

ISLAMABAD: Iranian Foreign Minister Seyed Abbas Araghchi on Monday arrived here on a two-day official visit to hold consultations with Pakistan's leadership on the situation in the Middle East and bilateral relations. During his visit, Foreign Minister Araghchi will hold meetings with Prime Minister and Deputy Prime Minister Ishaq Dar, according to a FO press release.

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif on Monday held separate meetings with members of the National Assembly Mubarak Zeb and Aurangzeb Khichi at the Parliament House. During the meetings, both the members expressed their trust in the government policies. They also reaffirmed their commitment to continue supporting the government.

Senate okays SC Number of Judges Amendment Bill

Parliament approves bill extending tenure of services chiefs up to five years

F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: The Senate on Monday approved six crucial bills including the Supreme Court Number of Judges (Amendment) Bill, 2024, the Islamabad High Court (Amendment) Bill, 2024, the Pakistan Army (Amendment) Bill, 2024 as passed by the National Assembly, amid the opposition uproar.

The bills included the Supreme Court Number of Judges (Amendment) Bill, 2024, the Supreme Court (Practice and Procedure) (Amendment) Bill, 2024, the Islamabad High Court (Amendment) Bill, 2024, the Pakistan Army (Amendment) Bill, 2024, the Pakistan Air Force (Amendment) Bill, 2024 and the Pakistan Navy (Amendment) Bill, 2024.

Earlier, Law Minister Azam Nazeer Tarar moved a motion to suspend the House business and take up the supplementary agenda which was adopted by the House. The three initial bills related to Supreme Court and Islamabad High Court were piloted by Minister for Law and Justice Azam Nazeer Tarar in the House while the remaining three bills pertaining to Army, Navy and Air Force were moved by Minister of Defence

Khawaja Muhammad Asif.

The House passed all the bills through clause-by-clause readings. The Supreme Court Number of Judges (Amendment) Bill, 2024 aimed at increasing number of SC judges to 34 which would help tackle the backlog of cases at the Supreme Court. Similarly, under the Islamabad High Court (Amendment) Bill, 2024, the number of judges in the Islamabad High Court has also been increased from nine to twelve. Furthermore, the Senate also passed amendments to the Pakistan (Army/Air Force/Navy) Act Amendment Bills 2024 to enhance the tenures of service chiefs.

In the said Act, in section 8A, in sub-section (1), for the expression "three (03)" the word "five (05)" shall be substituted," says the bill. Sub-section 1 of Section 8A states that "the President shall, on the advice of the Prime Minister, appoint a General as the Chief of the Army Staff, for a tenure of three (03) years," read the bill.

Similarly, the proposed bill aimed to increase the length of time the service chief can be reappointed or have their tenure extended to five years, instead of three as outlined in Section 8B. Section 8B of the Army

Act reads as follows: "The President, on the advice of the Prime Minister, may reappoint the Chief of the Army Staff for additional tenure of three (03) years, or extend the tenure(s) of the Chief of the Army Staff up to three (03) years, on such terms and conditions, as may be determined by the President on the advice of the Prime Minister, in the national security interest or exigencies, from time to time."

"In the said Act, in section 8B, in sub-section (1)- 10 for the expression "three (03)", occurring twice, the expression "five (05)" shall be substituted," the 2024 bill read. According to the statement of objects and reasons, "The purpose of these amendments is to make consistent the Pakistan Army Act, 1952 ... The Pakistan Navy Ordinance, 1961 ... and The Pakistan Air Force Act, 1953 ... with the maximum tenure of the Chief of the Army Staff, the Chief of the Naval Staff and the Chief of the Air Staff and to make consequential amendments for uniformity in the aforementioned laws." Later, the Presiding Officer prorogued the Senate session sine die after conclusion of the business. The Chair read the prorogation order signed by the President.



ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif chairing a meeting of PML-N's parliamentary party at Parliament House.

Navy conducts successful launch of Ballistic missile



F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan Navy conducted successful flight test of an indigenously developed Ship Launched Ballistic Missile. The Weapon System with 350 KM range is capable of engaging land and sea targets with high precision. The Weapon System is equipped with state of the art navigation system and maneuverability features.

Flight test was witnessed by Chief of the Naval Staff and Senior Officers from Pakistan Navy and dedicated scientists and engineers. The President, Prime Minister, Chairman Joint Chiefs of Staff Committee and Services Chiefs congratulated participating Naval Units and Scientists on this excellent achievement.

Fazl slams amendment as threat to democracy

F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: Jamiat Ulema-e-Islam (JUI-F) chief Maulana Fazlur Rehman strongly criticised the government's proposed amendments to the Anti-Terrorism Act, calling them an affront to democratic principles and an insult to the spirit of the 26th constitutional amendment.

Talking to the media, Maulana Fazlur Rehman condemned the government's plan to extend the period of detention and enable authorities to detain individuals for up to 90 days based solely on suspicion. He argued that granting such sweeping powers to the government would effectively amount to a "civil martial law," marking a dangerous erosion of civil liberties and democratic standards.

"It is unbelievable that parties like the Pakistan People's Party (PPP) and Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N), who have long advocated democratic values and the sanctity of the vote, are now supporting legislation that undermines the very essence of democracy," he held. Questioning the government's intentions, the JUI leader urged lawmakers to reconsider which parts of the 26th amendment they are willing to retract, suggesting that the current legislation contradicts the foundational principles of the constitution.

Fazlur Rehman also rebuked the recently enacted Evacuee Properties Act, which extends to Islamabad's limits, calling it "illegal" and claiming that opposition to the law reflects the collective stance of the Muslim Ummah, rather than just his own party's viewpoint. On a humanitarian note, Maulana Fazlur Rehman drew attention to the crisis in Gaza, where he highlighted severe food shortages. He also urged everyone to extend support to the oppressed residents in the besieged region.

PM apprises cabinet of his recent successful visits

F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif on Monday apprised the cabinet members of the outcome of his recent successful visits to Kingdom of Saudi Arabia and State of Qatar, terming these as 'successful and productive'.

The prime minister, while addressing the cabinet's meeting, said that he held very productive and useful consultations with the leadership of KSA and Qatar wherein different subjects like solar energy, mines, minerals and IT sectors were thoroughly discussed during the bilateral meetings.

He said a delegation of Qatar Investment Authority would soon visit Pakistan as Qatar had announced to invest \$3 billion in Pakistan, adding Saudi Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman, during a meeting, had told him that there was immense potential of IT trained people and asked him to send the skilled people from Pakistan to the Kingdom since they required it. Amir of Qatar also hinted at setting up an IT park in Pakistan, he added.

The prime minister said whereas Pakistan and Azerbaijan had also agreed to enhance the bilateral investment to \$2 billion in diverse areas. He said the understanding between the two countries was reached during a visit of Azerbaijan President Ilham Aliyev in the shape of signing of agreements and memorandums of understanding (MoUs).

PM expresses satisfaction at economic stability, inflow of foreign investment: Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif expressed his satisfaction over the economic stability in the country and the inflow of foreign investment.

He said that the State Bank of Pakistan had reduced the policy rate by 250 basis points and with its reduction, the interest rate had been brought down to 15 percent from 17 percent, adding that it would increase the business activities, boost exports and generate employment opportunities. Addressing a meeting of PML-N parliamentary party at the Parliament House, the prime minister said that due to government's efforts, the inflation rate was also reduced from 38 percent to 7 percent and observed that all the global and national institutions were projecting eco-

nomical stability in the country.

"The evil machinations of those who were out to create chaos and those who pushed the country to verge of default have been foiled," PM Office Media Wing, in a press release quoted the prime minister as saying. He further said that the history would always remember those who had staked their politics for the sake of country's survival, adding the historians would always write about those who worked for the sake of the country and those elements who addressed letter to International Monetary Fund (IMF) to halt country's financial programme.

The prime minister also lauded the members of parliament belonging to PML-N for sacrificing their politics for the sake of country and said that they had thought about 240 million people. He said that during his recent visits to the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, a new chapter of economic partnership between the two countries had been added.

During the participation in the Future Investment Initiative, he held detailed meeting with Saudi Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman, adding Saudi Arabia was a close friend and partner of Pakistan and its leadership had assured all kind of assistance to support economic stability and country's development. He said that volume of Saudi's investment would increase from \$2.2 billion to \$2.8 billion.

The prime minister said that during his visit to Qatar, its leadership also assured investment in Pakistan and in the bilateral meeting with its leadership, he discussed shaping worth \$3 billion projects in this regard. Qatar would invest in aviation, hoteling, IT, energy and other sectors, he said, adding that the government was taking all steps on priority basis to facilitate and encourage the foreign investment.

The prime minister maintained that they had been enforcing reforms agenda in every sector of the country. He said that he had directed FBR to accord respect to those who paid taxes as they were the ambassadors of Pakistan. Those who evaded paying taxes despite eligible to pay such and those officers who facilitated them, should be proceeded against, he stressed. In the meeting, the parliamentary party members were also taken into confidence over the proposed legislation in the parliament.

Drugs a major challenge for our society: Sharjeel

F.P. Report

KARACHI: Sindh Senior Minister Sharjeel Inam Memon has said that drugs are a major challenge for our society at present. Unfortunately, drug trafficking is on the rise across the country, and drug use is becoming fashionable. Cocaine addiction is seen as a status symbol in elite society. Along with cocaine, marijuana, and heroin, the biggest challenges right now are ice and crystal.

While discussing the attention notice in the Sindh Assembly, Sindh Senior Minister and Provincial Minister for Information, Transport, Excise, Taxation, and

Narcotics Control, Sharjeel Inam Memon, stated that actions against drugs are ongoing, and awareness efforts are also in progress. It is encouraging that the Sindh Assembly passed the anti-narcotics bill by consensus. Whenever drug-related issues were discussed, both government and opposition benches demonstrated a serious commitment. We must all work together to combat the scourge of drugs.

He said that crime reporters and beat reporters from TV channels should also help identify drug-related issues, and we will take action, MPAs should do the same, and we will personally take action. We

have developed an attitude of letting things pass. We must change this mindset and take a stand wherever there is wrongdoing.

He said that parents play the most important role in preventing drug abuse among children. "Parents should not turn a blind eye. It is primarily the responsibility of parents, followed by schools and colleges, to immediately investigate any changes in a child's behavior. Senior Minister Sharjeel Inam Memon stated that we all must work together in the fight against drugs. If the authorities, media, and members of this assembly unite in our efforts, we can bring an end to drug issues within a month.

