

NA session today
F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: The National Assembly session, initially set for 5 PM, has been rescheduled to 4 PM today, (Monday). The National Assembly secretariat issued a notification regarding the revised timing, made under Rule 49, sub-clause 2(b) of the National Assembly Rules of Procedure, 2007, at the Speaker's discretion.



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Shehbaz lauds successful operation against terrorists

Shehbaz ensures conducive environment for foreign investment

F.P. Report

LAHORE: Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif has said that ensuring favourable environment for foreign investment in the country is top-most priority of the government.

Talking to a business delegation from the United Kingdom (UK) during a meeting here on Sunday, he said immaculate services are being provided to the business and trader community through 'One Window Operations' under the Special Investment Facilitation Council (SIFC) in the country.

The UK-based renowned business figure Zubair Isa led the business delegation during the meeting.

Inviting the business-

people to invest in Pakistan, the PM said country's economy had improved due to dedicated efforts of the government in the recent days, adding that the initiatives had increased confidence of the overseas investors to invest in various ventures in Pakistan.

Ways to discover new vistas to enhance health business-to-business ties between Pakistan and the UK were also discussed during the meeting.

The delegation hailed the economic policies of Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif, which had strengthened the economy and put the country on the path to sustainable development.

Meanwhile, Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif has praised the Frontier

Constabulary (FC), the Counter-Terrorism Department (CTD), and police officers for their successful operation against terrorists belonging to banned Balochistan Liberation Army (BLA).

An official statement issued here on Sunday said the PM lauded the forces for their achievement in eliminating three terrorists and apprehending two others, preventing what could have been a major act of terrorism in Balochistan.

Acknowledging the critical role of the security forces, Shehbaz Sharif highlighted the sacrifices made by these units in combating terrorism. "Security forces have made invaluable sacrifices to eradicate the menace of terrorism in Balochistan," he added.

He also expressed his deep appreciation for their courage and dedication, saying, "Along with the entire nation, I pay tribute to the officers of FC, police, and the CTD."

Meanwhile, Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif on Sunday called senior journalist Altaf Hassan Qureshi and condoled with him the sad demise of his wife.

The premier expressed his deep grief and extended his sincerest sympathies with the renowned journalist.

Expressing his deepest condolences,

Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif prayed to Almighty Allah to grant courage and sustenance to the bereaving husband and family to bear the irreparable loss with equanimity.



LAHORE: A delegation of leading businessmen of the United Kingdom calls on Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif.

Russian drone attack on Kyiv damages buildings

KYIV (Reuters): A Russian air attack on Kyiv damaged buildings, roads and several power lines in the city, the capital's military administration said early on Sunday, after the military said air defenses were trying to repel a drone attack.

There were no injuries in the attack, which came in waves and approached the city from different directions, Serhiy Popko, the head of the Kyiv military administration, said on the Telegram messaging app.

Popko said there was no fire, amending the administration's earlier account that emergency crews had been dispatched to the site of a fire in the Shevchenkivskiy district that it said had been caused by the attack.

It was Russia's second drone attack on Kyiv in as many nights. According to preliminary information, all of the attack drones were destroyed, Popko added. It was not immediately clear how many drones were launched at Kyiv.

Falling drone debris damaged an entrance and windows of at least five buildings in the Shevchenkivskiy and Holosiivskiy districts, including a hostel and windows in an office building, Popko said.

The military posted several photos on Telegram showing a blown-out entrance to a building, damaged windows in another and power lines lying on the road.

Reuters witnesses reported hearing blasts and seeing plumes of smoke rising from above residential buildings.

Shevchenkivskiy district near Kyiv's center is a busy area with a cluster of universities, restaurants and tourist attractions. Holosiivskiy district is home to a large national park. Both districts lie on the western bank of the Dnipro River.

Kyiv, its surrounding region and the vast majority of the eastern half of Ukraine were intermittently under air raid alerts for most of the night, according to alerts issued on social media by the Ukrainian military.

Meanwhile, Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky has called on foreign allies for more help with air defence after another week of what he said were more than 900 bombings.

"Last night, Russia terrorized Ukraine with over 50 strike drones, and over the past week, it has used more than 900 bombs, around 30 missiles, and nearly 500 'Shaheds' against various regions of Ukraine," he said, adding that most targeted "civilian and critical infrastructure."

"All of these attacks would have been impossible if we had sufficient support from the world in crucial areas: long-range capabilities for our security, truly effective sanctions to prevent Russia from importing critical components for drone and missile production—especially microelectronics—and political decisions that could ruin Russia's will to wage this war," Zelensky said.

Nov 14 cantonment by-polls ECP directs LEAs to ensure impartiality

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) has issued guidelines for law enforcement agencies (LEAs) providing security for the Nov 14 cantonment by-polls, directing them to remain impartial and neutral while preventing intimidation and fairly enforcing the law.

In a comprehensive code of conduct for law enforcers, the electoral watchdog emphasised the need to maintain impartiality and neutrality while fostering a peaceful voting atmosphere, assisting the Presiding Officer, providing guidance to voters, preventing intimidation and fairly enforcing the law.

As per the ECP's code of conduct for the Cantonment Board bye-elections on November 14, 2024, law enforcement personnel, including police, must ensure free, fair, and transparent atmosphere outside polling stations including in Ward No. 06 of Rawalpindi Cantt, Ward Nos. 04 and 08 of Wah Cantt, and Ward No. 02, 04 of Pano Aqil Cantt, so that voters are not intimidated or obstructed in any way while casting their votes.

Security forces deployed at polling stations must avoid any actions that favor or oppose political parties or candidates. They are required to fully cooperate with the Presiding Officer to maintain order and ensure uninterrupted voting.

Personnel should act politely and professionally when interacting with voters and polling staff, while firmly addressing any situations in accordance with the law and providing guidance outside polling stations as needed.

Adhere to the code of conduct by refraining from arguments or altercations with candidates, election agents, polling agents, observers, or media personnel.

Do not interfere with the responsibilities of the Presiding Officer, Assistant Presiding Officer, or Polling Officer. If a personnel observe any irregularity outside the polling station, promptly report it to the Presiding Officer for further instructions. Should the irregularity persist, immediately inform the Officer In-Charge, who will take appropriate action as per their delegated authority and notify the Returning Officer.

According to the code of conduct, security personnel do not arrest anyone at the polling station unless explicitly directed by the Presiding Officer and do not interfere with the counting process, but rather ensure a peaceful environment outside the polling station during counting.

Additionally, the security personnel assist the Presiding Officer in maintaining order outside the polling station and have the authority to remove anyone who misbehaves or disobeys lawful orders.

Harris campaigns in Michigan, Trump hits eastern battleground

DETROIT (AP): Democratic presidential candidate Kamala Harris campaigns in Michigan on Sunday while her Republican rival Donald Trump will stop in three eastern battleground states just two days before Tuesday's U.S. presidential election.

Opinion polls show a historically close race, and a New York Times/Siena College poll published on Sunday showed Vice President Harris and former President Trump neck-and-neck in the seven states that are likely to determine the outcome on Tuesday.

A poll showing Harris leading in Iowa -- a state Trump won easily in the past two elections -- raised the possibility of an unexpected outcome, though another poll showed her trailing in that state.

Harris is due to campaign in East Lansing, Michigan, a college town in an industrial state that is viewed as a must-win for the Democrat.

She faces skepticism from some of the state's 200,000 Arab Americans who are frustrated that the sitting vice president has not done more to help end the war in Gaza and scale back aid to Israel. Trump visited Dearborn, the heart of the Arab American community, on Friday and vowed to end the wars in the Middle East.

Trump is due to hold rallies in three smaller cities that could help him galvanize the rural voters who make up an important part of his base. He starts the day in Lititz, Pennsylvania, before heading to Kinston, North Carolina, in the afternoon and ending with an evening rally in Macon, Georgia.



It will be the first day since last Tuesday that the two candidates are not campaigning in the same state. On Saturday, their planes shared a swath of tarmac in Charlotte, North Carolina, where both candidates held rallies.

Harris later flew to New York for a surprise appearance on the "Saturday Night Live" comedy show.

In the campaign's final days, Harris has sought to convince voters that she will bring down the cost of living -- a top concern after several years of high inflation. She has also portrayed Trump as dangerous and erratic and urged Americans to move on from his divisive approach to politics.

"We have an opportunity in this election to turn the page on a decade of Donald Trump trying to keep us divided and afraid of each other. We're done with that," she said in Charlotte on Saturday.

Trump has argued that Harris, as the sitting vice president, should be held

responsible for the rising prices and high levels of immigration of the past several years, which he has portrayed as an existential threat to the country.

"The only free aid they are going to get is a free ride back home," he said at a rally in Greensboro, North Carolina on Saturday, referring to people living in the U.S. illegally.

The stakes are high, with Harris and Trump having starkly different views of the economy, the role of government in American life and the role of the U.S. in the world.

One illustration of that came from Hungarian Prime Minister Viktor Orban, a Trump supporter and opponent of military aid to Ukraine as it fights off a Russian invasion. Orban said Europe will need to rethink its support of Ukraine if Trump wins.

Trump's public comments have suggested he could seek to wind down U.S. aid for Ukraine if he wins on Tuesday.

Israeli attacks kill at least 31 people in Gaza, medics say

CAIRO (Reuters): At least 31 people were killed during Israeli bombardment of the Gaza Strip on Sunday, Palestinian medics said, with nearly half of the deaths in northern areas where the army has waged a month-long campaign it says aims to prevent Hamas regrouping.

Palestinians said the new aerial and ground offensives and forced evacuations were "ethnic cleansing" aimed at emptying two northern Gaza towns and a camp of their population in order to create buffer zones. Israel denies this, saying it is fighting Hamas militants who launch attacks from there.

Medics said at least 13 Palestinians were killed in separate attacks on houses in Beit Lahiya town and Jabalia, the largest of the enclave's eight historic refugee camps and the focus of the army's new offensive.

The rest were killed in separate Israeli airstrikes in

Gaza City and in southern areas, including one in Khan Younis, which health officials said had killed eight people, including four children.

Israel has not commented on its military actions in Gaza on Sunday.

On Saturday, the Israeli military sent a new army division to Jabalia to join two other operating battalions, a statement said. It said that hundreds of Palestinian militants have been killed in the "battles" since the raid began on Oct. 5.

Meanwhile, COGAT, the Israeli army's Palestinian civilian affairs agency, said it facilitated the launch of the second round of a polio vaccination campaign in northern Gaza on Saturday and that 58,604 children have received a dose.

The Gaza health ministry said Israel's military offensive in northern Gaza was stopping them from vaccinating thousands of children in Jabalia, Beit

Lahiya, and Beit Hanoun.

It said one clinic had come under Israeli fire while parents brought their children for the anti-polio dose on Saturday and that four children had been injured.

"CEASEFIRE!"

The head of the World Health Organization said in a statement the clinic incident took place despite a humanitarian pause agreed upon by the two warring parties, Israel and Hamas, to allow the vaccination campaign.

"A @WHO team was at the site just before. This attack, during a humanitarian pause, jeopardises the sanctity of health protection for children and may deter parents from bringing their children for vaccination," Director-General Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus said in a post on X on Saturday.

"These vital humanitarian-area-specific pauses must be absolutely respected. Ceasefire!" he said.

The Israeli military,

which had no immediate comment on Tedros' remarks, said it was checking the report about the clinic.

A larger ceasefire that would end the war and see the release of Israeli and foreign hostages held captive in Gaza as well as Palestinians jailed by Israel remains remote due to disagreements between Hamas and Israel.

Hamas wants an agreement to end the war permanently, refusing recent offers for temporary truces, while Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu says war can only end when Hamas is eradicated.

The war erupted after Hamas-led militants attacked Israel on Oct. 7, 2023, killing some 1,200 people and taking 251 hostages back to Gaza, according to Israeli tallies.

Israel's retaliatory offensives have killed more than 43,000 Palestinians and reduced most of Gaza to rubble.

Iran stages rallies to mark 1979 US embassy hostage crisis

TEHRAN (AFP): Iranian demonstrators gathered on Sunday outside the former US embassy in Tehran to mark the anniversary of the 1979 hostage crisis that has for decades shaped relations between Washington and Tehran.

The hostage crisis began in November 1979 following the Islamic Revolution led by Iran's late supreme leader Ruhollah Khomeini which ousted the Western-

backed Shah Mohammed Reza Pahlavi.

Students loyal to Khomeini stormed the embassy building and held 52 staff hostage for 444 days while demanding that Washington hand over Iran's recently toppled shah, who was being treated in the United States for cancer.

Washington officially broke off relations with Tehran in 1980, midway

through the crisis, and they have been frozen ever since.

"Death to Israel, Death to America!" chanted crowds of Iranians outside the building, which is currently a museum known as the "Den of Spies," and covered with striking anti-American murals.

Others burnt the Israeli and US flags.

Iranians have held the rallies annually since

1979.

Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC) chief Hossein Salami criticized Israel and the United States, saying they "cannot survive by slaughtering and killing Muslims."

"We always warn them that if they don't change their behavior, they will go towards collapse and destruction," he said during a speech at the Tehran rally.



PENNSYLVANIA: Supporters of Republican presidential nominee and former U.S. President Donald Trump queue outside Flyadvanced Lancaster, to attend a campaign rally, in Lititz, Pennsylvania, US.



114 new dengue cases reported in Punjab

LAHORE (APP): The dengue outbreak in Punjab shows no signs of slowing, as the total number of cases has risen to 6,011 this year. Health authorities reported 114 new cases on Sunday, spread across 36 districts in the province, with Rawalpindi bearing the brunt of the surge.

According to recent Health Department data, Rawalpindi alone reported 105 cases in the past 24 hours, marking it as the hardest-hit area in recent weeks. Throughout Punjab, 954 cases were reported over the last week, further intensifying the situation. Lahore reported four new cases, while Attock, Multan, Khanewal, Sialkot, and Sahiwal each confirmed one new case during the same period.

In response to the alarming increase, the Health Department has assured the public that all necessary resources are being mobilized to address the crisis. Medicine supplies have been stocked in public hospitals across the province to ensure proper care for dengue patients.

For residents seeking information, treatment, or wishing to register complaints, the Health Department has set up a free helpline at 1033. Authorities are emphasizing the importance of vigilance and proactive measures to curb the dengue spread.

Over 2.2mn children vaccinated against polio

LAHORE (APP): Today marks the final day of the special anti-polio campaign, with the second day dedicated to the catch-up phase. The district administration of Lahore on Sunday released a report on the progress made during the first day of this catch-up initiative.

According to the report, a total of 88,104 children under the age of five received polio drops during the catch-up day. The overall goal of the seven-day polio campaign is to vaccinate 2,230,134 children across Lahore.

The deputy commissioner emphasized that the catch-up day is specifically aimed at vaccinating those children who missed their doses during the initial phase of the campaign. Teams are actively engaged in house-to-house visits, ensuring that every child receives the vital vaccine, even on this holiday.

The deputy commissioner urged parents to cooperate with polio vaccination teams, stressing the importance of ensuring that no child is left unvaccinated. "It is imperative that all children receive their polio drops," he stated, reiterating the commitment to making Lahore polio-free.

This campaign is being conducted under the directives of Punjab Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz Sharif, who is keen on ensuring the success of the anti-polio efforts in the region. Parents are encouraged to take part in this crucial health initiative by ensuring their children are vaccinated without fail.

PIA privatisation to be done in best way: Aleem Khan

LAHORE (APP): Federal Minister for Privatisation Abdul Aleem Khan said on Sunday he had responsibility of selling Pakistan International Airlines (PIA) and the best solution would be made in this regard.

Addressing a press conference here, he said that a framework had been made for privatisation of the PIA by the caretaker government. He said that the PIA had a debt of Rs 830 billion, adding that out of that debt, around Rs. 600 billion had been parked in Holdco Company, while Rs. 200 billion had been parked in the PIA. He said all these things had happened before he took charge of his office, adding that he could not change the process which had already been initiated.

Aleem said he had no power to change the framework of privatisation. He said there was procedure of privatisation under which he could private anything. He said he had a responsibility of selling PIA, and not to put it on the right track. He said that he was not responsible for the present condition of PIA and added that he could not deviate from privatisation

procedure given to him.

A former privatisation minister was also giving him suggestions, he said and added that he should have implemented those suggestions during his tenure as the minister. He said that the PIA was a national asset and could not be sold at throw-away price. Abdul Aleem Khan said that on the PIA bidding day, he was in Riyadh busy in a meeting with Saudi Arabia's Investment minister. He said that on the day of PIA bidding two meetings were held; one of the privatisation commission, which he presided over, and he also attended the CCOP meeting on the same day. He said, "We have no objection if Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Punjab and Sindh governments together want to buy the PIA."

Professional management was vital to run PIA in effective manner, he said and added that revenue could be generated through the national airline if managed properly. The minister said: "The PIA has best timings for international routes."

Regarding National Highway Authority, Aleem Khan said it was going to give a profit of Rs 50 bil-

lion in one year.

He said that this year the NHA revenue would reach Rs 110 billion from Rs 64 billion. He said that no truck would be allowed on motorway or national highway carrying more than allowed weight. He said the PIA privatisation matter would be carried forward in the best way and if a new framework would be required in this regard, it would be made.

He said, "If the PIA was to be privatised on government-to-government basis, the matter would be looked into."

Aleem said in present framework, there were limitations; but if new framework would be made, there was a possibility that the PIA would be privatised with zero liability and this might attract more buyers.

Regarding Pakistan Post, the minister said that 3,500 jobs had been abolished and that helped save Rs 2.8 billion.

To a question, he said that the number of memorandums of understanding with Saudi Arabia had increased to a 34-35 from the figure of 27. He said that implementation of some of the MoUs was under way currently.



LAHORE: Federal Minister for Privatization Board of Investment & Communications Abdul Aleem Khan held media talk on PIA. —APP Photo

PPP launches "Hoist the Party Flag" campaign in Punjab

LAHORE (APP): The Pakistan People's Party (PPP) has kicked off its "Hoist the Party Flag" campaign across Punjab, aiming to strengthen the party's presence in the region.

Launched on Sunday under the guidance of PPP Central Punjab President Raja Pervaiz Ashraf, the campaign will run until November 30 and will cover all divisions, districts, tehsils, and towns of Punjab.

As part of the initiative, PPP flags will be raised at the homes of at least 10 party officials and workers daily. On Sunday, PPP Central Punjab General Secretary Syed Hassan Murtaza hoisted the party flag at the homes of PPP workers in Rehman Gardens, Defence, and Green Town Bagrian. Several PPP leaders, including Faisal Mir, Dr. Khayyam Hafeez, Zeeshan Shami, Shahbaz Durani, Luqman Jatt, Mehr Waheed, Shahbaz Golo, and Naseem Sabir, were also present to support the campaign.

In a speech to party workers, Murtaza announced that party flags would be raised in public places across 26 districts in Central Punjab, emphasizing the party's commitment to revitalizing its base in the province.

Two women held with 47kg drugs

LAHORE (APP): Two women drug dealers were arrested from Sundar area here while 47 kilos of drugs were recovered, police said Sunday.

According to the details, SHO Sunder, Nadeem Kamboh along with a police team arrested women drug dealers. According to SP Sadr, Rana Ghayur, 47 kilos of drugs worth millions were recovered from accused Ayesha and Rabia. They came to Lahore by bus to supply drugs. A case was registered against the women drug dealers and investigation was started.

They have admitted to supplying drugs. According to the SHO, the accused have confessed to supplying drugs in the vicinity of educational institutions and farm houses.

Legendary folk singer Reshma remembered

LAHORE (APP): The 11th death anniversary of legendary folk singer Reshma was observed here and across the country on Sunday. Reshma was born in Rajasthan (India) in 1947 and was known as the Nightingale of the Desert. Having received no formal education, she was only 12 when she was spotted singing at Shahbaz Qalandar's shrine by a television and radio producer, who arranged for her to record "Laal Meri" on Pakistan Radio.

The song was an instant hit, and Reshma went on to become one of the most popular folk singers of Pakistan, appearing on television in the 1960s, as well as recording songs for both Pakistani and Indian film industries.

CM urges swift completion of PIC-II

LAHORE (APP): Punjab Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz Sharif emphasized the importance of completing the Punjab Institute of Cardiology-II (PIC-II) to ease the patient burden on the existing Punjab Institute of Cardiology (PIC-I).

During her visit to the under-construction hospital at Canal Bank on Sunday, she directed the team to expedite efforts to make the facility operational as soon as possible. The Chief Minister noted that efforts to provide comprehensive cardiology services across every dis-

trict in Punjab are already in motion. She added that the newly introduced card system for children's heart surgeries has significantly streamlined hundreds of operations for young patients.

Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz Sharif reviewed the ongoing construction, inspecting various departments, building materials, and other project aspects. She praised Punjab Infrastructure Development Authority CEO Shahmeer Iqbal for his efforts and suggested further design improvements for the hospital.

Additionally, she instructed officials to ensure the timely delivery of essential machinery for PIC-II.

Construction work on dry partition walls and the heating, ventilation, and air conditioning (HVAC) system is progressing across multiple floors. The PIC-II project, which will have a capacity of 250 beds, is set to include advanced hybrid operation theaters, emergency, surgical, and medical ICUs. Over 90 per cent of the gray structure has been completed, and the project is moving steadily toward its final stages.

