalities. Since its inception, this segment has claimed many lives, leaving families shattered and communities in mourning. The financial toll, amounting to billions in property damage, adds another layer to this tragedy.

International road safety guidelines typically recommend a gradient of no steeper than 3% to 4% for motorways to ensure vehicle safety, particularly for heavy

traffic. In contrast, the Kallar Kahar Salt Range features gradients ranging from 6% to 8%, significantly exceeding these safe limits. This steepness increases the risk of brake failure and catastrophic accidents, resulting in devastating consequences.

A tragic incident on June 09, 2024, underscores the dangers of this perilous segment. A gas bowser lost control on the steep slopes, colliding with a car and igniting a catastrophic fire. Tragically, a doctor, his wife, and their two children perished in the blaze, alongside the crew of the gas bowser. This is just one of many incidents; hundreds of accidents have occurred at this site

since M-2's launch, leading to numerous fatalities and immense property damage.

The Kallar Kahar Salt Range's most alarming feature is its steep inclines and sharp turns, which violate international safety standards. These hazardous gradients demand exceptional driving skills and impeccable vehicle condition. A momentary lapse in judgment or a minor vehicle malfunction can lead to lethal consequences. Even well-maintained vehicles struggle to maintain control on these treacherous slopes, heightening the risk of accidents.

In response to the alarming situation, the National Highways & Motorways Police (NH&MP) and

the National Highway Authority (NHA) have taken several measures to mitigate road crashes in the Salt Range. These include deploying additional NHMP officers and patrol vehicles, utilizing advanced speed-measuring equipment, enhancing road signage, setting up emergency climbs, improved banking on the curves, and initiating a Public Service Vehicle (PSV) convoy system. While these steps are commendable, they serve as temporary fixes rather than long-term solutions.

To ensure the safety of commuters and prevent further tragedies, a more permanent resolution is imperative. This

necessitates a thorough redesign of the existing road to eliminate steep slopes and sharp curves. Exploring design alternatives, such as gentler gradients could significantly enhance safety of commuters. Transforming this notorious black spot into a safe passage for travelers is not just a challenge for the government; it is an urgent obligation. By prioritizing impactful design interventions that comply with international standards, we can transform this perilous stretch of motorway into a safer thoroughfare, ultimately safeguarding the precious lives and property of commuters.



Negotiations stall over some crucial issues at UN summit

CALI (AP): At the United Nations biodiversity summit in Colombia, negotiators have struggled to find common ground on key issues. These include how to finance protections for 30% of the world's plants and animals by 2030, how to establish a permanent body for Indigenous peoples and how to make payments for nature's genetic data that's used to create commercial products.

The two-week conference, known as COP16, was due to wrap up, although observers say negotiations could go into the weekend. In 2022, the biodiversity summit in Montreal, COP15, established a framework for countries to go about saving plummeting global ecosystems. This year's follow-up summit was to put plans into motion. "COP15 was all about the 'what'; this was supposed to be about the 'how,'" Georgina Chandler, head of policy and campaigns at The Zoological Society of London, told The Associated Press.

Wealthy nations pledged in Montreal's summit to raise \$20 billion in annual conservation financing for developing nations by 2025 — with that rising to \$30 billion annually by 2030. "I don't think we've seen governments come here with increased commitments towards the \$20 billion significant enough that we're going to achieve that," Chandler said. "That's fallen a bit short."

The lack of financial pledges from wealthy countries prompted 20 ministers from the Global South to release a joint statement calling for the need to build trust among nations and for the Global North to meet its finance targets. In the run-up to negotiations, over 230 businesses and financial institutions demanded stronger policy ambitions to address the growing risks of nature loss, said Eva Zabey, CEO of Business for



Nature.

"In the final stretch at COP16, negotiations are stalling on crucial issues — including the mobilization of meaningful financial resources and a way for companies to ensure the benefits of nature are valued and shared fairly," Zabey said. "We need governments to put aside their differences and demonstrate real and urgent leadership to deliver a strong COP16 outcome that incentivizes and drives necessary business action, further and faster, to halt and reverse nature loss by 2030," she said.

Who owns nature's DNA was a major topic at the summit. There was tension between poorer and developed countries over digital sequence information on genetic resources (DSI). This would oblige the sharing of benefits when genetic resources from animals, plants or microorganisms are used in biotechnologies. In

Montreal, countries agreed to set up a global fund.

"The DSI fund was scheduled to be adopted here two years ago. There is no clarity on how money will be gathered from companies," said Oscar Soria, director of The Common Initiative. "As the text reads it is purely voluntary." Sources told AP that there has been significant back and forth over wording in the draft agreement by nations.

"It's clear that a number of points are going down to the wire in the COP16 negotiations," Catherine Weller, Director of Global Policy at charity Fauna & Flora said. One of the biggest controversies during talks was the blocking by a few countries of a Permanent Subsidiary Body for Indigenous Peoples and local communities, who Weller says bring valuable insights to many discussions. "We urge the negotiators to step up and ensure this is finalized," she said.

Botswana's politician who did unthinkable

MAHALAPYE (BBC): Confident and well-mannered, Botswana's new President Duma Boko carries the traits of a highly trained human rights lawyer. The 54-year-old's thoughtful, fluent sentences speak of his legal education first in Botswana and then at Harvard Law School in the US.

And despite being humble in victory, the fact that he won the presidency at the third time of asking reveals a single-minded ambition. For more than 50 years opposition politicians have dreamt of unseating the mighty Botswana Democratic Party, but only Boko has made that a reality. The crushing manner of the victory of his Umbrella for Democratic Change (UDC) party came as a surprise, including it seems to Boko himself, who admitted being shocked by the numbers.

But, dressed in his signature dark blue suit, he did not gloat or celebrate wildly in his first comments to the media when the scale of his win became clear. "I can only pledge to [the people] that I will do my very best. Where I fail and fault, I will look to them for guidance," he said. Boko captivated the nation going through difficult economic times with promises of change, employment and government stipends.

"People fell in love with him and this is the result," journalist Innocent Selathlwa told the BBC's Focus on Africa podcast. Throughout his campaign, at rallies Boko would ask supporters to come closer and listen to their grievances in a way that made him appealing to young people, the journalist added. Boko was serious, but always engaging and friendly. He also ruled out running as a member of parliament and put all his efforts into becoming president - a bold move, according to Selathlwa.

Born in 1969, in the country's Central District, in the small town of Mahalapye, Boko always had a sense of respect, according to relatives. "He was so fixated with doing the right thing. His sense of justice ran deep," his aunt told a local newspaper. During his time in school, he was elected president of the student council.

In his legal career, he emerged as one of the country's top lawyers, according to political analyst Lesole Machacha. Passionate about knowledge and education, Boko always has a strong grasp on current affairs and issues in Botswana, Mr Machacha told the BBC. "He is serious about fixing the country," he added. He became the leader of the Botswana National Front (BNF) in 2010, which used to have more "communist ideals", said Mr Machacha, but the party has since tacked towards the centre.

North Korea boasts of 'world's strongest' missile

SEOUL (AP): North Korea boasted that the new intercontinental ballistic missile it just test-launched is "the world's strongest," a claim seen as pure propaganda after experts assessed it as being too big to be useful in a war situation.

The ICBM launched Thursday flew higher and for a longer duration than any other weapon North Korea has tested. But foreign experts say the test failed to show North Korea has mastered some of the last remaining technological hurdles to possess functioning ICBMs that can strike the mainland US. The North's Korean Central News Agency identified the missile as a Hwasong-19 and called it "the world's strongest strategic missile" and "the perfected weapon system." The official media outlet said leader Kim Jong Un observed the launch, describing it as an expression of North Korea's resolve to respond to external threats to North Korea's security. The color and shape of the exhaust flames seen in North Korean state media photos of the launch suggest the missile uses preloaded solid fuel, which makes weapons more agile and harder to detect than liquid propellants that in general must be fueled beforehand. But experts say the photos show the ICBM and its launch vehicle are both oversized, raising a serious question about their wartime mobility and survivability.

"When missiles get bigger, what happens? The vehicles get larger, too. As the transporter-erector launchers get bigger, their mobility decreases," Lee Sangmin, an expert at South Korea's Korea Institute for Defense Analyses. The Hwasong-19 was estimated to be at least 28 meters long (92 feet) while advanced US and Russian ICBMs are less than 20 meters long (66 feet), said Chang Young-keun, a missile expert at Seoul's Korea Research Institute for National Strategy. He suggested that the missile's size likely helped South Korean intelligence authorities detect the launch plan in advance.

"In the event of a conflict, such an exposure makes the weapon a target of a preemptive attack by opponents so there would be a big issue of survivability," Chang said. Lee Ilwoo, an expert with the Korea Defense Network in South Korea, said North Korea may have developed a larger missile to carry bigger and more destructive warheads or

multi-warheads. If that's the case, Lee said North Korea could have used liquid fuels as they generate higher thrust than solid fuels. He said some advanced liquid propellants can be stored in missiles for a few weeks before liftoffs. Lee said North Korea may have placed a dummy, empty warhead on the Hwasong-19 to make it fly higher. In recent years, North Korea has reported steady advancement in its efforts to obtain nuclear-tipped missiles. Many foreign experts believe North Korea likely has missiles that can deliver nuclear strikes on all of South Korea, but it has yet to possess nuclear missiles that can strike the mainland US.

The hurdles it has yet to overcome, according to experts, include ensuring its warheads survive the heat and stress of atmospheric reentry, improving the guidance systems for the missiles, and being able to use multiple warheads on a single missile to defeat missile defenses. "Acquiring reentry technology is currently the most important goal in North Korea's missile development, specifically for ICBMs, but they just keep increasing the ranges instead. This possibly suggests they still lack confidence in their reentry technology," Lee Sangmin said.

Chang said state media dispatch on the launch lacks details on the technological aspects of the Hwasong-19 and focused on publicity. Other North Korean claims about its weapons capabilities have been met with wide outside skepticism. In June, North Korea claimed to have tested a multiwarhead missile in the first known launch of such a weapon, but South Korea said the weapon instead blew up. In July, when North Korea said it had test-fired a new tactical ballistic missile capable of carrying "a super-large warhead," South Korea said the claim was an attempt to conceal a botched launch. North Korea's missile program is still a major regional security concern, with the country openly threatening to use its nuclear missiles against its rivals. In a joint statement, the foreign ministers of South Korea, the US and Japan condemned the ICBM launch as a violation of UN Security Council resolutions and said they're committed to strengthening their efforts to block North Korea's illicit revenue generation funding its missile and nuclear programs.

Zelenskiy blasts allies for 'zero' response

KYIV (Reuters): President Volodymyr Zelenskiy blasted what he called his allies' "zero" response to Russia's deployment of North Korean troops for the war in Ukraine, saying a weak reaction would encourage Russia's Vladimir Putin to beef up the contingent.

The Ukrainian leader, in an interview with South Korea's KBS television channel, said he believed Moscow was already trying to agree for North Korea to send engineering troops and a "large number of civilians" to work at Russian military plants. "Putin is checking the reaction of the West ... And I believe that after all these reactions, Putin will decide and increase the contingent ... The reaction that is there today is nothing, it is zero," Zelenskiy said.

He began publicly warning of North Korean involvement in the war on

Oct. 13. Western allies have since described the move as a major escalation, but have not announced retaliatory measures or said they are preparing to implement any. South Korea has offered intelligence assistance and wider cooperation on the matter, and it is considering sending a team of military monitors to Ukraine, according to South Korean officials.

In prepared remarks to the UN Security Council, Ukraine's delegation named three North Korean generals it says are accompanying thousands of Korean People's Army troops deployed to Russia in aid of Moscow's war in Ukraine. Russia has not denied the involvement of North Korean troops in the war. North Korea initially denied involvement, but has since defended the idea of deploying troops as being in line with international law.

Deputy US Ambassador to the United Nations Robert Wood told the Security Council that Washington had received information indicating that "right now" there are 8,000 North Korean troops in Russia's southern Kursk region, which borders on northeastern Ukraine. In his interview comments, Zelenskiy said he was surprised by the "silence" out of China, the world's second economy, over the troop deployment.

Zelenskiy said that Ukraine had "clear information" that Russia had confirmed the deployment of the North Koreans directly to the West via intelligence channels. "The Russian Federation discussed this issue with the West and confirmed that yes, there are military personnel from North Korea who will fight against Ukraine," he said.

Mozambique social media restricted as runner-up in hiding

MAPUTO (BBC): Social media has been restricted in Mozambique as one of the main challengers in last month's disputed election remains in hiding calling for protests. Police say they believe Venancio Mondlane - a part-time pastor and independent candidate who insists he was the true winner of the polls - is in neighbouring South Africa.

He has been imploring his supporters in social media videos to demonstrate over the next week against the official poll results, which gave victory to Daniel Chapo from the ruling Frelimo party. Mondlane disappeared from public view 12 days ago, accusing the police of threatening behaviour not long after two of his aides were shot dead in the run-up to release of the results.

He has described the killing of his lawyer Elvino Dias and Paulo Guambe, an official from the opposition Podemos party that backed him, as politically motivated - an allegation denied by the government. Mondlane went into hiding before the results were released, saying his home had been encircled by officers and he had been tear-gassed at protests called after the murders. Demonstrations also erupted after the results were announced last week.

At least 10 people are known to have been shot dead by security forces during post-election protests, according to a report from Order of Doctors, an independent medics'

association, while dozens suffered non-fatal gunshot wounds. Police chief Bernardino Rafael has denied Mondlane's accusations and said his officers had been called to intervene in 58 protests, "of which 38 were violent, very violent".

Internet watchdog NetBlocks said restrictions to WhatsApp, Facebook and Instagram began, while there had been disruption to mobile data soon after election day on 9 October. For the past day WhatsApp, for example, gets cut off for hours at a time - and although a connection can be made intermittently, making calls on the app has not been possible. The government has not commented on claims it has deliberately stifled access to the internet to hamper protesters' ability to co-ordinate.

President-elect Chapo will be taking over from Filipe Nyusi, who is stepping down after serving the two-term limit. Mozambique has only ever been governed by one party - Frelimo - which has ruled since independence from Portugal. The official elections results gave Chapo 71% of the vote. Mondlane was runner-up with 20%, and Ossufo Momade, of former rebel group Renamo, came third with 6%.

But that result is being challenged at the Constitutional Court by Podemos. International election observers have also said the elections were flawed, pointing to doctored numbers and other irregularities during the counting process.

The electoral commission has now been ordered by the Constitutional Court to hand over all the records and tally sheets. Podemos leader Albino Forquilha met the police chief for talks, calling for "institutions that administer justice" to "carry out work that honours the vote the Mozambican people entrusted to political parties". Relative calm has returned to the streets of the capital, Maputo, and other cities on after days of demonstrations.

Some markets, shops and companies that were forced to close their doors have now reopened, but complaint of having very few customers. The impact on business has been "worse than Covid-19", said the president of the national trade association CTA, coming "at a time when the country is struggling with the issue of unemployment, mostly affecting the youth". Mozambicans have largely opted to stay home instead of going to work as normal, because of safety fears and scarce public transport.

Beyond the capital, schools are still running but with fewer pupils turning up to class. Mondlane is now urging Mozambican industry to back what he calls a week-long "paralysis", saying on Facebook live that "seven days without work are better than five years of misery". He has also called on his supporters to "occupy" the presidential palace and other strategic points in the capital city.

Kim was China's ally - until he became the 'comrade from hell'

BEIJING (BBC): Chinese tourists huddle together against the brisk autumn breeze on a 12-storey building, vying for the best spot to photograph the point where their country meets Russia and North Korea. The three national flags overlap on a map on the wall, which explains that Fangchuan in China's north-east corner is a unique place for that reason.

"I feel very proud to be standing here... with Russia on my left and North Korea on my right," declares one woman on a trip with her co-workers. "There are no borders among the people." That might be overly optimistic. Like the sliver of sandwiched Chinese territory she has travelled to see, Beijing too is caught between its sanctioned neighbours. Fears over the budding alliance between Vladimir Putin and Kim Jong Un have peaked in recent weeks, with reports of North Korea deploying thousands of troops to support Russia's invasion of Ukraine. And that was before Pyongyang fired a banned intercontinental missile, on the longest flight recorded yet - after turning up the rhetoric against Seoul for weeks.

"China seeks a relationship with a reasonable, high level of control over North Korea," says Christopher Green, an analyst from the International Crisis Group. "And North Korea's relationship with Russia threatens to undermine that." If Xi is unable shape the Putin-Kim alliance to suit his interests, China may well remain stuck in the middle as western anger and anxiety grows. Moscow and Pyongyang deny that North Korean soldiers are headed for Ukraine, widely seen as a significant escalation. But the United States says it has seen evidence of this, following allegations by South Korean and Ukrainian intelligence.

The first reports emerged just

before Chinese leader Xi Jinping met his Russian counterpart at the Brics summit earlier in October, overshadowing a gathering that was meant to send the West a defiant message. It increasingly appears as though China's allies are spiralling out of its control. Beijing, the senior partner in the triad, seeks to be the stable leader of a new world order, one that is not led by the US. But that's difficult to do when one ally has started a war in Europe, and another is accused of aiding the invasion.

"China is unhappy with the way things are going," Mr Green says, "but they are trying to keep their discontent relatively quiet." It's certainly a sensitive topic for Beijing, judging by the response to our presence in the border town, where it seems tourists are welcome - but journalists are not. We were in public areas at all times, and yet the team was stopped, repeatedly questioned, followed and our footage deleted.

The hotel demanded to keep my passport for "my safety and the safety of others". Police visited our hotel rooms, and they also blocked the road to the port at Hunchun, which would have given us a closer view of the current trade between Russia and China. On the viewing platform in Fangchuan, it's clear that most tourists have come to see North Korea. "I saw a person cycling," says one girl peering through a telescope. Her friend rushes over to see: "Oooh! It's such a mysterious country."

Close by is the Tumen river that gently cuts through all three countries. It is China's gateway into the Sea of Japan, where it has territorial disputes with Tokyo. The 1,400km-long (870 mile) Chinese border has some of the only platforms with a clear view into North Korea. South Korea's frontier with the North is an

almost impenetrable barrier, the heavily mined and fortified Demilitarized Zone. Someone offers me a pair of binoculars. Some people are cycling through the village on ageing bicycles, but there are few other signs of life. One of the largest buildings is a school with a sign calling for children to "learn well for Chosun", another name for North Korea.