Six militants killed in operations

F.P. Report

RAWALPINDI: Six Khwarij were killed in two separate engagements in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Province. An intelligence based operation was conducted by Security Forces in general area Dosali, North Waziristan District. During conduct of the operation, own troops effectively engaged the khwarij's location, resultantly one kharij Ahmed Shah@ Intizar was sent to hell.

In another incident, movement of group of khwarij, who were trying to infiltrate

through Pakistan-Afghanistan border, was picked up by the security forces in general area Khamrang, South Waziristan District. Own troops effectively engaged and thwarted their attempt to infiltrate. Resultantly, five khwarij were sent to hell, while three khwarij got injured.

Pakistan has consistently been asking Interim Afghan Government to ensure effective border management on their side of the border. Interim Afghan Government is expected to fulfil its obligations and deny the use of

Afghan soil by Khwarij for perpetuating acts of terrorism against Pakistan. Security Forces of Pakistan are determined and remain committed to secure its borders and eliminate the menace of terrorism from the country.

Meanwhile, a fire exchange took place between own troops and the terrorists in Nushki District of Balochistan. Own troops effectively engaged terrorists' location, and resultantly one terrorist was sent to hell. Weapon and ammunition were also recovered from the killed terrorist.

MPAs directed to ensure presence in KP Assembly

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: The Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Assembly with Panel of Chairman Speaker Idress Khattak in Chair on Monday directed all the lawmakers to ensure their presence in the Assembly.

Expresses displeasure over lack of interest and short of attendance of the law makers in the today's session, the Speaker said it was the responsibility of the Government to ensure presence of their lawmakers in the Assembly and respond to the opposition queries.

Meanwhile, the expenditure limit regarding renovation of panel of Chairman and Provincial Ministers was fixed at Rs1 million. They would be able to purchase carpets and refrigerators etc. The Assembly also approved privileged amendment bill 2024 regarding salaries and allowances of the MPAs and Provincial Ministers. The Law Minister Aftab Alam presented KP Landuse and Building Control Ammendment Bill 2024 that was approved by the house with majority.

Sindh PA passes resolution for constitutional benches

F.P. Report

KARACHI: The Sindh Assembly on Monday passed resolution for the formation of the constitutional benches in the province. Sindh's parliamentary affairs and home department minister Zia Lanjar tabled resolution in the house. Provincial legislature passed the resolution with 123 votes.

Four members, PTI's three and Jamaat Islami's Mohammad Farooq, voted against the resolution. People's Party and MQM's MPAs voted in support of the resolution.

Earlier, the PPP had directed all its members to ensure their presence in the assembly session at 10:00 AM. All provincial assemblies are required to pass resolutions for formation of the constitutional benches under the recently passed 26th Constitutional Amendment. The constitutional benches will be formed in the Sindh High Court under Article 202-A of the Constitution.

COAS seeks UN's role in Palestine, IOJ&K conflicts

F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: The 28th Annual Conference of International Association of Peacekeeping Training Centre (IAPTC) is being hosted for the first time in Pakistan at the Centre for International Peace and Stability (CIPS), NUST, Islamabad from 4-8 November 2024.

The event officially commenced with the inauguration of new CIPS building by the General Syed Asim Munir, NI (M), Chief of Army Staff

(COAS). Under Secretary General, Department of Peace Operations, Jean Pierre Lacroix, United Nations' Police Advisor, Acting Deputy Military Advisor, Foreign Secretary of Pakistan and Rector NUST, also accompanied the Chief Guest during inauguration and opening ceremony of the conference.

In keynote address to the august gathering, COAS emphasized that global peace today is confronted with ever evolving threats and challenges. Despite the numerous peacekeeping

endeavors underway by the UN and other organizations, the plight of innocent Kashmiris and Palestinians serve as a stark reminder that still a lot needs to be done. Guest of Honour, Mr. Jean Pierre Lacroix acknowledged Pakistan's contributions to UN Peacekeeping Operations and appreciated Pakistan for hosting the 28th IAPTC Annual Conference. Earlier on arrival, COAS was received by Inspector General Training and Evaluation (IGT&E), Lieutenant General Fazyaz Hussain Shah, HI (M).



RAWALPINDI: Under Secretary General, Department of Peace Operations, Jean Pierre Lacroix called on Chief of Army Staff, General Syed Asim Munir.

SBP cuts policy rate by 250bps to 15 per cent

F.P. Report

KARACHI: The State Bank of Pakistan (SBP) on Monday slashed the key policy rate by 250 basis points (bps) to 15%, at least 0.5% more than the market expectations, marking its fourth consecutive cut as inflation remains in single digits through October.

Analysts as well independent economists widely believed the central bank would cut its key interest rate further at its policy meeting, with policymakers continuing their efforts to revive a fragile economy as inflation eases off recent record highs.

"The inflation has declined faster than expected and has reached close to its medium-term target range in October," the SBP's Monetary Policy Committee (MPC) noted, adding that "the tight monetary stance continues to play an important role in sustaining the downward trend in inflation." The MPC, which met on Monday to decide the rate, attributed the disinflation to a sharp decline in food inflation, favourable global oil prices and the absence of expected adjust-

ments in gas tariffs and Petroleum Development Levy (PDL) rates in recent months.

Central Bank Governor Jameel Ahmad told analysts in a briefing following the rate cut decision that bilateral partner countries have assured the International Monetary Fund (IMF) that they will continue rollovers of their debt for the duration of Islamabad's bailout programme. Average consumer price index inflation in the South Asian country is 8.7% in the current financial year, which started in July, the statistics bureau says. The IMF expects inflation to average 9.5% for the year ending June.

While the economy has started to gradually recover, and inflation has moved sharply down from a multi-decade high of nearly 40% in May 2023, analysts say further rate cuts are needed to bolster growth. October inflation came in at 7.2%, slightly above the government's expectation of 6% to 7%. The finance ministry expects inflation to slow further to 5.5% to 6.5% in November.

However, inflation could

pick up again in 2025, driven by electricity and gas price increases after a new \$7-billion IMF bailout, and the potential impact of taxes on the retail, wholesale and the farm sector announced in the June budget to take effect in January 2025, some analysts say. However, taking into account the inherent risks associated with these factors, the MPC assessed that the near-term inflation might remain volatile before stabilising within the target range.

The committee noted key developments impacting the macroeconomic outlook: the IMF's EFF approval reduced uncertainty; October surveys showed improved confidence and lower inflation expectations; government yields and KIBOR fell; tax collection missed its FY25 target; and global oil, metal, and agricultural prices rose amid geopolitical tensions. The statement said that considering aforementioned developments, the MPC views the current monetary policy stance as appropriate to achieve the objective of price stability on a durable basis by maintaining inflation within the 5-7% target range.



Governor KP, Finance Minister discuss financial challenges

ISLAMABAD (APP): Governor Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Faisal Karim Kundi, called on Federal Finance Minister Muhammad Aurangzeb here on Monday to discuss financial challenges in the province.

The Governor was accompanied by the Parliamentary leader of Pakistan Peoples Party in KP assembly, Ahmad Karim Kundi.

They discussed financial challenges facing Khyber

Pakhtunkhwa, the provision of federal funds for development projects, and strategies to improve the province's economic situation.

Governor Kundi emphasized the need for financial support in the areas of education, health, and infrastructure to enhance the living standards of the province's residents.

He said that federal government collaboration is crucial for the economic development of the province and expressed hope that joint

efforts would lead to tangible improvements in the lives of the people.

In response, Finance Minister Aurangzeb assured the Governor of the federal government's commitment to supporting the province's development and prosperity.

He announced that additional funds would soon be allocated for both ongoing and new development projects, aimed at fostering economic growth in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa.

Minister inaugurates day care center

LAHORE (APP): Punjab Health Minister Khawaja Salman Rafique Monday inaugurated a new day care center for working lady doctors and female staff at the Children's Hospital Lahore.

On this occasion, Vice Chancellor University of Child Health Sciences Prof. Masood Sadiq, MD Children's Hospital Prof. Tipu Sultan, Prof. Junaid Rashid, Chairman Islamic Aid Mahmoodul Hasan, faculty members and others were present. The Canadian delegation also participated on this occasion.

The provincial health minister visited the day care center on this occasion and also cut the children's birthday cake. Prof. Masood Sadiq briefed about the facilities provided in the day care center. Provincial Health Minister Khawaja Salman Rafique also met the Canadian delegation on this occasion.

Rafique said that the establishment of a day care center for the children of the working lady doctors and staff of the Children's Hospital is a very good initiative. "We are grateful to Islamic Aid for supporting the establishment of the day care center. Newly established day care center has been made very beautiful. A gymnasium will also be established in the Children's Hospital soon," he said and added that the Punjab government is taking the best and basic steps for the treatment of children and prepared plan to expand Children's Hospital for the convenience of patients.

LESCO resolves 2,188 complaints

LAHORE (APP): Customers hearings are being conducted in LESCO region daily, while during the last day, a total of 2,486 complaints of various types were received out of which 2,188 complaints were redressed on the spot.

The series of public/customers hearings (open katchehry) are continued in all the eight circles of Lahore Electric Supply Company (LESCO) to address the customers' complaints regarding overbilling and other issues.

The LESCO spokesman confirmed to media here Monday that Northern Circle received a total of 398 complaints out of which 379 were resolved. Similarly, Central Circle resolved 645 complaints out of 723; Eastern Circle resolved 212 complaints out of 255; Southern Circle resolved 529 complaints out of 553; Nankana Sahib Circle resolved 77 complaints out of 89; Sheikhupura Circle resolved 86 complaints out of 119; Kasur Circle resolved 129 complaints out of 171; and Okara Circle resolved 131 complaints out of 178.

Commissioner for urgent action to combat smog

LAHORE (APP): Lahore Commissioner Zaid-bin-Maqsood and Secretary of the Punjab Environment Department Raja Jahangir Anwar held a review meeting to discuss the Green Zone Smog Lockdown Strategy, here on Monday.

The district administration and environment officials provided an update on ongoing measures to combat smog.