Minister to ensure public access to quality medicines

LAHORE (APP): Punjab Health Minister Khawaja Imran Nazir has reiterated that access to quality medicines is a fundamental right for the public, stressing that there will be no compromise on this issue.

He made these remarks during a meeting with a delegation from the Punjab Chemist Council at PMU on Sunday. The minister assured the council of the government's commitment to address their legitimate demands. He highlighted the ongoing campaign against quackery across the province, which will be intensified in the coming weeks. The minister

also called on the Punjab Chemist Council to fully cooperate with the Health Department in combating artificial shortages and hoarding of medicines.

"The Health Department is maintaining digital monitoring of medicine supplies in the market," said Khawaja Imran Nazir, adding that the sale of life-saving medicines at inflated prices will not be tolerated. The Punjab Chemist Council informed the minister about various issues and demands related to the availability and regulation of medicines.

Punjab Chemist Council President Nisar Chaudhry assured the

Health Department of the council's full cooperation in tackling quackery and preventing artificial shortages. The delegation, led by President Nisar Chaudhry and General Secretary Riaz Malik, included North Zone President Mehr Sajjad Ali, Senior Vice President Naveed Sheikh, Vice President Nadeem Siddiqui, and Hammad Shah.

Chief Drug Controller Azhar Jamal Salimi was also present at the meeting, underscoring the government's commitment to ensuring safe and fair access to medicines for all residents of Punjab.

PA Speaker departing for CPA conference

LAHORE (APP): Speaker of the Punjab Assembly Muhammad Ahmad Khan is embarking on a seven-day trip to Australia to attend the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association (CPA) conference.

This prestigious gathering will bring together parliamentarians from across the

Commonwealth to discuss key issues, share legislative practices, and promote democratic governance.

The conference is expected to cover topics such as climate change, economic development, and strengthening parliamentary ties among member countries.

Deputy Speaker PA Zahid Iqbal Channar

assumed the charge as acting Speaker of Punjab Assembly. The Punjab Assembly Secretariat has issued a notification confirming his assumption, ensuring the continuity of legislative activities during this period. Zahid Iqbal Channar will oversee assembly sessions and manage ongoing legislative matters until the Speaker's return.

DC reviews Lahore development plan

LAHORE (APP): Lahore Deputy Commissioner Syed Musa Raza, chairing a meeting here on Sunday, reviewed the implementation of the Lahore Development Plan (LDP).

The meeting focused on enhancing transparency and accountability in city projects, in alignment with Punjab Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz Sharif's vision of eliminating corruption, favoritism, and kickbacks from the district's administrative processes.

Senior officials, including Chief Officer Metropolitan Corporation Lahore (MCL) Shahid Abbas Kathia, Additional Deputy Commissioner Finance and Planning Mudassar Nawaz, and assistant commissioners,

attended the meeting.

A major highlight was the introduction of an e-tendering system, which officials believe will be a key tool in curbing corruption and favoritism by digitizing the bidding process.

Training sessions are already underway to familiarize staff with the e-tendering process, and the first round of tenders is scheduled to open on November 8.

The DC said that the LDP was a large-scale project aimed at revitalizing Lahore's streets, improving water supply, drainage, road repairs, and street lighting across various city zones. Additionally, each zone will have independent disposal systems to

ensure sustainable sewage management.

The plan also includes third-party audits and consultations with environmental experts to ensure that all developments meet ecological and transparency standards, he added.

The DC said that city administration was making efforts to ensure sustainable urban development and public welfare, marking the start of a new era of transparent and responsible governance in Lahore.

The DC emphasized that there is no place for bribery, commissions, or undue influence in the government's development agenda, aiming to set a precedent of integrity in public service.



LAHORE: The 2nd Shalamar Chess Championship, organized by the District Administration of Lahore, attracted over 400 chess players from across Pakistan to compete in different categories.

Govenor expresses concern over non release of funds to local government

PESHAWAR (APP): Governor Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Faisal Karim Kundi, criticized the provincial government's failure to provide funding to local government department, labeling it an undemocratic approach.

He said this during a meeting with Ejaz Surani, the elected Nazim from Bannu, who briefed the Governor on the challenges faced by local representatives here at the Governor House.

Governor Kundi emphasized that local governments are the "nurseries of democracy," highlighting a disconnect between the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf's (PTI) claims of empowering grassroots governance and the provincial administration's actual behavior towards local bodies and their representatives.

In response to Surani's concerns regarding issues related to federal departments, Kundi instructed relevant authorities to address these matters promptly.

Meanwhile, Atiqur Rehman Chauhan, the Provincial General Secretary of the All Pakistan Central Muslim League called on Governor Faisal Karim Kundi and discussed the province's political situation.

The two addressed issues related to the rights of the province, the formation of a political jirga by the Governor, and the overall law and order situation.

Governor Kundi emphasized that the resolution of issues can only be achieved through dialogue, asserting that confrontation and violence are not solutions.

He stressed the importance of political parties uniting on a single platform despite their ideological differences, saying that this unity is crucial for the welfare of the province's citizens.

During the meeting, Chauhan provided the Governor with a briefing on the political and welfare activities of the All Pakistan Central Muslim League and extended an invitation for him to visit the party's central office.

Similarly, Shoaib Alam Khan, the Provincial Vice President of Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP) Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, along with his son, Hassam Khan, met with Governor Faisal Karim Kundi.

The discussion focused on the national political landscape and specific issues facing the Mardan district.

Shoaib Alam Khan informed the Governor about the challenges faced by PPP workers in Mardan.

Provincial Coordination Secretary and Vice Chairman of the Red Crescent Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Farzand Wazir, was also present at the meeting.

Wrestler Athar Zahid calls on Governor Kundi

Pakistani wrestler Athar Zahid achieved a remarkable milestone by defeating Indian wrestler Singham Dubey at the International Wrestling Championship held in Kathmandu, Nepal, called on Governor Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Faisal Karim Kundi here on Sunday at Governor's House.

This victory earned him the prestigious title of World Champion.

Governor Faisal Karim Kundi, congratulated him on his outstanding performance. The Governor praised Zahid for his hard work, determination, and skill, saying that he has brought honor to Pakistan.

Governor Kundi expressed his commitment to supporting athletes, highlighting recent sponsorship initiatives for a female squash player, a junior champion, and boxing athletes through the Zokori Group Industries and OGDC.

He assured that similar support would be extended to wrestlers as well.

Kundi described Athar Zahid's victory as an exemplary achievement for the youth, saying that it opens new avenues for the promotion of sports in the country. Zahid thanked the Governor for his encouragement and attributed his success to the prayers of his parents and his dedicated efforts.

He pledged to continue striving to elevate Pakistan's name further in the world of sports.

During their meeting, Athar Zahid shared memorable moments from the championship and his experiences of victory, receiving further encouragement from Governor Kundi, who wished him success in future competitions.



PESHAWAR: Cobblers giving final touches to traditional Peshawari chappals their workshop.

Workshop on training of teachers from merged areas held

PESHAWAR (APP): A two days' workshop conducted under the Special Emphasis Programmes (SEPs) of the Accelerated Implementation Plan II (AIP II) of KP government for the Merged Areas (MAs), was held at Abbottabad.

Masood Ahmed, Secretary E&SED Faiz Alam, Additional Secretary (R&I), Ms Samina Altaf, Director Education, Mutahir Director DPD, Dr Safia Noor, Addl Dir DPD, Ms Nahid Anjum, Addl Dir DoESED participated in the event along with senior officials of the department. Munir Ali Shah, Senior Instructor DPD was the Master Trainer of the workshop while UNDP-MAGP team included Mr. Bilal Ahmad Sector Expert and Mr. Imran Malik Implementation Specialist.

Secretary E&SED emphasized that teachers should focus on morality and character building of students.

It is indeed our national obligation and duty to produce a generation which should believe in hard work and speak the truth to themselves.

We wish that the student who is entering our system today at the age of 5 should become a role model & honest person at the age of 21 in 2040.

He also appreciated the role of Master trainers of the program for conducting the program efficiently.

This SEP is focused on Transforming Teachers training system. It targets 135 randomly selected primary schools in district Khyber, Mohmand and North Waziristan.

The objective of the SEP is to enhance the students learning levels and teaching skills of the teachers of Grade 1-5 in English, Maths and Science.

Under this SEP a Tele Learning Ecosystem for the coaching and mentoring of teachers was developed to provide them with pedagogical training via a telephonic hot-line platform.

Throughout the implementation period, teachers will continue to receive the telephonic coaching and mentorship on a regular basis from experienced trainers known as Ustaad Mashars and Mashras.

The Ustaad Mashars and Mashras were selected through a rigorous three staged process by the Directorate of Professional Development (DPD).

The Ustaad Mashars and Mashras provides subject specific one to one coaching to the trainee teachers of the Merged Areas, which is anchored in classroom teaching using academic calendars and scripted lesson plans provided to each teacher for core subjects.

Minister inspects work on Pajagai Park

PESHAWAR (APP): Provincial Government Minister, Arshad Ayub Khan has said that to provide maximum recreational opportunities to the people, provision of all missing facilities at public parks would be ensured on an urgent basis.

For this purpose, he said necessary work on ensuring recreational facilities at Pajagai Park has been completed to provide a refreshed environment to the local people.

He said this during a visit to Pajagai Park along with Secretary Local Council Board, Wahid ur Rehman and TMO Azhar Ali Shah here.

On the occasion, the Minister urged the people to take their children to the newly renovated park for recreational activities and refreshment.

He said during the busy life routine, a visit to a recreational park will provide the minds with a new energy.

Besides, he said jogging and playing different games at the park will also maintain their good health.

On the occasion, he discussed and inspected the final-stage work at Pajagai Park and issued some necessary instructions.

He also directed the authorities to work on provision of more recreational opportunities at the Pajagai Park.

Rs1b approved for KP police modern vehicles

PESHAWAR (INP): For the capacity building of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa police, faced with shortage of modern arms and vehicles, the provincial government has decided to release an advanced grant of Rs one billion rupees for police department to overcome their shortcomings.

It reported in media that grant will be utilized in acquiring B-6 level security vehicles.

On procurement of B-6 level protective vehicles, a sum of Rs 800million would be spent while Rs200 million for the purchase of mine-resistant vehicles.

The document said the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa police were facing an acute shortage of required arms and modern anti-crime vehicles. To overcome this situation, the document said the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa government has decided to release Rs one billion as an advanced grant. It further confirmed that the provincial cabinet has accorded approval to the release of this advance grant.

137 shopkeepers arrested on profiteering

PESHAWAR (APP): The district administration in an operation against profiteers has arrested 137 shopkeepers and issued warnings to 641 others who created artificial price hikes in the markets.

Teams from the district administration, led by Deputy Commissioner, Sarmad Salem Akram, conducted raids in various markets across the city, including University road, GT Road, Charsadda Road, Dalazak Road, Circular Road, Walled City, and Hayatabad.

The arrested shopkeepers included vegetable and fruit sellers, bakers (nanbais), butchers, milk sellers, grocers and encroachment mafia and others.

Deputy Commissioner has directed officers for consecutive inspection of bazaars to ensure compliance with government prescribed prices and to take strict legal action against profiteers and encroachment mafia.



PESHAWAR: A vendor selling Dandasa (bark of walnut tree), which is used to clean the teeth, at Ashraf Road. — INP photo

Total Sanitation: Still a monster challenge for City Governments

PESHAWAR (APP): The massive rural urban population influx is gradually adding to problems of major cities in terms of fresh air, clean drinking water and sanitation cover and waste disposal, exposing millions of residents to environmental and health hazards.

Sanitation cover conspicuously has emerged as a persisting challenge to city governments in the pwake of emerging poor localities and slum areas with residents either defecating in open or lack the facility of proper toilettes.

Peshawar once known as 'City of Flowers' is also not an exception to this phenomenon like other mega cities in the country where numerous localities still lack sanitation cover although the government officials claim launching of number of projects in this area.

The city's historical charm, characterized by its Mughal-era gardens and fragrant Guli Dawoodi blooms, is being overshadowed by pollution, poor waste management and an inadequate infrastructure for sanitation.

Safdar Baghi, former Nazim of Nothia Jadeed mentions to areas like Kohati, Gunj, Khalasa, Hazarkhwani, Lateefabad and Faqirabad that speak loudly of sanitation and sewerage crisis with visitors often coming across unpleasant odor of garbage and sight of rusty pipes spewing contaminated water.

"Situation in these localities situated in the heart of city portrays a grim picture of sanitation and cleanliness services," Safdar said. "Foul odour oozing out of uncovered drains, stagnant sewage and absence of toilettes make these neighborhoods hazardous for residents."

Criticizing the PTI government for neglecting sanitation problems, Safdar Baghi emphasized an urgent need for a comprehensive plan to bring more and more people under sanitation cover also ensuring replacement of an outdated and leaking pipes. The lush green landscapes of Wazir Bagh, Shalimar Gardens and Jinnah Parks where once children used to play with colorful butterflies hovering over flowers of Gul e Dawoodi, had succumbed to neglect of successive governments.

Mud, dust and stagnant water now mar these recreational spaces, reflecting a broader trend of urban decay fueled by rapid and unplanned construction.

Deterioration of Peshawar's natural beauty is not just an aesthetic concern; it also poses serious health risks like polio and hepatitis.

According to Mian Javaid, Director Sanitation and member BoD Sarhad Rural Support Program, poor sanitation in cities emerged as major challenge in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KPK) that necessitates for joint efforts by authorities and the communities.

"As a pilot project, sanitation improvement schemes were launched in different areas of the province including those at Aliabad and Muslimabad villages in Swabi district," he informed.

Funded through IR&G program, he said the project was aimed to enhance quality of life of poor households with latrine construction while 1000 sanitation kits were distributed among people vulnerable to sanitation concerns.

"As many as 448 low cost latrines were constructed through social mobilization besides five drains to benefit 2000 individuals while 80 hygiene sessions and campaigns were conducted reaching out to 94,821 people to aware them on sanitation," he explained.

The equipment procured at a cost of Rs 413.5 million was handed to Water and Sanitation Services Peshawar (WSSP) for 11 new semi-urban union councils of Peshawar by the KP Govt. The machinery included 33 mini dumpers, 55 containers, 16 tractors and trolleys, 11 arm rollers, four FE loaders and four excavators.

Moreover, 11 new semi-urban union councils of Peshawar district were added to WSSP domain including Achini Bala, Chamkani, Larana, Pajagi, Pakha Ghulam, Pushtakhara Payan, Regi, Sarband, Sufaid Dheri, Wadpaga and Mera Kachori.

Hassan Khan, Spokesperson for Water and Sanitation Services Company informed that work on 12-year Municipal Services Program worth US\$ 44.6 million with assistance of USAID was recently completed where nearly 20 lakh residents of Peshawar were provided access to clean drinking water, waste management and improved sanitation services.

Under the project, he said, 140 clean drinking water facilities serving 448,000 people, replacement of 25,700 meters old and rusted water mains, clean water supply in 21 union councils, rehabilitation of sewerage and drainage lines was carried out.

"These initiatives improved sanitation facilities for people besides proper municipal waste management, provision of 575 vehicles and establishment of a repair and maintenance workshop," he narrated also mentioning to selection of a site at Pandu Peshawar for disposal of hospitals waste.

As majority of the population in KPK especially rural areas was still ignorant of the real meanings and benefits of sanitation, there was also dire need for launching awareness campaigns and educate people.

Open defecation is another major issues at city slums and in rural areas where feces lies in open for days emanating foul smell and germs injurious to human health and environment.

Despite numerous schemes launched by international and local organizations and the government departments and claims of authorities, the problem still persists.

"Under KP Clean and Green initiative, we are improving sanitation services and proper disposal of solid waste in major cities for providing healthy and quality environment to our citizens," said Minister for Local Government KPK, Arshad Ayub Khan. "This initiative includes construction of modern waste treatment plants, expansion of sewerage systems and provision of public toilets in thickly populated areas."

For this purpose, he underlined proactive role of media, civil society and religious scholars for creating mass awareness on improved sanitation services.



In brief

UoM okays promotions
F.P. Report

LOWER DIR: The University of Malakand (UoM) syndicate approved the promotion of 45 faculty members and administrative officers to next grades, said a press release issued here on Sunday. The 57th and 58th meeting of the syndicate, were simultaneously held at the UoM's Committee Room; presided by Vice Chancellor Prof. Dr. Rashid Ahmad, the release said. Various issues pertaining to academics, administrative and financial affairs were thoroughly discussed, deliberated upon and decisions were taken during the meeting. Recommendations of the Selection Board held previously were placed before the syndicate for approval of the august forum. The forum after threadbare discussion and reviewing the Board's recommendations, approved the appointment of new faculty members, promotion of existing faculty members and administrative officers. Addressing the meeting the VC pledged that the varsity strived for upholding the high standards of education and the grievances of all the stakeholders would be addressed gradually for ensuring egalitarianism. He congratulated the promoted faculty and administrative officers and hoped that all of them would keep the pace up for imparting quality education.

Arms, ammo seized

KOHAT (APP): The personnel of Riaz Shaheed police station on Sunday foiled an attempt of arms and ammunition smuggling and arrested an inter-district smuggler from Indus Highway. Police said the action was taken under the headship of SHO Riaz Shaheed police station, Mir Afzal during a routine checking on Indus Highway. A car was signalled to stop and upon inspection, weapons including 1 heavy machine gun, 1 Kalashnikov, 3 rifles, 1 pistol and 550 cartridges were recovered from its secret compartments. The smuggler, identified as Nadir Khan, a resident of Sada Kurram was taken into custody and a case was registered against him. He confessed to smuggling the arms to Kurram district.

Two brothers die

DUKI (PPI): Two drivers, reported to be brothers, died after truck loaded with coal fell into deep ditch near Mundaytuk area of Duki in Balochistan province on Sunday. According to Station House Officer, Police Station Duki, the incident took place near Mundaytuk area of Duki where truck loaded with coal fell into a deep ditch due to failure of brakes, resultantly, two drivers, reported to be brothers, died. The bodies, identified as Sabir Khan son of Mirza Khan and Samiullah son of Mirza Khan, residents of Tadinzai Zhob were retrieved and shifted to Duki hospital where after fulfilling necessary medico-legal formalities, the bodies were sent to the ancestral area. Further investigation is being conducted by the authorities of Police Station Duki. Meanwhile, unidentified gunmen set ablaze three trucks after bursting tyres of the trucks near three pull Killi Kach area of Duki in Balochistan province on Sunday. Driver of one of the trucks sustained injuries in the incident. According to rescue sources, three trucks, two loaded with coal, were burnt by unidentified gunmen near three pull Killi Kach area of Duki. Before setting the trucks on fire, gunmen shot at the trucks, bursting the tyres of trucks.

SACM given warm reception after release from jail

F. P. Report

LOWER DIR: The special assistant to chief minister on population welfare MPA Malik Liaqat Ali and other party workers were warmly received by the Pakistan Tahreek Insaf workers at Khazana bypass after his release from Attock jail here on Sunday. The MPA was arrested and jailed on Oct 5 when the PTI rallied against the federal government in Islamabad last month. He was released from the Attock jail along with another MPA Anwar Zeb, 46 Rescue personnel, 25 KP police officials and 13 municipal committee employees.

A large number of the PTI workers gathered on the Khazana bypass to receive the SACP Malik Liaqat Ali and his workers. The chairman district development advisory committee Lower Dir MPA Ubaid ur Rehman, MPA Malik Shafiullah, PTI district general secretary Ghulam Hussain, tehsil president Iqbal Ahmad Tajik and MPA Malik Shafiullah were also present on the occasion.

Addressing the workers, Malik Liaqat said that the PTI founder Imran Khan was being punished for freeing the country and the nation. He said that injustice was being made with the PTI leaders and workers. The SACM said that they were jailed because they protested against the government for doing injustice. "We can not be bowed as our courage is high than mountains", he said, adding that he would not hesitate if thousands of FIRs were registered against him. The lawmaker said that he would bow before anyone and would be ready for every sacrifice to get Imran Khan freed. He said the PTI workers would raise their voice for Imran Khan's release. He said that he hoped the newly

posted chief justice of Pakistan Justice Yahya Afridi would ensure justice in the country.

Meanwhile dozens of the Insaf Youth Wing workers staged a bike rally at Timergara for the release of Imran Khan, abolishment of FIR against Murad Saeed and end of military trials of the PTI workers. The PTI MPA Malik Shafiullah, chairman district development advisory committee MPA Ubaid ur Rehman, tehsil chairman Balambat Shakir Shuiab, IYW divisional general secretary Rahatullah Farooqi, district president Mian Sajjad, tehsil general secretary Syed Ubaid Jan and others took part in the event. They were demanding immediate release of the party chairman Imran Khan from the jail and abolishment of cases against the PTI leaders and workers.

ROAD ACCIDENTS: A man was killed while 9 others were injured in different road accidents in the Lower Dir district here on Sunday. According to Rescue 1122 officials, one motorcyclist Gul Zaman, a resident of Manirgai Khall was killed when a truck hit his motorcycle near the Shamar Din post in the jurisdiction of Khall police station. Similarly, 8 persons were injured when two cars collided head on near the Khazana bypass road. The injured were shifted to the DHQ hospital Timergara. In another incident one Amjad, 45 was injured when a passenger coach and a Vigo vehicle collided at Sarai Payeen area of Talash.