"North Korea has always been our neighbour. It's no stranger to us," says a middle-aged man. "To be able to see how they live makes me realise China is prosperous and strong." Kim Jong Un's regime would certainly struggle to survive without its biggest benefactor, China, which accounts for more than 90% of foreign trade, including food and fuel. That was not always the case. In the early 1960s it was the Chinese who fled famine across the shallow Tumen river. Some even went to school in North Korea because they believed its education system at the time was better.

The North Korean economy crashed after the fall of the Soviet Union in 1991 - which had been its main source of aid and cheap oil - sparking severe food shortages and, eventually, famine. Soon, North Korean refugees began wading through an often freezing Tumen river at the risk of being shot dead to escape hunger, poverty and repression. There are now more than 30,000 of them in South Korea and an unknown number still live in China. "Since the collapse of the Soviet Union, North Korea hasn't really had any choice but to maintain good relations with China, which has been its sole benefactor," Mr Green says.

But now, he adds, Russia "is offering an alternative and the North Koreans are seeking to exploit that". Mao Zedong, the first leader of the People's Republic of China, had likened the relationship between

Beijing and Pyongyang to the closeness between "lips and teeth": "If the lips are gone, the teeth will be cold." Now, Beijing finds itself smarting from a lack of gratitude as Kim's lips are "kissing elsewhere", according to sociologist Aidan Foster-Carter, who has studied North Korea for several decades.

"North Korea has consistently been the comrade from hell to both Russia and China. They take as much money as they can and [then] do what they like." Analysts have noted that Kim has consistently flattered Putin over Xi in the last year. While Kim hasn't met Xi since 2019, he has met Putin twice in the past year or so. Russia's invasion of Ukraine has drawn the two sanctioned leaders closer than ever. Putin seeks more support for his war and Kim wants to bolster his regime with alliances and attention. From the Chinese border, it's easy to see the burgeoning relationship between the two sides.

The whistle of a train interrupts the tourist chatter, and a steam engine pulling a long line of freight carriages slowly chugs across the railway bridge from Russia to North Korea. It stops in front of a Korean sign facing China which reads: "Towards a new victory!" The US estimates that Kim has sold more than a million artillery shells and Grad rockets to Moscow for use in Ukraine, which North Korea denies. But there is no doubt that the pair have stepped up cooperation after signing a security pact in June to help each other in the event of "aggression" against either country.

"You have very stiff and formal language to Xi Jinping on the occasion of what is actually an historically important event - the 75th anniversary of relations of the People's Republic of China," Mr Foster-Carter says. "And yet on Putin's birthday, Kim calls him 'my closest comrade'.

If you are Xi Jinping, what are you thinking?" It's hard to know, because China has shown no signs of interfering with the Russia-North Korea alliance. The US has noticed Beijing's disquiet and for once the two rivals may have similar goals.

In the last week, State Department officials have raised the issue of North Korean troops in Russia with Chinese diplomats. Beijing does have options - in the past, they have cut supplies of oil and coal to North Korea, and complied with US-led sanctions to curb Pyongyang's nuclear programme. Already, China is battling US accusations that it is selling components to Russia that aid its invasion of Ukraine. Beijing's trade with Moscow is also flourishing, even as it tries to cope with Western tariffs. Xi has kept Russia close because he needs Putin's help to challenge the US-led world order. But he has not stopped trying to repair ties with Europe, the UK and even the US. China has also been holding talks with Japan and South Korea to ease historic tensions.

But Kim's increasingly aggressive rhetoric against Seoul has the South once again debating whether it should have its own nuclear arsenal. North Korean troops on a Ukrainian battlefield would only further unravel Beijing's plans. The possibility has already been seen South Korean President Yoon Suk Yeol discuss "concrete counter-measures" and talk of strengthening security cooperation with Ukraine and Nato. A nuclear-armed South Korea or an "East Asian Nato" are not ideal in a region where China wants greater sway. An emboldened Kim could also draw a stronger show of support from the US - in the form of warships or even weapons - towards its allies, Seoul and Tokyo. "For a very long time, China has had a policy of three nos in

Northeast Asia - one of those nos was a no nuclear North Korea. Obviously that has been a failure," Mr Green says.

Now Beijing fears that the alliance with Russia could destabilise North Korea, he adds: "That could even benefit Vladimir Putin in a way it really would not benefit Xi Jinping." Experts say Beijing is just as worried as the West about what military technology Putin might sell to Kim in exchange for troops. "Satellites, for sure," Mr Foster-Carter says. "But Putin is bad - not mad. Russia knows just as China knows that North Korea is a loose cannon. Giving [Kim] more technology for nukes is not a good thing for anybody."

Experts believe Xi is unlikely to do anything drastic because China needs a stable North Korea - if he cuts off aid, he would likely have a refugee crisis at the border. But Kim too might have a decision to make. Although Russia is paying for shells and troops, Mr Foster-Carter says, it is China that "has actually kept North Korea going all this time, often through gritted teeth. I just wonder at what point Beijing will turn on Pyongyang?". Kim's deadly gamble could also have a profound impact closer to home - the 25 million North Koreans who are cut off from the outside world and completely dependent on the regime for their survival.

Across the Tumen river in Fangchuan, a North Korean soldier watches us, while we watch him. Steam rises from snack stands selling noodles and sizzled octopus on sticks on the Chinese side. And he can probably hear the giggling tourists taking pictures with the latest cameras and phones, which he is forbidden from owning. The shallow river is a gulf neither the tourists nor the soldier can cross.

The Frontier Post

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

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How Russia may be losing influence in ME

CONFLICT in the Middle East has opened a debate on the possibility of a change in the regional order that has existed for the past 50 years. These changes may affect the regional role of Russia, which has been working hard to reestablish itself as a great power: starting with its intervention in the Syrian civil war, since when Iran has remained a key regional ally on whom Russia's influence and power in the region closely depends. A year after the start of the Gaza war, it remains unclear which power bloc in the region will prevail: whether Israel, supported by the US and some EU member states, will emerge stronger and as a result weaken Iran's strength in the region and consequently its place worldwide; or whether the conflict will ultimately damage Israel and discourage outside support, enabling other players including Iran to establish a firm hold.

If Iran lost its influence (or it were much diminished), this would challenge Russia's standing, established since 2015. Wars in Gaza and Lebanon may also test these relations. The Kremlin is thought to have no intention of abandoning Iran despite the pressure it is under through its proxies, Hamas and Hezbollah: the commitment to continued cooperation and development stands. Russia itself has been affected by the war: the success of Israeli missile strikes on Iran damaged the reputation of the Russian arms industry. In fact, Russia provided no support for Iran's air defense and declined to condemn Israel's attacks. This perceived betrayal has resulted in unprecedented anti-Russian sentiment across Iran among parliament members, the Foreign Ministry, and ordinary Iranians.

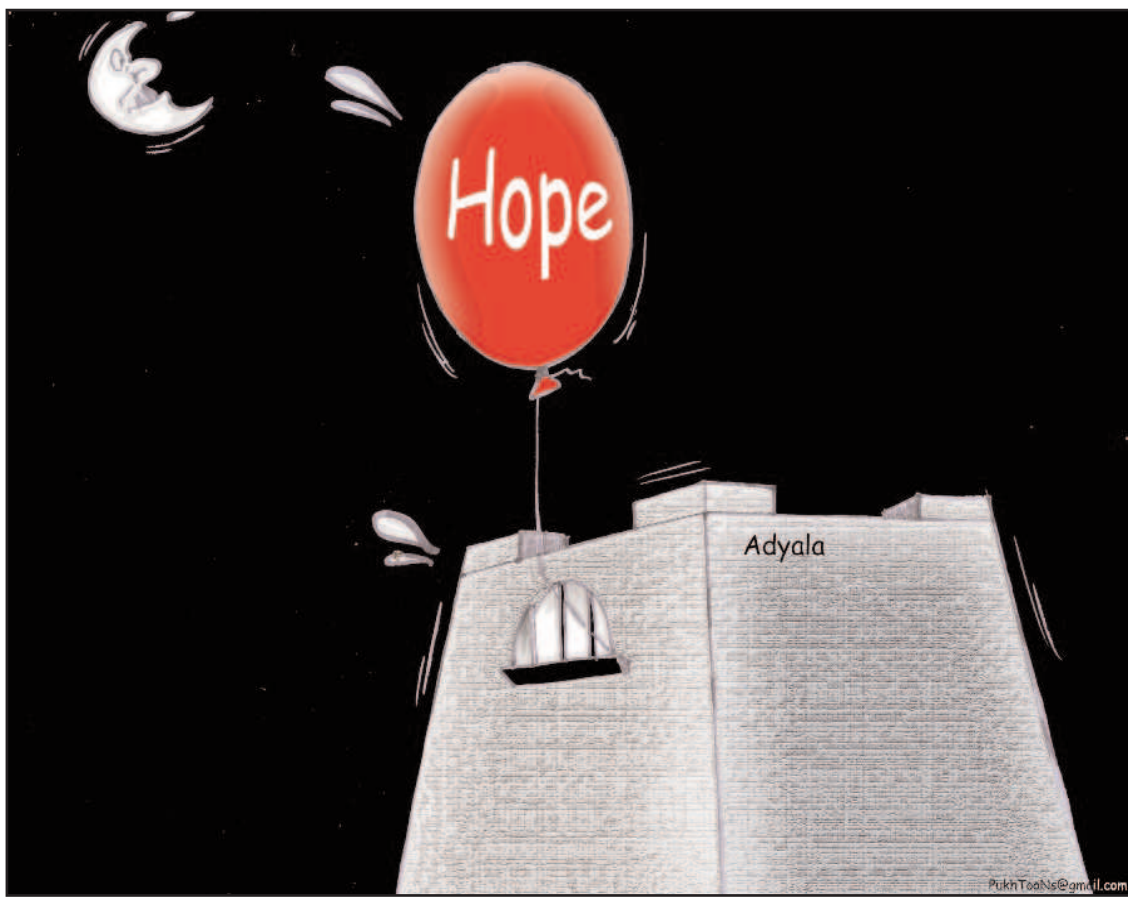
It is also unclear to what extent the war will challenge the role of Russia in the region when it is heavily occupied with the conflict in Ukraine. It has been less active than its rivals in the West, who Russia and Iran aim to challenge. The need to deploy its own military equipment and facilities in the Middle East has also made it more difficult for Iran to support Russia in Ukraine. The Ukraine war, I would argue, complex and troubling as it is, was a golden opportunity for Russia to build closer relations with Middle Eastern partners, as the region has in recent years been experiencing challenging relations with the West. Regional powers are key partners in energy deals with Russia: OPEC+ agreements since the Ukraine war have contributed to Russia's growing presence in the region through its "economic statecraft" of essentially weaponizing energy. The emerging challenge of reshaping the balance of the power in the Middle East and the return of the focus of regional powers to regional dynamics and security has stymied some of this progress. However, Russia may indeed remain crucial for regional actors, diplomatically and economically. Though far from certain, it seems that the vacuum of power created by Western withdrawals might have been Russia's to fill, but a visible lack of diplomatic energy and clear policies toward the Gaza and Lebanon wars may be seen as an opportunity missed.

For example, the president of the UAE, Sheikh Mohammed bin Zayed Al-Nahyan, met Joe Biden in the White House in September, three days before Israel assassinated Hezbollah leader Hassan Nasrallah in Beirut. The two leaders discussed ways to end the conflicts in the Middle East. A month later Sheikh Mohammed visited Moscow, but his discussions with Vladimir Putin focused on economic statecraft and mutual investments. Thus, neither the Emiratis side nor anyone else is relying on Russia to address the conflicts in Gaza and Lebanon. Rather, they consider the US — which heavily supports Israel — as the key player, and understand that if the balance of power shifts, it may do so toward the West.

With a US presidential election next week, the matter of choosing sides might become another challenge for Russia's place in the region: Donald Trump's 2017-2021 presidency contributed to close ties with the Gulf monarchies and the Abraham Accords with Israel. This could be another alarming history to remember while discussing Russia's future standing in the region. Thus, the Middle East is in transformation, affecting the balance of regional powers, the great power balance, and the positions of worldwide players including Russia. Russia has an important existing role in the region, but there are alarm bells that, occupied with its own war in Ukraine, Moscow is putting less effort into resolving issues and establishing its place in shaping the balance of regional powers. In analyses of Russian officials' discourses, the focus has been on the possibility of a Third World War as an outcome of the conflicts in Gaza and Lebanon. However, none has a suggested clear strategy in case Iran's influence collapses, how Russia could balance its focus over the Ukraine war, or any strategy to balance the US role in recent events. I believe Russia must reshape its focus from a "wars" mentality (always waiting for a nuclear war, Third World War, etc.) and instead consider all developments in the region as they occur, working out how to take advantage of events. It also needs a clear strategy for the short, middle and long term in case of a completely reshaped balance of power in the Middle East. The next 50 years there could prove as crucial and complex as the past 50.

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Harris will not be a president for marginalised folks

Donald Earl Collins

SHE made it clear in her acceptance speech at the Democratic National Convention in August, again at her televised debate with Donald Trump a few weeks later, and in all her interviews since. Vice President Kamala Harris, if or when elected the 47th United States president, will continue the centre-right policies of her recent predecessors, especially her current boss, President Joe Biden.

This likely means that efforts to address income equality and poverty, to abandon policies that beget violence overseas, and to confront the latticework of discrimination that affects Americans of colour and Black women especially, will be limited at best. If Harris wins this election, her being a Black and South Asian woman in the most powerful office in the world will not mean much to marginalised people anywhere, because she will wield that power in the same racist, sexist and Islamophobic ways as previous presidents.

"I'm not the president of Black America. I'm the president of the United States of America," President Barack Obama had said on several occasions during his presidency when asked about doing more for Black Americans while in office. As a presidential candidate, Kamala Harris is essentially doing the same. And as it was the case with Obama's presidency, this is not good news for Black Americans, or any other marginalised community. Take the issue of housing.

Harris's proposed \$25,000 grant to help Americans buy homes for the first time is a blanket grant, one that in a housing market historically tilted towards white Americans, will invariably discriminate against Black folks and other people of colour. Harris's campaign promise does not even discern between "first-time buyers" whose parents and siblings already own homes, and true "first-generation" buyers who are more likely not white, and do not have any generational wealth.

It seems Harris wants to appear committed to helping "all Americans", even if it means her policies would primarily help (mostly white) Americans already living middle-class lives. Any real chance for those

among the working class and the working poor to have access to the three million homes Harris has promised is between slim and none.

Harris's pledges about reproductive rights are equally non-specific and thus less than reassuring to those who already face discrimination and erasure.

She says, if elected president, she would "codify Roe v Wade". Every Democratic president since Jimmy Carter has made such a promise and yet failed to keep it. Even if Congress were to pass such a law, the far right would challenge this law in court. Even if the federal courts decided to uphold such a law, the Supreme Court decisions that followed between 1973 and 2022 gave states the right to restrict abortion based on fetus viability, meaning that most restrictions already in place in many states would remain. And with half the states in the US either banning abortion entirely or severely restricting it, codification of Roe — if it ever actually materialises — would at best reset the US to the precarity around reproductive rights that has existed since 1973.

Even if Harris miraculously manages to keep her promise, American women of colour, and women living in poverty, will still have less access to contraceptives, to abortions, and to prenatal and neonatal care, because all Roe ever did was to make such care "legal". The law never made it affordable, and certainly never made it so that all women had equal access to services in every state in the union.

Given that she is poised to become America's first woman/woman of colour/Black woman president, Harris's vague and wide-net promises on reproductive rights, which would do little to help any women, but especially marginalised women, are damning. Sure, it is good that Harris talks about Black girls and women like the late Amber Nicole Thurman who have been denied reproductive rights in states like Georgia, with deadly results. But her words mean nothing without a clear action plan. Where Harris failed the most of all, however, is tackling violence — overwhelmingly targeting marginalised, sidelined,

silenced and criminalised folks — in the US and overseas.

During a live and televised interview with billionaire Oprah Winfrey in September, Harris expanded on the revelation she made during her earlier debate with Trump that she is a gun owner. "If somebody breaks into my house they're getting shot," Harris said with a smile. "I probably should not have said that," she swiftly added. "My staff will deal with that later."

The vice president seemed confident that her remark would eventually be seen by pro-gun control democrats as a necessary attempt at grabbing the attention of gun-owning, centre-right voters, who could still be dissuaded from voting for Trump. Nonetheless, her casual statement about the use of lethal force revealed much more than her desire to secure the votes of "sensible", old-school right wingers. It illuminated the blitheness with which Harris takes the issue of the US as a violent nation and culture.

It is hard to believe Harris as president would be an advocate for "common sense" measures seeking "assault weapons bans, universal background checks, red flag laws" when she talks so casually about shooting people. Her decision to treat gun violence as yet another issue for calculated politicking is alarming, especially when Black folk — including Black women — face death by guns at disproportionate rates, particularly at the hands of police officers and white vigilantes. Despite Trump's disgusting claims, Harris is a Black woman. Many Americans assume she would do more to protect them than other presidents. However, her dismissive attitude towards gun violence shows that President Harris — regardless of her racial background — would not offer any more security and safety to marginalised communities, including Black women, than her predecessors.

The assumption that as a part-Black, part-South Asian president, Harris would curtail American violence that maims and kills Black, brown and Asian bodies all over the world also appears to be baseless.

In repeatedly saying that

she "will ensure America always has the strongest, most lethal fighting force in the world", Harris has made clear that she has every intention to continue with the lethal, racist, imperialistic policies of her Democratic and Republican predecessors, without reflection, recalibration or an ounce of remorse. Just look at the carnage in Gaza she has overseen as vice president.

Despite saying multiple times that she and Biden "have been working around the clock" for a ceasefire in Gaza, the truth is that Biden and Harris have not secured a ceasefire simply because they do not want one. Harris as president will be just as fine with Black, brown, and Asian lives not mattering in the calculations of her future administration's foreign policy, as she has been as vice president and US senator.