The officials reported that commercial generators within the Green Zone are being strictly monitored. BBQ and food outlets in the Shimla Pahari area are required to close by 8 PM, with ongoing monitoring of compliance. The shifting of

parking from the NADRA office in Shimla Pahari has resulted in improved air quality, and a shuttle service has been established from Bibi Pak Daman parking to the NADRA office.

Regular fog spraying and wet sweeping have been mandated throughout the area, while loading and unloading hours for vehicles entering the Green Zone have been restricted. All relevant departments are enforcing bans on encroachments and construction activities.

To enhance public awareness about smog, a door-to-door campaign has been initiated in the Shimla Pahari area, dis-

tributing educational materials to residents. Commissioner Zaid-bin-Maqsood emphasized the necessity of limiting commercial factors contributing to smog and urged increased awareness about wearing masks, encouraging residents to take this precaution seriously.

The district administration is fully cooperating with the Environment Department to address these issues. Key officials present at the meeting included Additional Commissioner Hamid Malhi, DG LDA Tahir Farooq, DC Lahore Syed Musa Raza, CTO Lahore Ammara Athar, and other environmental officers.

Mayor commends Karachi Corner at KPC library

KARACHI (APP): Mayor Karachi, Barrister Murtaza Wahab Monday said that the Karachi Corner at the Karachi Press Club library was a commendable initiative.

These remarks were made during a media interaction following the inauguration of the Karachi Corner at the Karachi Press Club library.

He offered the administration to establish similar libraries in places like Burns Garden, Bagh Ibane Qasim, Kidney Hill, and other locations in Karachi. He announced a grant of ten million rupees for the Karachi Press Club, as well as plans to construct a garden and a Rokeri as a personal initiative in memory of his parents.

The Mayor expressed that the Karachi Metropolitan Corporation (KMC) aims to work

closely with the journalist community and will continue efforts for the development and prosperity of the city. He believes that the Karachi Corner will prove effective for researchers studying the city, and it will help preserve the city's culture, literature, and knowledge more effectively.

Present at the occasion were the President of KPC, Saeed Sarbazi, Secretary Shoaib Ahmed, Library Secretary Abdul Razzak Abro, and other officials and members of the governing body.

Mayor Karachi Barrister Murtaza Wahab also announced that KMC will award the Karachi Medal to writers, poets, and citizens who have made significant contributions in various fields, particularly those conducting PhDs on Karachi.

He shared that he has fond childhood memories associated with the KPC, which has played a crucial role in the restoration of democracy and the fight for the rights of the oppressed.

He emphasized that all political parties and organizations raised their voices for their rights at the KPC, which exemplifies democratic values through its annual elections. He pledged to do everything possible for the betterment of the KPC and the journalist community.

The Mayor mentioned that renovations of Denso Hall and Khaliq Dina Hall libraries are ongoing, with plans to establish digital libraries at both locations to be opened to the public within a month. KMC is also ready to assist in improving private libraries.



LAHORE: Students participating in Art Work Competition organised by The Knowledge of Art Academy in collaboration with The Book Studio, NCBA University, University of Education and Birmingham University UK.

Punjab to present Rs630bn surplus budget next year: Azma

LAHORE (APP): Punjab Information Minister Azma Bokhari has that the KP government doesn't even have funds to pay employee salaries but still dreams of buying PIA.

At a press conference at DGPR, she said the Punjab government was set to present a surplus budget of Rs630 billion in 2025. "It's a joke that Maryam Nawaz is following Gandapur. Mian Nawaz Sharif never said that the Punjab government was planning to purchase PIA. All Pakistanis want the national airline to improve, and if investors from Karachi are interested in investing in PIA, it's a positive development," she added.

She said that KP needs jail reforms more urgently, as prisoners can break out of jails there. "When there was a forest fire in KP, their so-called revolutionary fire brigade didn't even have money to refuel their vehicles. Tackling smog is not easy; China has been fighting it for 26 years," she added. She noted that smog has become one of the biggest issues currently. "When the wind from India blows towards Pakistan, Lahore's

air becomes more polluted. We are aware that efforts are also being made on the Indian Punjab side. According to today's data, Delhi ranks first for smog, while Lahore is second. Delhi's air quality index is around 393, and Lahore's is close to 280. Primary schools in Punjab have been given holidays due to the smog. The Chief Minister of Punjab will soon write a letter to the CM of Indian Punjab," she added.

She mentioned that a news was published yesterday, claiming that all provinces except Punjab were financially stable, which was far from reality. "In 2025, Punjab is set to present a surplus budget of Rs630 billion. Punjab has cleared all its wheat loans since 1952 and is now free from the burden of a 56% markup," she maintained. "The Punjab government has invested Rs200 billion in treasury bills. If the amount is included in the budget, the news story would have ended right there. The PTI is using this news for political point scoring."

She said that Maryam Nawaz was introducing excellent projects in Punjab. "High-quality hospitals are

being built in Punjab, and the Punjab government is establishing the country's first public cancer hospital. The "Fitna Party" should tell us what new hospitals Gandapur has established in KP. Gandapur's actions are something no woman, or even a reasonable person, would do," she added.

She said that she was saddened to hear that Bushra Bibi cried in court. "When

Maryam Nawaz Sharif was in custody, we never saw her cry. It would have been better if Bushra Bibi had apologized for the false cases filed against Mian Nawaz Sharif, Maryam Nawaz and Rana Sanaullah. No matter what drama they play now, they will have to provide receipts, Bushra Bibi coming forward on the rostrum and speaking out was a good media stunt," she added.

پی ایے ایف بیس ، پشاور

کوشش/آفرزد کارپیں

پی ایے ایف بیس پشاور 7.9 مرلہ اراضی مال روڈ، صدر باغ، قابل آری پبلک اسکول (گرگوشین) پشاور کیسٹ کسی بھی شہرت یافتہ کیڑی/کینے کے لیے کارے پر PPRa تو انہیں کے مطابق محتاج ہے اس مسئلے میں پیش طلب کی۔

شراکاردہ ذیل ہوں گی:-

۱۔ فرمز/کمپنیاں یا افراد کی آوری پر پیشگیس رستروڈ ہونے چاہئیں۔

۲۔ خواہشمند فرمز/کمپنیاں یا افراد اپنی پیشگیس مع فرمیشنل رپورٹ 20 نومبر 2024 تک 11 بجے تک پہنچادیں۔

۳۔ پیشگیس دی دن 20 نومبر 2024 تک 11:30 بجے کو ملی جائیں گی۔

۴۔ کامیاب فرم/کمپنی یا فرد کے ساتھ تین سال کا کنٹریکٹ کیا جائے گا، جو باہمی رضامندی سے مزید تین سال کے لیے بڑھایا جائے گا۔

خواہشمند فرمز/کمپنیاں یا افراد دیے گئے نمبر پر 18 نومبر 2024 تک 9:30 بجے تک دیکھنے کے لیے آفس پیرسچارج، پریسٹن کواڈرون سے رابطہ کریں۔ فون نمبر: 0323-9411311

PJA launches training program on forensics

LAHORE (APP): The Punjab Judicial Academy (PJA) on Monday launched a five-day training program focused on understanding forensic science, medico-legal practices, autopsies, and arms and ammunition analysis.

This program aims to educate Additional District and Sessions Judges, Senior Civil Judges, and Civil Judges on the latest techniques and best practices in forensic analysis and insights. In his address during the inaugural session, Acting Director General of the Punjab Judicial Academy, Muhammad Hafeez Ullah Khan, emphasized the importance of continuous learning in the legal field. He stated that the Academy's training programs are designed to ensure that judges remain updated on recent developments in civil and criminal law.

He highlighted that the current training program covers a range of topics, including forensic analysis, medico-legal practices, autopsy reports, and arms and ammunition analysis. He added that experts from various fields have been invited to deliver lectures and lead discussions, providing participants with comprehensive training and hands-on experience.

He further noted that the program is structured to equip judges with the necessary skills and knowledge to handle cases involving forensic evidence effectively.

**DIRECTORATE OF HOUSING, AIR HQS
PAF BASE NUR KHAN, RAWALPINDI**

TENDER NOTICE

1. Directorate of Housing, Air Headquarters Islamabad invites sealed bids from firms / contractors having valid registration with Pakistan Engineering Council (PEC) in Category C-4 or above for the work as per the following details:

S. No	Description of Work	Time of Completion	Earnest Money	Tender Opening Date / Time
1.	Infrastructure Works (Phase-II) at Akora Khattak	06 Months	2% of bid amount	18 Nov, 2024 (1100 Hrs)

2. Interested firms / contractors may collect eligibility criteria / terms and conditions (free of cost), and tender documents on provision of Bank Draft worth Rs 5,000/- non-refundable in favour of Dte of Housing Air Headquarters, Islamabad from the address given below. E-Tender documents can be obtained from ddenghshg@gmail.com after payment of tender fee.

**Directorate of Housing, Air Headquarters
PAF Base Nur Khan, Rawalpindi
Tel: 0344-9222070 / 0333-9004819**

No.F.7-4/2024-25/DM/BHSP

**GOVERNMENT OF PAKISTAN
BORDER HEALTH SERVICES – PAKISTAN**

M/o. National Health Services Regulations & Coordination
Block-47, Pakistan Secretariat Saddar, Karachi Phone# 021-99201252 Fax# 021-99203328

**TENDER NOTICE FOR SUPPLY OF DRUGS/ MEDICINES
FOR THE FINANCIAL YEAR, 2024-25**

Sealed bid “Single Stage Two Envelope” procedure are invited for supply of **Drugs / Medicines** from Manufacture, Authorized Dealers and General Suppliers. All items must be delivered at the respected Sub-ordinate offices across the country. The Tender Participation forms with Terms & Condition along with list required may be obtained from Border Health Services - Pakistan, Block-47, Pakistan Secretariat, Saddar Karachi, from 06.11.2024 to 20.11.2024 (15 working days) during working hours. The Tender will be accepted up to 20.11.2024 (10:00 am). The Tender will be open on the same day 20.11.2024 at 12:00 pm, Border Health Services - Pakistan, Karachi in the presence of bidder or their representative available at that time. The Members of the Procurement Committee reserves the right to accept or reject any/ all tenders whole or in accordance with the PPRA rules. The department has the right to increase / decrease the quantity of the items at any stage.

(DR. ANWAR UL HAQUE)
DIRECTOR

PID(K)1405/24

WAPDA AUCTION NOTICE

Following Auction for the disposal of under mentioned vehicles belonging to WAPDA Formations on “AS IS WHERE IS BASIS” will be carried out on the place, date and time given below.