Meanwhile a chemist identified as Numan s/o Fazal Maula, a resident of Jam Dherai in Maidan was killed when unidentified accused opened firing on him at his clinic in Kumbar bazaar here the other day. He succumbed to injuries on way to Peshawar.

First phase of Raiwind Tableeghi Ijtema concludes

RAIWIND (INP): The first phase of the Tableeghi Ijtema in Raiwind, Lahore, concluded with a large gathering for final prayers led by Maulana Ibrahim Daulia.

Following the prayer, thousands of participants began their journey back home, with Raiwind Road converted to a one-way route to ease traffic flow.

At Raiwind Railway Station, special arrange-

ments were made to accommodate a large number of travellers. All trains were instructed to stop at Raiwind Station for the convenience of the Ijtema participants.

DSP Samia Sultan and senior officials from the Railway Police inspected the security measures in place to ensure a smooth departure.

A major portion of Raiwind's traffic was

diverted, with roads from Valencia Town to Bhubtian Chowk and Mohlanwal closed. Chief Traffic Officer (CTO) Lahore, Ammara Athar, announced a phased approach for clearing parking stands.

Motorcycles and rickshaws will be cleared in the first phase, followed by cars and vans, and finally, buses and trucks in the third phase.



MULTAN: A vendor is carrying traditional bed (charpai) on his head looking for customer to sell it.

Smoggy cities in dire need of mass transit system

FAISALABAD (APP): Unbridled population growth, rural to urban mass influx and rising vehicular number had made our major cities suffocating as smog engulfs them in very onset of every winter till the end of season exposing thousands to serious ailments.

Faisalabad, third largest city of the country with over four million urban population is also a victim of this phenomenon with thousands smoke emitting vehicles plying on its roads making it stuffy and polluted, creating health and travelling issues.

Pollution caused by loaders, busses, cars, bikes, rickshaws etc with many using sub-standard fuel as well as brick kilns and industrial units releasing smoke, liquid and solid waste cumulatively make lives of people miserable. Improper implementation of environmental laws, poor urban planning and absence of mass transit system also emerge as major factors to aggravate this situation.

As experts suggest solutions like strict action against environment polluting vehicles and industrial

units, they also advocate a holistic traffic and mass transit system to rid people of the nuisance of QingQi rickshaws. Although road transport system in the city at present usually seems like uncontrollable. But, a couple of past experiences offer varying results when this sector was successfully regulated.

"Tasneem Noorani, the Commissioner Faisalabad in early 1990s was the pioneer to upgrade city's master plan and regulated buildings and urban transport. His initiative of Faisalabad Urban Transport System (FUTS) was widely appreciated," said Rana Munir Ahmed, a retired government official. "Thereon, this legacy was carried forward by Deputy Commissioner Naseem Sadiq."

"Now once again, the city direly needs a well-planned mass transit system to reduce vehicular population on roads, control traffic congestion and facilitate commuters," he said. "It would also help reduce vehicular emission and pollution."

The existing urban transport system was launched in 1994 on 20 routes as a



cheap and affordable service to benefit almost 1.7 million Faisalabad residents. But in the absence of proper follow up this system deteriorated with the population grew to four millions making it more messy and stuffy.

The gap opening due to insufficiency of urban transport was filled by QingQi rickshaws, an irritating and problematic mode of travelling that not only spoiled the traffic system but also environment. Similarly, a government project of big buses launched in 1999 on major city roads also faded away



SWAT: Minister for Livestock, Fisheries and Cooperatives Fazal Hakeem Khan Yousafzai administering oath from the newly elected cabinet of Swat Motorcycle Traders Union.

FIA nabs human trafficker

MULTAN (APP): In a significant operation against human trafficking, Federal Investigation Agency (FIA) composite Circle Multan apprehended a suspect involving in human trafficking here on Sunday.

According to FIA officials, the suspect, identified as Muhammad Nawaz, was arrested during a raid at Burewala. The suspect allegedly took Rs500,000 from a citizen, promising a job in Saudi Arabia but failed and subsequently went into hiding. He added that an investigation is ongoing.

Three brothers, cousin electrocuted

TANK (APP): At least four children including three brothers and their cousin were electrocuted to death in Tank district, Deputy Commissioner Tank, Tanvir Ahmad confirmed on Sunday.

The unfortunate incident occurred in Garah Mitho area of the district where four children who were grazing their sheep, tried to lift a live electricity wire that was laying on the ground.

Oblivious to the fatal consequence, the children received severe electric shock and died on the scene. The children aged from 10 to 12 years.

Relatives of the deceased children staged a strong protest and blocked the highway.

However, following an assurance by the DC that a thorough investigation will be carried out into the fateful incident and those responsible will face justice, the protestors dispersed.

18 injured in accident

BAJAUR (APP): At least 18 people including women and children were injured when a passenger van fell into a ditch in Bajaur district on Sunday.

Police said the passenger van was on its way from Dargai, Malakand to Barang area of Bajaur when it fell into a ditch.

PTI Govt befooling masses: Muqam

SHANGLA (APP): Federal Minister for SAFRON, Kashmir and Gilgit Baltistan Affairs Engr Amir Muqam here Sunday said that PTI Government was befooling masses on hallow slogans and indulged them in lies based politics.

He was addressing at peace jirga after turning the 30 years old enmity into friendship between families of Poran Sandori here.

The families of Ayub Khan and Ameer Zareen Khan announced an end of a 30 years long enmity due

to reconciliation efforts of Engr Amir Muqam.

Engr Amir Muqam expressed proud of an immense respect given to him by the people of Khyber Pakthunkhwa especially Shangla and that he always preferred people welfare over his personal interests. The Minister said that he served people in all difficult times whether it was flood, terrorism incidents or earthquake and has never left them alone.

He said the record development projects worth billions of rupees were approved by the

Government during last four months for the area.

The Minister said the people problems related to NADRA, electricity, gas and national highway authority were addressed.

On the other hands, he said that PTI has deceived people on the name of change and hallow slogans. He said that despite the third term in Government, PTI has failed to address people problems. Engr Amir Muqam heard about people problems and issued spot orders on some applications.

Locals demand boating bridge at River Chenab

MULTAN (APP): Shujabad and Khangarh, two important cities on opposite sides of the Chenab River, face persistent challenges in transportation that disrupt daily lives and economic activities for thousands of the residents due to lack of a boating bridge.

With populations nearing 800,000 in Shujabad and 400,000 in Khangarh, thousands of citizens depend on boats to cross the river for trade, family visits, and recreation. Despite this high demand, a long-standing request for a boating bridge remains unaddressed, causing inconvenience and limiting local growth.

Each day, a good number of citizens commute between the two cities, primarily for trade. Merchants and traders rely on the river crossing to maintain connections and supply goods between these vital economic hubs.

Families residing on both riverbanks also frequently travel to visit relatives despite geographical separation. Currently, four to five large boats provide transportation across the Chenab daily.

These boats charge Rs. 100 per passenger and an additional Rs. 100 per motorcycle, covering a distance of nearly one kilometer. However, the distance between the both cities could be covered within 15 minutes in case the river has proper boating bridge.

Travellers board boats at several key points along the river, including Nehlonwala, Thatha Qureshian, and Sindhialianwala.

The sites are often crowded as residents eagerly wait for the limited transport available, an indication of the need for a more permanent solution. Local citizens, including community representatives such as Baba Aslam, Aamir Shehzad, Sajid Qureshi and some others, voiced their appeal for a boating bridge

as it was necessary for smoother transport.

According to these residents, the bridge would bring immense benefits to both cities, cutting travel time and reducing the strain of long commutes.

They stated, although boating is a scenic mode of travel, but it is time-consuming and cannot keep up with the growing population's demands.

Apart from the economic benefits, a boating bridge could also enhance trade connectivity between Shujabad and Khangarh. It could even attract tourists, increasing local business opportunities around river-based recreation.

The residents argue that a boating bridge is vital for sustaining the area's economic activities and is key to unlocking the trade potential between Shujabad and Khangarh. The demand for a boating bridge is not new. Residents stated it had been an age-old request.

The construction of the boating bridge would support the development of the both cities, Shujabad and Khangarh. "We are hopeful for a boating bridge to facilitate all citizens," said Baba Aslam, a community leader. "It would ease travel, boost trade, and connect families", he concluded.



holders. FDA would execute it and the government would provide 100 vehicles to ply on eight routes with heavy passengers load," Asif said. "This network of environment-friendly buses can later be extended to other routes."

According to local administration spokesman, the initial eight routes identified for these buses include from Gattwala Bridge to Bhola Di Jhugi, Rehmat Abad to Montgomery Bazaar, Gattwala Bridge to Canal Station, Faisal Town to Rajbah Road, Montgomery Bazaar to Sadhar Bypass, Rail Bazaar to Chak Jhumra and from Satiana Bypass to Rajbah Road.

In second phase, he informed eight more routes would be added to system from Millat Road to Bakkar Mandi Road, Chak Jhumra to Bhola Di Jhugi, Diyal Garh to Millat Road, Rail Bazaar to D-Ground, Chaman Zar Colony to Chak No.8, Rajbah Road to Bibi Jaan Road, Allied Morr to new Sabzi Mandi and from Muslim Town to Rajbah Road.

"In remaining three phases, 370 standard buses would be added to this sys-

tem to cover 35 routes in 40 kilometer radius of the city," the spokesman explained.

As mass transit systems are often seen skeptically by the private transporters, they fear losing their business and seek a shared mechanism with their participation as well.

"The government should devise a comprehensive transport system on public-private partnership basis," opined Anwar Khan, a wagon owner. "Faisalabad is a congested metropolis unsuitable for big buses and this experiment had failed in the past."

He may be right but it seems like a shabby argument of vested interests as they fear it would hurt their monopoly. As if Metro bus service can be run in Lahore, Rawalpindi, Multan, BRT in Peshawar and Green Line in Karachi, then why not a mass transit in Faisalabad.

Therefore, the government should briskly move forward on this project to ease out masses suffering as traffic on city roads presently feels like ungovernable and traffic wardens helpless due to massive load.



Germany’s upstart leftists chip at pro-Ukraine consensus

BERLIN (Reuters): Germany's new leftist populist party aims to exact a high price from mainstream parties for helping them govern three eastern states: demanding that their regional officials join calls to stop arming Ukraine.

Such concessions risk eroding the pro-Ukraine consensus in Germany, Kyiv's second biggest military supporter against Russia's full-scale invasion of its neighbour. They are also fostering tensions in Chancellor Olaf Scholz's three-way federal coalition in Berlin, which is already hanging by a thread.

Launched in January, the Sahra Wagenknecht Alliance (BSW) is the only party to oppose arming Ukraine besides the far-right AfD, a pariah because other parties refuse to work with it.

The BSW's electoral successes in the states of Brandenburg, Thuringia and Saxony in September make it a near-indispensable partner for mainstream parties seeking to form coalitions there.

Sahra Wagenknecht, the popular but divisive leader

after whom the Russia-friendly, NATO-sceptic party is named, wants its regional branches to force any potential partners to sign up to its anti-war positions as the price of a coalition.

That led this week to the Brandenburg branch of Scholz's Social Democrats (SPD) endorsing a joint statement with the BSW which included the message: "The war will not be ended by further weapons deliveries."

The text, which also criticised the possible deployment of U.S. long-range missiles in Germany, sparked outrage in Berlin and disquiet among some within the SPD.

Agnieszka Brugger, senior lawmaker for the Greens - junior partner in Scholz's government - accused the SPD of kowtowing to the BSW's "cynical and populist course".

"Anyone who talks about peace but means an end to support for Ukraine does not want real peace," she told Reuters. "Such a policy would jeopardise the security of our country and our allies."

The SPD mayor of Munich,



Dieter Reiter, said the Brandenburg party's language was "unacceptable". While Germany's state governments have no direct influence over foreign policy, the

political scientist at the University of Duesseldorf.

The SPD last month appointed as General Secretary leftist Matthias Miersch who appears to be rehabilitating Gerhard Schroeder, the former chancellor who worked for Russian state oil company Gazprom and calls President Vladimir Putin a friend.

RISK OF IMPLOSION

Blending paternalistic economic policies with an anti-migration stance, the BSW scored double-digit results in all three states in September and is on track to win 7-9% at the federal election next year, according to polls.

That has turned the cerebral Wagenknecht, 55 - who started out as a Leninist theoretician for the old East German Communist party - from a cult figure of marginal political importance to talkshow staple.

But there are signs that her demands on local party barons are already straining the limits of her authority, in turn testing the young party's cohesion.

In Thuringia, regional BSW leader Katja Wolf, a popular former mayor of Eisenach, was content in coalition talks with the SPD and the conservatives to relegate talk of peace and war to a vaguely worded, non-binding preamble.

For Wolf, who said she had joined the new party out of alarm at the far-right's success in her state, building a stable government was the priority.

Wolf earned a stern rebuke from party headquarters who demanded a more "recognisable BSW signature" in the agreement.

Critics say Wagenknecht would rather forgo regional power than dilute her message ahead of the bigger prize of the national election.

Wagenknecht has a bad track record of sustaining political movements and the BSW could yet implode, said political scientist Oliver Lembcke at the University of Bochum.

The "Rise Up" initiative she launched in 2018 petered out within a year. Wagenknecht said at the time that she left the movement due to burnout.

Protests over Spain flood response interrupt king’s visit to stricken Valencia suburb

PAIPORTA (Reuters): Hundreds of residents of a Valencia suburb particularly badly hit by last week's deadly floods protested on Sunday during a visit by Spanish King Felipe, Queen Letizia, and Prime Minister Pedro Sanchez, with some throwing mud at them.

Chanting "Murderers, murderers!" they vented pent-up anger over what has been widely perceived by local residents as tardy alerts from the authorities about the dangers of Tuesday's flooding, and then a late response by the emergency services when disaster struck.

"It was known and nobody did anything to avoid it," a young man told the king, who insisted on staying to talk to the people despite the turmoil, while the prime minister had quickly

withdrawn.

Spain is a parliamentary monarchy where the king is head of state.

At one point in the visit to the stricken suburb of Paiporta, Felipe, wearing a simple dark raincoat, distinguishable from afar by his height and grey hair, held a man who was crying on his shoulder.

Online footage showed his wife, Letizia, crying as she hugged some residents. Her hair and face had traces of mud and one of her bodyguards had blood on his face, apparently from a hurled object.

Bodyguards had opened umbrellas to try to protect the royals.

BLAME GAME

The central government has said issuing alerts to the population is the responsibility of regional authorities. The Valencia authorities have



Paiporta: People throw mud at King Felipe, Paiporta, Spain.

Moldovans choose president in decisive runoff

CHISINAU, Moldova (AP) — Moldovans cast votes in a decisive presidential runoff Sunday that pits pro-Western incumbent Maia Sandu against a Russia-friendly opponent, as ongoing claims of voter fraud, electoral interference, and intimidation threaten democracy in the European Union candidate country.

In the first round held Oct. 20, Sandu obtained 42% of the ballot but failed to win an outright majority. She faces Alexandr Stoiianoglo, a former prosecutor general, who outperformed polls in the first round with almost 26% of the vote.

Polling stations will close at 9 p.m. (1900 GMT). By 2 p.m., more than 1 million people — almost 35% of eligible voters — had cast ballots, according to the Central Electoral Commission.

A poll released by research company iData indicates a tight race that leans toward a narrow Sandu victory, an outcome that might rely on Moldova's large diaspora. The presidential role carries significant powers in areas such as foreign policy and national security and has a four-year term.

Moldova's diaspora played a key role in a nationwide referendum also held on Oct. 20, when a narrow majority of 50.35% voted to secure Moldova's path toward EU membership. But the results of the ballots including Sunday's vote have been overshadowed by allegations of a major vote-buying scheme and voter intimidation.

Instead of winning the overwhelming support that Sandu had hoped, the results in both races exposed Moldova's judiciary as unable to adequately protect the democratic process.

On Sunday, Moldovan police said they have "reasonable evidence" of organized transportation of voters

— illegal under the country's electoral code — to polling stations from within the country and from overseas, and are "investigating and registering evidence in connection with air transport activities from Russia to Belarus, Azerbaijan and Turkey."

"Such measures are taken to protect the integrity of the electoral process and to ensure that every citizen's vote is cast freely without undue pressure or influence," police said.

Stanislav Secriur, the president's national security adviser, wrote Sunday on social media platform X: "We are seeing massive interference by Russia in our electoral process" which he warned had a "high potential to distort the outcome" of the vote.

"Authorities are on high alert," he wrote, adding that "additional measures are in place to ensure the smooth conduct of the electoral process."

Moldova's Prime Minister Dorin Recean said Friday that people throughout the country were receiving "anonymous death threats via phone calls" in what he called "an extreme attack" to scare voters in the former Soviet republic, which has a population of about 2.5 million people.

"These acts of intimidation have only one purpose: to create panic and fear," Recean said in a statement posted on social media. "I assure you that state institutions will ensure order and protect citizens."

After casting her ballot in Chisinau, Sandu said "today, more than ever, we must be united, keep our peace, keep our vote, keep our independence."

"Thieves want to buy our vote, thieves want to buy our country, but the power of the people is infinitely greater," she told reporters.

Outside a polling station in Romania's capital, Bucharest, 20-year-old medical student Silviana Zestreanu said the runoff

would be a "definitive step" toward Moldova's future.

"People need to understand that we have to choose a true candidate that will fulfill our expectations," she said. "Because I think even if we are a diaspora now, none of us actually wanted to leave."

In the wake of the two October votes, Moldovan law enforcement said that a vote-buying scheme was orchestrated by Ilan Shor, an exiled oligarch who lives in Russia and was convicted in absentia last year of fraud and money laundering. Shor denies any wrongdoing.

Prosecutors say \$39 million was paid to more than 130,000 recipients through an internationally sanctioned Russian bank to voters between September and October. Anticorruption authorities have conducted hundreds of searches and seized over \$2.7 million (2.5 million euros) in cash as they attempt to crack down.

In one case in Gagauzia, an autonomous part of Moldova where only 5% voted in favor of the EU, a physician was detained after allegedly coercing 25 residents of a home for older adults to vote for a candidate they did not choose. Police said they obtained "conclusive evidence," including financial transfers from the same Russian bank.

On Saturday at a church in Comrat, the capital of Gagauzia, Father Vasiliu told the Associated Press that he's urged people to go and vote because it's a "civic obligation" and that they do not name any candidates. "We use the goods the country offers us — light, gas," he said. "Whether we like what the government does or not, we must go and vote. ... The church always prays for peace."

On Thursday, prosecutors also raided a political party headquarters and said 12 people were suspected of

paying voters to select a candidate in the presidential race. A criminal case was also opened in which 40 state agency employees were suspected of taking electoral bribes.

Cristian Cantir, a Moldovan associate professor of international relations at Oakland University, told the AP that whatever the outcome of the second round, it "will not deflate" geopolitical tensions. "On the contrary, I expect geopolitical polarization to be amplified by the campaign for the 2025 legislative elections," he said.

Moldovan law enforcement needs more resources and better-trained staff working at a faster pace to tackle voter fraud, he added, to "create an environment in which anyone tempted to either buy or sell votes knows there will be clear and fast consequences."

Savina Adasan, a 21-year-old economics student in Bucharest, says she voted for Sandu and cited concerns about corruption and voters uninformed about the two candidates.

"We want a European future for our country," she said, adding that it offers "many opportunities, development for our country ... and I feel like if the other candidate wins, then it means that we are going ten steps back as a country."

A pro-Western government has been in power in Moldova since 2021, and a parliamentary election will be held in 2025. Moldova watchers warn that next year's vote could be Moscow's main target.

In the wake of Russia's invasion of Ukraine in 2022, Moldova was granted to join the EU. It was applied candidate status in June of that year, and in summer 2024, Brussels agreed to start membership negotiations.

The sharp Westward shift irked Moscow and significantly soured relations with Chisinau.

DHAKA (AFP): A Bangladeshi worker died in a air strike in Lebanon, Dhaka's foreign ministry said Sunday, as the Israeli bombardment hampered efforts to repatriate citizens.

The foreign ministry estimates that between 70,000 and 100,000 of its nationals are working in Lebanon, many as laborers or domestic workers.

The first flights, organized by Dhaka's government with the UN's International Organization for Migration, brought home scores of Bangladeshis from Beirut last month.

Mohammad Nizam, 31, was killed on Saturday afternoon in a reported strike as he stopped at a coffee shop on the way to work in Beirut, Bangladesh's ambassador to Lebanon, Javed Tanveer Khan said in a statement.

Mohammad Jalaluddin said his younger brother Nizam had lived in Beirut for more than a decade, and had not been among the estimated 1,800 Bangladeshis who had registered for an evacuation flight home.

"We want to bury him in our ancestral home, and are now waiting for the government's response," Jalaluddin told AFP.

But senior Bangladeshi foreign ministry official Shah Mohammad Tanvir Monsur said it was challenging to arrange a flight into Beirut.