Anybody voting for Harris in this election — including yours truly — should be honest about why. Sure, there is excitement around having a woman — a biracial, Black and South Asian woman at that — as American president for the first time in history. This excitement, combined with her promise of "we're not going back" in reference to Trump's presidency, and many pledges to protect what's left of US democracy, provide many Americans with enough reason to support the Harris-Walz ticket. Yet, some seem to be supporting Kamala Harris under the impression that as a Black and South Asian woman, she would value the lives of people who look like her, and once elected, support marginalised people much better than her predecessors. This is a delusion.

Just like Obama once did, Harris wants to be president of the United States of America. She has no intention of being the President of "Black America" or the marginalised. She made this clear, over and over again, throughout her campaign, and through her work as vice president to Joe Biden. There is a long list of reasons to vote for Harris in this election, but the assumption that her presidency would be supportive of the rights and struggles of the marginalised, simply because of her identity, should not be on that list.

Aljazeera

Keeping global governance machinery running

Yu Yongding

THE rise of new global powers, such as China and India, has significantly changed the power balance in the international system. When institutions such as the World Bank, the International Monetary Fund and the World Trade Organization were established, the global economy was dominated by the United States and Western Europe. The economic landscape has changed dramatically over the past few decades, with emerging markets now playing a much larger role. Despite these changes, the governance structures of many international institutions remain largely unchanged, leading to frustration among emerging economies that feel underrepresented. This lack of adaptation has contributed to a decline in trust in these institutions and has raised questions about their relevance in the world today.

For instance, we can examine the multilateral trade system as an example. In April 2018, the then Donald Trump administration initiated a trade war with China. The Trump administration openly claimed that it did not merely want to ensure that China complies with existing rules, it wants to prevent China from catching up with the US technologically. This is obviously not acceptable to China. In the National Security Strategy that the Trump administration released in 2017, China was cited as the main challenger to "American power, influence, and interests", an adversary that is "attempting to erode American security and prosperity".

This perspective fuels the risk of the so-called Thucydides Trap, in which an established power's fear of a rising rival leads to conflict. Under the Joe Biden administration, the US toned down its rhetoric a bit but has expanded the scope of sanctions on Chinese companies, such as by placing hundreds, if not thousands, of Chinese companies on its so-called Entity List, blacklisting them on national-security grounds.

US National Security Adviser Jake Sullivan said these measures are not a "technology blockade". But the claim is dubious. While national security is a legitimate concern for any country, it is difficult, or impossible, to decide whether supply chains — or segments of supply chains — have security implications. The concept of national security can be easily abused to violate WTO provisions. Since the US-China trade war began in 2018, the US has imposed heavy tariffs on Chinese imports and China has retaliated with tariffs. The trade war increased costs for businesses and led to a significant reduction in bilateral trade. Even if the geopolitical situation deteriorates further, China cannot disengage fully from global supply chains — at least not without paying a heavy price. But the same is true of the West, which may be tempted by the idea of forcing China out. Just as the Chinese industry would suffer massively from the economy's isolation, so would Western businesses. Achieving a pyrrhic victory in a trade war actually benefits nobody. It is also important to note that the trade war has led to decoupling

and reshaping of global production chains against the principle of comparative advantage. While some countries might benefit in the short term, all countries will eventually diminish in the long run.

Recently, I met with a respected US business leader, who told me that China uses industrial policy to gain competitive advantage. I asked him why he does not sue China in the court of the WTO. His answer is that it does not help, because China has not violated WTO rules technically. Instead, the US will just copy China, using industrial policy to improve its industries' competitiveness. This is a worrying development. All countries should abide by WTO rules and the US should stop obstructing the normal functioning of the WTO. For example, the US government should stop blocking the appointment of new members of the Dispute Settlement Body.

Solving trade disputes within the WTO framework is of utmost importance to uphold multilateralism. If the world wishes to avoid repeating the terrible mistakes of the past, all countries, especially the US, should return to the WTO to solve trade disputes, rather than acting unilaterally. Currently, the other challenge faced by global governance is the issue of development financing for developing countries. To achieve the sustainable development goals set by the United Nations, developing countries need to make large-scale investments in infrastructure, food security, climate change, health and education. The funding gap is estimated at \$2.5 trillion.

At the same time, according to UN statistics, by 2022, the external debt stock of developing countries had reached \$11.4 trillion, double the figure 10 years ago. Developing countries, especially low-income developing countries, face a heavy debt service burden. Due to the impact of the pandemic, the debt situation in developing countries has further deteriorated. The UN's Report titled "2022 Financing for Sustainable Development Report: Bridging the Financing Gap" indicated that, on average, the poorest developing countries need to allocate 14 percent of their income to pay debt interest — almost four times the rate of developed countries (3.5 percent). Globally, due to the pandemic, many developing countries have been forced to cut budgets that should have been allocated for education, infrastructure, and other sectors.

In 2020, the G20 introduced the Debt Service Suspension Initiative. From May 2020 to December 2021, the initiative suspended \$12.9 billion in debt-service payments owed by 73 low-income countries to creditors, with China making the largest contribution. As the world's second-largest economy, China is still on its way to becoming a middle-income country in terms of per capita income. China will shoulder the responsibilities that it should and can take as a major power. China will also work with other countries, especially developing countries, to urge the West, led by the US, to fulfill their responsibilities.

Why Israel's UNRWA ban may backfire

Daoud Kuttab

IT is hard for any observer to understand or explain the latest Israeli action against the UN Relief and Works Agency. After the state of Israel was established in 1948, it took two years for it to become a full member of the then-nascent UN. Among the key issues that delayed Israel's induction was the status of the hundreds of thousands of Palestinians it had made refugees.

For its part, the UN had passed a clear and unambiguous resolution (General Assembly Resolution 194) guaranteeing the right of return of Palestinian refugees and compensation for the losses they incurred. Decades later, in negotiations, Palestinians insisted on Israel recognizing its historic and moral responsibility for having caused the Palestinian refugee crisis.

The US, wanting to ease the terrible humanitarian conditions that Palestinian

refugees were facing in tents in countries bordering Israel, helped create UNRWA, which began its operations in 1950. America was the biggest donor to this UN agency until President Donald Trump took power and cut off aid. This action, which has partially continued under the Biden administration due to pro-Israeli pressure in Congress, has whetted the appetite of members of the right-wing Israeli government who have always hoped that the Palestinian refugee issue would simply disappear.

UNRWA has been providing humanitarian aid services to 5.9 million Palestinian refugees in the West Bank and Gaza, as well as in Jordan, Syria and Lebanon. It is their primary source of humanitarian support. Its services include the provision of basic needs like education, food, medical care and the distribution of fuel. Its closure may inevitably lead to the col-

lapse of the primary lifeline for Palestinians. It is not a political body and has refrained from any political actions. UNRWA has strictly followed the regularly approved mandate of the UN.

The agency's mandate, as defined by the UN General Assembly, is to serve "Palestine refugees." This term was defined in 1952 as any person whose "normal place of residence was Palestine during the period 1 June 1946 to 15 May 1948 and who lost both home and means of livelihood as a result of the 1948 conflict." Palestine refugees are both those who fulfill this definition and the descendants of fathers fulfilling the definition.

For years, Israel and its supporters have zoomed in on this humanitarian agency, trying to bring about its disappearance by pressuring countries not to fund

it or by making claims, at times using fabricating stories, about UNRWA or its staff. The latest fabrication — that a few members of its huge local staff were involved in Hamas' Oct. 7 attacks on Israel — was debunked by a high-level investigation committee set up by the UN secretary-general. A UN inquiry published in April found no evidence of wrongdoing by UNRWA staff, noting that Israel had neither responded to requests for names and information nor "informed UNRWA of any concrete concerns relating to UNRWA staff since 2011."

But despite failing to convince the world of its accusations and despite pressure from Israel's allies not to approve the ban, 92 of the 120-seat Knesset's members on Monday voted in favor of banning UNRWA from working in Israel and 87 backed a ban

on state authorities from having any contact with the agency, effectively crippling its ability to operate in the Occupied Territories.

While the international community, under immense Israeli pressure, debated whether and how much money to commit to this important UN agency, no one expected Israel to act in such a callous manner and vote in its highest legislative chamber to prohibit UNRWA from providing humanitarian aid to needy Palestinians. For decades, Israel has demanded that the world, including its enemies, recognize its right to exist. But by banning a UN agency, Israel is weakening its own legitimacy.

Folklore is full of proverbs that apply to what Israel, a UN member state that is obliged to abide by the UN Charter, plans to do to UNRWA. "Do not spit in the well that you drink from" and "do not saw the branch you are sitting on"

are two examples that seem to perfectly illustrate the madness of a country that is worried about its own legitimacy acting against the one international agency that gave it license to exist.

What Israel is doing in a conflict it calls an existential war is weakening its own status in the world community. When you steal other people's land and create a country over their properties, the last thing you want to do is strengthen those who are questioning your own existence. So, as racist elements in Israel attempt to make the Palestinian refugee problem disappear, this move risks having the opposite effect. As a UN member state that is banning a UN agency, Israel has helped strengthen the demand of its enemies and is forcing the international community to seriously consider its membership of the global body that once gave it recognition.

Arab News

Those who govern Britain are increasingly unaccountable

SOME readers will think me naïve, but I used to believe that this was an uncorrupt country. In many ways, I still believe it, and it is a reason for legitimate pride. I would never expect to offer a bribe, or be offered one, however politely. I have never been asked to favour anyone applying for admission as a student to Cambridge, or to write a dishonest reference. I would not expect to give a box of chocolates to an archivist to get access to public records.

But I know that in many countries, such practices are common, indeed normal, something of a joke. I have close connections with France, where le piston (string-pulling) is almost a national sport. But in recent months, my complacency has crumbled. Not because of experiencing petty corruption on a personal level – I haven’t – but because of institutional scandals which put questions of corruption on a quite different plane. We have a tainted blood scandal dating back to the 1970s, 80s and 90s. So does France. In 1999, the French charged the Prime Minister in office during the scandal, the social affairs minister, and the health minister with manslaughter, and the health minister was convicted, though not imprisoned. The director of the French blood transfusion service was sentenced to four years’ imprisonment.

And here? Twenty-five years after the French put their politicians in court, we finally had the report of a public inquiry, whose chairman stated that: “This disaster was not an accident?... those in authority – doctors, the blood

services and successive governments – did not put patient safety first.” Shall we soon see the politicians and officials – those still alive – in the dock? I think we know the answer.

If this was the only scandal we had lived through, we might think it an exception. But we have had a series of appalling failures, none of which was “an accident”. The grooming gangs who were ignored by local authorities, social workers and police. The Grenfell Tower disaster, when so many people knew that cladding was dangerous and hid it. The Post Office scandal, in which hundreds of innocent people had their lives ruined by a well paid but indifferent bureaucracy.

Recently, there have been the plausible accusations of abuse of power made by Alan Halsall about his mistreatment by the Electoral Commission, egged on by anti-Brexit lawyers, politicians and newspapers to accuse a scrupulously honest Leave campaigner of dishonesty. This is fully documented in his recent book Last Man Standing. Now we have the disgusting behaviour of Mohamed al Fayed seemingly being overlooked by the police and perhaps by colleagues and senior employees. Readers will doubtless add to the list.

This deplorable record displays corruption in a very different and more alarming form than the banal exchange of cash-filled envelopes. In some ways, each case is very different. Some concern local authorities, others the police, or independent public bodies, or officials, or private

Robert Tombs

enterprise. But what they have in common seems to me more important than their differences. First, there is a lack of effective accountability to any outside body, whether Parliament or the public.

Second, the evident lack – or at least inadequacy – of people within these organisations who might have had the power and the courage to put a stop to what was being done at an early stage. Instead, there must have been a widespread culture of wilful ignorance or indifference. This is surely and sadly a cultural change. I am not saying that there was ever a golden age of honesty and public spirit. There have always been crooks and amoral careerists.

But recent corruption has been on such a scale, and has involved so many otherwise decent people – one of the Post Office bosses had not only been publicly honoured, but had been considered for a bishopric – that I think something important has shifted. Was there no one to say “We can’t do this, it’s wrong”? Did they feel that no one would support them? Did they shrug and say “Not my business”?

So many people running our institutions have the same background, the same opinions, the same ambitions. They progress from quango to quango, from boardroom to boardroom. Gamekeepers eagerly turn poachers. The result of failure or even misbehaviour is simply to move on. They are the epitome of the “anywhere” people, with little connection to place or community, and little loyalty to institutions

that are merely stepping stones to something more lucrative. There are, fortunately, exceptions. But the scandals show that the exceptions are not enough.

The causes seem plain. We live in a more diverse and mobile society. Old inhibitions against misbehaviour are weakened: we don’t worry about what the neighbours might say if we don’t know who they are. But there is another problem, which can be mitigated, though with difficulty. We have far too many unaccountable institutions.

Partly because of an old liberal tradition of limiting central authority, and partly through a Gladstonian/Thatcherite belief that markets themselves create discipline, we have created a horde of arms-length bodies that behave as a law unto themselves. We have charities that do not depend on individual charity but on the largesse of government departments. Quangos, NGOs and public corporations like the Post Office exist on public money, but are not accountable to the public. They also provide vast amounts of taxpayers’ money to each other.

This is the beating heart of the Blob. We have encouraged its expansion because we mistrust politicians. But at least we vote politicians in – and out. We must increase their authority over unelected bodies. Perhaps too we could learn something from the Jacobin traditions of our French neighbours: instead of peerages, a few jail sentences for ministers, officials, quangocrats and even chief constables might concentrate minds very effectively.

The Telegraph

Africa needs a true, progressive partner in the White House

Tafi Mhaka

achievement reflected a 67 percent increase in both the number and value of agreements finalised in 2022. Prosper Africa is anticipated to persist, irrespective of who becomes the next president.

Throughout its four-year tenure, the Trump administration prioritised a limited engagement with Africa, consistent with its America First principles. Conversely, the subsequent administration adopted a more welcoming approach, seemingly recognising the critical role of African nations as key partners. In this light, the Biden-Harris

an aggressive America First agenda, in contrast to Biden and Harris, who have chosen a more international approach, particularly regarding Africa.

Biden, who is slated to visit Angola in early December, just weeks before his exit from office, has not undertaken any state visits to Africa, despite assurances he made during the US-Africa Leaders Summit in December 2022. He did not engage in meaningful trips to Africa, cultivate partnerships or implement the reforms required to offer definitive proof of the US’s unwavering commitment to Africa and its alignment

Then, in a pivotal development, the Biden-Harris administration unveiled the Prosper Africa Build Together Campaign on July 27, 2021, effectively relaunching the Prosper Africa plan, but with a focus on energy, climate solutions, health, and digital technology. Later, in December 2023, the White House announced the successful completion of 547 new agreements, valued at approximately \$14.2bn in bilateral trade and investment between the US and African nations. This achievement reflected a 67 percent increase in both the number and value of agreements finalised in 2022. Prosper Africa is anticipated to persist, irrespective of who becomes the next president. Throughout its four-year tenure, the Trump administration prioritised a limited engagement with Africa, consistent with its America First principles. Conversely, the subsequent administration adopted a more welcoming approach, seemingly recognising the critical role of African nations as key partners. In this light, the Biden-Harris administration announced a new strategy for sub-Saharan Africa in August 2022 and subsequently convened the US-Africa Leaders Summit in Washington, DC, on December 13-15, 2022, featuring the participation of 49 African leaders.

administration announced a new strategy for sub-Saharan Africa in August 2022 and subsequently convened the US-Africa Leaders Summit in Washington, DC, on December 13-15, 2022, featuring the participation of 49 African leaders.

At the latter event, Biden expressed his strong commitment to future collaborations, stating, “The United States is all in on Africa and all in with Africa.” He also underscored that his country “fully supports reforming the UN Security Council to include permanent representation for Africa”. To boost trade, the Biden-Harris administration also championed AGOA. At the same time, it actively pursued bilateral agreements with selected African nations. On May 23, Biden and Kenyan President William Ruto revealed a series of investments focused on green energy, education, and health manufacturing, as well as a framework to tackle the country’s debt difficulties.

AGOA, unfortunately, is set to conclude in September 2025. Many African countries, including Tanzania, Kenya and South Africa, are seeking to have it renewed for at least a decade. Biden largely agrees with this sentiment. On July 23, he urged the US Congress to “quickly reauthorise and modernise this landmark Act” that forms “the bedrock of America’s economic partnership with African nations”. There is reason to believe his current VP Harris would assume a similar position as president. Trump, meanwhile, has made his intentions clear regarding the adoption of economic nationalism, implying that he could potentially refrain from renewing AGOA.

Speaking at a campaign rally in Savannah, Georgia on September 25, he affirmed his commitment to implement what he termed as “New American Industrialism” and to “bring thousands and thousands of businesses and trillions of dollars in wealth back to the good old USA”. Trump has, in fact, been exceptionally straightforward in his commitment to

with the continent’s enlightened objectives.

Thus, his administration’s highly vaunted suggestion to grant two permanent seats to African nations in the UN Security Council, albeit without the provision of veto powers, would merely represent a symbolic and ineffective change.

Arikana Chihombori-Quao, a former diplomat of the African Union, has labelled the proposal an “insult”. Therefore, if she triumphs on November 5, Harris will need to transcend mere rhetoric and support the addition of two permanent seats for African nations on the UN Security Council, with equal veto rights.

Her administration would have to regard its official relations with African countries with the seriousness they merit, thereby positioning African representation and agency at the forefront of the international agenda. Specifically, Africans must have a greater and equivalent say at multilateral institutions like the UN Security Council, World Trade Organization, World Bank and International Monetary Fund.

To effectively leverage African contributions, leadership and innovation in addressing global challenges, Harris will need to undertake regular state visits to various African nations. Indeed, unlike Biden, she must strive to engage in more than superficial efforts to transform Africa’s place and responsibilities in the current largely US-led world order. Although the administration to which she belonged for the last four years failed to uphold its stated obligations, it may still be considered, in a very limited or imperial context, as progressive.

Trump is a foul-mouthed, deranged and racist politician with an inward-looking agenda. He cannot and will not deliver for Africa. President Kamala Harris, on the other hand, could present opportunities for inclusive and productive collaboration with Africa. But she needs to make sure she holds her pledges to African nations, unlike her current boss Biden.