Description	Place of Auction	Date & Time of Auction
Auction No. 01	(P&D) WAPDA Sunny View, Kashmir Road, Lahore	25-11-2024 at 11:00 hrs.
Auction No. 02	(P&D) WAPDA Sunny View, Kashmir Road, Lahore	26-11-2024 at 11:00 hrs.
Auction No. 03	(P&D) WAPDA Sunny View, Kashmir Road, Lahore	
Auction No. 04	(P&D) WAPDA Sunny View, Kashmir Road, Lahore	
Auction No. 05	WAPDA Hospital Khanewal Road Multan	27-11-2024 at 11:00 hrs.
Auction No. 06	WAPDA Hospital Quetta	29-11-2024 at 14:00 hrs.

Auction No.	Description of Vehicles	Auction No.	Description of Vehicles
01	Lot-1: Hino Bus MI-6546, M-1983 (Registration Book N/A) Lot-2: Toyota Hiace LOQ-6698, M-1992 Lot-3: Toyota Hiace LOT-1568, M-1994 Lot-4: Toyota Hiace LOQ-7036, M-1993 Lot-5: Toyota Hiace LPT-265, M-1993 Lot-6: Mazda Van LOJ-7638, M-1992 Lot-7: Mazda Van LOF-8397, M-1991 Lot-8: Mazda Van LOF-8396, M-1991 Lot-9: Mazda Van LOF-8395, M-1991 Lot-10: Toyota Hiace LOH-7041, M-1991 Lot-11: Toyota Hiace MRB-597, M-1985 Lot-12: Hino Bus LOT-5560, M-1995 Lot-13: Hino Bus LPT-804, M-1994 Lot-14: Hino Bus LPT-769, M-1994 Lot-15: Mitsubishi Pajero Jeep (03 Door) B-5133, M-1987 Lot-1 to Lot-15: Sunny view Kashmir Road, Lahore.	03	Lot-1: Mitsubishi Ambulance GAJ-2185 M-1992 (Registration Book N/A) Lot-2: Mitsubishi Ambulance STF-330, M-1992 Lot-3: Mitsubishi Ambulance FDR-6245, M-1993 (Registration Book is duplicate) Lot-4: SGF-8680 MITSUBISHI AMBULANCE M-1992 (Registration Book is duplicate) Location: Lot-1,2: WAPDA Hospital Gujranwala Lot-3: WAPDA Hospital Faisalabad Lot-4: WAPDA Fortified Dispensary Sargodha
02	Lot-1: Toyota Hiace (3 door) IDD-3022, M-1990 Lot-2: Mitsubishi D/Cabin IDD-3158, M-1990 (Registration Book N/A) Lot-3: Toyota D/Cabin LHK-5378, M-1984 (Registration Book N/A) Lot-4: Mitsubishi Pajero Jeep (3 Door) B-2257, M-1987 Lot-5: Toyota Hilux D/Cabin LHN-5008, M-1984 Lot-6: Daihatsu Rocky Jeep (3 Door) LHR-4239, M-1986 Lot-7: Toyota Hilux D/Cabin OAG-849, M-1993 (Registration Book N/A) Lot-8: Toyota Hilux D/Cabin OAG-840, M-1994 (Registration Book N/A) Lot-9: Toyota Hilux D/Cabin B-2094, M-1994 Lot-10: Toyota Hilux S/Cabin SGH-1402, M-1995 Lot-11: Toyota Hilux D/Cabin CJ-3393, M-1993 (Registration Book N/A) Location: Lot-1 to Lot-11: 3-Canal Bank Mughalpur WAPDA.	04	Lot-1: Suzuki Van LEI:8508, M-1988 Lot-2: Suzuki Potohar Jeep LEI-15-7889, M-1988 Location: Project Director (H&R) Directorate WAPDA CMTL Building WAPDA Town Phase-II, Lahore.
03	Lot-1: Suzuki Bolan MNT-772, M-1996 (Purchase record N/A) Lot-2: Toyota Hiace MNJ-5468, M-1985 Lot-3: Mitsubishi MHA-8512, M-1993 Lot-4: Mitsubishi MNR-7468, M-1993 Location: Lot-1: WAPDA Hospital Khanewal Road Multan Lot-2: WAPDA Basic Dispensary Bahawalpur, Near Chock Fawara Lot-3: Thermal Power Station Colony Kot Addu Road Muzaffargarh	05	Lot-1: Suzuki Bolan MNT-772, M-1996 (Purchase record N/A) Lot-2: Toyota Hiace MNJ-5468, M-1985 Lot-3: Mitsubishi MHA-8512, M-1993 Lot-4: Mitsubishi MNR-7468, M-1993 Location: Lot-1: WAPDA Hospital Khanewal Road Multan Lot-2: WAPDA Basic Dispensary Bahawalpur, Near Chock Fawara Lot-3: Thermal Power Station Colony Kot Addu Road Muzaffargarh
04	Lot-1: Toyota Hilux Ambulance QAD-3660, M-1986 (From G available only) Lot-2: Mazda Van Ambulance QAF-4157, M-1991 (From G available only) Lot-3: Mitsubishi Ambulance LOD-4087, M-1991 (Registration Book N/A) Location: WAPDA Hospital Quetta.	06	Lot-1: Toyota Hilux Ambulance QAD-3660, M-1986 (From G available only) Lot-2: Mazda Van Ambulance QAF-4157, M-1991 (From G available only) Lot-3: Mitsubishi Ambulance LOD-4087, M-1991 (Registration Book N/A) Location: WAPDA Hospital Quetta.

Terms & Conditions:
1. All the interested bidders shall be required to furnish Bid Security/Token Money (returnable) in the form of CDR or Bank draft, the bid security shall be **Rs. 25,000/-** for each lot separately.
2. No bidder shall be allowed to participate in the auction without depositing the bid security/token money in favour of Director General (Purchase & Disposal) WAPDA.
3. The bidder shall be required to provide copy of CNIC along with correct Postal Address and Mobile number before participating in the auction at least 30 minutes before the start of auction.
4. The successful bidder shall be required to deposit 1/4th (25%) amount of his highest bid at the fall of hammer. Remaining 3/4th (75%) amount plus all applicable taxes shall be required to be deposited within 21 days from the date of issuance of letter of acceptance by the Competent Authority; failing this, the earlier deposited (1/4th of the bid) would be forfeited without any further notice.
5. In case the successful bidder fails to deposit the 1/4th amount of his bid at the fall of hammer, his earlier deposit token money **Rs. 25,000/-** will be forfeited in favor of CEO/DG(P&D) WAPDA and the same lot will be re-auctioned. Moreover, he will not be allowed to participate in other Auctions.
6. If any type extra tax is adhered to from the government during this period, the successful bidder shall be bound to deposit.
7. The Auction is conducted on “**AS IS WHERE IS BASIS**” therefore Bidders are required to inspect and satisfy regarding the documents/ File & condition of vehicles for which he is bidding before submitting bid. Failure to inspect the disposable vehicles/ Documents will. Not be advanced as a plea in any claim.
8. Only authorize Representative will be allowed to attend bid opening on behalf of bidder on day of opening of Auction.
9. WAPDA is not responsible for the availability of Vehicle Files in Excise & Taxation Department or elsewhere.
10. Further information regarding the auction can be obtained from the office of Chief Engineer/ Director General (Purchase & Disposal) WAPDA Sunny View, Kashmir Road, Lahore during working hours.
11. Objection, if any, with regards to auction process should be raised by the bidders at the spot; otherwise, late object/ claim would not be entertained, considered.
12. All rights reserved as per PPRA Rules as well as WAPDA Material Disposal Procedure to accept/ cancel, the highest bid/ bidding process without assigning any reason.
13. Any other terms & conditions will be communicated on the date of auction.

**Director (Disposal & Store) O/O CE/ DG (Purchase & Disposal) WPADA, Sunny View Lahore.
042-99200588, 042-99200587, 042-99206663, Email id: dgpd.wapda@gmail.com**

This notice is also available at PPRA Website: www.ppra.org.pk
Website: www.wapda.gov.pk
DONATE FOR DIAMER-BASHA & MOHMAND DAMS

PID(L)1247/24PRD(L)/WAPDA/147(2024-25)



PESHAWAR: Group photo of the participants of the three-day Criminology conference at the University of Peshawar with Provincial Minister for Higher Education Meena Khan Afridi.

Punjab at peak of financial mismanagement: Muzammil

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: Advisor to Chief Minister Khyber Pakhtunkhwa for Finance Muzammil Aslam has said that the Punjab Government formed on Form 47 under the leadership of Maryam Nawaz is at the peak of financial mismanagement and corruption.

The so-called 'best performing' Punjab government has awarded contracts worth Rs 1.16 billion to

preferred contractors for just Rs 390 million, while last year the same contract for minerals was awarded for Rs 1.16 billion.

He expressed these views in a statement issued from his office.

He said that the so-called best performing Punjab government has injected Rs 770 million into the government treasury.

The days of this Form 47 government are numbered, so it is busy cleaning its hands in a hurry.

This is the reason why the Punjab government incurred a deficit of Rs 160 billion in the budget during the first quarter.

On the other hand, the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa government has awarded the first-ever placer gold contract for Rs 4.92 billion.

Despite such mismanagement and corruption, a team of spokespersons is working day and night to portray the performance of Punjab Government in the media as excellent.

Power suspension notified

PESHAWAR (APP): Peshawar Electric Supply Company (PESCO) on Monday notified that due to maintenance work power supply will remain suspended from Jamrud Grid Station on 6th and 10th from 8:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. resultantly, consumers of Hayatabad 1, 3, 4, 5, New Hayatabad, Health Care Hospital, RMI, Kacha Garhi, Karkhano, PIC, Hayatabad Surgical, Peshawar General Foundation Hospital, Cell Wood, Northern Bottling, PCB, Alhaji, BSF, Olympia, Omoac, Industrial Estate, Mohmand Steel, Hafiz, Frontier Tech Wood, PPI, Mika Steel, Express 1, 2, 3, 4 and PHA feeders will face inconvenience.

It said that power supply will also remain suspended from Phase 7 Hayatabad Grid Station on 6th and 10th from 8:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. resultantly, consumers of Green Wood, Frontier Ceramics feeders will face inconvenience.