"With the ongoing war, there are hardly any flights from Lebanon to Bangladesh," Monsur said.

"It's becoming increasingly difficult to repatriate our citizens who have registered to return home."

Israel drastically escalated its air campaign against Lebanon's Hezbollah group in September, displacing hundreds of thousands of people.

It has since launched a ground offensive intended to push the group back from its northern border.

Hezbollah has been firing thousands of projectiles into Israel over the last year, displacing tens of thousands of Israelis.

The war has killed at least 1,930 people in Lebanon, since it began on September 23, according to an AFP tally of health ministry figures, though the real number is likely higher due to data gaps.

Israel's military says 38 soldiers have been killed in the Lebanon campaign since it began ground operations on September 30.

Dr. Jacqueline to assume role of SG World Agriculture Forum

F.P. Report

HYDERABAD, India: Dr. Jacqueline d'Arros Hughes, outgoing Director General of the International Crops Research Institute for the Semi-Arid Tropics (ICRISAT), headquartered in Hyderabad, India, is set to take up the role of Secretary General of the World Agriculture Forum in mid-November 2024. Her extensive career, marked by ground breaking work in sustainable agriculture, equips her to steer the Forum towards its mission.

Dr. Hughes has over 30 years' experience in agricultural research for development and is highly regarded for her leadership in tackling the pressing global challenges of food insecurity, sustainable agriculture, and rural development in some of the world's most vulnerable regions.

Trained in the United Kingdom, Dr. Hughes holds a PhD from Reading University and began her career with postdoctoral work before working with national partners in Ghana. Throughout her career, Dr. Hughes has held international leadership positions in prestigious agricultural institutes across Africa and Asia, equipping her with a profound understanding of the unique challenges faced by these regions.

A distinguished plant virologist, Dr. Hughes has strong interests in remote sensing, digitalisation, and gender equity. She continues to champion the integration of modern technologies, plant quarantine best practices, and the ethical use of



intellectual property to enhance agricultural outcomes. Dr. Hughes believes in both working locally for global impact and working globally for local impact.

As Director General of ICRISAT, Dr. Hughes adeptly led the Institute through the global pandemic, achieving significant milestones despite unprecedented challenges. Under her leadership, ICRISAT was honoured with the Africa Food Prize 2021 and welcomed the Honourable Prime Minister of India, Narendra Modi, at the Institute's 50th Anniversary celebrations in 2022. Dr. Hughes further strengthened ICRISAT's influence as a leader in dryland agriculture in 2023, actively participating in the agriculture meetings of the G20 Summit held in New Delhi and serving as co-Chair of the International Steering Committee for the United Nations'

International Year of Millets.

Rudy Rabbinge, Chairman of the World Agriculture Forum, remarked: "Dr. Hughes brings to the World Agriculture Forum a wealth of experience and a commitment to agricultural innovation that is critical to achieving our mission. Her proven ability to deliver impactful results, her deep understanding of the international agricultural landscape, and her vision for sustainable intensification will strengthen the World Agriculture Forum's position as a leader and partner in addressing food and nutrition security worldwide."

As Secretary General, Dr. Hughes will focus on strengthening alliances and advancing innovative solutions in agriculture, ensuring the World Agriculture Forum is well-positioned to address the evolving needs of the sector globally. Her appointment is a testament to WAF's commitment to bringing visionary leaders on board.

WAF is a global platform connecting diverse stakeholders to drive sustainable agricultural development through policy advocacy, trade facilitation, and technology-driven solutions. WAF unites governments, farmers, agribusinesses, experts, and development institutions to bridge implementation gaps and drive food systems transformation, supporting the smallholder farmers, agro-ventures, and value chains development for a resilient, food-secure future. With a strong focus on collaboration, innovation, and public-private partnerships, WAF is committed to transforming agriculture worldwide.

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Chinese lessen dependence on US farm imports

CHINA has a trade surplus of \$33.3 billion with the United States, and the largest US export of soybeans is to China. But the Chinese have been diversifying their agricultural imports, which had started in 2018, during Donald Trump's first term as president.

There is the anticipation that a Trump win on November 5 would make China vulnerable if the US under Trump were to impose restrictions on Chinese exports, and China would have to retaliate. So, China has increased its imports of corn, soybean from Brazil, Argentina and Ukraine. China is taking precautions on the trade front. And also it is cushioning its food security.

The country to benefit most from China's shift away from the US is Brazil. While the US's soybean exports to China fell from 40 per cent in 2016 to 18 per cent in the January-September 2024 period, that of Brazil's exports rose from 46 per cent to 76 per cent in the same period.

While the Chinese feel more assured that they have another big source of soybean imports, American farmers are worried. They are not just worried by Brazil, but by the fact that other countries are producing as much as soybeans as them, and they do not have a strategic advantage. Mark Tuttle, a soybean farmer from northern Illinois, said, "We are very concerned. We are not the only soybean producer in the world. South America is producing an awful lot of soybeans. If we were to institute more tariffs that would be very detrimental to our situation."

About half the American soybean produce is exported to China. During his last term in office, Trump had to pay a compensation of \$23 billion. So, the Trump idea of increasing tariffs to garner billions which then is to be spent on American citizens seems to be a simplistic strategy to protect America from being flooded with imports.

The US and China, the first and second largest biggest economies in the world, are also rivals in trade, and sometimes because of ideology, the rivalry becomes adversarial and bitter.

Experts say that China cannot move completely away from American farm exports because it would not be possible for China to requisition the large amounts that are available only in America.

Even as Brazil has become the larger exporter of agricultural produce to China, the US, though its share has fallen, the actual value of American exports remains quite high. It also shows that China continues to import huge quantities of agricultural produce. This is reflected in the agricultural produce figures of 2021, 2022 and 2023.

In 2021, Brazil's exports were worth \$46b, and from the US it was \$41b. In 2022, the figure for Brazil was \$53b and for the US it was \$43b. And in 2023 there was a huge divergence in the figures. The US agricultural imports to China fell to \$34b while that of Brazil stood at a \$59b high.

While the figures show Brazil has gained over the US, they also reveal that agricultural imports for China are quite huge. It will not be able to move away from the imports as much as it would like to, and it would still need a substantial amount of American agricultural imports.

The Chinese are trying to boost their domestic agricultural produce with better varieties of seeds, but it is not going to be an easy task.

The world will remain interdependent in terms of trade.

America will not be able to keep out Chinese goods completely out of the country. It would need to import Chinese manufactures, even as China has to continue to buy American farm produce.

Each cannot shut the door completely on the other.

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Political protest and the university

Joseph S. Nye, Jr.

Although the war in Gaza has not ended, it has already had far-reaching effects on American universities. Following Hamas's atrocious attacks on civilians, most campuses were initially sympathetic toward Israel. But as time passed and images from the war piled up, many young people began to protest what they saw as an excessive civilian death toll in Gaza. Campuses grew deeply divided as pro-Palestinian students demanded divestment from companies working with Israel, and as pro-Israel students argued that a hostile environment was threatening their safety and pursuit of an education.

University presidents and governing boards have struggled to find the right response, and many top administrators have resigned, including at my own university, following congressional hearings on the issue this spring. According to Harvard's new president, the university will no longer issue official statements about public matters unless they directly threaten academic freedom or affect the institution's core functions of teaching and research. Is this the right answer?

The policy is new, but the problem is not. Things were even worse during the Vietnam War. While this year's tent encampments and protests over the Gaza war have often violated Harvard's long-standing statement of rights and responsibilities regarding the time, place and manner of protests, the current protests have been relatively tame compared to the 1960s.

As I recall in my memoir, "A Life in the American Century," my office in the 1960s was in the Center for International Affairs. Our building was occupied multiple times and subjected to a bombing and an attack that sent one staff member to the hospital. To quote a radical Weather Underground pamphlet that I kept from November 1969: "The people who run the CIA are hired killers. They write reports for the government on how to keep a few Americans rich and fat. Professors who help the government are pigs. Isn't there a pig you'd like to

get?" Our assailants bragged about breaking into buildings, kicking the "swine" down the stairs, and shattering windows. Today's obstructive encampments come nowhere close to this.

Violence is not the only problem. Free speech is essential to a university, and protests that respect the appropriate limits on time, place and manner should be both expected and tolerated.

The problem is that the costs to the university are much higher than the benefits gained for the cause being advocated. Far stronger political pressure groups are likely to outweigh the political impact of the divesting universities, which in turn will incur costs not only to their academic freedom and independence, but also to their internal community. As a recent report from Harvard's Institutional Voice working group argues, "because few, if any, world events can be entirely isolated from conflicting viewpoints, issuing official empathy statements runs the risk of alienating some members of the community by expressing implicit solidarity with others." Accordingly, Harvard recently rejected demands that it divest from firms with business in Israel.

ed. But protests should be conducted by individuals or groups; they should not invoke the institution.

The role of the university was already being disputed in the 1960s, and not just by students. At a dinner with a small number of faculty colleagues, I argued that our democratic societies would be poorer if academics debased their search for truth, and if universities became just another pressure group. Some of my colleagues disagreed, arguing that the institution was obliged to dissociate itself publicly from immoral government policies like the Vietnam War. In another prelude to the current moment, they pointed out that university endowments were support-

ing companies that produced war materiel.

Protesters later argued for divestment with respect to other issues, such as apartheid in South Africa, climate change, and now Israel. When economists point out that such actions have little economic effect (because someone else quickly buys the divested stock), advocates reply that what matters is the political statement of naming and

flirting viewpoints, issuing official empathy statements runs the risk of alienating some members of the community by expressing implicit solidarity with others." Accordingly, Harvard recently rejected demands that it divest from firms with business in Israel.

Self-restraint on political statements is only part of the solution. Equally important is the enforcement of existing rules. For a university administration to rely on the police is both tactically and morally problematic. This has been a point of tension on many campuses over the past year. Harvard erred in 1969 when it called in the state police (who overreacted). The enduring lesson for today is that such measures should be a last resort.

Nonetheless, if university rules governing the time, place and manner of free speech (including protest) are not enforced, the institution can no longer uphold its core purpose of teaching and research. Moreover, impunity for rule-breakers endangers reasoned exchange of opposing views and reduces discourse to a contest of who can push the hardest. If protesters reply that they are deliberately breaking the rules to dramatize their cause and amplify their message, they should remember Martin Luther King Jr.'s point that civil disobedience is morally compelling only if you are willing to pay the penalty. That is also part of education.

Of course, universities cannot be completely neutral on all political issues. But they should reserve their institutional fire for cases that have a direct and significant impact on their core functions of teaching, research and independent inquiry. In the current situation, academic freedom means that both pro-Israel and pro-Palestine voices must be heard, and that universities must stand up to browbeating by congressional committees and donors who threaten to withdraw financial support. The 1960s has a lot to teach us about the importance of protest and its limits, as well as the proper institutional role of universities. Let us hope we do better in the 2020s.

How the hunt for the cheapest air ticket turned out to be expensive

Shyam A. Krishna

I'm clever. At least, that's what I think. But my over-analyses have often backfired and cost me money. So I'm not as clever as I think.

Every time I book a flight ticket, I go through a bizarre ritual. First I check a couple of aggregator portals. Once I shortlist the flights, I double-check it on the airline's website. Then I wait for Tuesday because conventional wisdom says you get the best fares on Tuesdays, although some say that's not true.

Even that doesn't satisfy me. Maybe it's too early to book the flight; I might get a better rate after a couple of weeks, I tell myself. And I wait. When I'm ready to buy the tickets, the flight

would have been sold out, or the fares would have gone up. Strange, isn't it? Leaving Las Vegas

I berate myself for refusing to book earlier. In a few days or the following week, I'd have forgotten the episode. And the cycle repeats itself. Unbelievable! And I thought I was smart.

The biggest faux pas happened in Las Vegas recently. I had gone through the usual drill of checking Google Flights and Kayak before logging on to the Delta website. There were at least three flights on the day I was flying, and I opted for the cheapest.

The day before the flight, I didn't get the online check-in alert. I was perplexed. I checked the flight itinerary and was agast to find that my flight was a month away. In my haste to pick the cheapest fare, I had overlooked the date.

The situation was salvaged by amending the booking. But I had to part with \$150 — the price for being super smart.

How I missed the Hogwarts Express

One recent episode was my holiday in Scotland. I had been planning the trip for several months. I talked to my friends who had gone there. Factored their inputs,

and did my research.

The Glennan Viaduct, immortalised in the Harry Potter movies as the Hogwarts Express, caught my attention. The viaduct, a renowned feat of Victorian engineering and Scotland's longest concrete railway bridge, is a picturesque sight with its 21 arches.

I wanted to ride the Jacobite Steam Train. Tickets were available; there were still three months left, and I hadn't even bought the flight tickets. A month before the trip, I started booking my tickets. Alas, the train tickets were sold out. I was so crestfallen that I didn't bother to make the trip to Mallaig to see the viaduct.

How Russia may be losing influence in Middle East

Dr. Diana Galeeva

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

ics 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

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.

despite the pressure it is under through its proxies, Hamas and Hezbollah: the commitment to continued cooperation and development stands.

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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 dynam-

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 suggested a 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.

As COP29 approaches, is there still any hope of avoiding a climate catastrophe?

When the world's climate negotiators gather in Baku, Azerbaijan, on Nov. 11 for the start of the 2024 UN Climate Change Conference, COP29, they will have little to show for the previous 28 rounds of negotiations and agreements, which have failed to deliver significant results as carbon emissions continue to rise.

Emission levels are now so high, with no signs of easing, and the state of the global climate so dire that the UN's Framework Convention on Climate Change, which oversees the negotiations, issued a warning a few days ago that global warming will continue to rise sharply for many years to come.

A report by the World Meteorological Organization backed up this assertion. It found that greenhouse gases in the atmosphere reached a record high in 2023, and issued a stark warning that this means the world is bound to experience rising temperatures in the years ahead.

The organization attributed the increase in greenhouse gas levels in the atmosphere to a number of factors, including large wildfires that might have reduced the ability of forests to absorb carbon, and "stubbornly high" emissions caused by human activity. It said carbon dioxide is accumulating in the atmosphere at the fastest rate in human history, and increased by more than 10 percent in the

past two decades alone.

So stark and clear was the data that the organization needed to say little more, but its secretary-general did warn that with each passing year the world seems to be setting new records for carbon emissions despite the multitude of promises and commitments at every climate change conference for more than 20 years.

The blame for this lies at the doorsteps of those developed countries that continue to miss their own targets and commitments on emissions, and fail to honor pledges to provide much-needed financial and technical assistance to developing nations to help them keep their emissions in check. Certainly, there is some semblance of progress at each successive COP, but it is simply too little and, of course, too late to make a real difference to carbon emissions. For example, during COP28 in Dubai last year, wealthy countries said they would stump up money to help the least-developed countries but there was no timeline for when this would happens or details of where the funding would come from, in terms of contributions by individual nations.

The report said that the last time the planet experienced a comparable concentration of carbon dioxide was about 3 to 5 million years ago, when average temperatures were 2 to 3 degrees Celsius warmer and sea levels 10 to 20 meters higher.

This was just the latest reality check for the world; a report by the UN Environment Programme had already declared that we are heading for temperature rises "far above" the

Ranvir S. Nayar

goals set by the 2016 Paris Agreement unless countries start to deliver more than they have promised.

Despite this faint glimmer of hope in the UNEP's assessment if countries take decisive action, it is evident that whatever happens in Baku this month, or at subsequent gatherings, the world is now des-

in check.

Certainly, there is some semblance of progress at each successive COP, but it is simply too little and, of course, too late to make a real difference to carbon emissions. For example, during COP28 in Dubai last year, wealthy countries said they would stump up money to help the least-developed countries but there was no timeline for

nations falter on meeting commitments.

Despite the doom and gloom, one glimmer of hope might be emerging in Europe. According to estimates revealed this week, carbon emissions in the EU region have declined by 8 percent this year and by about 37 percent compared with the 1990 levels used by the EU as a reference point.

Of all rich nations, therefore, those in the EU are the only ones that have made significant progress in curbing emissions. Other countries could still follow suit but the signs of this happening do not look promising.

If climate change denier Donald Trump is elected as US president this week, we can say goodbye to any hope of salvaging the situation.

Despite this somber reality, developing nations need to take whatever proactive action they can to curb emissions to whatever extent is possible. There might not be a lot they can achieve without financial and technical support, but given the speed with which the world is hurtling toward catastrophe, every little action that can apply a brake that reduces the speed of the juggernaut is welcome.

As such, the developing world would do better to follow the example of the EU rather than the flawed approaches of the US and other rich countries to climate action.

UK Prime Minister Keir Starmer seeks reset of UK politics with big Budget statement

Andrew Hammond

Nonetheless, Starmer's team will seize on the 2025 upside in its keenness to move the economic narrative away from fiscal "black holes" to more optimistic mood music. This includes a focus on the UK's long-term growth potential into the 2030s, fueled by a fresh wave of investment to deliver on goals that go well beyond tackling crumbling national infrastructure, to such efforts as becoming a "clean energy superpower."

The fact that clean energy has become a political super-priority for Labour was highlighted at the UK Investment Summit last month. About half of the more than £50 billion in

It is relatively rare for economic events in the UK to cause big political ripples globally. However, last Wednesday's Budget could be different. Many people, not only domestically but internationally as well, were looking closely at the most important fiscal statement by a British government in a generation.

There are several reasons why the Budget is potentially era-defining, politically and economically, including the fact that, following the party's victory in the election in July, it is the first fiscal event by a Labour government since 2010, during the final days of Gordon Brown's administration.

Given the huge majority Prime Minister Keir Starmer's government enjoys in the House of Commons, Labour might well remain in office not only until the end of the current Parliament in 2028 or 2029, but possibly well into the 2030s if a second term is secured, even with a reduced majority. This means this week's Budget could shape the UK's political agenda for much longer than the typical annual Budget.

In her statement, Chancellor Rachel Reeves launched what she described as "a new era of public and private investment in hospitals, schools, transport and energy, as momentous as any in Labour's history".

What she was attempting to do here was to try to draw political comparisons with the big programs of reforms that began in 1945 under Prime Minister Clement Attlee, in 1964 under Harold Wilson, and in 1997 under Tony Blair.

In addition to welcoming additional private capital, the government therefore announced plans for a step change in public investment. This marks a shift from the plans Reeves inherited from the Conservative administration of the former prime minister, Rishi Sunak, under which public-sector net investment would have fallen from 2.4 percent of gross domestic product this year to 1.7 percent by 2028 or 2029.

The new government wants to boost this proportion significantly, as outlined in Labour's election manifesto, in which the party pledged to keep public sector net investment at a constant level as a share of GDP. This implies big additional investment commitments each year, especially if the economy grows significantly.

To facilitate this plan, Reeves is redefining the government's fiscal rules to potentially free up tens of billions of pounds of additional borrowing to fund long-term investment, while still seeking to deliver on a Labour manifesto pledge to reduce debt as a proportion of the UK economy.

Chief Secretary to the Treasury Darren Jones, who is No. 2 to Reeves in the UK finance team, has announced that a new National Infrastructure and Service Transformation Authority will try to "fix the foundations" of a creaking UK infrastructure system.

To help pay for this huge investment, a very significant net tax rise was announced on Wednesday and the financial markets are still digesting its likely

To facilitate this plan, Reeves is redefining the government's fiscal rules to potentially free up tens of billions of pounds of additional borrowing to fund long-term investment, while still seeking to deliver on a Labour manifesto pledge to reduce debt as a proportion of the UK economy. Chief Secretary to the Treasury Darren Jones, who is No. 2 to Reeves in the UK finance team, has announced that a new National Infrastructure and Service Transformation Authority will try to "fix the foundations" of a creaking UK infrastructure system. To help pay for this huge investment, a very significant net tax rise was announced on Wednesday and the financial markets are still digesting its likely impact. Certainly, tax hikes are far from unprecedented immediately following an election. However, the fiscal measures unveiled by Reeves this week amount to a tax take of about £40 billion (\$52 billion). This comfortably exceeds the £14 billion and £13 billion, in today's prices, of her predecessors, Gordon Brown and George Osborne, in their first Budgets in 1997 and 2010 respectively. Indeed, it is most comparable, in real terms, to Norman Lamont's fiscal plan in 1993, which was the biggest tax-raising Budget in half a century. In the coming years, the acid test for how many people perceive the success of the Budget will be whether it succeeds in boosting economic growth.

In the coming years, the acid test for how many people perceive the success of the Budget will be whether it succeeds in boosting economic growth. This reflects the context in which it was prepared, which dates back more than a decade and a half to the 2007/08 international financial crisis. Since then, economic growth in the UK has flat-lined compared with the era immediately before it, and many people around the world will be watching closely to see whether the country can get out of this funk.

So with the No. 1 mission of the Starmer government perhaps being its attempt to rejuvenate growth, Reeves highlighted the latest economic forecast from the independent UK Office for Budget Responsibility. This indicated a modest upside in 2025, in part because of falling interest rates, but was less optimistic about the several years immediately afterwards, which will be a cause of concern for the government.

business deals announced during this big event were energy-related.

One driver of this spurt of investment was the launch of Great British Energy, an investment body and publicly owned power-generation company that aims to ensure a massive expansion of clean energy to help enhance the UK's energy security.