BRICS expansion a boon for ASEAN

INDONESIA’S formal application to join BRICS, confirmed recently by Indonesia’s Ministry of Foreign Affairs spokesperson Roy Soemirat, highlights the bloc’s increasing appeal among emerging economies. In the 15 years since its first summit in Yekaterinburg, Russia, BRICS has overcome huge internal differences and external challenges to play a vital role in global trade, development, investment and financing. It has become a significant force for promoting good global governance, improving the world order, and uniting the countries of the Global South to address common global challenges.

As such, BRICS has a huge appeal among ASEAN member states. While Indonesia, Thailand and Malaysia have officially applied to join BRICS, Cambodia and Myanmar have expressed their desire to become observer states, with Vietnam and Laos showing varying degrees of interest in joining the grouping. But how will the member states of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations benefit by becoming “BRICS Plus” members?

First, their trade volumes will expand, and they can increase their trade with African and Latin American countries by joining BRICS. According to a World Trade Organization report, BRICS members’ share in world trade had increased to 21.6 percent, and the intra — and inter-BRICS trade volume added up to \$10.4 trillion by the end of 2023, putting them in second place globally — after the European

Liu Litao

Union (\$14.5 trillion). BRICS’ trade volume is also higher than that of the US-Mexico-Canada Agreement (\$7.6 trillion).

Second, ASEAN members can also attract more foreign capital after joining BRICS by, for example, taking loans from the New Development Bank, which the original BRICS member states established in 2015. ASEAN members can also promote the reform of the global financial system and meet their infrastructure needs. As an effective alternative to the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund, which are dominated by the West, the NDB has been helping developing countries to compete with their Western counterparts despite its relatively small scale. China has been providing significant support to BRICS because it regards the grouping as an important force shaping the global landscape. China has also set up the Global Development and South-South Cooperation Fund of \$4 billion, and has said that its financial institutions will establish a special fund of \$10 billion for the implementation of the Global Development Initiative.

In addition, a couple of the new BRICS members are rich in capital, which countries such as Thailand can use to improve their infrastructure and boost their economic growth. Third, ASEAN members can develop their industries, too, by joining BRICS. While China has complete industry chains, each of the BRICS’ member states has its unique

industrial advantage. Not to mention some BRICS Plus member states have huge energy, mineral and agricultural resources, which can benefit the ASEAN members that have applied (or are likely to apply) to join the grouping.

Besides, BRICS can help develop the digital sector, as well as the manufacturing and agricultural industries in ASEAN member states through technology transfer. Fourth, ASEAN members can benefit by establishing a financial cooperation mechanism with BRICS. In fact, BRICS already has in place a contingent reserve arrangement to respond to any economic or financial crisis.

As tensions between the major powers keep rising, the United States is increasingly using the SWIFT global trade settlement system, an international financial public good, as a hegemonic tool to target other countries. As a matter of fact, secondary sanctions are becoming the preferred tool of Washington to implement its geopolitical strategies. It is against this background that BRICS has established two alternative global trade settlement systems — “BRICS Bridge” and “BRICS Pay” — to help end the US’ financial hegemony. The two new systems will introduce blockchain technology to let BRICS members make and receive payments in their respective currency, while reducing transaction costs.

Fifth, ASEAN members can also expand their global influence by joining BRICS. Thailand and Malaysia, for example, can

leverage the mechanisms of BRICS Plus to amplify their voice at global forums and seek the help of two of the BRICS member states which are also permanent members of the United Nations Security Council to increase their global influence. Sixth, ASEAN members can strengthen their relations with China, as well as attract more Chinese capital, by becoming part of BRICS. China, which is the largest economy within BRICS, has been ASEAN’s largest trading partner since 2009, with the two-way trade volume reaching \$911.7 billion in 2023. ASEAN members can also deepen South-South cooperation while contributing to global governance. Plus, they can make full use of the facilities provided by China to boost their own development.

And seventh, ASEAN members can promote regional development by becoming BRICS members. They can also learn from BRICS’ experience to alleviate poverty at home and improve their infrastructure. It is therefore clear that ASEAN members can boost their economy, and attract more investment by becoming part of BRICS. This is the exact reason why Thailand and Malaysia have applied to join the grouping. But they are also likely to face some challenges including internal competition, and intense pressure from the US and its allies which regard BRICS as a serious competitor. This could eventually prevent some ASEAN members from joining the grouping.

The China Daily

Turkiye through the eyes of Eastern European states

Sinem Cengiz

OVER the past few years, there has been a growing trend in Türkiye’s relations with Eastern European states, particularly Poland, Hungary and Romania. Despite differences in their approaches, they share common interests with Türkiye. As Europe is not immune to security challenges, especially following Russia’s invasion of Ukraine in 2022 and the escalating migration crisis, the evolving ties between Ankara and these Eastern European states deserve a closer look.

Turkiye focuses on three key areas to enhance its relations with Eastern European states: establishing military cooperation within NATO as part of the European security framework; balancing relations with countries that have differing views on Ankara’s EU accession process; and strengthening its political and economic influence in Eastern Europe in alignment with the interests of Poland, Romania and Hungary. Among these states, Poland looks for closer security relations with Türkiye. Both are key NATO members, with Türkiye having NATO’s second-largest military after the US and Poland in third spot. According to newly released figures, the size of Poland’s military has more than doubled over the last decade. It stood at 99,000 personnel in 2014, when it was only the ninth-largest in NATO, but is now at 216,100, according to NATO’s estimates for this year.

Poland is among the states interested in the Turkish defense industry, which has attracted a lot of attention

from different parts of the world, including Europe. In June, Turkish manufacturer Baykar delivered to Poland the final batch of Turkish drones, namely the Bayraktar TB-2, ordered at a cost of \$270 million. Polish policymakers underline that it is essential for their country to maintain strong security relations with Türkiye, despite their differences, which mostly relate to Ankara’s approach to Russia. Poland serves as a key NATO ally on the eastern flank. Both Türkiye and Poland have shown a strong commitment to NATO’s collective security principles and are part of the alliance’s activities that involve collaboration against common threats.

Despite their strong will, the extent and effectiveness of their defense cooperation is yet to reach its potential. Both states, either bilaterally or multilaterally, strive to enhance their defense ties not only to bolster their own security but also to contribute to the broader stability of Europe and beyond. Regional instability caused by Russian aggression, terrorism and hybrid threats are common security challenges. Within the NATO framework and beyond, they can counter these threats through coordinated strategies to enhance the alliance’s eastern flank. Moreover, Poland fully supports Türkiye’s accession to the EU, which began in 2005 but stalled due to Ankara’s strained relations with some members of the union — not Poland, Romania or Hungary, however.

Warsaw has defined Türkiye and

Romania as Poland’s “key allies” and said that the foreign ministers of these three states should harmonize on the need to invest in the security of NATO’s eastern flank. Türkiye and Romania, along with Bulgaria, in July started joint demining operations in the Black Sea to ensure the safety of grain shipments from Ukraine. Under the Turkish-led deal, the three countries aim to oversee efforts to clear mines that have been drifting in the Black Sea since the onset of Russia’s invasion. While other NATO members are not involved in the initiative, Türkiye, which brokered the Black Sea Grain Initiative in 2022, plays a major role in the demining agreement.

The Black Sea is of strategic importance to NATO, of which all three of these states are members. Türkiye and Romania are also safeguarding the eastern flank of NATO airspace with their F-16 fighter jets. Last December, Turkish F-16 fighter jets arrived in Romania to participate in NATO’s enhanced air policing mission in the south for the first time.

Compared to Romania and Poland, Hungary shares more commonalities with Türkiye in its approach to NATO and Russia. While some NATO and EU members see Türkiye as the odd one out within the alliance, Hungary views it as a close partner and a role model as part of its broader foreign policy strategy. Hungary and Türkiye were the only two NATO countries that dragged their heels on ratifying Sweden’s bid to join the transatlantic military alliance. Sweden became a

full member of NATO in March, only after Ankara and Budapest finally approved. Yet, this does not mean their interests in bargaining with NATO were for the same cause, as their demands were different.

Also, while Türkiye and Hungary hedge on supporting Ukraine, their foreign policies often clash with NATO priorities. Both the Turkish and Hungarian leaders have broken ranks within NATO and met with Russian President Vladimir Putin as they try to maintain relations with Moscow. For instance, Hungary made it clear that it would not participate in security assistance and training efforts for Ukraine, while Romania became one of Ukraine’s staunchest allies, capped with the signing of a 10-year security agreement in July. This demonstrates that there are diverse views within the Eastern European states that Türkiye aims to cooperate with.

Hungary is also pushing for economic neutrality within the EU, including a “shift from traditional Western alignment.” In this regard, it has engaged in energy collaboration with Türkiye. Hungary in April became the first non-neighboring country to import gas from Türkiye. When looking at these Eastern European states’ relations with Türkiye, it is safe to argue that they aim to redefine their positions within NATO and strengthen their military capabilities through a strong collaboration with Türkiye. Although their approaches often conflict, NATO remains a core foreign policy priority for all these states and this shapes their view of Türkiye.



Fly Jinnah launches new non-stop route between Lahore and Dammam

New service will expand the airline’s presence

F.P. Report

Flight Schedule between Lahore and Dammam, effective 16 November 2024:

KARACHI: Fly Jinnah, Pakistan's low-cost carrier, announces the launch of its new non-stop flights between Lahore's Allama Iqbal International Airport and King Fahd International Airport in Dammam, Kingdom of Saudi Arabia.

The new route will commence on November 16, with flights operating twice a week on Tuesdays and Saturdays. Starting December 7, the frequency will increase to three weekly flights with the addition of a Thursday service.

Fly Jinnah's spokesperson commented: "We are glad to launch this new route between Lahore and Dammam, further reinforcing our expanding presence in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. This route underscores Fly Jinnah's commitment to offer enhanced connectivity and exceptional value to our passengers. We look forward to welcoming travelers onboard our new flights and further expanding our network to

cater to their needs." This expansion follows Fly Jinnah's recent launch of its direct flights from Lahore to Riyadh in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, marking another step forward in its commitment to provide accessible and con-

venient travel options for passengers across Pakistan and the Gulf region. Fly Jinnah operates a modern fleet of five Airbus A320 aircraft, serving five major cities in Pakistan: Karachi, Lahore,

Islamabad, Peshawar, and Quetta. The airline also operates international flights from Lahore to Sharjah, as well as from Islamabad to Bahrain, Muscat and Sharjah. With a focus on convenience and reliability, Fly Jinnah con-

tinues to grow its network, providing exceptional service and value to its customers. In addition to the extra comfort provided by the most generous seat-pitch of any economy cabin, the carrier offers

affordable and value-driven travel experiences through "SkyCafe" onboard menu where passengers can enjoy a wide variety of delicacies between snacks, sandwiches, and meals at affordable prices. The aircraft is also equipped with "SkyTime", a free in-flight streaming service that allows passengers to stream a wide selection of entertainment directly to their devices.

Customers can now book their flights by visiting Fly Jinnah's website (www.flyjinnah.com), by calling the call centre (111-000-035) or through travel agencies.

'Fly Jinnah' is a Pakistani private joint venture low-cost airline. Based in Karachi, Fly Jinnah follows the successful low-cost business model operated by Air Arabia that focuses on offering comfort, reliability, and value-for-money air travel.



ISLAMABAD: A shopkeeper arranging and displaying dryfruit to attract the customers at Aabpara. The sale of dryfruit in Pakistan increases manifold with the arrival of winter.

Pakistan Airports Authority launches official website



F.P. Report

KARACHI: In a ceremony at the Pakistan Airports Authority (PAA) Headquarters, the organization marked the launch of its official website.

Director General PAA, AVM Taimur Iqbal, led the event, joined by Additional Director General (designate) AVM Zeeshan Saeed, Deputy Director General Airports Engr. Sadiq Ur Rehman, and Deputy

Director General Works and Development Sumair Saeed.

IT officials provided a briefing on the website's key features. In a symbolic gesture, AVM Taimur Iqbal pressed the 'Enter' key fol-

lowing a countdown, officially making the website live.

The new website represents a step forward in enhancing PAA's digital presence and public accessibility.

President GCCI describes Uzbekistan as important trade partner of Pakistan

ISLAMABAD (APP): President of Gujranwala Chamber of Commerce and Industry (GCCI) Rana Muhammad Siddique Khan has described Uzbekistan as an important trade partner of Pakistan and reiterated that he would soon take a business delegation from different sectors to Uzbekistan.

"The role of the business community of Gujranwala is significant in increasing bilateral trade between Uzbekistan and Pakistan, and the role of the private sectors of both countries is very important for flourishing both sides economic ties," President GCCI said.

During a meeting between ambassador of Uzbekistan to Pakistan, Alisher Tukhtaev, and President Gujranwala Chamber of Commerce and Industry, Rana Muhammad Siddique Khan, at the Embassy of Uzbekistan in Islamabad, both sides discussed the promotion of bilateral economic and trade relations between the two countries and the possibility of the Uzbek Ambassador visiting GCCI soon.

On the occasion, the President said,

"Gujranwala Industrial Sector contributes eight percent to Pakistan's Gross Domestic Product (GDP), and similarly, Pakistan's exports from Gujranwala are currently \$2.5 billion, and the city is the third largest contributor to the country's revenue also."

The President said, "There are currently 18,000 small and medium entrepreneurs in Gujranwala, which are the backbone of the country's economy."

"Uzbekistan is a central country among the Central Asian states, and Pakistan and Uzbekistan can play a very important role for economic integration in the region."

He said, "Pakistan and Central Asian states, especially Uzbekistan, have a common economic and trade future, and only through the concept of shared economic prosperity can economic development come to our region."

Rana Siddique Khan said, "The current trade volume of \$400 million between Pakistan and Uzbekistan is much less than its potential, and the role of the business community of both countries is significant for the promotion of bilateral trade."

"Gujranwala Chamber of Commerce is already doing business in Uzbekistan in different sectors, which needs to be further increased, and Gujranwala Chamber of Commerce will play its full role in that regard," he said.

President GCCI said, "The Uzbek Embassy provides ease of visa and other business process facilities to Gujranwala traders and industrialists for the promotion of mutual business and direct flight between the two countries, which is very important."

The President of the Gujranwala Chamber of Commerce said, "GCCCI is soon organizing an exhibition in Islamabad in which he invites the Uzbek trade delegation to participate in it."

On the occasion, the Ambassador of Uzbekistan to Pakistan, AliSher Tukhtaev, hinted at further increasing cooperation with the GCCCI in the near future and said that he would soon visit it too.

The ambassador said, "He is seeing an important role of the Gujranwala Chamber of Commerce and Industry in the mutual economic and trade relations between Uzbekistan and

Pakistan."

It is pertinent to mention that Pakistan and Uzbekistan have a long history of close economic ties and a number of areas for potential cooperation.

Bilateral trade between the two countries has increased significantly in recent years to \$ 400 million, and in 2022, Uzbekistan exported \$134 million to Pakistan, while Pakistan exported \$153 million to Uzbekistan.

The main exports from Uzbekistan to Pakistan were dried legumes, non-retail pure cotton yarn, and onions.

The main exports from Pakistan to Uzbekistan were potatoes, rice, and packaged medicament.

Pakistan and Uzbekistan have signed a bilateral transit trade agreement (UPTTA) and a bilateral preferential trade agreement (PTA) on 17 items.

The exchanges between the peoples of Uzbekistan and Pakistan are much older and deeper than the emergence of the two countries as sovereign states.

The Mughal Dynasty, with its Central Asian roots, further reinforced the foundation between the two countries.

Danish foreign minister will arrive on Nov12: Qaiser Sheikh

KARACHI (APP): Minister for Maritime Affairs, Qaiser Ahmed Sheikh, led a performance review meeting at PNSC Building on Saturday to evaluate the progress of key maritime organizations, including the Port Qasim Authority (PQA), Karachi Port Trust (KPT), and Pakistan Marine Academy (PMA).

The meeting highlighted monthly performance metrics, while addressing challenges and identifying areas for improvement. Key topics included strategies to enhance efficiency, productivity, and overall service delivery within the

maritime sector. The meeting concluded with a pledge to implement the recommendations and action plans aimed at fostering growth and development within the maritime sector.

After the Performance Review meeting, the minister chaired a KHULI KACHEHRI session to hear complaints and grievances from employees of maritime organizations including other maritime industry stakeholders. This open forum allowed employees and stakeholders to engage directly with the Minister, sharing their concerns, suggestions, and

ideas for enhancing the sector. The Minister assured stakeholders that their concerns would be acknowledged and their issues addressed in a timely manner. The KHULI KACHEHRI was attended by representatives from various organizations working under Ministry of Maritime Affairs, including Chairman Port Qasim Authority (PQA), Chairman Karachi Port Trust (KPT), Executive Directors of the Pakistan National Shipping Corporation (PNSC), and Commandant of the Pakistan Marine Academy including team members

from other maritime organizations. Directives were issued to resolve the issues on a priority basis.

While talking to the media, the Minister for Maritime Affairs, Qaiser Ahmed Sheikh said that the Minister of Foreign Affairs of Denmark will come on November 12, during his visit there will be agreements with Maersk. He further said that there is a need to promote technical education for job vacancies and advancement of the country, for which the present federal government is working. The Economy is improving, coming days will prove better.

WASHINGTON (Reuters): U.S. job growth almost stalled in October as strikes in the aerospace industry depressed manufacturing employment while hurricanes shortened the collection period for payrolls, making it hard to get a clear picture of the labor market ahead of next week's presidential election.

The Labor Department's closely watched employment report on Friday was the last major economic data before Americans head to the polls to choose Democratic Vice President Kamala Harris or Republican former President Donald Trump as the country's next president. Polls show the race is a toss-up.

Nonetheless, the labor market is cooling, with employment gains for August and September revised down by 112,000 jobs. While the unemployment rate held steady at 4.1% in October, that was because more people left the labor force. Economists expected Federal Reserve officials would brush aside the report and deliver another interest rate cut when they meet next week.

"This is not the clarifying report on the economy that Americans and markets needed before next week's election to answer whether voters are better off than they were four years ago," said Christopher Rupkey, chief economist at FWD-BONDS.

"The one thing we can rule out is that the dramatic slowdown in nonfarm payroll jobs does not indicate the economy is at a tipping point and in danger of falling over the cliff and into recession."