The power supply will remain suspended from Peshawar University grid station on 6th and 10th November from 8 a.m. to 2 p.m. resultantly consumers of Malakandher, Engineering, Agriculture, Taj Abad, Taj Abad 2, Danish Abad, Gharib Abad, Rahat Abad 1, CMB, Old Bara Road, JAF, Academy Town, Circular Road, Askari 6, Regi feeders will face inconvenience. The power supply will remain suspended from Peshawar Cantt grid station on from 8 a.m. to 2 p.m. resultantly, consumers of Tehkal, Islamia College, KTH, commercial, Jahangir Abad, NCR, NCR, Airport Road, PAF Base, Saddar Road, Mall Road, MES 2, MES, Palosi 1, Marble Industrial, CAA, Maghdarzi, Behari Colony, Tehkal Payan, Bank of Khyber Scarp 1 and Kababian feeders will face inconvenience.

Nida Sharif Qureshi defends PhD thesis

PESHAWAR: Nida Sharif Qureshi, a PhD scholar in the Department of Teachers' Education at Qurtuba University's Dera Ismail Khan Campus, has successfully defended her research thesis titled "Impact of Innovative Teaching Strategies on Active Participation of Secondary School Students." The defense took place at the Peshawar Campus of Qurtuba University, where Qureshi presented her findings to a panel of esteemed examiners. Her supervisor, Prof. Dr. Asif Jamil, praised her comprehensive research and contributions to the field. The internal examiner, Prof. Dr. Umar Ali, and the external examiner, Prof. Dr. Iqbal Amin Khan from Malakand University, also lauded her work for its relevance and practical implications in educational settings. Her research explores how innovative teaching methods can enhance student engagement and participation, offering valuable insights for educators and policymakers alike.

Advisor on Health chairs reforms review meeting

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: A high-level meeting of the Health Department was held under the chairmanship of Health Advisor Ihtisham Ali.

The meeting was attended by Special Secretary Health Ghafoor Shah, Special Secretary Health Budget and Accounts Habibullah, Additional Secretary Fayaz Sherpao, Director General Health Services Dr. Muhammad Saleem, DG PHSA Dr. Abdul Waheed, Chief HSRU Dr. Khalil Iftikhar, Chief Planning Officer Qaiser Alam, ADG Public Health Dr. Shahid Younis, Deputy Director IT Zakrullah, Deputy Chief HSRU Dr. Majid, and other relevant officials.

During the review meeting on departmental

reforms, Advisor Ihtisham Ali assessed the progress on a 30-point agenda with concerned officials. He issued instructions for implementing these reforms and evaluated the current progress.

It was reported to the Advisor that the IT cell had mostly completed training of DHO and MS staff across districts as part of the health sector's digitization process. Measures have also been taken to enhance HRMIS, IT equipment availability, and staff capabilities.

The Health Advisor directed that appointments and postings of DHOs and MS are now the responsibility of the Health Department's Placement Committee, which will appoint individuals from a pre-approved panel. He

stressed, "From now on, no one should bring recommendations to me."

The Health Advisor was informed that, to decentralize authority, RDGs have been empowered to grant essential leave permissions.

He also instructed that all DHOs and MS should immediately install face recognition devices to ensure biometric attendance of medical staff. Furthermore, all MS are directed to activate the queue management system.

He emphasized that DHOs should take immediate action against individuals identified by M&E reports.

Digital issuance of orders has been implemented in all health directorates, and from today, attachments and additional

charges in the Health Secretariat and directorates will be abolished.

Officials holding dual charges in ADP schemes and projects will be immediately de-notified. To facilitate staff, the seniority list will be promptly published on the Health Department's website.

The Health Advisor was informed that over 1,600 vehicles have been registered in HRMIS.

Correspondence with the Excise Department will also be initiated to prevent the unauthorized use of health department vehicles.

The Advisor concluded by saying, "Anyone wishing to work in their area of specialty in health should come directly to me; any future attempts to influence transfers or postings will not be tolerated."

PHC grants bail to alleged facilitator in Badabher massacre

Humayun Khan

PESHAWAR: Peshawar High Court (PHC) single member bench of Justice Sahibzada Asadullah granted bail to alleged facilitator in Bada Bher massacre while rejected

Ullah including four women and four children, on 25th June, on Monday.

The suspects allegedly committed the murders over a property dispute, showing no mercy to the victims.

During the hearing, Abdul Fayyaz advocate

stated that Rooh Ullah and Farman Ullah were directly implicated in the case, while Qulander was accused of facilitating the crime.

However, the defense counsel argued that the allegations against the accused were baseless and that they were not

present at the scene.

PHC's single member bench of Justice Sahibzada Asadullah Khan rejected the bail applications of Rohullah and Farmanullah but accepted alleged facilitator Qulander's bail request after conclusion of arguments.

Saif criticizes Maryam Nawaz's Punjab airline decision

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: Barrister Dr. Saif, Advisor to the Chief Minister of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa for Information and Public Relations, has termed Maryam Nawaz's decision to establish Punjab Airline

as "laughable". He expressed astonishment that while Maryam Nawaz is buying national assets, her uncles are selling them at very low prices.

Dr. Saif questioned Maryam Nawaz's ability to manage an airline, stating that if she can fix Pakistan

International Airlines (PIA), why couldn't her father and uncles do the same during their multiple terms in power?

He further criticized the Sharif family's for prioritizing personal interests over national ones, added that the airline would serve

the family's needs, including flying to London for medical treatment. Dr. Saif proposed to rename the airline as a "Jati Amra Airline".

Barrister Dr. Saif further said that Maryam Nawaz's might start creating TikTok videos dressed as a pilot.

Govt finalizes arrangements for Horse & Cattle Show

PESHAWAR (APP): Arrangements for organizing a three-day Horse & Cattle Show at Karnal Sher Khan Stadium from November 8 to 10, 2024 were finalized here on Monday. Public entry to the show will be free.

Chief Minister Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Ali Amin Gandapur will inaugurate the three-day show on November 8.

On the special directives of Chief Minister Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Ali Amin Gandapur an important meeting was held here at the Office of the Commissioner Peshawar Division regarding the preparations for the event with Provincial Sports

Minister Syed Fakhar Jahan in the chair.

Besides, Commissioner Peshawar Division Riaz Khan Mehsud, Deputy Commissioner Peshawar, Director General Sports, Chief Executive WSSP, SP Security and SP Traffic, other concerned administrative officers attended the meeting.

The arrangements were finalized for the successful holding of the three-day show while directives were also issued to the police and traffic authorities to formulate a security and traffic plan for the festival.

Similarly, Chief Executive Officer WSSP was also directed for cleaning arrangements.

Addressing the participants of the meeting, the Provincial Minister for Sports and Youth Affairs, Syed Fakhar Jehan said that the event is very important in the history and culture of the province, saying the provincial government is making all out efforts to keep the culture and traditional sports alive.

On this occasion, the Commissioner Peshawar Division Riaz Khan Mehsud issued directives for making the three-day festival successful in Peshawar and to use all resources for maximum participation of the people and asked for a daily report.

According to the briefing given by the Sports

Department, in addition to horse and cattle races, pigeon races, traditional games, traditional music, art exhibition, traditional dance, family festival, mushaira, dog show and vintage car show will be held during this three-day show. One thousand horses will participate in the horse race.

Similarly, 16 competitions will be held in traditional sports, Kabaddi, Dargal, Camel Race, Camel Dance, Dog Race, camel race, camel dance and horse race will be organized while the inaugural program will feature music, air-gliding traditional music and traditional dance.

Health Department signs MoU to enhance access to LHWs services

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: The Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Health Department and the Population Welfare Department have signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) aimed at improving the utilization of Lady Health Workers (LHWs) for family planning and maternal and child health services. The agreement was signed by Dr. Muhammad Saleem, Director General of Health Services, and Ayesha Ehsan, Director General of Population Welfare.

The ceremony was attended by Health Advisor Ihtisham Ali and Special Assistant for Forest Environment and Wildlife Peer Musawir Khan Ghazi, underscoring the collaborative effort between the two departments.

Under this MoU, both departments will work to ensure better access to LHW services to enhance family planning and maternal-child health outcomes. The agreement establishes a framework for improved coordination between the departments, enabling LHWs to deliver more effective family planning and health services.

This initiative is expected to significantly reduce stunting, neonatal mortality, and maternal deaths during pregnancy, contributing to the overall improvement of health indicators in the region.

Combating smog: an urgent solution required to save living creatures, environment

PESHAWAR (APP): As the sun sets behind a thick haze in Kohi Sufaid Mountain at Khyber district, Peshawarties, which once enjoyed the fragrance of Gul e Dowadi these days, are exposed to various environmental hazards mostly caused by smog and air pollution.

This pervasive winter smog, primarily stemming from traffic emissions, brick kilns, and waste burning at open places, have started negative effects on the human health and ecosystem in Peshawar Valley.

In recent years, cities like Peshawar have witnessed an upward increase in air pollution levels due to massive traffic jams, brick

kilns and marble factories, particularly during the winter season.

The PM 2.5 level pollution can lead to severe respiratory issues, cardiovascular diseases, and stunted children.

Gulzar Rehman, former conservator of forest said that PM 2.5 air pollution is a silent killer, emphasizing the grave risks posed by smog.

"Many individuals are unaware of the long-term effects of smog, mostly caused by air pollution, until they become victims to asthma, lung cancer, chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD) and heart complications.

"The primary issues behind this environmental

problem are vehicular emissions, industrial discharges, brick kilns and burning of solid waste at open," he said.

The tragic story of Hosan Zadgai, a 65-year-old resident of Nowshera, has exemplified the grim reality of air and household pollution. She had fallen prey to the chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD)—an ailment mostly linked to air pollution in a local hospital.

Hosan's battle ended after being diagnosed with advanced COPD, a condition exacerbated by the increasingly hazardous smog that enveloped several areas of the country during winter months.

"My mother collapsed

suddenly while preparing breakfast," recounted Shageef Bagum, Hosan's daughter while talking to APP.

"Despite the doctors' best efforts over 16 days in various wards of Lady Reading Hospital, the pollution-induced COPD took her life." Shageef's heartbreak echoed the experiences of countless families facing similar tragedies, as COPD has become the third leading cause of death globally.