Moreover, in July Labour overturned a nine-year ban by its Conservative predecessors on onshore wind-power construction. This was followed by one of the most successful auction rounds for renewables in history.

Wednesday's Budget was therefore the most important moment yet for Starmer's government. The measures that were announced will help define the next few years, and potentially beyond, of his administration as it seeks to reset the UK's political landscape by "going for growth" to try to shift the economy out of its long funk.

Given rapid rise of AI, will robots replace humans?

With the rapid rise of artificial intelligence, many people worry that their jobs — or even their very roles in society — could be replaced by AI and robots. But can AI or robots truly replace humans?

The idea of machines replacing humans has deep roots in history. Humans build machines to extend and enhance their own capabilities — from tools that can act as substitutes to human hands, to vehicles that do the job of feet, and much faster, to computers that augment human minds.

Yet machines possess many "superpowers" that humans lack. They're tireless, capable of working 24/7 while we sleep; they can process data at lightning speed, handle complex calculations effortlessly, don't have personal agendas; and work without getting sidetracked or taking breaks.

Every major technological advancement brings with itself a fresh wave of "machine replacement" anxiety, raising the fear that machines will outdo us at every turn. From the textile mills of the Industrial Revolution to today's intelligent systems, every era has raised the same fear.

So, will machines actually replace humans?

First, it's true that machines have a replacement effect. Machines have surpassed human capability in many fields. In the production sector, the replacement of humans by machines hinges on a machine's ability to effectively perform a task.

Automated equipment freed up hands, industrial robots became "super employees" on assembly

lines, and smart algorithms now make faster, more efficient decisions. Tasks once exclusive to humans are now partly or fully done by machines. This shift is happening across sectors. The jobs of factory workers, dispatchers, drivers, customer service providers are being taken over by automation because machines often match or

A common joke goes something like this: "Don't worry about being replaced by a machine — you're cheaper." It highlights the economic rationale behind automation. Replacement only makes sense when machines can reduce costs without compromising output. Machines don't need breaks or paychecks, which makes them attractive for labor-intensive industries. In such cases, for jobs that don't demand complex human capabilities, machines serve as low-cost alternatives to boost profits. But this replacement effect has limits. Human labor retains unique, hard-to-replace qualities like creativity, emotional connection and complex judgment. These traits are essential in jobs requiring innovation, flexibility, management, or decision-making. The logic of "machines replacing humans" is not only about technical advancement but also about economic optimization, driven by cost-benefit analysis. It reshapes job markets, shifting human labor from easily replaceable roles to more valuable, innovative positions.

exceed human efficiency.

On the consumer side, cashier-free stores and self-checkout services are replacing entry-level service jobs, ushering in a world of unmanned and smart services. But beyond replacement, machines are creating new job opportunities for humans. Rather than viewing machines only as competitors, we should recognize the new demands they create. In fact, each new machine

Sun Jiashan

requires skilled operators and maintenance workers, creating at least one job, even though part-time.

During the industrial automation wave, new technical roles emerged, focusing on human-machine collaboration. When large AI models were introduced, some predicted

instance, during the early assembly line era, companies only needed workers to tighten screws on some products. When machines "mastered" the "screw-tightening" skill, the need for workers in that role declined. As machines evolve, they improve their precision in specific tasks. So once human skill levels stagnate, machines with

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Fortunately, humans are more than just a collection of skills. Every individual has multifaceted qualities — hands that can work, minds that think — and can use experience productively and feel emotions. Embracing creativity, empathy, and intellectual curiosity is key to avoiding replacement. As long as we continue to develop our unique traits, machines will remain tools at our disposal, not our replacements. The real question is not whether machines will replace us, but rather, what can we uniquely achieve.

While automation may replace humans in jobs like "screw-tightening", it creates more jobs in the machine maintenance and operation sectors. Companies now require individuals with managerial and analytical skills to optimize production and workflow. Thus, machine replacement and creation effects are two sides of the same coin. A common joke goes

Let's enjoy the outdoors, responsibly

Niu Zhipei

In recent years, outdoor sports have surged in popularity across China, with first-tier and emerging first-tier cities leading market growth. According to the General Administration of Sport, the number of people participating in outdoor activity nationwide has exceeded 400 million person-times, with those born in the 1980s and 1990s as the primary driving force. Enthusiasts are fueling the market with annual spending per activity averaging between 2,000-5,000 yuan (\$281-701). However, an increase in accidents has cast a shadow over this trend, causing some to associate outdoor sports with heightened risks.

With social media and short-video platforms fueling new trends, many

beginners have taken to outdoor sports without understanding the risks involved. Inspired by influencers' picturesque hiking photos with catchy captions like "beginner-friendly" and "just need legs", they enthusiastically set out on trails.

Motivated by a "come all the way up to here" drive and the desire to share their "brave explorer" posts online, they often rush into outdoor adventures unprepared, lacking both the equipment and awareness necessary to ensure safety.

In reality, without proper risk awareness and essential skills, outdoor activities can be perilous. Beginners who ignore potential dangers could suffer from hypothermia while hiking up to high-altitude destina-

tions. Or, they could get lost in forests, be caught in a thunderstorm, or slip or fall into ravines. Tragic incidents remind us that outdoor sports are much more than a simple test of endurance and stamina. Two hikers recently lost their lives to hypothermia on the Qingling Mountains' icy summit, while some met with fatal accidents in various locations across China.

So, how can we reduce the risks of outdoor sports? The secret is to plan ahead to stay safe. First, thorough planning is essential. Before going hiking, people need to research the route's environment, and climate and seasonal conditions to choose a safe, suitable time and route, and avoid "wild" or dangerous

spots, which pose high risks or are difficult to access.

Potential adventure seekers also need to carefully read the weather forecast and be aware of the potential hazards, and work out contingency plans. Before venturing outdoors, it is important to know the trail's elevation, difficulty level, supply points and emergency stations — and always plan alternative escape routes.

Besides, adventure seekers should be well-equipped. Having the right gear is crucial for staying warm and dry in cold and wet environs. For that, hikers need to wear layered clothing to adapt to changing wind speeds and temperatures, and follow the

principle of "removing layers when warm, adding layers when cold, and changing clothes when wet". The layered clothing should include moisture-wicking inner layers, insulating mid-layers and protective outer layers.

Adventure seekers should not forget to carry hats and gloves to keep warm, put on proper footwear, and have an extra pair of shoes. For example, comfortable, non-slippery, waterproof hiking boots are ideal for treks, while bike-riders need supportive sneakers or specialized cycling shoes.

More important, it is essential to inform friends and/or family about your route and expected time of return, so they can reach

you if needed.

Packing enough food and water based on the trip's duration is absolutely necessary. For multi-day treks, hikers need to bring enough water and high-energy food items like nuts, energy bars and jerky or fresh produce, if they can. And if their activity begins in the morning, they should eat breakfast to prevent their sugar level from falling. It is also important to keep the backpack or rucksack below one-third of your body weight, and carry a first-aid kit with disinfectants, bandages and emergency blankets. It is helpful to undergo first-aid training to learn, among other things, how to tend to wounds and perform cardiopulmonary resuscitation, so you can assist your-

self as well as others in an emergency. These preparations can be lifesavers in a crisis.

Awareness and emergency skills are critical for outdoor safety. The key is to stay alert to your surroundings, and guard against natural hazards and wildlife. For high-risk activities like rock climbing or diving, people should always use specialized equipment and follow professional guidance. And it is absolutely necessary to abide by outdoor rules, stick to your group, and not indulge in risky behavior.

Adventure seekers should avoid venturing into forests or going hiking alone. Instead, they should partner with trustworthy individuals or join reputable adventure groups

that provide guidance and safety support. When choosing companions, people should prioritize those with similar skills and equipment levels, as well as a strong sense of responsibility. If joining a group, adventure seekers need to verify its credentials, reputation and service quality, and sign an agreement on roles and responsibilities.

Outdoor sports are not a reckless gamble. But with careful planning and proper precautionary measures, outdoor adventures can be exhilarating, therapeutic and refreshing, full of surprises and unforgettable memories.

Let's step outside, feel the breeze, listen to the birds, and savor the beauty of nature, but responsibly and safely.



Pakistan carpet industry seeks govt support

LAHORE (APP): Pakistan Carpet Manufacturers and Exporters Association (PCMEA) Chairman Mian Atiqur Rehman said on Sunday that increasing exports is impossible without removing unnecessary obstacles and securing government support.

Addressing a review meeting of the Association here, he said organizations like SMEDA should provide financial and technical assistance for establishing carpet production centers in rural areas to increase production. "The 41st International Exhibition, scheduled for 2025, will be designed according to new trends, for which proposals

will be solicited in advance," he added.

PCMEA Patron-in-Chief Abdul Latif Malik, Vice Chairman Riaz Ahmed, Carpet Training Institute (CTI) Chairperson Ejaz-ur-Rehman, senior leaders Usman Ashraf, Major (R) Akhtar Nazir, Saeed Khan, Shahid Hassan Sheikh, Akbar Malik, Saad-ur-Rehman, Faisal Saeed Khan, and others attended the meeting.

Mian Atiqur Rehman said, "Currently, our priority is to increase the exports of handmade carpets. However, we are not producing at the desired level, and there are several reasons for this. To retain

skilled artisans associated with this industry, we need to make it attractive, for which the government and relevant organizations must support us."

He proposed the establishment of handmade carpet production centers in rural areas to increase the number of skilled artisans and provide employment opportunities for people at their doorsteps. The government should provide land for establishing these centers; we are ready to form joint ventures.

He emphasized that handmade carpet production involves various sectors, and projects should be initiated to bring all stake-

holders under one umbrella, ensuring increased production.

Vice Chairman Riaz Ahmed said that despite their best efforts to preserve the handmade carpet industry, success is unlikely without government support.

He emphasized the need to address issues related to the Torkham Border, State Bank, and FBR to enable industry stakeholders to wholeheartedly focus on boosting exports.

Various proposals were discussed to resolve industry challenges, ensuring stakeholders can confidently increase exports with determination.

Unlock incredible offers in Dubai this winter with 'My Emirates Pass'



F.P. Report

KARACHI: Emirates has today announced the return of its popular "My Emirates Pass", allowing passengers to enjoy exclusive offers at hundreds of locations in Dubai and the UAE. Starting from 1st November 2024 to 31st March 2025, My Emirates Pass enables customers to use their boarding pass to enjoy incredible discounts at restaurants, family days out, tranquil spa treatments, luxury shopping outlets, private pools and much more.

Emirates customers flying to or through Dubai can simply show their boarding pass and a valid form of identification to unlock incredible offers to some of the world's most iconic attractions including At The Top Burj Khalifa, IMG Worlds of Adventure and

Aquaventure Waterpark. To see all My Emirates Pass offers, please visit: emirates.com/myemiratespass.

Complimentary access to cultural attractions

In addition to over 600 exclusive offers and discounts for retail, leisure, dining, renowned attractions, and luxury spas, passengers this year will also receive complimentary access to the Vision Pavilion and Expo Museum at Expo City for the season.

Dubai shopping festival 30th anniversary

This year sees the acclaimed Dubai Shopping Festival proudly celebrate its 30th anniversary, with a host of A-list performers, exclusive experiences and unforgettable entertainment lined up to mark the occasion. The festival will run from 6th December 2024 to 12th January 2025 across

the city, offering a month packed full of unmissable retail offers. While there, Emirates customers can use their boarding pass to enjoy exclusive offers at restaurants, spas, pools, family attractions and more.

Take advantage of some winter sun in Dubai

Whether it's indulging in world-famous hospitality offerings, unwinding on a sun-soaked beach or immersing yourself in the festive celebrations, Dubai offers a host of iconic experiences and attractions for every traveller.

MR - Dubai experience: Customers can browse, create and book their own customised itineraries including flights, hotel stay, visits to key attractions, and other dining and leisure experiences in Dubai and the UAE, through Emirates' Dubai Experience platform,

and enjoy even more unique benefits.

GL - Skywards partners: Members of the award-winning loyalty program, Emirates Skywards can earn Miles with our world-wide partners like hotels, airlines, car rentals, retail and banking. Members can spend these Miles on reward tickets, upgrades, or even tickets for concerts and sports events. While in Dubai, you can earn Miles with our partners across the city like Dubai Mall, Arabian Adventures, Emirates Holidays and more.

MR - Emirates holidays/vacations: Customers can book their holiday to Dubai through Emirates Holidays. All Emirates Holidays include flexible booking options. Whilst for even more peace of mind, Emirates Holidays' dedicated 24/7 On Holiday Service team will be there to support holidaymakers for every moment that they're away. When you book your holiday with Emirates Holidays, you receive bonus Miles on top of the Miles you would receive for your flight.

Emirates offers flights to more than 140 destinations around the world, across six continents and currently operates 44 flights per week from the Pakistan to Dubai.

SMEs shocked over hike in PoL prices despite cut in int'l market

F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: The All Pakistan Business Forum (APBF) has rejected the recent increase in prices of petroleum products, as despite a decline in the international market, the government has increased the prices of petrol and high-speed diesel which is unjust and unfair. The APBF appealed the government to bring down the prices of utilities to the regional competitors besides lowering interest rate which is also very high when compared to the other countries.

APBF President Syed Maaz Mahmood remarked that at a time of unsatisfactory export volumes and low industrial growth, the hike in oil products along with constant raise in electricity and gas tariffs for the industry, especially for the SMEs, was really surprising. If the decision is not withdrawn, it will prove dangerous for the country's

SME sector, he stressed.

The average prices of petrol and HSD decreased in the international market by about \$1.5 and \$2.5 per barrel, respectively, after October 15. The average price of petrol had dropped to about \$76 per barrel from about \$77.5. The price of HSD also declined to about \$84 per barrel from \$86.5 in the last fortnight.

He said that the businessmen were hoping that the prices of petroleum products would go down, but the government increased the rates to offset inventory losses incurred by oil companies after the last price revision on October, saying the massive jump in electricity base rates and petroleum products prices would make local products uncompetitive in the international market.

The APBF Chairman Ibrahim Qureshi observed the move came as a surprise as experts were hoping for

a reduction in the prices of petroleum products.

According to an official announcement last week, the price of petrol has gone up by Rs1.35 and that of diesel by Rs3.85 per litre.

Until November 15, the ex-depot petrol price will be Rs248.38 per litre, up from Rs247.03, and diesel Rs255.14 per litre, up from Rs251.29. The prices of light diesel and kerosene have been reduced by Rs2.61 and Rs1.48 per litre, respectively.

In announcement, the Ministry of Finance said the petroleum regulator, Ogra, had worked out the prices based on the variations in the international market.

However, the fact is that the government had retained a part of the increase in rates due on October 15, hoping that the following quarter would be cheaper.

However, this resulted in inventory losses to the oil

companies, which also protested against the government.

The international prices subsequently came down, but the backlog was on the higher side, forcing the government to increase the prices for the next 15 days.

During the current fortnight, the import premium on both petrol and HSD remained generally stable at \$8.7 and \$5 per barrel, respectively. The exchange rate also stood its ground.

At present, the government is charging about Rs76 per litre tax on both petrol and HSD. However, the general sales tax is zero on all petroleum products.

APBF President said that the government is charging Rs60 per litre petroleum development levy on both products that normally impact the masses. It also charges about Rs16 per litre as customs duty on petrol and HSD, irrespective of their local production or imports.



RAWALPINDI: A vendor displaying fish to attract customers at his setup in a local market.

SNGPL disconnects 125 illegal connections

F.P. Report

LAHORE: In its ongoing crackdown against gas theft, SNGPL has disconnected 125 illegal connections across Punjab, KP, and Islamabad. The company has also imposed fines amounting to Rs 3.7 million on violators.

In Lahore, 26 illegal connections were severed, along with one for compressor use, resulting in fines of Rs 1.63 million. The Gujranwala team disconnected 4 illegal connections, imposing fines of Rs 0.36 million, while in Gujrat, 1 illegal connection and 2 for compressor use were terminated.

Faisalabad saw 4 disconnections, with fines totaling Rs 0.05 million. The Sheikhupura team severed 5 connections, resulting in fines of Rs 0.67 million. In Multan, 20 connections were cut due to illegal usage, and 4 for compressor use. Sahiwal followed with 4 illegal connections and 2 for compressor use, with fines of Rs 0.04 million imposed. The Bahawalpur team disconnected 12 connections for compressor use.

In Mardan, 5 connections were disconnected with fines of Rs 0.63 million imposed. In Sargodha, 3 connections were cut, while in Rawalpindi, 2 connections were disconnected due to illegal usage. In Islamabad, 1 connection was cut off.

Peshawar and Karak saw the disconnection of 25 illegal connections, with an additional connection for compressor use, resulting in fines of Rs 0.32 million. The Abbottabad team disconnected 1 illegal connection and 2 for compressor use, imposing Rs 0.02 million in fines.

Pak Hilal food holds market potential

LAHORE (APP): Convener Federation of Pakistan Chamber of Commerce and Industry's regional standing committee on Food Shahid Imran said that Pakistani Hilal food had substantial potential in the global market, given the increasing demand for Hilal-certified products worldwide. He said with the rise in the Muslim population, especially in regions of Middle East, Southeast Asia, Europe, and North America, halal food had transformed from a niche segment to a mainstream preference.

PIAF calls for upbeat economic agenda

F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: The Pakistan Industrial and Traders Associations Front (PIAF) has stated that political uncertainty has rattled the Pakistan economy, asking the government to take proactive measures to encounter external and domestic challenges, besides stabilizing the economy.

In a statement issued here on Sunday, the PIAF Chairman Faheemur Rehman Saigol outlined a comprehensive economic agenda aimed at steering the country towards progress. He emphasized the critical need for a strategic approach to economic development, calling for concerted efforts from both the government and political parties. He observed that industry was expecting to presage easing of all political uncertainty paving the way for economic stability that all stakeholders and associated media pundits insisted would be a key factor in turning the economy around.

This in the face of ever-rising electricity rates as pledged to the International Monetary Fund in an attempt to attain full cost recovery (instead of improving the management of the sector as is required).

Faheem Saigol said that the government should be committed to transforming the economy of the country, as the process of transforming the economy is already underway in the country, acknowledging that structural reforms in every sector takes time.

He mentioned that the government will have to take joint action to combat currency smuggling and narrow the difference in dollar rates between official and open markets. It is the fact that the government has undertaken various initiatives for the betterment of the country.

The trade deficit narrowed by 3.6 per cent to \$1.3 billion, demonstrating positive progress and expressed optimism that the government's efforts would lead to an expansion in export potential and the export market.

The PIAF leader said that the government would encounter the external and domestic challenges, which are enormous but the government will have to take proactive measures to overcome them. He said that the Pakistan Credit Guarantee Company had been formed for Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs), emphasizing that the companies had to stand on their own feet and should not rely on subsidies.

He stated that a substantial change should introduce to the FBR to enhance its performance with a view to raise the economic growth of this country. He said that the economic managers should diligently work on reforms in the FBR and ensure their implementation. He praised the efforts of the caretaker government and urged consultations with the BMP in the fiscal budget-making process to facilitate the business community.

Furthermore, he called

upon political parties to announce clear and robust economic strategies. He argued that these strategies should not only focus on short-term gains but also encompass a long-term vision for sustained progress. The Chairman emphasized that such transparency from political leaders is crucial for instilling confidence in the business community and investors.

The PIAF Chairman outlined a comprehensive economic agenda aimed at steering the country towards progress. He emphasized the critical need for a strategic approach to economic development, calling for concerted efforts from both the government and political parties.

Turning his attention to the international stage, he highlighted the need for the country to actively engage with the global market. He argued that tapping into international opportunities is key to unlocking the full potential of the economy. Encouraging businesses to explore and expand their presence in the global arena, he urged policymakers in the upcoming government to create an enabling environment for international trade and investment.

He mentioned that the government will have to take joint action to combat currency smuggling and narrow the difference in dollar rates between official and open markets. It is the fact that the government has undertaken various initiatives for the betterment of the country.

Persistent load shedding crisis in Karachi

Atiya Akbar

I am writing to bring attention to the worsening situation of load shedding in Karachi, which has become an unbearable burden for residents and businesses alike. Despite being Pakistan's largest city and an economic hub, Karachi continues to suffer from chronic power outages, disrupting daily life and harming the local economy.

In many areas, power outages last for several hours a day, often without prior notice. This has had a devastating impact on households, especially during peak summer months, when the heat becomes unbearable without electricity. Small businesses are struggling to operate efficiently, with many unable to afford alternative power sources like generators. Educational institutions are also feeling the strain, with students unable to study properly, and online classes being frequently interrupted. The healthcare sector, already stretched

thin, faces even greater challenges when hospitals and clinics are deprived of electricity for extended periods.

The situation is further exacerbated by the inconsistent communication from power distribution companies, which leaves citizens in the dark about the reasons for the outages and any plans for improvement. It is clear that the city's power infrastructure needs urgent upgrading and that there must be a concerted effort to invest in sustainable energy solutions to reduce dependency on the grid.

As Karachi continues to grow, it is unacceptable that the city's power supply remains so unreliable. I urge the authorities and the relevant power distribution companies to take immediate action to mitigate the effects of load shedding, improve communication with the public, and invest in long-term solutions to meet the energy demands of this dynamic and vibrant city.