Nonfarm payrolls increased by 12,000 jobs last month, the smallest gain since December 2020, the Labor Department's Bureau of Labor Statistics said. The economy added 112,000 fewer jobs in August and September than previously reported. Economists polled by Reuters had forecast payrolls would rise 113,000.

Hurricane Helene devastated the U.S. Southeast in late September and Hurricane Milton lashed Florida a week later.

The response rate for the establishment survey in October, from which payrolls are calculated, dropped to 47.4%. That was the lowest reading

since January 1991 and was considerably below the 69.2% average for October in the past five years. The household survey from which the unemployment rate is derived found that 512,000 people reported they could not work in October, a record high for the month. About 1.4 million people who normally hold full-time positions said they could only work part-time because of the weather. That was also an all-time high for October and compared to only 129,000 last year.

The Bureau of Labor Statistics acknowledged that payroll employment estimates in some industries were likely affected by the hurricanes, but said it was "not possible to quantify the net effect on the over-the-month change in national employment, hours, or earnings estimates because the establishment survey is not designed to isolate effects from extreme weather events."

It said the collection period for the responses, which can range from 10 to 16 days, only lasted 10 days in October and was completed several days before the end of the month. There was a concentration of job losses in industries, which tend to employ hourly workers, a group that tends to be most affected by business closures due to weather disruptions.

The strikes by machinists at Boeing (BA.N), opens new tab and Textron, an aircraft company, subtracted 44,000 jobs from transportation equipment manufacturing payrolls. Workers who do not receive a paycheck during the survey period are counted as unemployed in the establishments survey. Some economists estimated the storms, strikes and shorter collection period had subtracted roughly 115,000 jobs from payrolls.

"The hurricanes clearly had a far greater impact on employment last month than most economists had anticipated," said Stephen Stanley, chief U.S. economist at Santander U.S. Capital Markets. "Much of that should reverse in November."

First-time applications for unemployment benefits dropped to a five-month low in late October after surging in the aftermath of the hurricanes.

Wall St closes higher as Amazon's gains offset weak job growth

NEW YORK (Reuters): Wall Street's major indexes ended higher on Friday, rebounding from the previous day's sell-off as Amazon's strong earnings countered a significant drop in U.S. job growth in October.

A m a z o n . c o m (AMZN.O), opens new tab rose 6.2% after it reported earnings on Thursday that revealed strong retail sales, boosting profit above Wall Street estimates.

Meanwhile, Apple (AAPL.O), opens new tab fell 1.2% as investors worried about a decline in its China sales during its most recent quarter.

Other so-called Magnificent Seven members Meta Platforms (META.O), opens new tab and Microsoft (MSFT.O), opens new tab also reported earnings earlier this

week and warned on AI-related infrastructure costs, dragging the Nasdaq down on Thursday.

"A new month frequently seems to offer new optimism for investors - especially after we saw a sharp decline yesterday - and after seeing encouraging results from Apple and Amazon," said Sam Stovall, chief investment strategist at CFRA Research.

Equity markets brushed off weak U.S. October nonfarm payrolls data, given disruptions from hurricanes and strikes. The data showed an increase of 12,000 jobs, much smaller than economists' estimate of a 113,000 rise.

However, the unemployment rate held steady at 4.1%, reassuring investors the labor market remained on solid ground.

After the jobs data was released, investors largely stuck to bets that the central bank would cut rates by 25 basis points in November.

"Third-quarter earnings, interest rates and the election continue to be the main drivers in the near term," Stovall said.

The Dow Jones Industrial Average (DJI), opens new tab rose 288.73 points, or 0.69%, to 42,052.19, the S&P 500 (SPX), opens new tab gained 23.35 points, or 0.41%, to 5,728.80 and the Nasdaq Composite (IXIC), opens new tab gained 144.77 points, or 0.80%, to 18,239.92.

All three indexes were down for the week overall, with the S&P 500 falling 1.38%, the Nasdaq dropping 1.51% and the Dow slipping 0.16%.

The U.S. election is on

investors' minds, with many analysts predicting a close presidential race and some uncertainty over the final outcome. The Fed's November meeting kicks off the following day.

Amazon.com's gains lifted the Consumer Discretionary index (.SPLRCD), opens new tab 2.4% to a more than two-year high, while utility (.SPLRCU), opens new tab and real estate (.SPLRCR), opens new tab stocks were the biggest sectoral decliners.

Intel (INTC.O), opens new tab jumped 7.8% after a better-than-expected revenue forecast. An index of chip stocks (.SOX), opens new tab rose 1%.

Chevron (CVX.N), opens new tab shares rose 2.8% after the company beat third-quarter profit estimates on higher oil output.

MPC urges to cut interest rates by 400 to 500 basis points

KARACHI (PPI) The President of the United Business Group (UBG), Zubair F. Tufail, former Senior Vice President of FPCCI Mazhar Ali Nasir, and other UBG leaders have demanded a reduction in interest rates by at least 400 to 500 basis points at the Monetary Policy Committee meeting of the State Bank of Pakistan scheduled for Monday.

According to UBS statement on Saturday, Tufail stated that the cost of doing business, ease of doing business, and access to finance are facing significant challenges compared to competitors in export markets. In these circumstances, the business, industrial, and trading community expects the Monetary Policy Committee to make a substantial reduction in interest rates to a realistic level, as the current rate is based on a heavy premium compared to the fundamental inflation rate.

He noted that private sector lending in Pakistan has dropped to the lowest level among emerging markets, constituting only 12.0% of GDP as of 2023. The inability to compete with rival countries in the global market has adversely affected industry and exports. It is a fact that the State Bank has successfully controlled inflation; however, its stringent monetary policy is creating an unbalanced lending environment.

Mazhar Ali Nasir remarked that the UBG's patron-in-chief and business community leader S.M. Tanveer has been consistently advocating for a reduction in interest rates, as he is aware of the issues faced by exporters and industrialists. The Monetary Policy Committee is urged to immediately reduce the interest rate to 12.5% to enable Pakistani exporters to significantly lower their cost of capital and compete in regional and international export markets. Mazhar Ali Nasir emphasized that reducing interest rates will help revive economic activities, increase government revenue, and create more job opportunities.



In brief

Pak Shaheen Club qualifies for Q Final

RAWALPINDI (APP): Interesting matches in Salem Farani Memorial Football Tournament are continued at the Municipal Stadium. In a qualifying round match on Saturday, Pak Shaheen Club defeated Regal Club with 3-1 goals. According to the details, in a first pre-quarter final match of the tournament was played, both the teams initially tried to maintain their ball possession at the start of the first half. Pak Shaheen Club showing better game plan took a 2-0 lead. In the second half, both teams scored one goal, thus Pak Shaheen Club won the match by three goals to one and qualified for the quarter finals. Faisal scored two goals for the winning team. The tournament is being organized by the District Football Association, Rawalpindi.

Hull wins in Riyadh

RIYADH (Agencies): England's Charley Hull shot a six-under-par final-round 66 to win the Aramco Team Series event in Riyadh and claim her first victory since 2022. Hull, 28, started the third and final round two strokes behind Pia Babnik of Slovenia, but five birdies in the first seven holes pushed her into a lead she was able to hang on to as she won by three shots. "I felt really sharp, I played very solidly," said Hull after claiming a fourth Ladies' European Tour victory, to add to two LPGA titles. "I made a bogey on the par-five 17th and the par three, but that was just two three putts. [They were] quite long putts and they got away from me a little bit, but I felt like I held my game together pretty well. "And 18 under for three days is a pretty good score." Hull - ranked 15th in the world - won by three shots from Denmark's Nicole Broch Estrup, with Babnik in third after a costly round of 73. Fatima Fernandez Cano, who had a birdie putt for a record-equaling round of 61 on Friday, followed up with a 73 to finish tied for fourth place. Meanwhile, the third round of the LPGA's Toto Japan Classic was cancelled on Saturday because of heavy rain caused by Typhoon Kong-rey in Shiga. The event will be shortened to 54 holes, with the final round on Sunday. Japan's Hana Wakimoto is in the lead on 13 under.

Scott beats Marchand

SINGAPORE (Agencies): Great Britain's Duncan Scott beat France's multiple world and Olympic champion Leon Marchand into second place in the men's 200m freestyle on the final day of the short course World Cup event in Singapore. The 27-year-old Scot, who had finished second behind Marchand, 22, in the 200m medley on Friday, added a second title of the meeting after also winning the men's 400m freestyle in a British record time. He won Saturday's 200m freestyle in one minute 39.83 seconds, 1.08 secs ahead of Marchand, while China's Pan Zhanle was third. Scott's results in the third and final event of the series move him up to third place in the men's overall standings. Marchand, who won four gold medals at the Paris Olympics during the summer, did enough to be crowned the men's overall champion. Switzerland's Noe Ponti was second overall after closing his championships with victory in the men's 50m butterfly.



NEWCASTLE : David Raya of Arsenal fails to make a save as Alexander Isak of Newcastle United scores his team's first goal during the Premier League match between Newcastle United FC and Arsenal FC.

Arsenal Premier League hopes hit by Newcastle defeat

NEWCASTLE (AFP): Newcastle put a huge dent in Arsenal's title aspirations on Saturday, winning 1-0 to give leaders Manchester City the chance to move eight points clear of the Gunners at the top of the Premier League. Alexander Isak scored what proved to be the winning goal in the 12th minute, heading home Anthony Gordon's pinpoint cross from the right.

Third-placed Arsenal struggled to get out of first gear and although they dominated possession, they produced just one shot on target in the entire game. Mikel Arteta's men have now picked up just one point in their past three games, with their title push quickly running out of steam. If defending champions City win at Bournemouth later on Saturday they will be eight points clear of the Gunners. Liverpool, a point behind City, host Brighton at Anfield.

Arsenal have pushed Pep Guardiola's City hard in each of the past two seasons and appeared to be well-equipped for another title challenge but the gap already looks alarmingly big. "We didn't find enough answers to a lot of the questions and situations that you have to resolve better," Arteta told TNT Sports.

"So I'm very frustrated."

The Arsenal boss was asked how he would lift his team ahead of matches in the coming week against Inter Milan and Chelsea.

"It's time to do it on the pitch," he said. "You know, we can say whatever we want. Probably we're not going to find the right words today because after losing a game, you are hurt. But we have to show it on the pitch on Wednesday night." The injury-hit visitors, still missing captain Martin Odegaard, started brightly at St James' Park, with Leandro Trossard dragging the ball wide.

Isak breakthrough But the home side, who had not won for five league matches, quickly settled and Sweden forward Isak got between Gabriel and William Saliba to head home from Gordon's exquisite first-time cross.

Arsenal winger Bukayo Saka lacked his usual penetration but headed just wide in the 18th minute after leaping above his marker.

Newcastle defender Lewis Hall blocked Mikel Merino's shot on the line after a Declan Rice corner caused chaos but the visitors lacked rhythm and failed to match the intensity shown by the home side.

Arteta opted against making changes at half-time and

Newcastle came close to doubling their lead almost immediately, with Joe Willock's shot saved by David Raya. The Spanish boss threw on 17-year-old Ethan Nwaneri and Oleksandr Zinchenko for Gabriel Martinelli and Merino just after the hour mark. Isak fired a shot at Raya that the Arsenal goalkeeper pushed away before Rice muscled his way into the Newcastle area and flashed a shot wide. Arteta made further changes, introducing defender Ben White and forward Gabriel Jesus in the desperate push for an equaliser.

Arsenal struggled to build up a head of steam as the clock ticked down but they squandered a golden chance to level when Rice headed just wide from a Saka cross in stoppage time. The win lifted Eddie Howe's Newcastle to eighth in the table ahead of the later kick-offs.

Howe described the victory as a "massive win against a really good team". "We've drawn against Manchester City here, beaten Arsenal, beaten Tottenham," he said. "So there's a lot of positives. But then you look at the other side, we've been slightly inconsistent."

There's games and points we've probably left on the pitch, so we need to put it together."

Pak cueists win matches in World Snooker C'ship

ISLAMABAD (APP): Pakistani cueists Awais Muneer, Muhammad Naseem Akhtar, Asjad Iqbal and Muhammad Asif earned victories in the IBSF World Snooker Championship 2024 at Doha, Qatar.

According to details, the World Championship kicked off on Saturday with 48 players divided into 12 groups. From each group two players will qualify for knockout round.

On Day 1, Awais beat Kritsanut Lertsattayathorn (Thailand) 4-2 (6-103(52), 100(68)-00, 77(83-12, 97-00, 36-77(76), 82(76)-27); Naseem downed Mhanna Alabdill (Qatar) 4-0 (73-06, 94(52)-30, 65(54)-06, 74-14); Asjad outplayed Darryl Hill (Isle of Man) 4-1 (87-15, 100(84)-01, 79-00, 42-59, 74(51)-60(60) and Asif (Pak) defeated Kamal Chawla (India) 4-1 135(100)-00, 114(66)-19, 01-56, 77(52)-41), 72(63)-16).

Bournemouth stun Man City with historic win

LONDON (Agencies): Antoine Semenyo and Evanlison scored as Bournemouth sealed their first-ever win against Manchester City at Vitality Stadium.

The Cherries, in good form after picking up four points from their last two games against Aston Villa and Arsenal, started quickly and full of positivity.

Ederson was forced into a double save after just two minutes as he denied Semenyo and Justin Kluivert.

With the tone set, Bournemouth continued to press high and they were rewarded in the ninth minute when Milos Kerkez's cut-back from the byeline was turned in by Semenyo.

City failed to muster an attempt on target during a largely frustrating first half.

Bournemouth came out for the second period full of confidence and were close to doubling their lead in the first minute, but Ederson was sharply off his line to keep Evanlison's effort out.

Evanlison made sure with his next opportunity, though, sliding to meet Kerkez's low ball and nestling it into the bottom corner.

The hosts should have made it three moments later but Adam Smith, presented with an open goal, blazed over the bar after Marcus Tavernier's shot came back off the post.

City finally registered an attempt on target in the 80th minute, albeit a tame one, with Erling Haaland struggling to get any power on his volley.

And two minutes later, Josko Gvardiol headed beyond a despairing Mark Travers to offer hope but the Premier League champions were unable to grab an equaliser.

The defeat means City slip to second after Liverpool came-from-behind to beat Brighton, while Bournemouth climb up to eighth.

Pakistan beat South Africa to qualify for semi-final of HK Sixes

HONG KONG (Monitoring Desk): Pakistan have made it to the semi-final of the ongoing Hong Kong Sixes tournament after defeating South Africa by 18 runs during the quarter final match at the Mission Road Ground on Saturday.

Batting first, the Green Shirts had a shaky start to their innings as their in-form batters Asif Ali and Faheem perished for a golden duck in the first over with just eight runs on the board.

Back-to-back wickets did not deter the national side as Muhammad Akhlaq, during his partnership with Hussain Talat, launched an astounding recovery with belligerent hitting.

The wicket-keeper batter smashed the Proteas bowlers for seven sixes and two fours and brought up his half-century in just 16 deliveries.

Soon after amassing the milestone, Akhlaq retired

out at 53*, putting Pakistan in a dominant position as they were 66-2 in four overs.

All-rounder Aamer Yamin and Talat then gave the final touches to Pakistan's innings with blistering cameos. Yamin scored 18 off six, while Talat scored an unbeaten 27 off 11 balls.

Courtesy of them, the Men in Green managed to put on a formidable total of 105-3 in the given six overs.

Chasing a daunting 104-run target, South Africa only managed to score 88-4 despite Evan Jones' blitz.

The five-time champions had a shaky start to the pursuit as they lost two wickets including their captain JJ Smuts inside two overs with just 12 runs on the board.

Jones then joined forces with Modiri Litheko and pushed to anchor the run chase with a crucial 48-run partnership for the fourth wicket until Talat drew cur-

ains on his fighting knock.

Jones remained the top-scorer for South Africa with a 13-ball 41, laced with one four and five sixes.

Talat struck again on the next delivery to reduce the former champions to 61-4 in 4.3 overs.

The back-to-back dismissals halted the flow of runs for South Africa and they eventually came up 18 runs short.

For Pakistan, Talat bagged two wickets, while Shahab Khan and Yamin made one scalp each.

The Faheem Ashraf-led side is unbeaten in the ongoing edition of the Hong Kong Super Sixes. They started their campaign with a 13-run victory over the United Arab Emirates (UAE) before humbling arch-rivals India by six wickets.

The tournament's semi-finals and final will be played on Sunday (tomorrow).

Zverev powers past Rune to reach Paris Masters final



PARIS (AFP): Germany's Alexander Zverev outserted Holger Rune in the semi-finals of the Paris Masters on Saturday to book his place in the final for the first time since losing to Daniil Medvedev in 2020.

Zverev's 6-3, 7-6 (7/4) win against the Dane sent the 27-year-old to his second ATP 1000-level final of the season -- after his victory in Rome in May. World number three Zverev will face either Frenchman Ugo Humbert, who downed world number two Carlos Alcaraz in the last 16, or Russia's Karen Khachanov in Sunday's showpiece.

"I feel like I made it a little difficult for myself but he (Rune) is a champion," said Zverev. "It is probably his favourite tournament and favourite court, but I am happy to be in my second final here." For 2022 champion Rune, the loss put an end to his outside hopes of reaching the ATP Finals in Turin, which run

from November 10-17.

"Upping their level" --

Zverev put pressure on Rune right from his first service game with the Dane eventually holding after two deuces. Zverev, standing at 198cm, relied on his big first serve and the speed of the surface at Paris' Bercy Arena to carry him through his service games.

Rune, on the other hand, misfired regularly on his first serve and lacked fluency with his groundstrokes as two consecutive framed shots off his forehand and backhand at deuce gave the German a 3-1 lead.

The 21-year-old suddenly raced to 15-40 in the next game, but was again let down by his backhand as he sent two shots long and an attempted pass wide as Zverev recovered to consolidate. Despite leading 4-1, the 2024 French Open runner-up was also unconvincing from behind the baseline as the unforced errors accumulated for both

players.

However, Zverev could always rely on his serving to carry him through as he claimed the first set. Neither Rune nor Zverev challenged on serve at the beginning of the second set, with both holding to love or 15 until the seventh game.