According to Dr. Sirzamin Khan, a senior chest specialist at Govt Rashid Hussain Shaheed Hospital Nowshera, COPD claims approximately 3.23 million lives annually. In Pakistan alone, he said the

mortality rates are alarmingly high, with 138.2 deaths per 100,000 males and 41.3 per 100,000 females attributed to COPD and related diseases.

Dr Sirzamin highlighted that the disease, characterized by severely restricted airflow and chronic respiratory issues, is fueled by environmental factors, including poor air quality.

The prevalence of COPD and asthma in developing nations like Pakistan stands at 2.1% and 4.3%, respectively, he said, adding tobacco use and household pollution also remains a significant contributor to these chronic conditions.

"Ninety percent of COPD deaths in individuals

under 70 occur in low- and middle-income countries where air pollution and smog are high compared to developed states," Dr Sirzamin Khan noted.

Millions of vehicles emissions contributed to the toxic air quality in cities like Peshawar, Dr. Khan said and advocated for an urgent action, including stricter regulations on vehicle emissions and relocating polluting industries, such as brick kilns and stone crushing factories, away from populated areas of Peshawar.

"COPD is manageable but not curable," he explained, "With early diagnosis and proper treatment, patients can live for years.

"Awareness among people against smog is crucial," Dr. Sirzamin Khan said and called on media, civil society, and health advocates to disseminate information regularly against air pollution, smog and its relationship with COPD.

Public campaigns, educational initiatives, and community engagement are essential to drive a positive change.

As cities continue to grapple with the health impacts of smog and air pollution, the time for collective action was the need of the hour. The experts said combating air pollution was not just a public health issue, rather it's a moral imperative for which

every person should play a positive role by planting canopy trees and ensuring the fitness of their vehicles.

They suggested lockdowns at smog hit areas, formation of environmental clubs at schools and colleges and launching of short videos on social media highlighting negative effects of smog on living creatures.

"We need not only educate the community about the dangers of smog but also push for stricter enforcement of environmental laws." In addition, increasing green spaces and promoting the use of renewable energy sources can help combat the rising levels of air pollution and smog in the country.



In brief

Motorcyclist killed in mishap

MUZAFFARGARH (INP): A motorcyclist died in a road mishap on Patafi chowk DG Khan road, here on Monday. According to rescue officials, Amir Aziz(40) was riding a bike, when an unidentified vehicle hit his two wheeler near Patafi chowk DG Khan road. As a result, he died on the spot. The driver allegedly managed to escape from the incident, he added.

DC inspects schools, hospital

B A H A W A L P U R (APP): Deputy Commissioner Dr. Farhan Farooq visited Khairpur Tamewali tehsil, during which he inspected various public facilities and educational institutions. Assistant Commissioner Khairpur Tamewali Aamir Mujtaba accompanied him. The Deputy Commissioner visited Government Fazil High School and Government Girls English Medium High School Khairpur Tamewali, where he interacted with students in the classrooms and assessed the teaching process. He also inspected the school library, cleanliness, and tree plantation efforts. Later, the Deputy Commissioner visited the Tehsil Headquarters Hospital, where he thoroughly reviewed medical facilities, the stock of medicines, and the attendance of the staff. Dr. Farhan Farooq urged the hospital administration to improve the delivery of health services. During the visit, Dr. Farhan Farooq also inspected Jinnah Park and assessed the cleanliness and tree plantation in the park. He instructed the park administration to take special measures to water and maintain the plants. Finally, the Deputy Commissioner visited the Khairpur Tamewali market and issued directives for removing encroachments and improving cleanliness. He instructed the administration to take immediate action to provide citizens with a clean and organized environment.

Helmets among bikers distributed

TIMERGARA: Malakand Youth Assembly distributed free helmets among motorcyclists to ensure road safety as well as to encourage public for adopting such measure, on Monday, Chairman Malakand Youth Assembly, Qazi Habibullah and Speaker Asif Iqbal Sadat supported the initiative, while Traffic Police In-charge Khan Nazar Khan handed out free helmets and awareness pamphlets to dozens of motorcyclists in Timergara. Khan Nazar Khan emphasized that wearing helmets can significantly increase motorcyclists' chances of staying safe during accidents. He warned that those who do not wear helmets will face legal action. Thanks to the collaboration with the Malakand Youth Assembly, free helmets were distributed in Shaheed Chowk, Timergara, to promote helmet usage. Motorcyclists were advised to wear helmets and avoid one-wheeling. Meanwhile, there has been a significant increase in electricity load-shedding on the Balambat feeder. Despite the cold weather, prolonged power outages are disrupting daily life. This feeder, which serves Dir Scouts Cantonment, district courts, TMAs Timergara and Balambat, the Government Postgraduate College, Girls' College Balambat, the police line, and numerous government offices, as well as a population of hundreds of thousands, faces hours-long load-shedding, with no response from relevant authorities.

KP CM Advisor inaugurates hospital

F.P. Report

RUSTAM: Advisor to Chief Minister Khyber Pakhtunkhwa for Health Ihtisham Khan Advocate, Special Assistant for Technical Education Tufail Anjum, MNA Mujahid Khan and Abbas Khan inaugurated private medical hospital.

On this occasion PTI Senior officials and workers were also present. Chakor Foundation Hospital has been built with the support of social personalities Asad Khan and Abbas Khan, in which there will be online treatment and treatment of diseases of all fields, which will also come on record in every major hospital. Speaking to the media on this occasion, Health Adviser Ihtesham

Khan Advocate said that Chief Minister Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Ali Amin Khan has approved a huge amount of money for the health department, which will provide the best health facilities in every small and big health center in the province.

The quality of hospitals will further improve. The establishment of an online hospital in Adda Rustam, Dubai will provide the best method of healthcare in a rural area. The provincial government is trying to provide maximum health facilities in all BHUs, RHCs and type D hospitals so that the people can get better treatment facilities at their doorsteps in rural areas.

He further said that efforts are being made to

establish private hospitals in areas where access to doctors is not possible. In response to a question, he said that no deal has been made, the deal can only be done if the rule of law and constitution is established in the country, so that the rule of law is established in the country, there is no grouping or differences in the party, everyone is on the same page. If one gives an impression, it is wrong.

In the end, Special Assistant for Technical Education Tufail Anjum thanked the hospital staff and donors for their efforts to make Dubai Adda Rustam an online private hospital where free treatment will be available online for poor people and his record will come online in every major hospital.

Labourers role in development lauded

F.P. Report

GHAZI: Chief Engineer and Project Director of the Tarbela Fifth Extension Project, Waseem Raza praised the bravery and hard work of laborers who face daily risks on the challenging project. Speaking at a workshop on the topic of "Issues of Construction Workers and Media in Pakistan". He emphasized the dangers involved and the dedication shown by workers who put their lives on the risk while performing their duties.

The workshop was organized by major labor unions like BWI, IFI, and PFBWW, brought together workers, union leaders, and journalists to discuss safety and support for laborers. Raza's message highlighted the importance of valuing workers' safety and well-being in such demanding projects.

Project Director Tarbela Fifth Extension Project, described the undertaking as one of immense complexity and risk. He noted the unique challenges involved, such as breaking down 50-year-old concrete, navigating long tunnels and working in razor wire demand patience and resilience from the workers. Raza praised the laborers as the backbone of the project, recognizing the daily risks they face and affirming their crucial role. "Our workers are the foundation of this project, and their safety and well-being are always a top priority," he said.

Emphasizing his commitment to addressing

workers' needs, Raza assured that laborers are central to every aspect of the project's planning and execution. Waseem Raza highlighted the availability of the Grievance Redressal Committee (GRC) as a dedicated forum for addressing workers' concerns on the Tarbela Fifth Extension (T5) Project.

While he acknowledged that some issues may experience delays, he assured that no concern is overlooked, with matters like low wages given top priority. Raza also emphasized the vital role the media plays in bringing workers' issues to light, further supporting efforts to improve working conditions and resolve grievances.

The several prominent figures and labor leaders including Provincial President of Pakistan United Workers Federation Iqbal Khan, General Secretary Razam Khan, Chief Organizer Rasool Khan, Deputy General Secretary Ehsanullah Khan, and PFBWW General Secretary Aslam Adil, Sharif Ahmad Khan, Assistant Director of the Labor Department, EOBI Director Gohar Khan, Hamid Khan, HR Manager at PCCCL, Sajid Mehmood, Representative of the project's consultants, Farhan Sheikh, PCCCL Safety Manager and others attended the workshop.

Representatives from Indus Press Club Ghazi, Swabi Electronic & Print Media Association, GRC, and workers from the Tarbela Fifth Extension Project also participated.

Renowned labor leader Rafiq Khan served as stage secretary, facilitating the program and discussions.

Provincial President of Pakistan United Workers Federation Iqbal Khan in his speech said that only 30% of organizations in Pakistan adhere to labor laws, while 70% operate like forced labor camps. He stressed the need to fight for workers' rights alongside the media. General Secretary Razam Khan expressed hope that the PUFW will continue its struggle and emerge successful, and he also pointed out that Khyber Pakhtunkhwa has suffered from unrest for 40 years, which has severely impacted its industries.

Assistant Director of Labor Sharif Ahmad stated that large business units comply with labor laws, but small units often face challenges. EOBI Director Gohar Khan mentioned that 5,000 workers are being given pensions by the Chinese construction company PCCCL, and further improvements are being made in this regard.

Chairman of Indus Press Club Qazi Muhammad Asif commented that journalists, who are often referred to as the laborers of the pen, face countless issues daily. Despite legislation for their protection, the federal and provincial governments have shown little interest in implementation. Swabi Electronic and Print Media Association President Azmat Ali Khan emphasized the importance of highlighting workers' issues on a priority basis.

Deworming campaign kicks off across KP

F.P. Report

LOWER DIR: Deworming campaign in government and private schools kicked off in the district here on Monday. According to official sources in the elementary and secondary education department, about 850,000 children aged 5-14 years would be given strawberry-

flavoured chewable deworming tablets at schools till Nov 8. The official said that proper training to the concerned teachers and other officials of the health department had already been done. The campaign is aimed to protect children from stomach worms.

Meanwhile the district education officer Inayatullah

asked parents to cooperate with teachers and health professionals to make the campaign a success. Muhammad Imran, a school teacher, told this scribe on contact that the children were motivated prior to the drive. He said that some of the school children were reluctant to take the tablets, however they were convinced.