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BMP wants solid, serious reforms for long-term economic stability

F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: The Federation of Pakistan Chambers of Commerce and Industry (FPCCI) Businessmen Panel (BMP) on Sunday placed significant responsibility on the government to pursue reforms for long-term stability, as with continuous hike in cost of production in the country, what the Pakistan's economy really needs is persistent and sound economic management.

The FPCCI former president and BMP Chairman Mian Anjum Nisar said asked the authorities for undertaking economic reforms and improving the regulatory environment for better Ease of Doing Business level to boost for-

eign investment so that financial stability can be achieved in the long-run, warning the government that extensive borrowing is unlikely to put the country's economy back on track. He said that Pakistan's industry had been harmed by the high cost of doing business, which discouraged investment in capacity and capability and called for easing the burden of heavy taxes on the power sector.

Mian Anjum Nisar stated that the constant increase in power tariffs on the pretext of fuel adjustment had increased electricity prices and added to the already high cost of trade and industry. Seeking comparable energy tariffs for domestic industries in order to capture the global mar-

ket, he stated that due to high electricity rates, power theft became rampant as the tariff was unaffordable to consumers.

Pakistan had reached agreement with the IMF for the 37-month loan, the 25th since 1958. The government has hailed the decision, insisting that the government was committed to implementing reforms demanded by the deal. He said he also hoped that this would be Pakistan's last IMF program. Economic analysts said that while Pakistan has stabilised after a prolonged period of volatility, much work needs to be done. The agreement, in the short term, will create space for the government, but if the medium-term outlook is to improve, then the

government needs to pursue structural reforms that create both fiscal space for Islamabad and assuage concerns about debt sustainability, they said.

Pakistan's debt, which poses the biggest strain on its \$350 billion economy, requires \$90 billion in repayments over the next three years, with the next major tranche due in December. Foreign reserves with the central bank currently stand at \$16 billion, sufficient to cover just over three months of imports. The senior economists said that the loan primarily aims to ease Pakistan's debt repayments. While much needed, a program built around rollovers, expensive borrowing from commercial banks to

fill in financing gaps is hardly to bring any sustainable solutions to Pakistan's economic and financial challenges, they added.

Pakistan is the IMF's fifth-largest debt-or, owing more than \$7 billion as of September 25, according to the lender's data, after Argentina, Egypt, Ukraine and Ecuador. Analysts say one challenge before Pakistan will be to build a broad political consensus around the reforms needed under the IMF deal, including taxes, raising energy tariffs and allowing market forces to determine the Pakistani rupee's value. Political stability will define the fate of the program and the economy. Implementation of the reforms agenda outlined in this program,

such as no subsidies from provinces, taxes on the ag-riculture sector, privatization a very high level of commitment from different political parties ruling in respective provinces, they said. Without addressing fundamental dysfunctions, the country will almost certainly falter. Long-term possibilities are immense, but they remain untapped, they said, referring to the political schisms in the country and the risks they pose to a unified approach towards reforms.

He urged the power ministry to identify system constraints and communicate targets to all concerned departments in order to launch a wartime effort to upgrade the transmission system. He urged the com-

pletion of all ongoing power projects well ahead of schedule. He stated that business-friendly policies must be adopted, similar to those adopted by other neighboring countries in the region. He suggested that the amount specified in trade policy be used to promote exports by providing incentives to trade and industry and by exploring new markets. According to him, Pakistan's electricity prices were already on the high side, which was the primary reason for the country's price hikes. He stated that providing affordable electricity would assist in lowering production costs, thereby benefiting the public. He stated that rising imports and a widening trade deficit

posed a serious threat to economic growth and must be addressed urgently.

He accused all previous governments for extensive borrowing of forex during last five years to meet local expenditure, which had increased the burden of foreign debt of Pakistan substantially, instead of making serious efforts to enhance the ranking of Ease of Doing Business Index of Pakistan, as it is must to attract for-eign as well as local investment and high economic growth. BMP chief stressed the need for reducing cost of doing business, besides evolving a new price control mechanism, as huge taxation, rising oil prices and constant jump in electricity and gas tariffs have lifted the inflation.



In brief

Sri Lanka defeat Pakistan

HONG KONG (Web Desk): Sri Lanka Sunday defeated Pakistan by three wickets claiming their victory over the Hong Kong Super Sixes 2024 title. The Green shirts were outclassed as The Lions chased a modest 73-run target with a loss of just three wickets and six balls. Openers Sandun Weerakkody and Dhananjaya Lakshan gave the team a decent start, recording a 39-run partnership. Skipper Faheem Ashraf drew the much-needed breakthrough for Pakistan in the fourth over by dismissing set batter Weerakkody, who top-scored with a 13-ball 34. Pakistan then struck twice in quick succession and had reduced Sri Lanka to 59/3 in 4.2 overs but Tharindu Rathnayake played a gutsy 16-run knock under pressure and took his side over the line in the penultimate over. For Pakistan, Hussain Talat and Faheem could pick up a wicket apiece. Sri Lanka captain Lihuru Madhusanka's decision to bowl first bore fruits as his bowlers bundled out Pakistan on a modest total despite Muhammad Akhlaq's quickfire knock up the order.

Umaira, Riaz win marathon race

B A H A W A L P U R (APP): Ms. Umaira Sheraz and Muhammad Riaz have won the first position in marathon race in women and men categories, respectively which was held at Defense Housing Authority township. The DHA organised the race for women and men, which was participated by a total of 460 people, including 165 women and 216 men. The winners were awarded shields and prizes. A ceremony in this regard was also held at DHA Bahawalpur that was attended by Vice Chancellor Sadiq Chagge Women University Bahawalpur, Prof-Dr. Shazia Anjum, Project Director DHA Brig. Naveed Iqbal, Brig (retd) Alamdar Hussain Shah, Deputy Director Colleges Tasleem Aalam, DEO (Education), Chaudhry Akram and other officials.

Bagnaia wins MotoGP race

SEPANG (AFP): Francesco Bagnaia won a thrilling Malaysia MotoGP on Sunday after a ding-dong battle with championship leader Jorge Martin to take the pair's title battle to the final weekend of the season. Spaniard Martin's lead was cut to 24 points after he finished second behind the Italian defending champion Bagnaia in a race that had to be restarted, with a maximum of 37 points remaining to be won in the final round in a fortnight's time. Enea Bastianini was a distant third to complete the podium behind the dominant front two, who battled wheel-to-wheel for the first four laps before Bagnaia was able to open a gap which he held till the chequered flag. "Honestly, Jorge was very aggressive," said Ducati rider Bagnaia after the lead was exchanged on multiple occasions in the opening skirmishes. "But our pace was too good, and like always in the race, on Sunday, I can attack." Pramac's Martin had extended his championship lead from 17 to 29 points after he won Saturday's sprint and Bagnaia crashed his Ducati. Bagnaia admitted his sprint race form had not been good enough this year after taking his 10th grand prix win of 2024.

Ahmad Zafar lifts CNS Amateur Golf Cup trophy

E.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: Ahmad Zafar Hayat won the title of the 17th Chief of the Naval Staff Amateur Golf Cup 2024, whereas Irtaza Hussain was declared the winner of Net Category. While Mr. Alam Afzal, Miss Humna Amjad and Master Abdullah Khan won the titles in the Senior, Ladies, and Junior categories, respectively. Chief of the Naval Staff Admiral Naveed Ashraf graced the prize distribution ceremony as the Chief Guest. While addressing the ceremony, the Chief of the Naval Staff con-

gratulated the prize winners on their well-earned success, appreciated their skills and dexterity, and commended the high standard of golf displayed by all participants throughout the event.

He also lauded the consistent and generous support from sponsors, the media, and the management of Margalla Greens Golf Club (MGGC); without whom, the event would not have been such a resounding success.

The four-day-long Golf Cup was held from 31st October to 3rd November at the scenic Margalla Greens Golf Club (MGGC)

in Islamabad. Around 300 golfers from across Pakistan participated in various categories, including Amateurs, Seniors, Ladies, and Juniors.

The Golf Cup has been part of the National Golf Circuit since 2007 and is considered one of the finest competitions. It symbolizes the Pakistan Navy's steadfast commitment to promoting sports.

The closing and prize distribution ceremony was attended by various dignitaries, including officers, organizers, sponsors, golfers, and members of the media fraternity.



ISLAMABAD: Chief of the Naval Staff Admiral Naveed Ashraf giving away trophy to Ahmed zafar hayat winner of 17th CNS Amateur Golf Cup 2024.

Team BN clinches Islamabad Club Open C'ship title

ISLAMABAD (APP): Team BN secured a convincing 8-3 victory over Team HN in the 5th Islamabad Club Open Championship final, held here at the Islamabad Club Polo Ground on Sunday.

Team BN's Muhammad Ali and Babar Naseem scored three goals each, while Ibrahim Khalil added two. For Team HN, Haider Naseem, Saqib Khakwani, and Taimur Nadeem scored one goal, each.

Muhammad Ali, who scored three goals, expressed his delight, saying, "I'm thrilled to have played in the Islamabad Club Open Championship

and scoring three goals in the final."

He also praised teammate Ramiro Zaveleta's exceptional skills. Ali revealed his next destination, the Serena Cup. "I'm looking forward to competing in the Serena Cup," he said.

Meanwhile, Saqib Khakwani of Team HN commended the Islamabad Club's organization of the championship. "The championship has been exceptionally well-organized, with international referee and professional players, making it highly competitive."

Khakwani emphasized, "Polo is Pakistan's her-

itage sport, and it's heartening to see healthy tournaments thriving. The Islamabad Club Open Championship has concluded on a high note, showcasing Pakistan's passion for polo," he said.

The winning and runner-up teams, along with outstanding players, received trophies at the closing ceremony of the championship. Ambassador of the Argentine Republic in Pakistan Sebastian Sayus, graced the occasion as the chief guest while Ambassadors of Bulgaria and Austria, dignitaries, and officials also attended the event.

Asjad Iqbal victorious in IBSF World Snooker C'ship

ISLAMABAD (APP): Pakistan's Asjad Iqbal earned victory in the IBSF World Snooker Championship 2024, at Doha, Qatar by beating Milad Fathpour Kashani of Iran.

According to details, Asjad defeated Milad Fathpour Kashani by 4-2 (61-05, 97-09, 48-78(51), 74-02, 40-73, 51-24).

Meanwhile in other matches, Yongjun Park of South Korea outplayed Pakistan's Awaiz Muneer by 4-0 (76-26, 0-102, 85-16, 73-15); Tirdad Azadipour of Iran downed Pakistan's Muhammad Naseem Akhtar (Pak) by 4-3 (60-63, 17-91(90), 88-05, 81-0, 66(52)-09, 38-68, 66-46) and Harvey Chandler of England sealed victory over Pakistan's Muhammad Asif by 4-3 (27-109(71), 0-109(109), 76-22, 37-85(64), 109(74)-28, 111(51)-0). However all four Pakistani players have one match more.

Pakistan AFL women's team trials held

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Pakistan AFL Women's team trials for the Australian Football League (AFL) Asia Cup were held here at the Star Cricket Ground, G-9 on Sunday.

Pakistan's men's and women's teams will participate in the AFL Asia Cup to be held in Vietnam from December 6 to 8. Teams from 16 countries including Pakistan and India will participate in the AFL Asia Cup.

A total of 60 female players from across the country featured for the Pakistan AFL team trials out of which 24 women players were selected for the training camp of the national team. Pakistan Women's AFL team's training camp will begin next week in Islamabad. Pakistan AFL Secretary General

Chaudhry Zulfiqar, Director Women Irfan Khan and Chief Selector Abid Hussain and other officials monitored the trials.

Naqvi for early completion of work on Gaddafi Stadium

LAHORE (INP): PCB Chairman Mohsin Naqvi inspected the ongoing upgradation work at Gaddafi Stadium, Lahore, where nearly 50% of the project is complete.

During his visit, Chairman Naqvi observed accelerated progress in enclosure renovations and main building flooring, with the work on floors nearing completion.

Chairman Naqvi held a

meeting at the FWO camp office, where he reviewed project designs and assessed the progress presented by the FWO Project Director.

Mohsin Naqvi instructed officials to ensure spacious parking and enhance the stadium's external outlook.

The PCB chairman emphasized the importance of completing the renovations by the

Champions Trophy, adding that Gaddafi Stadium is being transformed to meet international standards with improved facilities for players and spectators.

PCB officials including the director of infrastructure, director of domestic, senior general manager of infrastructure, and officials from FWO and NES-PAK were also present in the meeting.

Pakistan pick pace-dominated XI to rattle Australia in first ODI

ISLAMABAD (Monitoring Desk): Pakistan will head into the first ODI against Australia on Monday with fiery fast bowlers Shaheen Shah Afridi, Naseem Shah, Haris Rauf and Mohammad Hasnain featuring in the playing XI squad, the Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB) said.

Pakistan's new white-ball skipper Mohammad Rizwan will lead his side for the first time since assuming captaincy this month at Melbourne against Australia on Monday.

The South Asian country is scheduled to play three ODIs on Nov. 4, 8 and 10 in Melbourne, Adelaide and Perth, respectively before taking on Australia in a three-match T20I series on Nov. 14, 16 and 18.

"The men's national selection committee has confirmed Pakistan's playing XI for the first ODI against Australia," the PCB said in a statement.

Rauf and Hasnain have both had ample experience playing on Australian pitches for the Big Bash League (BBL). Both bowlers have the ability to bowl above 150 kmph and bamboozle batters through sheer pace.

Australian pitches favor pace and bounce, serving as ideal hunting grounds for pacers from Australia, South Africa, Pakistan and the West Indies in the past.

Afridi and Shah, Pakistan's experienced pace bowlers, will return to the squad after they were dropped from the Test squad after England drubbed Pakistan in the first Test in Multan last month.

Former Pakistan captain Babar Azam and Kamran Ghulam have both been included in the squad while the green shirts will rely on openers Abdullah Shafique and Saim Ayub to deliver the goods with the bat against Australia.

Playing XI: Abdullah Shafique, Saim Ayub, Babar Azam, Mohammad Rizwan (captain), Kamran Ghulam, Salman Ali Agha (vice-captain), Muhammad Irfan Khan, Shaheen Shah Afridi, Naseem Shah, Haris Rauf, Mohammad Hasnain.

Zverev outclasses Humbert to win Paris Masters

PARIS (AFP): Germany's Alexander Zverev won the Paris Masters on Sunday by defeating home hope Ugo Humbert 6-2, 6-2 in a dominant display by the new world number two.

Zverev, 27, now boasts seven ATP 1000-level titles over the course of his career, following two wins in Rome and Madrid, as well as victories in Montreal and Cincinnati.

It was a happy return to Paris for Zverev, after he lost the French Open final in five sets to Carlos Alcaraz in June. Four years ago he lost the 2020 Paris Masters championship match to Daniil Medvedev.

"I knew I had to play like this to win today," said Zverev, who opened his victory speech by apologising to the crowd at Paris' Bercy Arena.

"I want to congratulate Ugo on an incredible week, (he's an) incredible player. If you continue like this, you'll be able to lift trophies like this. This is not your last chance, Ugo."

Zverev's victory in Saturday's semi-final meant the current world number three will overtake Spain's Alcaraz in the new updated rankings.

The German will next play the ATP Finals in Turin from November 10-17, where he will seek to emulate his past successes in 2018 and 2021 at the season-ending showpiece.

Zverev will head into the event as the player with the most wins this year as Sunday's victory in the French capital was his 66th in 2024, taking him one ahead of world number one Jannik Sinner.

For 26-year-old Humbert it was a chastening experience at the end of a week that will live long in his memory as he reached his career-first Masters final on home soil.

The world number 18 stunned four-time Grand Slam winner Alcaraz in the last 16 as he delighted the vocal home crowds on his way to becoming the first French finalist at the indoor event in 13 years.

"I want to congratulate Sascha (Zverev) for the quality of the tennis he has played all this week, and season," said Humbert.

"I came as a kid to watch matches here (at the Paris Masters) and it made me want to do what I do, so I'm very happy to have reached the final."

Ajaz stars as New Zealand beat India 3-0 in historic Test sweep

MUMBAI (AFP): New Zealand spinner Ajaz Patel took six wickets as his side sealed a historic 3-0 Test sweep in India with a thrilling 25-run win in the third Test on Sunday.

Chasing 147 for victory, India were bowled out for 121 in 29.1 overs on day three, after Rishabh Pant hit a valiant 64 at Mumbai's Wankhede Stadium.

Ajaz roared in delight as he bowled Washington Sundar to take the final wicket and the Black Caps celebrated a first Test series win on Indian soil in style.

It was the first time India had been swept in a Test series at home since South Africa's 2-0 win in 1999-2000 and the first time they were beaten 3-0 at home. "This will be a very low point in my career, having lost three games at home," India skipper Rohit Sharma told reporters.

"I fully take responsibility for that. As a leader, I have not been at the best of my abilities right from the start of the series. "With the bat as well, I have not been good enough." New Zealand did the unthinkable under new captain Tom Latham, and in the absence of senior batsman Kane Williamson, who was recovering

from a groin injury back home.

The Black Caps turned around their fortunes from a 2-0 whitewash in Sri Lanka, and made India suffer their first Test series loss at home in 12 years.

"Very ecstatic," said Latham. "Looking back at the start of the series, to now be in this position, the boys have done a fantastic job over the last three Test matches."

Mumbai-born New Zealander Ajaz ended with a match-haul of 11 wickets at a venue where he created history by claiming all 10 wickets in a Test innings in 2021.

In a tricky chase on a turning pitch, New Zealand reduced India to 29-5, before the left-hander Pant made counter-attacked with his half-century.

Pant controversy Ajaz, after lunch, had Pant caught by wicketkeeper Tom Blundell, a decision denied by the on-field umpire but successfully reviewed by New Zealand. An unconvinced Pant trudged back.

"If we say something, it will not go down well. If the decision is not conclusive then the decision has to stand with what the on-field umpire calls," said Rohit.

"I don't know how that decision was overturned." Glenn



Phillips then got two in two balls and Ajaz wrapped up the innings to be named player of the match.

India bowled out New Zealand quickly for 174 in the first session, with Ravindra Jadeja taking five wickets on a turning wicket for 10 in the match. But the New Zealand bowlers led by Ajaz ripped into India's top order.

Fast bowler Matt Henry dis-

missed Rohit Sharma in the third over, getting the captain to mis-hit to Phillips at midwicket for 11. He extended his poor run with the bat in the series with scores of 2, 52, 0, 8 and 18 in his previous five innings.

Ajaz bowled Shubman Gill and then had Virat Kohli, on one, caught by Daryl Mitchell at slip to silence the home crowd.

Kohli has also struggled in the series, with just one half-century and four single-digit scores in the series. Pant put on 42 runs for the sixth wicket to revive the chase, but Ajaz struck again to remove Jadeja for six.

Will Young's 71 and 51 in the two New Zealand innings proved key and he was named player of the series for amassing 244 runs.



In brief

Accused arrested

RAWALPINDI (APP): Police have arrested a man involved in killing his cousin over old enmity, informed a police spokesman. The suspect, identified as Akhtar Munir, with the help of accomplices allegedly killed Sher Khan, cut his throat with a knife and then dumped the body in his home. After committing crime, the suspects fled away from the scene. The incident, which occurred last year, was reported to the police by the victim's brother. Since then, the police had been searching for Munir, a proclaimed offender, using various methods, including human intelligence. The search for his accomplices is still ongoing. SP Saddam Muhammad Nabil Khokhar commended Jatl police team for their swift action emphasized that police will continue crack-down against such elements involved in heinous crimes.

4 booked for violating law

RAWALPINDI (APP): The Rawalpindi Police on Sunday carried out a door-to-door search operation in the limits of R.A bazaar Police Station and arrested four persons for violating the tenancy law. According to a police spokesman, the personnel of the Elite Force and Special Branch along with the lady police took part in the operation, searched houses and collected the data of tenants. The accused were identified Amir, Sultan Muhammad, Kamran and Haseeb were apprehended and booked under the Punjab Information of Temporary Residence Ordinance 2015. The search operation was conducted on the directives of City Police Officer (CPO) Khalid Mehmood Hamdani.

10 outlaws arrested

ISLAMABAD (APP): Islamabad Capital Territory (ICT) Police apprehended 10 outlaws involved in different criminal activities including selling drugs and possessing illegal weapons recovered a huge cache of drugs and weapons with ammunition from their possession. A public relations officer told APP that the Islamabad Police Shams Colony, Noon, Phulgran and Nilore police station teams took legal action against the accused involved in selling drugs and possessing illegal weapons. He said the police team also arrested four accused namely Muhammad Irfan, Hamza Khan, Wahab Ali and Allah Ditta and recovered four 30 bore pistols with ammunition from their possession. Similarly, the Lohi Bher and Sabzi Mandi police station team arrested two accused namely Atta Ullah and Rizwan Ullah and recovered 1200 gram heroin and 65 gram Ice 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 Islamabad 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 and emergency helpline "Pukar-15" to help make the city crime-free through cooperation between the police and the public.