At 3-3, Zverev pounced to take a 0-40 lead and he broke Rune with a powerful inside-out forehand that set him up to finish easily at the net. The third seed now seemed in total control of the match and consolidated the break with a hold to love. But the resilient Rune defied expectation by suddenly breaking Zverev when the German was serving for the match.

As the pressure mounted, both responded by upping their level from the open court and winners flew off both rackets as Rune eventually held a gripping game at 5-5, which had lasted 17 minutes. Zverev then served out comfortably to set up a tiebreak.

Errors again crept into Rune's play and Zverev got an early mini-break, which he defended to book his spot in the final despite a superb passing shot on the run by the Dane to save a first match point.

In the day's second semi-final, home hope Humbert bids to reach his first championship match at a Masters event, but to do so must overcome 2018 Paris winner Khachanov.

New Zealand lead by 143 as spin rules in seesaw third India Test

MUMBAI (AFP): New Zealand lead by 143 runs in their second innings, after Indian spinners Ravindra Jadeja and Ravichandran Ashwin triggered an opposition collapse in a keenly fought third Test on Saturday.

The tourists were 171-9 on day two after Jadeja bowled Matt Henry for his fourth wicket of the innings at the stroke of stumps on a sharply turning track in Mumbai.

Ajaz Patel was batting on seven after he took five wickets to help bowl out India for 263, with the hosts taking a slender lead of 28.

New Zealand won the first two matches to seal their first-ever Test series triumph in India and now eye a 3-0 sweep. "To be honest it's (the pitch) turning quite sharply," Ajaz told reporters. "I suppose inconsistent in terms of how much it does turn and bounce. It has started to turn from both ends and from a batting perspective that can be a challenge."

India's Shubman Gill, who hit 90, said: "It's all about one good partnership when you are chasing a total which is around 150-160. If you have one partnership about 70-80 runs the match is done and dusted."

Will Young stood out with his 51 before being caught and bowled by Ashwin, who took three wickets with his off-spin.

Fast bowler Akash Deep struck in the first over when he bowled skipper Tom Latham for one to keep up India's fight after



Gill's knock. Washington Sundar sent back Devon Conway for 22, and Ashwin dispatched Rachin Ravindra for four, as New Zealand slipped to 44-3.

But Young and Daryl Mitchell put on 50 runs to resist the Indian attack, which hit back through Jadeja's left-arm spin.

Jadeja got Mitchell out for 21, with Ashwin taking a stunning catch while running backwards from mid-off, and soon the bowler dismissed Tom Blundell.

Gill having fun Earlier Ajaz's heroics -- at the same venue where he claimed all 10 wickets in a Test innings in 2021 -- helped end India's reply to their 235 in the second session. Gill and overnight partner Rishabh Pant, who hit 60, stood out as they counter-attacked in a stand of 96 while Sundar smashed an unbeaten 38 off 36 balls.

"I was honestly trying to have fun in the middle even if it was difficult -- enjoy the difficult

moments," said Gill. "If I was to put too much pressure on myself then I am losing on the art of batting." Off-spinner Glenn Phillips struck soon after lunch to send back Jadeja, caught at slip for 14.

Ajaz got Sarfaraz Khan caught behind for a duck in the next over. Gill took on the spinners in the next few overs before Ajaz had him caught at slip. Sundar and Ashwin took India into the lead before Ajaz got Ashwin out for his sixth career five-wicket haul. Resuming on 86-4, the batsmen came out aggressively as India look to avoid an embarrassing whitewash on home soil.

Gill survived a reprieve on 45 by substitute fielder Mark Chapman, who failed to hang on to a high catch off Phillips' bowling while running in from long-on.

Gill reached his fifty with a single and Pant kept up the attack with regular boundaries to raise his half-ton in 36 balls.

Hasan, Nusratullah star in Islamabad's victory

ISLAMABAD (APP): A maiden first-class century by Hasan Nawaz and a second five-wicket haul in as many matches by fast bowler Nusratullah handed Islamabad an innings and 107 runs victory over Larkana on the second day of the second round of Quaid-e-Azam Trophy match played at the Diamond Cricket Ground here Saturday.

Hasan Nawaz, starting at the overnight score of 75 in Islamabad's 186 for four while replying to Larkana's 140, was dismissed for 169 that lifted his side to 343. With 203 runs first innings lead in the bag, Nusratullah returned figures of 8-1-33-5 and Shayan Sheikh bagged three wickets for one run to dismiss Larkana for 96 in 20.5 overs.

This was Islamabad's second successive victory, courtesy a 251-ball knock by Hasan, whose innings was laced with 21 fours and a six. This was Hasan's eight first-class match, while Nusratullah also had an impressive match after claiming a five-fer on his debut last week. The other eight matches were also heading for exciting finishes.

In Sheikhupura, Mohammad Sarwar Afridi scored an unbeaten 138 and Mohammad Usman scored 100 to help FATA post 448 all-out against Dera Murad Jamali, who were bowled out for 170 on Friday, while Rawalpindi were on top of AJK in Rawalpindi with the latter still trailing by 201 runs and five wickets remaining. In reply to AJK's 82, Rawalpindi posted 375 that revolved around Umar Amin's 96 and Shadab Khan's 84. In AJK's second innings, Shadab Khan and Mohammad Faizan equally shared four wickets between them to leave the visitors tottering at 92 for five.

Elsewhere, fast bowler Niaz Khan returned figures of 23.5-3-97-6 helped Peshawar secure a slender 22-run first innings lead. While replying to Peshawar's 301, Bahawalpur were bowled out for 279. Peshawar, in their second innings were 57 for two to lead by 79 runs. At Islamabad's Margharz Cricket Ground, Hyderabad's Mohammad Suleman scored 90 to help his side take a 73-run first innings lead against Lahore Whites, who were 162 for five when stumps were drawn on Saturday.

At the National Ground in Islamabad, Abbottabad team was in control against Faisalabad when they scored 405 in their first innings and then limited their opponents to 189 for nine, while Multan were also on top of Karachi Whites in Charsadda after claiming 90 runs first innings lead -- thanks to five for 47 by Mohammad Ismail and four for 36 by Waseem Akram Jr. When play ended, Multan were 62 for two to lead by 152 runs with eight wickets standing.

Sialkot's Abdul Rehman scored 113 and Azam Awais contributed 78 to guide their team to 306 for four in reply to Quetta's 263.

Punjab Colleges win intercollegiate Volleyball Championship

RAWALPINDI (APP): The final match of the intercollegiate volleyball championship organized by Board of Intermediate and Secondary Education Rawalpindi was played between Govt College Satellite Town and Punjab College in which Punjab College beat the opposing team and won the final match.

The championship was held at Government College Rahmatabad in which Government College Rahmatabad, Government College Satellite Town, Divisional Public School and College, Punjab College of Information Technology and Punjab College D9 teams participated.

In the first semi-final of the tournament, Punjab College D9 won against Punjab College of Information Technology and reached the final, while in the second semi-final, Government College Satellite Town defeated Divisional Public School & College and qualified for the final.

In the decisive final match, Punjab College D9 Satellite Town defending the title by defeating Government College Satellite Town easily by 0-3. Areeb Qasim, Uzair Najeeb, Saad Rabbani and Sufyan Abbasi showed excellent performances from the winning team.



In brief

IRSA releases 118,400 cusecs water

ISLAMABAD (APP): Indus River System Authority (IRSA) on Saturday released 118,400 cusecs water from various rim stations with inflow of 63,800 cusecs. According to the data released by IRSA, water level in River Indus at Tarbela Dam was 1527.40 feet and was 129.40 feet higher than its dead level of 1,398 feet. Water inflow and outflow in the dam was recorded as 32,500 cusecs and 55,000 cusecs respectively. The water level in River Jhelum at Mangla Dam was 1185.45 feet, which was 135.45 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 70,000, 43,200, 39,500 and 6,200 cusecs respectively. Similarly, from River Kabul, a total of 14,300 cusecs of water released at Nowshera and 4,500 cusecs released from River Chenab at Marala.

Islamabad Police returns lost

turns lost
ISLAMABAD (APP): The Islamabad Capital Territory (ICT) police and the Kirpa Police team on Saturday have successfully returned a lost purse to its owner, which contained important documents and cash amounting to 45,000 rupees. A police spokesman told APP that Islamabad Police was continuously engaged in maintaining law and order and ensuring the safety of citizens' lives and property in the federal capital. In this regard, the purse was discovered by the Kirpa Police team during their routine patrol. He said utilizing technical resources, the team traced the original owner of the missing purse and ensured its prompt return. The owner expressed gratitude to the Kirpa Police team, commending the ICT Police for their swift response and dedication to community service.

PBCC calls for boost in modern education

RAWALPINDI (DNA): Punjab Boards Committee of Chairmen (PBCC) hosted an educational conference aimed at promoting high-quality education, improving examination methods, and introducing modern educational reforms. The key officials, including the Chairman of the Punjab Education Task Force Muzammil Mahmood, Education Task Force Member Rana Shakeel Ahmed Bhatti, Secretary of Higher Education Dr. Farrukh Naveed, as well as representatives from Agha Khan Board, Cambridge, Federal Board, and the Inter Board Committee of Chairmen (IBCC), participated. The conference provided suggestions that align with the needs of the modern education system. Chairman of the Punjab Education Task Force, Muzammil Mahmood said that modern education reforms are being introduced in all Punjab Education Boards. He highlighted that in line with Chief Minister of Punjab, Maryam Nawaz Sharif, a special task force has been established to bring reforms, aiming to improve and modernize Punjab's education boards. Secretary of Higher Education, Dr. Farrukh Naveed reiterated the government's commitment to transparency and merit in educational appointments, such as the recent recruitment of Vice Chancellors and College Teaching Interns (CTIs) for 18 universities. He also added planned examination reforms aimed at evaluating students fairly and accurately without compromising their rights.



ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Interior Mohsin Naqvi in a meeting with police officers from 49th common who have been recently posted in frontier Constabulary. —APP Photo

Marriyum stresses collective responsibility in smog control

ISLAMABAD (APP): Senior Punjab Minister Marriyum Aurangzeb on Saturday called for cooperation from all stakeholders, including the public to tackle the issue of smog in Lahore and emphasized the need for mature behavior from the public in controlling smog, highlighting that it was a collective responsibility. In an exclusive talk with a private news channel, she shared that the provincial government has been actively working on anti-smog measures since March, shortly after Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz took office, adding, preventing smog is a lengthy process that requires sustained effort of all stakeholders. Maryam Nawaz, the Chief Minister of Punjab has taken the issue of smog very seriously, unlike any

other government in history, she mentioned. Marriyum Aurangzeb said Punjab Senior Minister Maryam Nawaz's dedication to addressing this issue is unparalleled, adding, CM's approach to tackling smog is not just about short-term solutions but also focuses on long-term policies and environmental diplomacy efforts. She highlighted that Maryam Nawaz's environmental diplomacy efforts have been met with mockery and criticism from opponents, who are more interested in playing politics with health issues rather than finding solutions. Thick smog has been engulfing several parts of Punjab, especially Lahore due to Diwali celebrations and stubble burning in India, according to Marriyum Aurangzeb,

Punjab's Senior Minister. Responding a query, Marriyum Aurangzeb also disclosed that Punjab will launch environmental diplomacy efforts with India starting next week, focusing on addressing the smog issue that has been plaguing Lahore. This initiative includes writing a letter to facilitate further progress and engaging in dialogue to find solutions, she added. The move is part of Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz Sharif's vision for a pollution-free and smog-free Punjab, she highlighted. To another question, Marriyum Aurangzeb urged citizens to take precautions against Lahore's smog by avoiding unnecessary travel and outdoor activities. She also advised citizens to wear face masks to minimize health risks.

IG Islamabad reviews security measures

ISLAMABAD (APP): Inspector General of Police (IGP) Islamabad Syed Ali Nasir Rizvi here on Saturday inspected various duty points within the city and reviewed security measures. On this occasion, Senior Superintendent of Police (SSP) CTD Muhammad Iqbal and SSP Special Branch Yasir Afridi, along with other senior police officers, were also present, a police spokesman told APP. During the visit, the IG inspected various duty points within the city and evaluated the security measures in place. IG met with police officers on duty and

directed them to perform their duties with alertness. He emphasized the need for stringent security measures in the city, instructing the officers patrolling the area to increase the intensity of their patrols and to make the search process more effective. The IG ICT further directed the officers to brief their subordinates on handling emergency situations and to personally monitor all duties. Syed Ali Nasir Rizvi also emphasized that all officers should be provided with complete safety equipment before being deployed.

Furthermore, Deputy Inspector General of Police (DIG) Syed Ali Raza reviewed the security of all financial institutions in Islamabad. The DIG issued orders to the police officers on duty to perform their responsibilities diligently and with full safety equipment. Islamabad Police is constantly working to maintain peace and tranquility in the federal capital and to ensure the protection of citizens' lives and property. He urged citizens to cooperate with the police and report any suspicious activities.

Citizens urged to take precautionary measures against smog

ISLAMABAD (APP): Healthcare specialists Saturday cautioned Punjab inhabitants to adopt protective measures to mitigate the harmful effects of escalating smog levels, emphasizing the potential for noxious chemicals to exacerbate respiratory issues and other health concerns. Renowned respiratory infection specialist, Dr. Azam Mushtaq talking to a private news channel sounded the alarm on the deteriorating air quality in the province, urging citizens to take immediate precautions to safeguard their health. The worsening air quality poses significant health risks, particularly for vulnerable

populations such as children, elderly individuals and those with pre-existing respiratory conditions, he added. "Inhaling smog-filled air can lead to severe respiratory complications, including asthma, bronchitis, and chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD)," Dr. Mushtaq warned. By taking proactive measures, citizens can protect themselves and their loved ones from the hazardous effects of smog, he added. Dr. Azam Mushtaq has issued a smog safety advisory and recommends wearing face masks during any outdoor activities, washing mouths, avoid unnecessary outdoor activities, especially during peak

pollution hours (10am-4pm). Citizens should also check smog timing before venturing out and consider staying indoors with windows and doors closed, using air purifiers, reducing physical activity, staying hydrated and monitoring air quality indexes, he suggested. Vulnerable populations, such as children, elderly individuals, pregnant women and those with pre-existing respiratory conditions should be particularly cautious. If symptoms like coughing, shortness of breath, chest tightness, irritation, headaches, or fatigue persist or worsen, seek immediate medical attention, he added.



ISLAMABAD: Laborers busy fixing tough tiles on footpath at Aabpara. —APP Photo

Hindu community celebrated "Dewali"

ISLAMABAD (APP): Like other parts of the world the country Hindu and Sikh Community celebrated "Dewali" here on Saturday. Despite its deep religious significance, Diwali today is also a cultural festival observed by people regardless of faith. According to information, Hindus, Sikhs, Jains and Buddhists around the world are celebrating Diwali, the festival of lights. Diwali, also called Deepavali, is one of the biggest festivals in India. It's also widely celebrated in Nepal, Malaysia, Fiji and other countries with large South Asian diasporas. Homes, businesses and public spaces are lit up with diyas, or oil lamps made from clay, and fireworks displays abound. People gather with their families, eat sweets and exchange gifts. The festival gets its name from the row (avali) of clay lamps (deepa) that Indians light outside their homes to symbolize the inner light that protects from spiritual darkness. This festival is as important to Hindus as the Christmas holiday is to Christians. Over the centuries, Diwali has become a national festival that's also enjoyed by non-Hindu communities. For instance, in Jainism, Diwali marks the nirvana, or spiritual awakening, of Lord Mahavira on October 15, 527 B.C.; in Sikhism, it honors the day that Guru Hargobind Ji, the Sixth Sikh Guru, was freed from imprisonment. Buddhists in India celebrate Diwali as well.

Mosin Naqvi meets newly appointed FC Officers

ISLAMABAD (APP): Federal Interior Minister Mohsin Naqvi on Saturday met with the 49th Common Police Officers appointed to the Frontier Constabulary, extending his best wishes as they embarked on their new assignments within the force. Minister Naqvi highlighted the essential role that the Frontier Constabulary played in maintaining peace and security across Pakistan, especially in the ongoing battle against terrorism. In his address, Naqvi praised the dedication of the Frontier Constabulary in ensuring peace and security is of utmost importance. He commended the force for its collaboration with other law enforcement agencies in combating terrorism, noting, "In the fight against terrorism, the

Frontier Constabulary is battling alongside other law enforcement agencies." Referring to the recent sacrifice of ten FC soldiers in DI Khan, Naqvi honored their courage and commitment to the nation, saying, "Ten brave FC soldiers sacrificed their lives for the nation, setting a high standard of dedication." He expressed that such sacrifices further strengthened Pakistan's resolve in the fight against terrorism. "The martyrs of FC are our valuable asset, and the nation holds their unparalleled sacrifices in high esteem," Naqvi stated. Naqvi also highlighted advancements in the Frontier Constabulary, sharing that the force was being equipped with modern technology and tools to enhance its capabilities. Addressing the young officers, he emphasized the significance

of integrity and ethical standards in law enforcement, urging them to fulfill their duties with the highest standards of discipline. "Young officers bring fresh energy to any institution," he remarked, adding, "Good behavior is the hallmark of a good officer." He encouraged the officers to build meaningful relationships with the public and to prioritize service. "Go out of your way to help and serve the public," he advised. "Officers who serve with dedication earn the respect and trust of the people," he stated. Federal Secretary of Interior Khuram Ali Agha and Frontier Constabulary Commandant Riaz Nazir Ghara were also in attendance, underscoring the government's support for the Frontier Constabulary's critical mission in maintaining national security.