QUETTA: Relatives of missing persons addressing a press conference.

Food Authority conducts 2908 inspections

F.P. Report

TOBA TEK SINGH: Deputy Director (Operations) Punjab Food Authority Toba Tek Singh, Muhammad Adnan Haider conducted 2908 inspections across the district in the month of October. In which we have closed 10 units of sales and production till reformation and registered 03 cases against adulteration and forgery mafia and hefty fines of 17 Lakh 20 thousand were also imposed for selling expired and defective food items and poor sanitation arrangements.

He added that reform notices were also issued to 1163 units for reform. 1197 liters of adulterated and substandard milk and 335 kg of meat of sick and dead animals were destroyed on the spot.

Also destroyed 2500 substandard and defective ice lollies and 388 kg of other defective and expired food items on the spot. Apart from this, vigorous actions are being taken against adulteration and forgery mafia. In the end, He said that providing quality food to the people is our top priority.

Security tightened

F.P. Report

LARKANA: Deputy Inspector General (DIG) Nasir Aftab Patahan ordered to strengthen security measures in all the five districts of Larkana range for the seventh day in relation to the security of the polio campaign.

During the ongoing polio campaign in the five districts of Larkana range, Shikarpur, Larkana, Jacobabad, Qamber Shahdadkot, 4475 police personnel are performing the security duties of the staff of polio teams, while the orders issued by Larkana for the care of polio teams in the entire district range. The SSPs of each district are personally reviewing the polio teams and safety arrangements.

Compulsory training course for PMS concludes

F.P. Report

KOHAT: The 50th Compulsory Training Course for Professional Management Service Group was concluded in Staff Training Institute Peshawar the other day. At the end, a certificate distribution ceremony was held at the Staff Training Institute in which certificates were distributed to the officers who completed the course.

Four officers, including PS to Commissioner Kohat Rashid Munir, who had outstanding success and leadership skills in the course, was also awarded additional certificates of appreciation.

At least 41 Employees completed the 14-week Compulsory Training Course for PMS and 5 employees for PPS, which lasted for 9 weeks. Two female Employees also completed the 14-week Training in the Course. During the course, the participants were given comprehensive training on various aspects of office procedure and management so that these government employees could discharge their new responsibilities of

public service efficiently.

Sadiq Adbi Jirga honors renowned Pashto Poet Sarwar Khattak: Sadiq Adbi Jirga on Monday arranged a literary function and Mushaira in honor of Sarwar Mahmood Khattak, Vice President of the Jirga at Al-Sadiq Public High School Teri, District Karak the other day in which his Pashto Poetry Collection "Da Shahbaz Manzil" was also formally launched locally.

The event was consisted of two sessions was presided over by Saadat Sahar, a famous Pashto Poet, Writer and Researcher from Lachi, district Kohat. On this occasion, Jirga President Professor Aziz Qureshi presented his detailed paper on "Da Shahbaz Manzil" and described Sarwar Mahmood Khattak as a poet who expresses Pashtun values in the light of his Pashtun, Pashtunwali and poetic thoughts.

Senior Librarian Abdul Ghafoor while highlighting various aspects of the personality of Sarwar Mahmood, said that he is a true and genuine person. He has immense love for

this soil, that is why he has written many songs in love for the country and the nation. Former MNA Shams-ur-Rahman Khattak in his address appreciated Sarwar Khattak's welfare spirit and called it a prominent aspect of his personality. Majlis President Saadat Sahar also shed light on Sarwar Mahmood Khattak's poetry and personality. Syed Akbar Hashmi presented a poem of appreciation to the members of the Jirga and Sarwar Mahmood Khattak. Ehsan Sabirkhel presented Sarwar Mahmood's poetry with chants and received applause from the audience.

In the 2nd Session, an open Mushaira was held in which Israr Sufi, Tabassum Khattak, Amir Hamza Bawar, Iftikhar Sharar, Mubarak Qurban, Usman Sabahat, Aziz Qureshi, Syed Akbar and Atif Anokhi presented their poetry. Sarwar Mahmood Khattak in his concluding remarks thanked all the guests and members of the Jirga for attending the event and their encouragement in the literary field.

Stomach de-worming campaign launched

F.P. Report

MARDAN: Additional Deputy Commissioner Saeed Ullah Jan inaugurated the campaign against stomach worms by giving de-worming pills to the students. The de-worming campaign will continue from November 04 to November 08, on Monday. Under this program, children will be given deworming medicine in schools. All public and private schools and madrasas will participate in this campaign. Trained teachers will administer medicine to children in schools and health department doctors will be ready for any emergency.

Additional Deputy Commissioner (G) Saeedullah Jan said that

deworming is very important to protect children from stomach worms. This has a good effect on the health and educational activities of children and will develop resistance in the body against infection. The Government of Pakistan's top health priorities include ending malnutrition and anaemia, for which de-worming is the quickest, easiest and safest method.

Meanwhile, Assistant Commissioner Tehsil Rustam in action, sending messages against encroachment mafia on the way of Government Girls Higher Secondary School, no concession will be made to those who disrupt the traffic of the public, especially schoolgirls.

The Assistant

Commissioner of Tehsil Rustam Rashid Ali Khan had received a complaint from the citizens that due to the temporary encroachment of shopkeepers in front of Government Girls Higher Secondary School Rustam, the students are facing serious difficulties in going to school.

The shopkeepers have kept half of the goods in front of the shop and half of the goods on top of the rain drain, blocking the entire road. On the orders of AC Rustam Rashid Ali, TMA encroachment staff reached the spot and identified Ibrahim son of Bakhtzada, Muaz son of Mohib Gul, Hayatullah, Ishaq son of Faizullah, Waqif Khan Son of Ikram as being involved in temporary encroachment.

Effects of marble wastes on Biodiversity-I

Murad Khan

MOHMAND is a hub of beautiful and world class marble , in which white and grey marble are most famous and according to some marble businessmen the Mohmand's white marble were so beautiful and famous that they have been used in Sheikh Zaid Mosque in UAE and in old buildings of Washington DC as well. Besides this, there are metals like chromite, nephrite, iron and so many other metals which are found in very huge quantity in this merged district. For the extraction of these metals, there are more than 4 hundred registered and non-registered marble factories divided into three main different areas including Tehsil Haleemzai of Upper Mohmand, Subhankhwar and Mohmand Industrial Zone in Lower Mohmand.

On one side these industries have created many business involving countless local workers, but on the other side due to huge extraction of metals and lack of proper waste management policy, the waste of these marble industries either lying in open air or that wastes mix with water creating many health diseases in local community (especially in old aged and children's),

animals and plants, which ultimately disturb the overall biodiversity.

Patient affected from Marble waste: 45 years old worker Zahir Shah told that he did 25 to 30 years work as Labor in an industry, where we used to smash tons of marble into small pieces and convert them into white powders. He complained to his factory owner and said that when I became I'll and went to bed, he (owner of the factory) wouldn't help me, as I was seriously I'll and suffering from lungs and vascular diseases. Although a lot of people used to tell us that if any worker gets I'll the owner will not come to help you, but we were young and will do hard work in order to get more and more money, he added .

Suffering from back injury and serious lungs and heart disease, the weak man said that waste of marble not only destroys the human lungs but it also affects the vascular system and heart as well and that's why a lot of our co-workers get into the death's mouth.

Recalling his old golden days MR. shah said that at that time we were young and didn't care about our health so when our colleague got old and weak, he will retire and there was no any organization who could help him, he said that almost ten years ago, when I

get weak and I'll I asked for help to my owner, he gave me 8000 Rupees, for repaying this amount I was forced to sell my own property, because I was weak, old and suffering from different kind of diseases due to the marble waste, as my kids were small, so I was not able to refund that amount, so the selling of my property was the last option, after which I was able to do my treatment and fed my kids as well.

"After passing through serious hardship and difficulties I came to know that the owners of marble wastes industries just ruined the life of workers like me, that's why I used to tell all the people that please don't ruin your life anymore for the small amount of money, as these waste will destroy your whole internal body and ultimately you will die. He added. Finally he requested the District administration to ban all these industries as a lot of human beings are affected by these wastes.

How marble Wastes effect's Human health: Doctor Asad Ullah working as Assistant professor Endocrinology and diabetes in Akhtar Saeed Medical College Rawalpindi said that marble waste is affecting badly the human health, the marble waste containing a special mineral called asbestos when get mix with air and goes into human

lungs, it cause a disease called asbestosis, which gradually effects lungs. He said that the man affected by asbestosis will feel weakness, temperature, and dry cough, weight loss and clubbing of the fingers which are the initial sign & symptoms of asbestosis.

The labors working in these industries are not taking proper SOPs (Standard operating procedures), they do not use, glasses, gloves, clothing and special respiratory masks, that's why they are most effecting from chest and lung diseases and the research shows that the signs & symptoms of asbestosis can appear after 20 years.

Doctor Asad added that the diseases caused from marble waste includes asbestosis, mesothelioma and lung cancer, which are common in Mohmand, Bajaur, Mardan and other marble producing areas. Besides this, the people living near marble industries and who are passing from those areas are most vulnerable from these diseases, similarly the workers when they come to homes in his factory clothes, can spread diseases like asbestosis in the whole family.

Diabetes expert doctor Asad said that although there are laws and standards for the establishment of these industries and SOPs for workers, but unfortunately, it is not followed properly

in our country, therefor he demanded the govt. to take positive steps to ban the establishment of these industries in living areas and the owners should be strictly ordered to follow the international SOPs.

Effects of marble wastes on Biodiversity: Habib Jan, Deputy Director Environment Protection Agency said that marble waste can pollute water and soil, disrupting ecosystems. It reduces water quality, harms aquatic life, and affects plant growth by altering soil PH, this leads to the loss of biodiversity and degradation of natural habitats.

He said that marble waste can lead to soil contamination, weakening plants and making them more susceptible to diseases caused by pathogens like fungi, bacteria, and nematodes and the altered soil conditions can promote harmful microorganisms. Moreover, heavy metals from marble waste can accumulate in soil and water, leading to toxicity in plants, this affects plant growth by disrupting essential physiological processes like photosynthesis, nutrient uptake, and water balance.