ISLAMABAD: Children are enjoying on swing in a local park in the Federal Capital. —APP Photo

PTI's actions will lead to disappointment, says Rana Afzal

ISLAMABAD (APP): Coordinator to the Prime Minister Rana Ihsan Afzal Khan issued a stern warning to Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) on Sunday, stating that their actions would ultimately lead to disappointment.

In a recent interview with a private news channel, he strongly criticized PTI's political tactics, adding, "PTI's primary focus has been gaining their personal interests rather than serving the people."

He pointed out, "Under the leadership of Prime Minister Shahbaz Sharif, the country is making progress and any attempts to disrupt stability will not be tolerated."

Responding a query regarding to constitutional bench, he said, "The

government will accept any decision made by the Constitution bench regarding judge selection, without exerting influence."

Ihsan Afzal also emphasized the importance of unity and maturity in the face of opposition, urging all parties to work together for the country's progress and respect state institutions.

DIG Raza for strict action against criminal elements

ISLAMABAD (APP): Deputy Inspector General of Police (DIG) Islamabad Syed Ali Raza, presided over an important meeting at Safe City on Sunday.

A public relations officer told APP that the meeting was attended by SSP Operations, zonal SPs, SDPOs, SHO's and other senior police officers.

During the meeting, DIG Ali Raza reviewed the overall security and crime situation in the federal capital and issued directives to all senior police officers for strict action against criminal elements.

DIG Raza directed the Dolphin and Ababeel squad officials to enhance their checking in different areas of the city. DIG emphasized increasing checks at the city's entry and exit points and ensuring effective monitoring through Safe City surveillance cameras.

He instructed all officers to be present in their respective areas and to monitor all duties closely. During checking, they should inspect suspicious individuals, vehicles, and motorcycles and ensure proper registration of their details.

DIG Raza further stated that if a serious incident occurs in any area, strict action will be taken against the relevant officers. He urged all officers to engage with their subordinate staff and listen to their issues, emphasizing that high morale among officers and personnel would lead to the dedicated performance of their duties.

DHO appeals to vaccinate children against polio

ISLAMABAD (APP): The District Health Officer (DHO) Rawalpindi has issued an urgent appeal to parents to vaccinate their children against polio, a crucial step towards eradicating this debilitating disease and called on all stakeholders to join forces in the fight against polio.

Talking to a private news channel, Chief Executive Officer of District Health Authority Rawalpindi Dr. Asif Arbab Khan Niazi said to achieve our target goal, health officials will deploy vaccination teams at bus stops and other high-traffic areas to administer polio drops to children traveling from Kashmir and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa.

By targeting these key locations, the District Health Authority hopes to minimize the risk of transmission and protect Pakistan's progress in reducing polio cases, he added.

He announced the expansion of the Polio program's scope to combat the spread of the virus. He also emphasized that protecting children from this crippling disease requires a collective effort, where every parent plays a vital role.

He further pledged that field teams will not only meet their vaccination targets but also work diligently to reduce refusal rates among parents. By minimizing refusals and maximizing vaccinations, Pakistan can move closer to eradicating polio, he added. CEO of District Health Authority Rawalpindi has reaffirmed his commitment to eradicating polio by ensuring that all children under five.

Naqvi reiterates to protecting journalists

ISLAMABAD (PPI) Federal Interior Minister Mohsin Naqvi issued a special message on the International Day to End Impunity for Crimes Against Journalists.

According to PID information on Sunday, he said that a favorable and secure environment is crucial for journalists to perform their duties.

He said that journalists have a heavy responsibility to inform the public with authentic information.

Mohsin Naqvi emphasized that journalists should clearly distinguish between truth and falsehood and focus on responsible journalism, advancing Pakistan's agenda rather than anyone else's.

He lamented that journalism has become entangled in a whirlpool where

the distinction between truth and falsehood has almost disappeared. He highlighted that a mafia, both inside and outside the field, is actively perpetrating crimes against the journalistic community, exerting influence.

The Interior Minister said that there is a long list of crimes against journalists, and it is essential for all segments of society, along with governments, to play their part in preventing these crimes.

He expressed solidarity with journalists who have become victims of crimes, reiterating the commitment to take all necessary measures to prevent crimes against journalists.

Mohsin Naqvi said that today, we reaffirm our commitment to taking all

necessary measures to prevent crimes against journalists.

Tarar grieved over demise of senior journalist's wife

ISLAMABAD (APP): Federal Minister for Information, Broadcasting, National Heritage and Culture on Sunday expressed deep grief over demise of the wife of senior journalist Altaf Hussain Qureshi. The minister, in a condolence message, prayed to the Almighty to rest the departed soul in eternal peace and grant courage to the bereaved family to bear the irreparable loss with fortitude.

Islamabad Police elevate officers to higher ranks

ISLAMABAD (APP): Approved by the Inspector General of Police (IGP) Ali Nasir Rizvi, the Islamabad Capital Territory (ICT) police have announced the promotion of a total of 240 officers to higher positions following a recent meeting of the Departmental Promotion Committee (DPC) chaired by Deputy Inspector General of Police (DIG) Dr Syed Mustafa Tanveer.

The promotions were made consequent upon the recommendations of the DPC in its meeting held at the Central Police Office. A public relations officer told APP that the promotion board convened to address vacancies for the ranks of Head Constable, Assistant Sub-Inspector (ASI), Sub-Inspector, and Inspector.

The board recommended the following promotions based on exemplary service records and overall satisfactory performance:

20 Sub-Inspectors (BS-14) promoted to the rank of Inspector (BS-16).

55 Assistant Sub-Inspectors (BS-11) promoted to the rank of Sub-Inspector (BS-14).

65 Head Constables (BS-09) promoted to the rank of Assistant Sub-Inspector (BS-11).

2 Inspectors (BS-16) promoted to the rank of Deputy Superintendent of Police (BS-17).

Additionally, under the leadership of AIG Logistics Muhammad Shoaib, a separate board recommended the promotion of 98 Constables to the rank of Head Constable. All pro-

motion notifications have been issued promptly.

IGP Rizvi had previously instructed that all vacancies be filled as quickly as possible.

"Promotion is a fundamental right for every officer," IGP Rizvi stated.

The officers promoted to the rank of Deputy Superintendent of Police (BS-17) include:

Muhammad Sarfraz, Inspector, promoted to Deputy Superintendent of Police.

Muhammad Yasin Taggar, Inspector, promoted to Superintendent of Police.

These promotions take immediate effect, with the promoted officers remaining on probation for a year unless extended under applicable regulations.

HEC awards 200 scholarships to SI students

ISLAMABAD/COLOMBO (APP): Higher Education Commission (HEC), Pakistan has awarded 200 fully and partially funded scholarships to the 6th batch of Sri Lankan students under the Allama Muhammad Iqbal Scholarship Programme.

Around 500 Sri Lankan students, apart from these awardees, are already pursuing their undergraduate, MS and PhD studies in leading universities in Pakistan.

In this connection, HEC in collaboration with the Pakistan High Commission, Colombo held a ceremony for the newly selected students in Colombo.

General Shavendra Silva, Chief of Defense Staff was the chief guest. High Commissioner of Pakistan

to Sri Lanka Maj. Gen. (R) Faheem Ul Aziz also graced the occasion, said a press release received here.

Speaking on behalf of the Chairman HEC, the Project Director, Pakistan Sri Lanka Higher Education Cooperation Programme, Jehanzeb Khan congratulated the Sri Lankan students and briefed the participants about various aspects of the scholarship programme.

He highlighted the importance of education in bringing regional economic stability and enhancing collaboration between the two friendly countries.

In his remarks, the High Commissioner said that awarding these scholarships to Sri Lankan students is yet another testa-

ment to the excellent brotherly relations between Pakistan and Sri Lanka. He urged the students to embrace this opportunity with determination and resilience.

"As you pursue your studies, remember that you are ambassadors of your country and culture. Engage with your peers, share your experiences, and be a bridge between our two nations. The knowledge and understanding you gain will be invaluable as we work together to address the challenges we face in the ever-changing world."

The ceremony was attended by prominent personalities from various walks of life including businessmen, academicians, parents of the awardee students, and government officials.

CTP issues 66,482 challan tickets in Oct

RAWALPINDI (APP): City Traffic Police (CTP) Rawalpindi, while taking action in accordance with the law against traffic rules violators, issued 66,482 challan tickets in October, said a CTP spokesman.

He informed me that CTP also provided driving licenses and related facilities to over 148,000 citizens during last month.

CTP on the vision of Chief Minister of Punjab Maryam Nawaz and the special instructions of Chief Traffic Officer (CTO) of Rawalpindi Beenish Fatima, working hard to enforce the traffic rules. Strict action was taken against those who violated the traffic rules, he said.

CTP issued 858 challan tickets for no parking and 2177 challan tickets for traffic signal violations. 1074 challan tickets were issued for one-way violations and 4268 challan tickets for line violations. 12,659 challan tickets were issued in the crackdown against unlicensed drivers, he informed.

CTP also took action

against smoke-emitting vehicles and issued 1929 challan tickets. In October, traffic police also penalized 1716 drivers for underage driving. 1782 challan tickets were issued to public transport vehicles checked without fitness certificates, the spokesman said, adding that 2518 vehicles were challaned for not having route permits. 6932 bikers were fined for riding motorcycles without helmets.

The CTO informed that CTP was making efforts to make Rawalpindi city accident-free. Actions were taken against underage driving. Drivers without licenses and those not wearing helmets and more strict actions would be taken against the rule violators, she added.

She urged the citizens to use seat belts and safety helmets while driving. No person would be allowed to violate the law, she added.

Traffic wardens had been directed to make all-out efforts to prevent road accidents and improve traffic flow in Rawalpindi district, she said.

IRSA releases 115,400 cusecs water

ISLAMABAD (APP): Indus River System Authority (IRSA) on Sunday released 115,400 cusecs water from various rim stations with inflow of 59,700 cusecs.

According to the data released by IRSA, water level in River Indus at Tarbela Dam was 1526.46 feet and was 128.46 feet higher than its dead level of 1,398 feet. Water inflow and outflow in the dam was recorded as 31,400 cusecs and 55,000 cusecs respectively. The water level in River Jhelum at Mangla Dam was 1184.30 feet, which was 134.30 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 65,700, 43,200, 36,500 and 5,500 cusecs respectively. Similarly, from River Kabul, a total of 11,900 cusecs of water released at Nowshera and 3,900 cusecs released from River Chenab at Marala.



ISLAMABAD: Worker busy repairing security cameras in Federal Capital. —APP Photo

IEA making progress

KABUL (Ariana News): Plans to construct a total of 355 water reservoirs across the country are being implemented. According to the statement, of the 355 dams, a number of them have already been completed and inaugurated while others are under construction. Of these reservoirs, 138 are being constructed by the Ministry of Agriculture, Irrigation, and Livestock; 117 by the Ministry of Water and Energy; and 100 by the Ministry of Rural Rehabilitation and Development.

Gas company fire kills two

KABUL (Anu TV): A fire at a gas company in Kabul's Paghman District on late Saturday, killed two people and injured 107 others, according to a statement from the Taliban-controlled National Disaster Management Authority. The agency reported that 81 of those injured sustained minor wounds. Preliminary estimates indicate that the fire caused over \$1.2 million in financial losses to local businesses, merchants, and the gas company involved.

The Frontier Post

AFGHANISTAN

Monday, November 04, 2024

Victims urge govt to help rebuild homes

KUNAR (TOLOnews): Flood victims from last month in Kunar province are calling on the interim government to help rebuild their homes.

They say that although they initially received some assistance, they are still facing serious challenges due to the lack of shelter.

Abdullah Jan, a resident of Lamatak area in Narang district, who was cleaning his home, said that a month ago the floods caused him great losses, and now he is struggling due to the absence of shelter.

Abdullah Jan told TOLOnews, "When I saw the flood coming, I quickly closed the door. Everything inside was ruined. Two

houses were destroyed, and the walls of three other houses were damaged."

Ghulam Nabi, another flood victim, said: "Our house has been destroyed, and the flood took our livestock. We have nothing left for shelter."

According to the residents, recent floods in Kunar have not only destroyed homes but have also damaged hundreds of acres of farmland.

Izzatullah, another flood victim, said, "We request the authorities to provide us with shelter."

Farid, also a flood victim, said: "The floods have destroyed hundreds of acres of agricultural land and our homes. I ask the govern-

ment to help us."

Local officials pledged that they are addressing these issues.

Izzatullah Karimi, spokesperson for the Kunar Department of Natural Disaster Preparedness, said: "For the homes that were completely destroyed, their surveys are completed, and in coordination with partner organizations, these homes will be rebuilt in the future."

According to statistics from the Kunar Department of Natural Disaster Preparedness, the recent floods have caused significant financial losses and resulted in casualties in various districts of the province.

Daikundi offers free education

DAIKUNDI (TOLOnews): Director of Information and Culture in Daikundi has announced the provision of free education for one thousand underprivileged students in the province. Over the past year, these students have received training in English language and computer skills.

Sayed Mustafa Saleh, the Director of Information and Culture in Daikundi, said: "Currently, around 300 students are engaged in learning computer basics and English at this center, and these free educational services are offered to underprivileged students from morning until evening."

Students who have completed free courses at this educational center are requesting the continuation of such programs from the authorities.

Mohammad, one of the students, said: "This free program is beneficial for everyone because those who cannot afford educational expenses can study with peace of mind."

Ali, another student, added, "We hope these classes will continue, and that pens and notebooks will also be provided so we can study better."

Due to economic difficulties and the mountainous terrain of Daikundi, many students in the central areas and districts lack access to costly educational programs.

Deputy Minister of Mines invites Chinese investment



KABUL (BNA): During a recent mining investment promotion conference in Hunan Province, China, the Deputy Minister of Mines and Petroleum of the Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan

extended an invitation to Chinese investors, highlighting Afghanistan's mineral sector as a promising opportunity for mutual growth.

The Ministry of Mines and Petroleum reported that the conference, organized in partnership with the Afghan Hub Exim, aimed to foster collaboration in developing a state-of-the-art laboratory in Afghani-

stan, enhance technical and professional expertise within the Ministry, and attract significant Chinese investment in Afghanistan's rich mineral resources.

Chinese investors expressed strong interest in various mineral deposits, particularly in gold, copper, mica, talc, oil and gas, lithium, lead, and zinc. They also expressed a desire to engage in activities across the mining value chain, including surveying, exploration, design, processing, and the establishment of advanced laboratories. The investors requested further

clarification on Afghanistan's mining contract processes to better understand the framework for potential collaborations.

In his remarks, the Deputy Minister for Finance and Administration of the Ministry of Mines and Petroleum emphasized the favorable investment climate in Afghanistan, noting that such events help strengthen diplomatic and economic relations between Afghanistan and China.

He underscored that Afghanistan is now a secure environment for foreign investment, with abun-

dant untapped mineral resources that present substantial economic potential.

Afghan investors attending the conference echoed these sentiments, expressing interest in modernizing the mining sector in Afghanistan by importing advanced surveying, exploration, and extraction equipment to ensure efficient and sustainable resource development.

Ministry of Mines and Petroleum hopes that these efforts will catalyze Afghanistan's economic growth, creating pathways for development in collaboration with international partners.

Writers seek help for language preservation



KABUL (TOLOnews): A group of poets and writers from Badakhshan has called on the Ministry of Information and Culture to support the preservation and development of local languages and to assist with the publication of their works.

They say that local languages in this province are at risk of extinction, and due to economic challenges, they cannot afford to publish their works.

Writer Ahmad Nabil Qazizada said: "We request that the Ministry of Information and Culture support poets who lack the financial means to publish their books so that their works can be printed."

Poet and writer Farid Habibi added, "Some writ-

ers whose works have not yet been published ask that the government cooperate in this regard, so these cultural and artistic works are not lost."

At a meeting held in Faizabad, attended by the Deputy Minister of Culture and Arts of the Ministry of Information and Culture, poets and writers discussed their cultural challenges and the need to preserve local languages.

Writer Iqbal Hossam said in this meeting, "If these languages are not given attention, they will move towards extinction, and various factors have placed these languages at risk."

Zabihullah Amiri, head of Badakhshan's Information and Culture Depa-

rtment, said, "Many poets in Badakhshan have valuable works in their personal collections, but due to lack of funding, they are unable to publish them."

Attiqullah Azizi, Deputy Minister of Culture and Arts of the Ministry of Information and Culture, also pledged support, saying: "If these poets' and writers' works hold national, Islamic, and scientific value and are free from prejudice, we are ready to assist in their publication; this is our promise."

According to the Badakhshan Department of Information and Culture, more than 300 poets and writers and eight local languages are currently registered in this province.

Iran ramps up deportation of Afghan migrants

KABUL (Ariana News): Iran has stepped up its deportation of undocumented Afghan migrants, with up to 3,000 individuals reportedly being sent back to Afghanistan each day.

According to Iran's Director General of Foreign Nationals and Migrants of Khorasan Razavi, Hossein Sharafati, more than 3,000 Afghans are detained daily and deported through the Dogharun border following legal procedures.

Undocumented Afghan nationals living in Khorasan are identified, detained, and subsequently deported via the Dogharun border. During a recent visit to Taybad city, Sharafati also inspected a

20-hectare plot of land designated for a new camp intended to hold "unauthorized Afghan nationals."

This facility, proposed near the Dogharun border in Taybad, is intended to streamline the process of managing and deporting undocumented migrants.

The steep increase in deportations comes after Tehran recently took a stricter stance over undocumented Afghan migrants, after President Masoud Pezeshkian came into power.

In September, the Iranian government announced it would deport two million undocumented foreigners over the next six months. When Iranian officials speak of "illegal foreign-

ers," they usually mean migrants from Afghanistan.

At the time, Iranian police chief Ahmad-Reza Radan said security forces and the Interior Ministry were working out measures that would deport "a considerable number of illegal foreigners" over the long term. Iran and Afghanistan share a 900-kilometer long border, parts of which run through inaccessible, high mountain ranges.

The United Nations refugee agency UNHCR estimates that nearly 4.5 million Afghan nationals currently live in Iran. According to Iranian news agencies, however, the real number could be as high as 6 million or 8 million.

ZARANJ (Pajhwok): Some residents of northwestern Nimroz have once again complained about a high price of Iranian visas for this province compared to other provinces, saying an Iranian consulate should be established here in order to address the issue.

Jawed Zori, a resident of Zaranj, who had submitted his passport to a travel agency for a visa, told Pajhwok Afghan News that there was no consulate in Nimroz, so residents either travel to provinces where there is a consulate or obtain their visas through companies.

He added: "The Iranian consulate in Kandahar does not issue individual visas to Nimroz citizens; they say to submit your passport to the agency. When we give it to the agency, they register it online, and it takes three months for an appointment, costing 12,500 afghanis. If we want an urgent visa, they give us an appointment in a week for 18,000 afghanis."

He also complained

about the high visa costs, saying, "I don't understand why the Iranian visa costs 16,000 afghanis for residents of Nimroz, while it is only 6,000 afghanis for residents of Herat and Farah."

Zori emphasized that officials had promised to address this issue, but it remains unresolved.

He urged the Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan (IEA) to look into this problem and, if possible, establish an Iranian consulate in Nimroz.

Meanwhile, Karima Barakzai, another resident, shared a similar complaint, saying, "It's strange that in one country, the Iranian visa has three different prices... it's like having one roof with multiple skies."

She called this issue injustice with residents of Nimroz and called for its resolution by the Islamic Emirate.

Additionally, Amanullah Baloch, a resident of Kenj district of Nimroz, who visited a travel agency for his visa, also called for a solution to this issue.

He said he submitted his passport for a visa to a travel agency few months ago, but has only recently been informed that his visa has arrived.

He said, "Yesterday they informed me that my visa has arrived. I wanted to reject it because I was tired; I am going to Iran for work, and now the work season is over, and winter is coming."

He urged the authorities to establish an Iranian consulate in Nimroz to facilitate the residents and end their frustration.

Meanwhile, Abdul Wahab Khashroodi, head of the Travel Agencies Union in Nimroz, said: "The visa for the Kandahar zone is the same; but its price varies, they add airfare costs, which increases the total cost."

A regular visa costs 11,000 and an urgent one costs 15,500 afghanis. The Iranian consulate divides the cost of a \$290 plane ticket among five passports, which is why the visa price increases, even

though residents of Nimroz should not be included in airfare, as they only travel four kilometers by land."

He added, "We charge 500 afghanis as a registration fee for each passport; the remaining amount is deposited into the Iranian consulate's account, and the profit does not go to the companies."

He pointed out another problem, saying the visa registration website was only open once a week but closed for two weeks, and when the site is closed, the visa price increases by 1,000 to 1,500 afghanis, which again harms the people. Currently, the site is closed as well.

Khashroodi also called for a resolution to this issue.

However, Maulvi Yar Mohammad Haqyar, head of the Foreign Relations Office in Nimroz, acknowledged that the price of Iranian visas for residents of this province was indeed higher than in other provinces.

He considered the con-

cerns of Nimroz residents as valid, but added that they recently held a meeting with representatives of travel agencies to discuss the matter.

He added: "Travel agency officials say regular visa takes three months, while urgent visa takes one month. We also spoke with the Iranian consulate, and they mentioned having internet issues and insufficient capacity for issuing visas."