13 outlaws arrested; weapons & drugs recovered

ISLAMABAD (APP): Islamabad Capital Territory (ICT) Police apprehended 13 outlaws involved in different criminal activities including drug peddling and illegal weapons. Police have recovered hashish, heroin, liquor and weapons with ammunition from their possessions. On the directives of Inspector General Police (IGP) Syed Ali Nasir Rizvi, the ICT Police have intensified their crackdown against criminal elements in a bid to eliminate crime from the city; public relation officer told APP on Saturday. In this regard, the ICT Police Ramna, Sangiani,

Koral, Bhara Kahu, Secretariat, Industrial Area and Sabzi Mandi police stations teams took legal action against accused involved in drug peddling and possessing illegal weapons. He said that the police teams also arrested nine accused namely Umar Farooq, Ikram, Habib Ullah, Iqar Khan, Muhammad Ali, Faizan Munir, Saeed Ahmad, Nasir Abbas and Muhammad Arshad and recovered four 30 bore pistols and one 09 mm pistol with 2,440 gram hashish, 10 liters of liquor and 129 gram heroin from their possession. Moreover four absconders were also arrested

from various areas of the city during the last 24 hours. DIG Ali Raza said that the ICT Police is actively working to ensure the safety of citizens' lives and property in the federal capital, emphasizing that no elements will be allowed to disrupt citizens' peace. Protecting the lives, property, and dignity of citizens is the Islamabad Police's top priority. Citizens are urged to report any suspicious activities to the relevant police station, emergency helpline "Pukar-15" to help make the city crime-free through cooperation between the police and the public.



RAWALPINDI: A vendor selling colorful balloons to attract customers at roadside. —APP Photo

Sherry Rehman urges COP 29 to support developing countries

ISLAMABAD (APP): Chairperson Senate Committee on Climate Change Senator Sherry Rehman underpinned the critical role of development organizations in fostering climate resilience through providing adequate funding. She was speaking at a pre-COP29 panel discussion titled 'Bridging the Gap: Humanitarian/Development Agencies and Climate Adaptation in Pakistan' held at the Institute of Regional Studies (IRS), said a press release issued here Saturday. Sherry Rehman also underscored the need for local climate action backed by robust international financing. Advocating proactive measures in flood-prone areas to prevent escalating climate impacts, she urged major emitters to honour their Internationally Determined Contributions (IDCs) and called for a Global Goal on Adaptation that prioritises funding for on-ground initiatives. Calling upon major emitters to commit to their Internationally Determined Contributions (IDCs), Senator Rehman emphasized that climate

financing for the Global South should be directed towards on-ground adaptation initiatives, not just reporting. In his remarks on the occasion, Ambassador Jauhar Saleem, President of the Institute of Regional Studies (IRS) highlighted the potential role of COP29 in advancing climate adaptation efforts and ensuring essential funding. He also stressed upon the importance of decentralised approaches to climate adaptation, while ensuring that strategies are tailored to local contexts to address diverse climate challenges effectively and shared that IRS was conducting a number of pre-COP discussions to generate concrete recommendations for COP-29. Dr. Altaf Abro, Head of Mission for Secours Islamique France (SIF) Pakistan, emphasized the importance of linking development funds with humanitarian resources to enhance adaptation efforts and enable more effective resilience strategies. Dr. Samuel Rizk, Resident Representative of UNDP Pakistan, stressed the need for coordinated government action

in addressing climate change. He also invited attention to rapid population growth and worsening climate impacts as significant challenges for Pakistan, which were deepening vulnerabilities for marginalised communities. Bilal Anwar, CEO of the National Disaster Risk Management Fund (NDRMF), accentuated the need for transformative adaptation initiatives to meet the mounting challenges of climate change. He also called for mobilization of resources, enhancement of expertise, and inclusion of indigenous practices to build resilience and drive sustainable climate action. Dr. Rizwan Naseer, Senior Research Fellow at IRS, underscored the importance of aligning humanitarian responses with development strategies to create a more integrated approach. Muhammad Arif Goheer, Executive Director of the Global Climate Change Impact Study Centre (GCISC), brought out the urgency for effective adaptation strategies in Pakistan's agricultural sector and called for climate-smart

farming practices and improved water management to safeguard this vital sector. Isabel Bogorinsky, Head of Programs at Welthungerhilfe (WHH) Pakistan, highlighted the threat that climate change poses to food security and emphasized upon the vital role of government organizations and think tanks in building resilience and developing strategies to mitigate climate risks while enhancing adaptive capacities. Ahmed Kamal, former Chairman of the Federal Flood Commission (FFC), discussed government-led disaster risk reduction initiatives, including the 10-year National Flood Protection Plan and advancements in flood forecasting systems. Hassan Hayat, Programme Producer at PTV Home, underscored the impact of documentaries in effectively communicating the severe consequences of climate change. The event brought together a range of national and international experts, policymakers, heads of development & humanitarian organizations.

Afghan woman to be extradited from US

KABUL (Khaama Press): International media reports state that a 25-year-old Afghan woman named Wajiha Qureshi has been accused of killing her secret lover in Sweden. She is set to be extradited from the United States to Sweden for trial. The Daily Mail reported early Friday, November 1, that Qureshi, along with her husband Farid Waziri, allegedly killed a 37-year-old Afghan refugee named Abbas Hamid in March of this year.

Afghanistan secures third and fourth place at global Quran recital event

KABUL(BNA): Afghanistan secured notable achievements in the 9th annual global Quran recitation and memorization competition, held in Turkey. Participants representing the Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan achieved third and fourth place in this prestigious event. According to Bakhtar News Agency, Afghan representatives Abdulrab Ayubi and Shafiq Amini were honored for their excellence in Quranic recitation and memorization.

Retirees protest again, demanding unpaid Pensions

KABUL (TOLO News): In continuation of previous protests, a group of retirees once again gathered today (Saturday) in front of the Pension Fund building to demand their unpaid pensions.

The retirees told TOLONews that with winter approaching, they are facing numerous challenges. During today's gathering, they called on the Islamic Emirate to expedite the payment of their pensions.

Abdul Wasi, a retiree, told TOLONews: "Retirees have no bread, no water. Their children have resorted to hard labor, selling vegetables or secondhand goods on the streets, but even there they are harassed by the municipality. If they try to beg, the police arrest them."

Ghulam Ehsan, another retiree, said: "It's been over three years since they received their pensions. Each one of them has families of five to ten members to support."

Sayed Sahib Shah, another retiree, said: "Aid is flowing in from all sides, and resources are being extracted. Doesn't this government have the means to pay us our pensions? Are we not from this land or country? They should pay our pensions."

The Islamic Emirate has not recently commented on this demand, which retirees have repeatedly raised. In the past, retirees have also protested outside the United Nations office in Kabul over unpaid pensions, urging UNAMA to step in to address the issue.

Paktia residents want re-opening of IDH

GARDEZ (Pajhwok): Some residents in south-eastern Paktia province have demanded the resumption of 50-bed Infectious Diseases Hospital (IDH) operation.

Local officials have acknowledged that IDH halt operation for the past two months.

Mohammad Rahim, a resident of Syed Karam district, told Pajhwok Afghan News recently the IDH halt operation.

He said: "We request that this hospital be re-activated which will decrease the load on Zonal Hospital, every patient should be properly checked, in the past there were good and specialist physicians here, infectious diseases and dangerous and viral, if this hospital resumed operation it would be a relief."

Mohammadullah, a resident of Gardez, said the IDH has been closed due to unknown reasons.

He said with the arrival of the winter season the weather gets cold in Paktia province due to which infectious diseases spread quickly. Local officials acknowledged the closure of the 50-bed IDH in Paktia.

Public Health Department Director Dr. Meraj Gul Adel told Pajhwok Afghan News the IDH was supported by the World Health Organisation (WHO). The contract with WHO was now over for this reason the hospital had been closed.

He said there were medicines and equipment in the hospital but due to the non-availability of personnel and budget for expenditures the facility had been shut.

He said: "The need for an infectious disease hospital is great because more than 50 percent of the diseases are infectious everywhere, it has been almost two months that the activity has been stopped, the reason is that the donor was WHO, so the activity has been stopped in all zones, we have spoken to the ministry and institutions for reactivation."

According to information, the Gardez IDH was opened two years ago with the support of WHO but for the past two months the hospital has been closed.

Afghanistan seeks Global Aid for agricultural at China conference

KABUL (TOLO News): At the International Conference on Poverty Reduction and Agricultural Growth in China, Sadr Azam Osmani, Deputy Minister of Agriculture, Irrigation, and Livestock, highlighted the urgent need for global support for Afghanistan's agriculture sector. He stated that if the world wants to reduce poverty, Afghanistan should be the starting point.

Osmani emphasized that poppy cultivation in Afghanistan has nearly reached zero. He also called on the international community to implement alternative crop programs for Afghan farmers, noting that poppies are not only a challenge for Afghanistan but also pose a problem for the world.

Speaking about the



Islamic Emirate's delegation's participation in the conference, ministry spokesman Misbahuddin Mustaeen said: "Afghanistan is one of the countries highly suited for growth and development. If the world aims to reduce

poverty, it would be wise to begin with Afghanistan, as it is now a secure place for all. Agriculture, mining, industry, and trade are growing here."

According to some experts, international support, especially from China, could significantly

boost Afghanistan's agricultural sector, thereby strengthening the country's economy.

Mohammad Nabi Afghan, an economic analyst, told TOLONews, "We need to focus on standardizing our agriculture and finding ways to bring high-

quality products to global markets to increase our income and make the most of the present era."

Another economic expert, Abdul Ghafar Nizami, said, "The Islamic Emirate alone cannot manage this task. The world needs to invest in Afghanistan to address issues such as water shortages on existing farmland and to irrigate unused land, which will expand agricultural production."

The Ministry of Agriculture, Irrigation, and Livestock also noted that, twenty years ago, Afghanistan was the largest producer of illicit drugs. However, since the Islamic Emirate's return to power and the issuance of a ban on poppy cultivation, production has nearly ceased, and farmers have turned to cultivating lawful crops.

Kabul Police Command: significant progress made with security

KABUL (TOLO News): The spokesperson for the Kabul Police Command, Khalid Zadrin, has stated that the command has successfully reduced crime levels and recently brought the kidnapping rate in the capital down to nearly zero percent.

Zadrin pledged that security is being maintained, adding that the Islamic Emirate's security forces are working diligently to ensure stability across the country. According to the Kabul Police Command's spokesperson, the command has apprehended dozens of individuals on charges including kidnapping and theft, who have been subsequently referred to the judicial and legal authorities.

Speaking to TOLONews, the spokesperson for the Kabul Police Command said: "We have reduced the kidnapping rate to zero, and we have completely eliminated major criminals who used to steal dozens of vehicles daily in Kabul. Previously, between 30 to 35 vehicles would be stolen in a single district, but now there are weeks when not a single car is

stolen across all of Kabul, which signifies our progress in this area."

Meanwhile, several residents of the capital, while expressing satisfaction with the security forces' efforts to ensure safety, told TOLONews that certain security challenges still remain unresolved. They called on security agencies to be more proactive in strengthening security.

Javid, a Kabul resident, said: "Our request to the Islamic Emirate is to prevent theft and the disappearance of vehicles occurring in some areas of

Kabul so that thefts can be further reduced."

Siddiqullah, another resident of Kabul, said: "With the installation of security cameras, security has improved. If anyone tries to steal, rob, or engage in terrorism, they cannot enter these areas because the security system is much stronger."

However, some residents of the capital have previously voiced concerns over the lack of complete security in Kabul and have urged security agencies to take serious steps toward ensuring stability.

Kabul Silversmiths seek support to facilitate exports

KABUL (TOLO News): Several silversmiths in the capital complain about the downturn in their business and call on the Islamic Emirate to facilitate the export of silver abroad.

Ismat, who has been selling silver in a corner of the capital for 20 years, said that his business is not thriving these days.

He learned this craft from his father and is the sole breadwinner for his family of 11.

Ismat Rasheed told TOLONews, "If imports and exports are facilitated, we can source raw materials. There should be special provisions allowing us to freely work with countries like Pakistan, Iran, and other nations around the world and to obtain visas easily."

Mohammad Akram, another seller, said, "Import taxes should be reduced so we can offer our products more effectively in the market. Additionally, we should be allowed to export our products, such as gemstones like rubies, lapis lazuli, and emeralds, to improve our business."

Another vendor, Yaqeen Ali, said, "We request the government to support us so we can export our products abroad and display them in international exhibitions."

Uzbekistan, EU representatives hold talks on humanitarian crisis



KABUL (Khaama Press): Uzbekistan's Ministry of Foreign Affairs announced that Ismatulla Irgashev, the country's Special Representative for Afghanistan, and Terhi Hakala, the European Union's Representative for Central Asia, met for discussions.

According to a statement released on Friday, November 1, the Uzbek and EU representatives discussed the current situation in Afghanistan, sharing insights and strategies.

The statement noted that Irgashev and Hakala emphasized the importance of joint efforts to prevent a

humanitarian crisis in Afghanistan.

Terhi Hakala expressed appreciation for Uzbekistan's efforts to establish a unified regional stance on Afghanistan and to support long-term peace and stability in the country.

It is noteworthy that last

week, Ismatulla Irgashev also met with Nico Schermers, the Special Envoy of the Kingdom of the Netherlands in Astana.

Uzbekistan and the European Union's focus on preventing a humanitarian crisis in Afghanistan comes amid rising poverty and unemployment over the past three years, which has intensified international concerns about the need for humanitarian assistance.

The collaborative efforts by Uzbekistan and the EU reflect a proactive approach to stabilizing Afghanistan, highlighting the urgency of coordinated regional and international support.

As Afghanistan faces deepening humanitarian challenges, sustained partnerships between neighboring countries and the global community will be essential to address the dire humanitarian crisis and poverty in the country.

Jawzjan woman seeks support to train female photographers

SHIBERGHAN (Pajhwok): A woman in northern Jawzjan province has established a photography studio for the first time and says if she is supported, she will provide females with jobs and trainings.

Recently, Soman Kohkan created the studio and computer services named Taswir-e-Roz in Shiberghan city and now she has many customers.

Kohkan told Pajhwok Afghan News she established the shop with a capital of 150,000 afghanis. It offered services including taking photos, printing documents and filming different ceremonies.

"Now, in this studio, women take photos safely. Women are not comfortable with men's photography due to social conditions and family restrictions and they prefer to be photographed by woman," she added.

According to Soman, if government and partner institutions support her, she will develop the studio and attract a number of women and girls to work and provide trainings in the field of



photography and filming. "I established this shop three years ago and I had good income, but eight months ago robbers stole the studio's equipment and I was unemployed, recently, I reactivated it by taking loan."

In future, she plans to provide the service of printing on clothes with different designs and others by purchasing advanced equipment and devices.

Some women are happy with the photography and say now they are comfortable taking photos and printing documents.

Gul Naz, a customer, explained she would not feel comfortable when

being photographed by men. She said Soman's studio had high quality and said: "I'm very happy that a lady takes my photo and now I can easily come and take a photo."

"Today, I brought my wife for taking photo in women's photography because of its safe and secure environment for women to come alone and all employees are ladies," Yousof, a resident, said, welcoming the establishment of this studio.

He expressed hope there will be more shops like this so that women could take pictures safely.

Meanwhile, Marina Barakzai, a civil society

activist, told Pajhwok: "Creating this photography gives other women motivation and encourage to invest, on the other hand it shows strength and capabilities of women"

She hoped the government and institutions would support female investors so that they could develop their works.

Head of Commerce and Industry Maulvi Niyaz Mohammad Tawab also welcomed the photography studio and said: "It is a different business and very comfortable for females"

This investment gives other women and girls motivation to start their own businesses, the director added.

"We are trying to support these businesswomen by attract donations with the help of institutions, more women will be recruited and provide more work opportunities for women"

Currently, more than 4,000 women are engaged in various industrial and commercial works and play a good role in economically supporting their families.

Journalists' demands on Day to end impunity for crimes against journalists



KABUL (TOLO News): On the International Day to End Impunity for Crimes Against Journalists, the Afghanistan Journalists Center (AFJC) reported 447 cases of rights violations against journalists and media workers, along with more than 220 arrests, in Afghanistan over the past three years.

This international observance, marked every year on November 2, aims to raise awareness about the need for accountability for crimes against journalists.

AFJC stated in its announcement: "In the three years of 'Islamic Emirate' rule (from August 15, 2021, to August 15, 2024, corresponding to the Afghan calendar dates of Asad 24, 1400 to Asad 24, 1403), the Afghanistan Journalists Center has recorded at least 447 incidents of rights violations against journalists and media workers, including three deaths, dozens of threats and instances of violence, and more than 220 arrests."

In response, the Ministry of Information and Culture stated that it is working to improve media operations in Afghanistan and that the Commission for Addressing Media Complaints and Violations has resolved all challenges faced by journalists.

Khobab Ghufuran, spokesperson for the Ministry of Information and Culture, denied that any journalists had been detained, adding that during the three years of Islamic Emirate rule, no journalist has been detained for their media activities.

Ghufuran explained, "No journalist has been or will be detained as a journalist. If any case has arisen, the Ministry of Information and Culture, in coordination with relevant state bodies, has promptly addressed it."

Some journalists and media-support organizations have stressed the importance of addressing cases concerning journalists and emphasized the need for enacting the media law.

Hafizullah Barakzai, President of the Afghan Journalists' Union, stated: "There is an urgent need for the public media law to be enacted and made available to the journalism community as soon as possible. We do have some issues, particularly regarding access to information, but these are gradually being resolved."

Zabihullah Sharifi, a journalist, said, "Journalism is about impartial reporting for the people, and anyone committing a crime against a journalist should not go unpunished or ignored. For a clearer path forward in journalism and media operations, it is essential that the public media law be approved and finalized as soon as possible."

On the international front, the United Nations also marked November 2 with a statement on the increase in violence and fatalities among journalists in conflict zones in recent years. According to UNESCO statistics, 85 percent of journalist killings since 2006 remain unresolved.

Stephane Dujarric, spokesperson for the UN Secretary-General, stated, "According to a new report by the UN Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), 85 percent of all killings recorded by UNESCO since 2006 are considered unresolved."

November 2 was designated the International Day to End Impunity for Crimes Against Journalists by the 68th United Nations General Assembly in 2013. This day is commemorated annually to honor journalists who have lost their lives in the pursuit of truth.

Afghanistan among 22 nations facing severe food insecurity: WFP



KABUL (TOLO News): The World Food Program (WFP) and the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) of the United Nations have reported a growing trend of food insecurity in 22 countries worldwide, including Afghanistan.

In the joint report by these organizations, it is said that conflict, climate crises, and economic pressures will place millions of people in critical conditions in the coming months.

A section of the WFP and FAO report reads: "Afghanistan is among the 22 countries and territories classified as Hunger Hotspots."