The head of foreign relations about high visa prices said: "To resolve this issue, we have talked to the Iranian consul general in Kandahar, but the consul blamed Afghan airlines, stating that the issuance of a visa involves the agreement of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Afghanistan and the governor of Kandahar. However, upon investigation, we found that the airlines had no issues."

He said this issue will be discussed with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs to seek a solution.

Afghanistan to tour Zimbabwe

KABUL (Ariana News): AfghanAtalan will tour Zimbabwe next month for an all-format series that will feature two Test matches, three ODIs and three T20Is. According to the Afghanistan Cricket Board (ACB) the tour will take place from December 9 to January 6.

First up will be a three-match T20I series to be played on December 9, 11 and 12 at the Harare Sports Club. This will be followed by a three-match ODI

series on December 15, 17, and 19 at the same venue.

The tour will conclude with a two-match Test series in Bulawayo, with the first Test scheduled from December 26 to 30 and the second from January 2 to 6.

Mirwais Ashraf, Chairman of the Afghanistan Cricket Board, said in a statement that "this year (2024) has been quite productive for us both domestically and internationally, and we've had good

achievements.

"We are committed to striving hard and adding more bilateral cricket to our calendar in the next year and bringing more glory to our nation," he said.

"The all-format tour to Zimbabwe is a significant event for us. We have a rich history with Zimbabwe, and playing there has always been challenging, but it's a challenge I believe the AfghanAtalan can face confidently," he added.

Zimbabwe Cricket's

Chairman Tavengwa Mukuhllani said December 26 and January 1 "Test matches are iconic cricket fixtures that we are delighted to be adding to our calendar this festive season and we are looking forward to celebrating in style one of the finest traditions in the sport's long history."

"Before the Test series, scheduled for Bulawayo, we will start off with some T20I and ODI action in Harare to complete a full tour, a clear demonstration

of our commitment to improve our game across all formats.

"Matches between Zimbabwe and Afghanistan are always intense and exciting affairs and we have no doubt the players will once again serve up some great entertainment befitting such a historic tour."

The AfghanAtalan squad will arrive in Zimbabwe on December 6, where they will have two practice sessions before the first T20I match on December 9.

Five killed, two injured in Afghanistan last week

KABUL (Pajhwok): Last week, seven countries affirmed their commitment to engaging with Afghanistan, and a delegation reported initial findings from a probe into shootings and explosions affecting Afghans in Iran.

Additionally, Afghanistan and Kazakhstan signed a cooperation roadmap. Australia announced \$1.3 million in aid to Afghanistan.

Casualties: Last week, five people were killed and two injured in various incidents in Afghanistan.

Reports indicate that an unexploded shell blast in Ghazni killed two children and injured a third. In the same province, one individ-

ual was killed due to personal enmity.

Local officials said that a young girl was killed in Badghis. Unidentified gunmen killed a man in Faryab, wounding his nine-year-old son.

In the previous week, seven people had been killed and 14 others injured.

Before the regime change in 2021, hundreds of civilians, insurgents and security forces would be killed and maimed every week.

Probe team's findings On October 16, Iran-based human rights organization Haalvash claimed that Iranian border forces had killed a large number of Afghan refugees. It cited two eyewitnesses put-

ting the number of the dead at 260.

Following the report, the caretaker government appointed a delegation to investigate the matter.

Maulvi Hamidullah Fitrat, the deputy spokesman for the Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan, wrote on his X: "Initial evidence suggests that explosions and shootings occurred against our citizens in the Kalgan Valley of Iran, with two bodies and 34 eyewitnesses—some of whom are injured—transferred by the delegation."

He said a full investigation had not been completed yet, and the delegation was still working. Further details will be released upon completion of the

investigations.

Afghans refugees in Iran and Pakistan

Millions of Afghan refugees are residing in Iran and Pakistan, many without documents.

Afghan refugees are being forcibly expelled from both countries. There are also reports that sometimes document-holding refugees are also forcibly repatriated.

Last week, the head of the UN refugee agency in Afghanistan, Arfat Jamal, urged Pakistan and Iran to cease the forcible expulsion of Afghans and to treat them kindly.

Additionally, Khalil Rahman Haqqani, the acting minister of refugees and repatriation, called on the neighbouring countries to

refrain from using force against Afghan migrants.

He also said asked the Afghans abroad to live according to immigration laws and not to interfere in the internal affairs of host countries.

Cooperation roadmap Last week, Zabihullah Mujahid, chief spokesman for IEA, said a government delegation had signed a cooperation roadmap with Kazakhstan.

The cooperation roadmap covers trade, industry, mining, electricity, logistics, agriculture, telecommunications, health, higher education and humanitarian assistance.

Additionally, contracts worth \$100 million were signed in various sectors

between the private sectors of both countries, the spokesman informed.

Cement, power project Last week, a 30-year contract worth \$163 million for a cement project in the YatimTaq area of Jawzjan province was signed with a 77 Turkish company.

The head of the company, Suleiman Jiliou, expressed interest in investing in a 200 megawatt wind energy project in Herat during a meeting with Minister of Energy and Water Mullah Abdul Latif Mansoor.

Investors from Russia, Bahrain, India, and Uzbekistan evinced an interest in investing in electricity production, coal, copper, lead, aviation security, training of professional personnel

and health sectors of Afghanistan.

IEAAmbassador in Beijing Maulvi Bilal Karimi opened a cargo train service between Afghanistan and China. A train carrying 50 containers of electric equipment, cloth and other goods headed from China to Afghanistan.

Direct flights

Last week, Iran Air began flights to Afghanistan. Moreover, an agreement for direct flights between Afghanistan and Qatar was inked.

Engagement with Afghanistan stressed

Last week, Afghan Ambassador to Malaysia Nageebullah Ahmadi discussed bilateral economic and political relations and the

expansion of engagement with his counterparts from Russia, Uzbekistan, Turkmenistan, Kazakhstan, Tajikistan, Azerbaijan and Kyrgyzstan. He emphasized on global engagement with Afghanistan.

Deputy Prime Minister for Political Affairs Maulvi Abdul Kabir said in a meeting last week that political relations with Tajikistan were improving and interaction between the two sides had increased.

Aid continuation

Last week, Australia announced an additional \$1.3 million in aid to Afghanistan, and UNICEF provided health and non-health equipment to the Nangarhar Public Health Department.

Punjab schools closed for a wekk amid Lahore smog crisis











F.P. Report

LAHORE: The Punjab government has announced a one-week closure of schools for primary classes in Lahore due to severe smog conditions.

Senior provincial minister Maryam Aurangzeb made the announcement during a press conference, emphasising the urgent need to protect children and vulnerable populations from the hazardous air quality.

Maryam Aurangzeb indicated that the prevailing wind patterns bringing air from India are expected to persist, complicating efforts to control the smog. "We cannot stop or redirect the Indian air, and the only solution is dialogue," she stated, urging cooperation to tackle the environmental crisis.

In addition to the school closures, the government has advised that 50% of the workforce should work from home to reduce exposure to the polluted air. Parents are being encouraged to provide masks for their children and to keep them indoors as much as possible.

| Live city ranking | | |
|---------------------------------------|--|---------|
| Cities with high air pollution (AQI*) | | |
| # | MAJOR CITY | US AQI* |
| 1 |  Lahore, Pakistan | 320 |
| 2 |  Delhi, India | 261 |
| 3 |  Hanoi, Vietnam | 186 |
| 4 |  Dhaka, Bangladesh | 182 |
| 5 |  Tashkent, Uzbekistan | 181 |
| 6 |  Wuhan, China | 179 |
| 7 |  Kolkata, India | 158 |
| 8 |  Chongqing, China | 157 |
| 9 |  Hangzhou, China | 154 |
| 10 |  Kathmandu, Nepal | 143 |

The minister also highlighted measures being taken to mitigate the effects of the smog, including a ban on certain vehicles within a one-kilometre radius of green zones.

Maryam Aurangzeb mentioned that the technology for artificial rain, previously acquired from

the UAE, is now locally available, and plans for implementation will proceed when conditions are suitable.

The government aims to address the immediate health risks posed by the deteriorating air quality while seeking longer-term solutions to combat smog in the region.

Air pollution in Lahore reached alarming heights on Saturday, with officials reporting that the city's air quality is nearly 40 times higher than the World Health Organisation's (WHO) recommended limits. The level of PM2.5 pollutants, which pose significant health risks, peaked at 610.

The city has been engulfed in smog for several days, a mixture of fog and pollutants exacerbated by low-quality diesel emissions, agricultural burning, and winter weather.

The air quality index (AQI) surged to 1,067, far exceeding the 'dangerous' threshold of 300, according to IQAir data.

Winds blowing from India have further deteriorated Lahore's air quality, placing the city third on the global air pollution index, following Delhi and Kinshasa.

Reports indicated that regions near the Indian border recorded AQI levels between 1500 and 1800, with Lahore itself facing hazardous conditions marked by an AQI score of 1000.



GAZA STRIP: Mourners weep near the bodies of Palestinians killed in an Israeli airstrike amid the conflict between Israel and Hamas in Deir al-Balah, central Gaza Strip, on Sunday.

Opening 1st segment of Malir Expressway Murad for relocation of KE installations

KARACHI (APP): The Sindh Chief Minister Syed Murad Ali Shah, during his visit to the under-construction 39.889 km Malir Expressway, evaluated the project's progress from Zero Point – near Jam Sadiq Bridge to Kathore and expressed his dissatisfaction with the administration due to their inability to relocate the K-Electric (KE) installations, which has consequently delayed the opening of the first segment of the expressway.

The chief minister reached the Zero point of Malir Expressway at Jam Sadiq Bridge, where he was received by Mayor Karachi Murtaza Wahab, DG PPP Unit Asad Zamin, PD Niaz Soomro, Engineer Khalid Mansoor and others.

During the inspection, the Chief Minister expressed his displeasure upon discovering that the ready spans were lying on the ground and had not

been installed on the pillars to create a traffic ramp to access the Malir Expressway at Zero Point. When he inquired about the delay, he was informed that K-Electric (KE) had not yet relocated its overhead installation, which was preventing the spans from being fixed on the pillars.

The Chief Minister instructed the Deputy Commissioner to ensure that this issue was resolved within a week, warning that he would take action if it was not addressed. He pointed out that since KE had already been paid for the relocation of its installation, their delays were unacceptable.

Mr Shah drove on the Malir Expressway from Zero Point to Shah Faisal Interchange, and on the way, he discovered that land grabbing had been started on the sides of the expressway. The CM stopped there and called

the deputy commissioner and SSP Korangi on the spot and inquired them why the illegal structures had started developing under their nose. "I'll not allow encroachment even on a single inch of government land," he said and ordered them to bulldoze the illegal structures and compound walls and report him.

The CM directed the PD of the Expressway to ensure the completion of the work by the end of November because he wanted the first segment, Korangi Causeway to Shah Faisal, to be opened for traffic in the first week of December.

Murad Ali Shah, along with his team, travelled along the expressway from Shah Faisal to Quaidabad to inspect the ongoing construction. During the briefing, it was noted that while the expressway itself was ready, the small interchange at Quaidabad had been halted due to

issues with land acquisition. In response, the Chief Minister said that he had released funds for the land acquisition. He said that payments should be made to the landowners promptly so that Segment II of the expressway could be opened as soon as possible.

The CM visited the structures of Toll Plaza and triangular parks being developed at the Shah Faisal Interchange and other Interchanges. He directed the plantation of grass and trees to beautify the areas.

Mr Shah also directed the police department to prepare a plan for the establishment of police checkpoints for the security of the Malir Expressway.

It may be noted that the Malir Expressway, from Zero Point to Kathore, has six Interchanges, three bridges, and five weight stations, and the project is scheduled to be completed by the end of 2025.

Taiwan detects 37 Chinese aircraft

TAIPEI (AFP): Taiwan said it detected 37 Chinese fighter jets, drones and other aircraft near the self-ruled island on Sunday as Beijing carried out "long-distance" training flights.

China has ramped up military activity around Taiwan in recent years as Beijing pressures Taipei to accept its claims of sovereignty over the island.

The Chinese aircraft were spotted from 9:00 am (0100 GMT) and 35 of them crossed the median line of the Taiwan Strait, which separates mainland China and Taiwan, and

entered Taiwanese airspace on their way to the Western Pacific Ocean, the defense ministry said.

Taiwan's military responded by deploying aircraft, naval vessels and shore-based missile systems, the ministry said.

The exercise came a day after Taiwan said it had detected a Chinese military "joint combat readiness patrol" around the island involving fighter jets and warships.

Taiwan spotted 27 Chinese aircraft and six warships in the 24 hours to 6:00 am on Sunday, the ministry said earlier.

China considers Taiwan part of its territory and has refused to rule out the use of force to bring the democratic island under its control.

Beijing held large-scale military drills around Taiwan last month, which were condemned by Taipei and its key backer the United States.

The Chinese military conducted long-distance training flights in late September, the ministry said previously, when Beijing also fired an intercontinental ballistic missile into the Pacific Ocean.

Tarar grieved

ISLAMABAD (APP): Federal Minister for Information, Broadcasting, National Heritage and Culture Ata Tarar on Sunday expressed deep grief over demise of the wife of senior journalist Altaf Hussain Qureshi.

Federal Minister for Information, Broadcasting, National Heritage and Culture, in a condolence message, prayed to the Almighty to rest the departed soul in eternal peace and grant courage to the bereaved family to bear the irreparable loss with fortitude.

Eleven injured in attack in IOK

NEW DELHI (Reuters): At least 11 people were injured when a grenade was thrown at Indian security forces on Sunday in a crowded flea market in Srinagar, capital of Indian-occupied Kashmir, a police official said.

Mujahideen missed their target and instead injured at least 11 people, the official told Reuters. The official wished to remain unnamed as he was not authorised to speak to the media.

The identity of attackers responsible for the attack is unknown. The injured were rushed to hospital for treatment where they were in a stable condition, the official said, adding that the explosion had caused panic in the market and sent shoppers scrambling for cover. The attack comes a day after a top commander of Lashkar-e-Taiba (LeT), was killed along with two others by Indian troops in Kashmir.

Kashmir has seen a spate of attacks since a government formed by an opposition alliance took over the territory, where separatist movement members have fought security forces for decades, resulting in thousands of deaths.

Since the new government took over earlier last month, 15 people have died in different militant attacks.

US bomber joins air drill with S. Korea, Japan

SEOUL (AFP): South Korea, Japan, and the United States on Sunday conducted a joint air drill involving a heavy bomber, Seoul's military said, in response to North Korea's latest long-range missile test.

The exercise took place three days after Pyongyang launched one of its most powerful and advanced solid-fueled intercontinental ballistic missiles (ICBM), which experts say could reach targets in the mainland US.

The drill mobilized the US' B-1B bomber, South Korea's F-15K and KF-16 fighter jets, and Japan's F-2 jets, Seoul's military said. "The exercise demon-

strates the commitment of the ROK-US alliance to integrated extended deterrence in response to the advancing nuclear and missile threats from North Korea," said South Korea's Joint Chiefs of Staff in a press release.

During the aerial maneuver, South Korea and Japan's jets escorted the US strategic bomber to a designated location south of the Korean peninsula, "demonstrating an overwhelming capability to swiftly and accurately strike simulated targets," it added.

The B-1B Lancer is a supersonic heavy bomber known for its high-speed

performance with a payload of 75,000 pounds (34,000 kilograms) of munitions, including both conventional and precision-guided weapons.

It was the fourth time this year the bomber was deployed to the Korean peninsula, the military said, and the second time for a trilateral aerial exercise to counter Pyongyang's military threats.

The North's latest ICBM launch is said to have flown higher and further than any previous missile, according to North Korea as well as Seoul and Tokyo's militaries, which tracked it in real-time.

The official Korean Central News Agency hailed it as "the world's strongest strategic missile," and leader Kim "expressed great satisfaction" at the successful launch.

North Korea "would never change its line of bolstering up its nuclear forces," the agency said.

The launch came amid growing international scrutiny over Pyongyang's purported deployment of thousands of troops to Russia to support Moscow's war efforts in Ukraine, raising concerns North Korean soldiers in Russian uniforms could soon engage in combat.

Israeli military says Hezbollah commander of Khiam area killed

GAZA STRIP (DPA): The Israeli military killed "the terrorist Farouk Amin Alasi, the Hezbollah commander of the Khiam area," it said on Sunday as fighting continues in southern Lebanon.

"Alasi was responsible for the execution of many anti-tank missile and rocket attacks toward Israeli communities in the Galilee

Panhandle, and especially Metula," the tweet said.

The Israel Defense Forces (IDF) also eliminated "the terrorist Yousef Ahmad Nun, a Radwan Forces company commander in the Khiam area who was responsible for rocket and anti-tank missile attacks toward Israeli communities in the Galilee area and IDF troops operating in the area," the military said.

Hezbollah has not yet commented on the two men said to have been killed. Khiam, close to the border with Israel, is the site of ongoing fighting between the Israeli military and the Iran-backed Hezbollah militia.

The IDF also "eliminated Radwan forces and

other Hezbollah terrorists through air strikes and close combat," it said in a statement that added soldiers also found large stocks of Hezbollah weapons.

Fighting between Israeli ground troops and fighters for the pro-Iranian Hezbollah militia is continuing in several villages in the south of Lebanon.

They also carried images of killed top figures of Iran's allied militant groups including Lebanese Hezbollah leader Hassan Nasrallah and Palestinian Hamas leader Yahya Sinwar. The crowd in the state-organized rallies chanted they were ready to defend the Palestinians.

US says Iranian-American held in Iran as tensions high

DUBAI, United Arab Emirates (AP): An Iranian-American journalist who once worked for a U.S. government-funded broadcaster is believed to have been detained by Iran for months now, authorities said Sunday, further raising the stakes as Tehran threatens to retaliate over an Israeli attack on the country.

The imprisonment of Reza Valizadeh, acknowledged to The Associated Press by the U.S. State Department, came as Iran marked the 45th anniversary of the American Embassy takeover and hostage crisis on Sunday. It also followed Iran's

Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei threatening both Israel and the U.S. the day before with "a crushing response" as long-range B-52 bombers reached the Middle East in an attempt to deter Tehran.

Valizadeh had worked for Radio Farda, an outlet under Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty that's overseen by the U.S. Agency for Global Media. In February, he wrote on the social platform X that his family members had been detained in an effort to see him return to Iran.

In August, Valizadeh apparently posted two messages suggesting he had returned to Iran despite

Radio Farda being viewed by Iran's theocracy as a hostile outlet.

"I arrived in Tehran on March 6, 2024. Before that, I had unfinished negotiations with the (Revolutionary Guard's) intelligence department," the message read in part. "Eventually I came back to my country after 13 years without any security guarantee, even a verbal one."

Valizadeh added the name of a man who he claimed belonged to Iran's Intelligence Ministry. The AP could not verify if the person worked for the ministry.

Rumors have been circulating for weeks that

Valizadeh had been detained. The Human Rights Activists News Agency, which monitors cases in Iran, said that he had been detained on arrival to the country earlier this year, but later released.

He was then rearrested and sent to Evin prison, where he now faces a case in Iran's Revolutionary Court, which routinely holds closed-door hearings in which defendants face secret evidence, the agency reported. Valizadeh had faced arrest in 2007 as well, it said. The State Department told the AP that it was "aware of reports that this dual U.S.-

Iranian citizen has been arrested in Iran" when asked about Valizadeh.

"We are working with our Swiss partners who serve as the protecting power for the United States in Iran to gather more information about this case," the State Department said. "Iran routinely imprisons U.S. citizens and other countries' citizens unjustly for political purposes. This practice is cruel and contrary to international law."

Iran has not acknowledged detaining Valizadeh. Iran's mission to the United Nations did not immediately respond to a request for comment.

The Voice of America, another U.S. government-funded media outlet overseen by the Agency for Global Media, first reported the State Department was acknowledging Valizadeh's detention in Iran.

Since the 1979 U.S. Embassy crisis, which saw dozens of hostages released after 444 days in captivity, Iran has used prisoners with Western ties as bargaining chips in negotiations with the world. In September 2023, five Americans detained for years in Iran were freed in exchange for five Iranians in U.S. custody and for \$6 billion in frozen

Iranian assets to be released by South Korea.

Valizadeh is the first American known to be detained by Iran in the time since.

Meanwhile, Iranian state television aired footage Sunday of different cities across the country marking the anniversary of the embassy takeover.

Gen. Hossein Salami, the head of the Guard, also spoke in Tehran, where he repeated a pledge made the day before by Khamenei.

"The resistance front and Iran will equip itself with whatever necessary to confront and defeat the enemy," he said, referring to the militant groups like

Hamas and Lebanon's Hezbollah backed by Tehran.

In Tehran, thousands at the gate of the former U.S. Embassy chanted "Death to America" and "Death to Israel." Some burned flags of the countries and effigies of Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu.

They also carried images of killed top figures of Iran's allied militant groups including Lebanese Hezbollah leader Hassan Nasrallah and Palestinian Hamas leader Yahya Sinwar. The crowd in the state-organized rallies chanted they were ready to defend the Palestinians.