Economic expert Mir Shakib Mir said, "Afghanistan, with its high poverty level, unfortunately, needs international assistance to prevent the further impoverishment of its people and to avoid worsening economic issues. There is a need for

an understanding with UN agencies, and all differences with them should be set aside so that aid is not reduced, and people do not suffer further."

Several economic experts say that to prevent the worsening of this situation, the Islamic Emirate should establish closer cooperation with global aid organizations.

They believe that to eradicate food insecurity in Afghanistan, investment in agricultural infrastructure is necessary. "Undoubtedly, there are various factors contributing to food insecurity, including conflicts, droughts, and unfortunately, the majority of people in Afghanistan lack access to three quality meals a day, all due to poverty and unemployment," said Abdul Naseer Reshtia, an economic affairs expert.

The Ministry of Economy stated that combating food insecurity and

reducing poverty are among its top priorities.

The ministry emphasizes that for the country's economic growth and development, it is essential for the international community to lift economic restrictions and release Afghanistan's frozen assets.

Abdul Latif Nazari, the Deputy Minister of Economy, said: "The international community has a moral and legal responsibility to help lift banking restrictions, release the Afghan people's assets, and remove sanctions so that economic growth, development, and large-scale national projects can take shape in the country."

Recently, the Ministry of Economy held a meeting with representatives from the United Nations and the European Union to strengthen the effectiveness and transparency of activities by non-governmental organizations and non-Islamic Emirate entities.



JERUSALEM: Residents and police officials gathered near a house that was hit, following a projectiles attack from Lebanon towards Israel.

Harris, Trump go toe to toe in frenzied final campaign weekend

WASHINGTON (AFP): Kamala Harris and Donald Trump enter the final weekend of the most tense US presidential campaign of modern times with a flurry of swing-state rallies that will test their stamina — and ability to persuade the country's last undecided voters.

Harris, bidding to become the country's first woman president, will use rallies in Georgia, North Carolina and Michigan to drive home her message that Trump is a threat to US democracy, Trump — seeking a sensational return to the White House after losing in 2020 and then becoming the first presidential nominee to have been convicted of crimes — promises a radical right-wing makeover of the government and aggressive trade war to promote his policy of "America first."

The 78-year-old, who rallied in Milwaukee, Wisconsin late on Friday, just miles from Harris's event there, will all but cross paths with her again as Trump makes whistle-stops in North Carolina, Virginia, Pennsylvania and Georgia. Their frenetic schedule will run right into Monday, culminating with late-night rallies — in Grand Rapids, Michigan for Trump and Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, for Harris.

Election Day is Tuesday but Americans have been voting early for weeks, with more than 70 million ballots already cast — including a record four million in Georgia, where Democrats seek to pull out all the stops to keep the state in their column. Opinion polls continue to show a tied race, particularly in the seven battleground states likely to determine the result in the US electoral college system, leaving the Republican businessman and his 60-year-old Democratic rival fighting hard to peel off even slivers of support from one another's camps.

Harris, currently President Joe Biden's vice president, is doing that by appealing to centrist voters and propelling her base to the polls with a



robust ground game and get-out-the-vote effort. And by painting Trump as a toxic authoritarian, she is also encouraging voters to "finally turn the page" on the former president. "He is someone who is increasingly unstable, obsessed with revenge, consumed with grievance — and the man is out for unchecked power," she told supporters in Little Chute, Wisconsin. Trump, meanwhile, has doubled down on his already extreme rhetoric in hopes of firing up his loyal base to turn out in massive numbers. "Kamala's closing message to America is that she hates you," Trump fumed on Friday night in Warren, Michigan, where he trashed the economy under Biden and Harris as a disaster — which economists say it clearly is not — and warned that "a 1929-style economic depression" would ensue if Harris were elected. Citing her hawkish foreign policy views, Trump earlier had conjured the image of former Republican representative turned Harris supporter Liz Cheney being shot.

"She's a radical war hawk. Let's put her with a rifle standing there with nine barrels shooting at her, OK? Let's see how she feels about it, you know when the guns are trained on her face," Trump said. Despite the rhetoric, Trump waxed nostalgic on Friday about how his experience

campaigning over the past nine years has been "the thrill of a lifetime."

"And now we want to take that thrill and turn it into 'let's do business,' right?" Harris, the nation's first Black and first Asian-American vice president, meanwhile has sought to harness celebrity star power like Beyonce and Bruce Springsteen in the campaign's waning days. Jennifer Lopez, a pop icon of Puerto Rican heritage, joined Harris onstage on Thursday, amid a firestorm triggered by a Trump rally warm-up speaker branding the US territory a "floating island of garbage."

Grammy-winning rapper Cardi B appeared with the candidate Friday night, asking the crowd in Milwaukee, "Are we ready to make history?" With the election just days away — and Trump refusing to say whether he would accept its results if he loses — businesses in the capital Washington have begun boarding up shop fronts as city authorities warn of a "fluid, unpredictable security environment" in the days after the polls close. Trump is already alleging fraud and cheating in swing states such as Pennsylvania, laying the groundwork for what many fear will be more unrest, following the violence that erupted at the US Capitol in the wake of the 2020 vote.

First phase of Raiwind Ijtema will close today

F.P. Report

LAHORE: The first phase of the Raiwind Ijtema 2024 will close tomorrow with special prayers. This annual international gathering attracts thousands of delegates from across Pakistan and beyond, aiming to foster unity and strengthen the faith of participants.

The Raiwind Ijtema is being commenced in two phases. The second phase is scheduled from November 7 to November 10, 2024, concluding with a special prayer. Delegates from various regions have already started arriving, with arrangements in place to ensure a smooth experience. Meanwhile, a reception camp has been established at the railway station and Lahore Airport to welcome guests.

A senior official of Raiwind Ijtema Maulana Abdullah told APP that at both camps, attendees are provided with refreshments and transportation to the main Ijtema venue, ensuring their journey is comfortable. The Raiwind Ijtema serves as a pivotal platform for spiritual uplift, discussion of Islamic teachings, and collective prayers. It brings together individuals from diverse backgrounds, emphasizing the importance of faith, unity, and community.

In preparation for the event, security measures have been significantly enhanced this year. The traffic police have deployed 13 DSPs, 203 inspectors, and 999 wardens to ensure the safety of all participants. Additionally, walk-through gates and surveillance cameras have been installed to maintain a secure environment throughout the gathering.

As the first phase of the Raiwind Ijtema closes tomorrow, the local community and authorities have prepared to ensure a successful and enriching experience for all participants. The Lebanese Hezbollah group after said it had targeted Israel's Palmachim Airbase in southern Tel Aviv on Saturday noon with drones. There was no immediate comment from Israel on the attack. The militant group frequently claims to have fired rockets at Israeli bases or urban

Missile strike on central Israel wounds 19

JERUSALEM (AFP): A missile strike in Israel's Sharon area wounded 19 people, police said early Saturday, after the army reported three projectiles were fired from Lebanon into central Israel. All 19, four of whom were "in moderate condition," were taken to hospitals for treatment, the Israeli police added.

Israel's Magen David Adom (MDA) emergency medical service earlier said that several people had been wounded in a strike on the central city of Tira, including "a male around 20 with shrapnel injuries." Hezbollah also said on Saturday it had launched rockets at an Israeli intelligence base near Tel Aviv in the early hours of Saturday. At 2:30 a.m. (00:30 GMT) militants "fired a salvo of rockets at the Gilot base of the 8200 military intelligence unit in the suburbs of Tel Aviv" the Iran-backed group said in a statement.

The Lebanese Hezbollah group after said it had targeted Israel's Palmachim Airbase in southern Tel Aviv on Saturday noon with drones. There was no immediate comment from Israel on the attack. The militant group frequently claims to have fired rockets at Israeli bases or urban

areas in Israeli territory, and has several times claimed the targeting of Gilot.

Videos posted by the Israeli Foreign Ministry on social media showed fire and smoke spilling from a building into the street and emergency responders swarming the site. "This is the result of a direct hit of a Hezbollah rocket on a building in the Israeli Arab town of Tira, injuring 19 civilians," the ministry said in the post. "We cannot and will not rest until Hezbollah is dismantled," it added.

The Israeli army said on Telegram that it had intercepted some of the three projectiles fired from Lebanon. Tira, a predominantly Arab town, is located around 25 kilometers (15 miles) northeast of Tel Aviv, near the border with the occupied West Bank. The war raging in the Gaza Strip has spread to Lebanon, where Israel has been carrying out air strikes against Hezbollah, an ally of Palestinian group Hamas. According to Israeli figures, at least 63 people have been killed on the Israeli side since cross-border exchanges with Hezbollah erupted following Hamas's deadly attack on Israel on October 7, 2023.

On Thursday, rocket fire

from Lebanon killed seven people in Metula, northern Israel, including four Thai farmers. Hamas's October attack on Israel resulted in 1,206 deaths, mostly civilians, according to an AFP tally of Israeli official figures. Israel's response has killed 43,259 Palestinians in Gaza, most of them civilians, according to figures from the Hamas-run territory's health ministry, which are considered reliable by the United Nations.

Meanwhile, the Israeli military said on Saturday it had intercepted three drones launched from the east over the Red Sea, without specifying where they came from. "A short while ago, three UAVs that were launched from the east were intercepted over the Red Sea.... the UAVs were intercepted prior to crossing into Israeli territory," the military said in a statement. A coalition of pro-Iran groups in Iraq said it carried out four drone attacks on the Israeli resort of Eilat on Saturday, after Israel said it intercepted three drones approaching from the east. In a statement, the Islamic Resistance in Iraq it was behind the attacks on what it called "four vital targets" in the resort on Israel's Red Sea coast, all conducted within one hour.

Spain deploy soldiers to flooded Valencia region

MADRID: Spain is sending 5,000 more soldiers and 5,000 more police to the eastern region of Valencia after deadly floods this week, Prime Minister Pedro Sanchez has announced.

In a televised address on Saturday, Sanchez said the disaster was the second-deadliest flood in Europe this century and that Spain was carrying out its largest deployment of army and security force personnel in peacetime. At least 211 people have been killed, including 202 in Valencia alone, in Spain's deadliest natural disaster in living memory.

Rescuers were still searching for bodies in stranded cars and sodden buildings on Saturday, four days after the monstrous flash floods that swept away everything in their path in the east of Spain. An unknown number of people remain missing. Thousands of volunteers are helping to clean up the thick mud that is covering everything in streets, houses and businesses in the hardest-hit towns.

Authorities are facing criticism over the effectiveness of warning systems before the floods, with opposition politicians accusing the central government in Madrid of acting too slowly to warn residents and send in rescue teams. "There has been a sense of anger that people have been left abandoned here," said Al Jazeera's Sonia Gallego, reporting from Paiporta, one of the worst-hit areas in the outskirts of Valencia.

"This neighbourhood, which is only half an hour from Valencia's city centre, remained utterly cut off — no water, no electricity, hardly any telecommunications," she added. Prime Minister Sanchez said: "I am aware the response is not enough, there are problems and severe shortages... towns buried by mud, desperate people searching for their relatives."

Susana Camarero, deputy head of the Valencia region, stated on Saturday that essential supplies had been delivered "from day one" to all accessible areas.

In the Valencia region, authorities have restricted road access for two days to enable emergency services to carry out search, rescue, and logistics operations more efficiently. Officials report that dozens of people remain unaccounted for, though determining an exact figure is challenging due to severe damage to communication and transport networks.

Interior Minister Fernando Grande-Marlaska told Cadena Ser radio on Friday that it was "reasonable" to expect more deaths would be discovered. Authorities are hopeful that the number of missing will decline once telephone and internet services are restored. The storm that started the floods on Tuesday formed as cold air moved over the warm waters of the Mediterranean and is common for this time of year. But scientists warn that climate change driven by human activity is increasing the ferocity, length and frequency of such extreme weather events. — Aljazeera



MADRID: Search and rescue team members looking for bodies, following heavy rains that caused floods, in Chiva, Spain.

Khamenei warns Israel, US for actions against Iran

TEHRAN: Iranian Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei has warned Israel and the United States of "a crushing response" for actions against Iran and its allies, according to state media. Khamenei, 85, made the remarks on Saturday while addressing students ahead of the anniversary of the 1979 takeover of the US embassy in Tehran by hard-line students — which cemented the decades-long enmity between Tehran and Washington that persists today.

"The enemies, whether the Zionist regime or the United States of America, will definitely receive a crushing response to what they are doing to Iran and the Iranian nation and to the resistance front," Khamenei

said in the capital, Tehran, also referring to Iran-aligned armed groups that include Yemen's Houthis, Lebanon's Hezbollah and the Palestinian Hamas. The supreme leader did not elaborate on the timing of any attack, or the scope.

He had previously struck a more cautious approach, saying officials would weigh Iran's response and that Israel's attack "should not be exaggerated nor downplayed", after the Israeli military launched strikes last week on military bases in Iran, hitting about 20 sites over several hours in Ilam, Khuzestan and Tehran. Israel said the strikes were a response to attacks from "Iran and its proxies". Khamenei on Saturday met with university students to

mark Students' Day, which commemorates a November 4, 1978, incident in which Iranian soldiers opened fire on students protesting the rule of the shah at Tehran University. The crowd greeted Khamenei with enthusiastic cheers, chanting, "The blood in our veins is a gift to our leader!" Israel has said its air strikes on Iran on October 26 were in retaliation for a major ballistic missile attack by Tehran on October 1.

The Iranian attack, which involved about 200 missiles, was launched after Israeli assaults in recent months that killed leaders of Hezbollah, Hamas and the Iranian military. Israel has warned Iran against retaliating, while Tehran, stating it does not seek war, has promised to respond. — Aljazeera

IHC bars authorities from arresting Panjutha

F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: The Islamabad High Court (IHC) ordered that Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) lawyer Naeem Panjutha cannot be arrested without prior permission in any case. As per details, the court has also directed the parties to submit their arguments on Naeem Panjutha's petition and provide details of the cases registered against him.

The Secretary of the Interior, the Inspector General of Islamabad, and the Federal Investigation Agency have been ordered to provide details of the cases registered against Naeem Panjutha. If any cases are registered against him, the court has ordered that copies of the FIRs be submitted to the court. The parties have been directed to submit their replies and detailed reports on the petition, and the hearing has been adjourned until November 5.

The development came after a protest by lawyers outside the Supreme Court (SC), the Federal Police registered a case against 20 lawyers, including the Chairman of Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) Imran Khan. Prominent figures such as MNA Latif Khosa, Senator Shibli Faraz, and lawyer Salman Akram Raja are among those named in the case under the Anti-Terrorism Act and other charges. Meanwhile, other notable individuals including Mustafin Kazmi, Niazullah Niazi, and Azam Swati also booked under the same charges.

One dead, 15 wounded in Israel strike on Beirut

BEIRUT (AFP): Lebanon's health ministry said one person was killed and 15 others were wounded Saturday in an Israeli strike on Hezbollah's south Beirut stronghold, which has been hard hit by the Israel-Hezbollah war. The ministry announcement came as the official National News Agency said the "Israeli enemy launched a raid near Karout Mall... in the southern suburbs of Beirut".

The strike was not preceded by an Israeli evacuation warning. According to an AFP photographer, the strike targeted an abandoned building, which includes a car dealership on the ground floor. The area was cordoned off by the army and security forces. Beirut's southern suburbs have been heavily bombed by Israel since its war with Hezbollah erupted in September.

The war has killed more than 1,900 people in Lebanon since September 23, according to an AFP tally based on figures from Lebanon's health ministry. Al Jazeera adds: A group of armed men has abducted a mariner in northern Lebanon, prompting an investigation by Lebanese authorities into whether Israel was involved in the raid. A man identified by Lebanese state media as Imad Amhaz was seized after a naval force landed in the town of Batroun around dawn on Friday.

CCTV camera footage shared online by Lebanese journalists appeared to show a group of armed men leading away a man whose shirt was over his head. According to local media reports, more than 25 armed men landed in Batroun, about 50km (31 miles) north

of Beirut, and seized the man before returning to their boats and leaving the area. Lebanon's state-run National News Agency (NNA) said an "unidentified military force" carried out a "sea landing" on the shore of Batroun at dawn on Friday.

The force "went with all its weapons and equipment to a chalet near the beach, kidnapping a Lebanese man... and sailing away into the open sea on a speedboat," the NNA said. Reporting from Batroun, Al Jazeera's Imran Khan said the raid was "unprecedented". "This is northern Lebanon; this is not the southern suburbs or the border parts where we have seen Israeli troops on the ground. This is an unprecedented raid," he said.

"This is a very serious incident. We haven't seen an extraction or abduction like this for a very long time. This is something the Lebanese authorities will be taking seriously. They are already on the ground here," Israeli journalist Barak Ravid cited an unnamed Israeli source as claiming Amhaz is allegedly a senior member of Hezbollah's naval force.

Lebanon's Minister of Public Works and Transport Ali Hamieh quoted the country's state-run National News Agency as saying Amhaz was a civilian naval officer. He said the man was abducted just 100 metres (328 feet) from his home and questioned why UN Security Council Resolution 1701, which was intended to resolve a 2006 war between Israel and Hezbollah, was not being implemented. "There is communication

with UNIFIL because the Lebanese coast is monitored by it, UNIFIL's mission is to monitor the Lebanese coast periodically from Naqoura to Arida," Hamieh said about the UN peacekeeping force — which Israel has repeatedly attacked in recent weeks.

Kandice Ardiel, a spokesperson for the UN peacekeeping force in Lebanon, denied allegations by some local journalists who said that UN forces helped the landing force in the operation.

Five killed as coach plunges into ditch

F.P. Report

JACOBABAD: A passenger coach hurtled in a ditch in Thull area of Jacobabad leaving five passengers dead and 15 others injured. The accident took place when the vehicle was carrying passengers from Baluchistan to Punjab in A-section police station jurisdiction, officials said.

The injured passengers were transferred to taluka hospital Thull for medical attendance. The dead bodies have also been shifted to the hospital to complete formalities, police officials said. In an incident in May this year, at least one person died and over 30 were injured when a bus carrying wedding guests overturned in Jacobabad. The incident occurred at Daival Machhi village in Jacobabad district, when the ill-fated wedding party's bus plunged into a ravine after a tyre burst.