He added that heavy metals such as lead, cadmium, and mercury can also damage root systems, reduce seed germination, and cause stunted growth or death in plants and long-term exposure leads to reduced biodiversity as sensitive species die

off, altering the ecosystem balance. Additionally, heavy metals can enter the food chain, affecting not only plants but also animals and humans.

Doctor Habib Jan suggested "To protect biodiversity, measures like proper waste management, soil treatment, and use of eco-friendly practices such as phytoremediation (using plants to absorb contaminants) should be implemented and farmers should avoid using contaminated water for irrigation, maintain soil health with organic matter, and use natural barriers like plants that can filter pollutants. Proper waste disposal and soil testing can also help prevent contamination.

How Marble Waste Effects Plants & Biodiversity: Botanical scholar, Mr. Hashim khan said that marble waste in Mohmand District is very dangerous for Biodiversity, because these wastes either lying in open air making a layer over the leaves of the plants or it mixed with water, which ultimately change the PH, physicochemical process and overall texture of the soil, as every enzyme works on a specific PH, so when the PH get changes then a plant can go to the dry condition or stunted growth condition occurs as well.

(To be continued)



Protests over Spain flood response interrupt King’s visit

PAIPORTA (Reuters): Hundreds of residents of a Valencia suburb badly hit by last week's deadly floods protested 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 flooding, and then a late response by the emergency services when disaster struck. "Please, the dead are still in the garages, the families are looking for their relatives and friends. Please come, we only ask for help ... All we wanted was to be warned and we would have been saved," yelled one resident, Nuria Chisber, with tears in her eyes.

"It was known and nobody did anything to avoid it," a young man told the king, who insisted on staying to talk to 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 distance by his height and grey hair, held to his shoulder a man who was crying. 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. The death toll from the country's worst flash floods in modern history edged higher to 217 - almost all in the Valencia region and over 60 of them in Paiporta alone. Some of protesters wore clothing with the symbols of far-right organisations which often stage protests against the leftist government. "We are not going to get side-tracked by some marginal acts," Sanchez said, referring to the incidents and the need to repair damage caused by the flood. Photos showed his official car with windows broken.

As the king tried to calm the mood, he also referred to attempts by agitators to destabilise the situation. "There is a lot of toxic information going around and a lot of people interested in chaos," he told the crowd. As it started drizzling, police cars with loudspeakers drove around Valencia warning of more heavy rains coming.

The central government has said issuing alerts to the population is the responsibility of regional authorities. But the Valencia authorities have said they acted as best as they could with the information available to them. Dozens of people were still unaccounted for, while some 3,000 households had no electricity, officials said. "With a timely warning to the population, many fatalities could have been

avoided," Jorge Olcina, climate expert at the University of Alicante, told Reuters, also pointing to poor coordination between national and regional authorities.

He added though that the magnitude of the disaster made it "difficult to handle". Sanchez said that any potential negligence would be investigated and called for political unity in the face of the tragedy. Valencia's regional leader Carlos Mazon, who also visited Paiporta to boost and insults from protesters, posted on X: "I understand the public anger and of course I will stay to receive it. It is my political and moral obligation. The King's attitude this morning has been exemplary." Thousands of additional troops and police joined the disaster relief effort over the weekend in the largest such peacetime operation in Spain.

The floods engulfed streets and lower floors of buildings, sweeping away cars and pieces of masonry in tides of mud. The tragedy is already Europe's worst flood-related disaster in a single country since 1967, when at least some 500 people died in Portugal. Scientists say extreme weather events are becoming more frequent in Europe and elsewhere due to climate change. Meteorologists think the warming of the Mediterranean, which increases water evaporation, plays a key role in making torrential rains more severe.

Politicians not ambitious enough to save nature

CALI (BBC): Scientists say there has been an alarming lack of progress in saving nature as the UN biodiversity summit, COP 16, draws to a close. The scale of political ambition has not risen to the challenge of reducing the destruction of nature that costs the economy billions, said one leading expert.

Representatives of 196 countries have been meeting in Cali, Colombia, to agree on how to halt nature decline by 2030. The biodiversity summit is separate from the more well-known COP climate summit, which is set to take place in Baku later this month. Countries were meant to come to the table with a detailed plan on how they intended to meet biodiversity targets at home, but most missed the deadline. However, plans were agreed to raise money for conservation through making companies pay for using genetic resources from nature. The summit comes as one million

species face extinction and nature is declining at rates unprecedented in human history.

We are stuck in a "vicious cycle where economic woes reduce political focus on the environment" while the destruction of nature costs the economy billions, said Tom Oliver, professor of biodiversity at the University of Reading. "Until we have world leaders with the wisdom and courage to put nature as a top political priority then nature-related risks will continue to escalate," he told BBC News. The UN biodiversity summit, COP 16, was the first chance to take stock of progress towards a landmark deal to restore nature agreed in 2022.

However, scientists lamented the pace of progress. Nathalie Seddon, professor of biodiversity at the University of Oxford, said while some meaningful progress was made, the overarching picture was "undoubtedly deeply concerning". "Biodiversity still

takes a back seat to climate action - even though the science speaks strongly to the need for fully coordinated approaches," she said. The next biodiversity summit will take place in 2026, with time running out for solutions. Astrid Schomaker, executive secretary of the UN Convention on Biological Diversity, said through such gatherings governments, NGOs and scientists could share knowledge and resources. "This collective spirit is critical as we work to develop and implement effective policies to confront the complex and interconnected crises facing our planet's ecosystems," she said. Commenting on the talks, the renowned scientist, Dr Jane Goodall, said our future is "ultimately doomed" if we don't address biodiversity loss. She told BBC News: "We have to take action too. We can't only blame the government and big corporations, although a huge part of the blame lies on them."

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 Sahara 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 posi-

tions 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 US 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 BSW's stance comes as some surveys show public opinion already cooling on support for Ukraine at a critical time - with Russia making

battlefield advances and US policy on Ukraine dependent on the Nov. 5 US election. The BSW's manoeuvres are also strengthening the SPD's traditionally Russophile left flank, said Stefan Marschall, 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.

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.

Indonesia’s volcano on Flores Island erupts, killing 9 people

JAKARTA (Reuters): At least nine people died after Mount Lewotobi Laki-laki in eastern Indonesia erupted, spewing explosive plumes of lava and forcing authorities to evacuate several nearby villages, officials said on Monday.

Mount Lewotobi Laki-laki, located on Flores Island in East Nusa Tenggara province, erupted at 23:57 local time (15:57 GMT), belching a fiery-red column of lava, volcanic ash and incandescent rocks, Hadi Wijaya, a spokesperson for The Center of Volcanology and Geological Hazard Mitigation (PVMBG), said on Monday. "After the eruption, there was power outage and then it was raining and big lightning which caused panic among residents," he told Reuters, adding that the authority had raised the status of the volcano to level IV or the highest.

The agency has recommended a seven-kilometer (4.35 miles) radius must be cleared. Fiery lava and rocks hit the nearest settlements around four km from the crater, burning and damaging residents' houses, Hadi said. As of Monday morning at least nine people had died, said Heronimus Lamawuran, a local official at East Flores area, adding the eruption had affected seven villages. "We have started evacuating residents since this morning to other villages located around 20 km (13 miles) from the crater," he said.

The nearest villages were covered by thick volcanic ash on Monday morning, Heronimus added. The authorities are still gathering data on the number of evacuees and damaged buildings. Indonesia sits on the "Pacific Ring of Fire," an area of high seismic activity atop multiple tectonic plates. This eruption follows a series of eruptions of different volcanoes in Indonesia. In May, a volcano on the remote island of Halmahera, Mount Ibu, caused evacuation of people from seven villages.

North Sulawesi's Ruang volcano has also erupted in May and prompted authorities to evacuate more than 12,000 people. Flash floods and cold lava flow from Mount Marapi in West Sumatra province, covered several nearby districts following torrential rain on May 11, killing more than 60 people.

Activists rally in Belgrade to protest railway station disaster

BELGRADE (Reuters): Hundreds of opposition activists rallied in Belgrade to protest over a deadly accident at a railway station in Serbia's north, for which they blame negligence and corruption by the authorities. The disaster on in the city of Novi Sad, about 70 km (40 miles) northwest of Belgrade, happened when roofing along the entrance to the station suddenly collapsed, killing 14 people and severely injuring three.

Protesters carrying banners reading "The blood is on your hands," and "Corruption kills," and chanting "Arrest (President Aleksandar) Vucic", marched by government buildings in the center of the Serbian capital. "We are all shaken and furious ... the state is directly responsible for this," said Djordje Dimitrijevic, a protester. Serbia's opposition politicians, activists and rights groups accuse authorities loyal to Vucic and his Serbian Progressive Party of rampant corruption, ties with organised crime, nepotism and excessive red tape.

Vucic and his allies deny such allegations. Serbia's Prime Minister Milos Vucevic said authorities were investigating who is responsible for the disaster. "Prosecution and police are working to establish criminal responsibility ... (and) there is no avoidance of political responsibility," Vucevic said in a TV broadcast. The station in Novi Sad was renovated in 2021 and 2022. Other minor works continued until July this year.



MADRID: A woman walks by piled-up cars after floods in Massanassa, just outside of Valencia, Spain.

Green shoots spring from ashes in Brazil’s fire-resistant savanna

BRASILIA (AFP): The huge wildfires that ripped through Brazil recently did not spare its vast tropical savanna, but green shoots are already emerging from the ashes there, proof of the vast grasslands' rare gift for fire resistance. The Cerrado, the most species-rich savanna in the world, covers some two million square kilometers of land (770,000 square miles) in central Brazil -- nearly one-fifth of the country's entire surface area.

In Brasilia National Park, on the outskirts of the nation's capital, blackened soil and charred tree trunks stand testimony to the ferocity of a fire that ripped through 1,470 hectares (3,600 acres) of land in September. Brazil was then in the throes of a record drought -- the city of Brasilia had gone 169 days without a drop of rain -- which lit the torch under the worst wildfire season in over a decade, blamed by experts at least partly on climate change. But the Cerrado, which is less well-known than the neighboring Amazon and Pantanal wetlands, has a superpower: over millions of years, it has developed some resistance to flames and high temperatures. "The Cerrado is an inverted forest. We see only a fraction of it because the forest is all under our feet," said Keiko

Pellizzaro, an environmental analyst at the Chico Mendes Institute for Biodiversity Conservation, a government agency. The Cerrado's deep root system acts like a "pump," sucking up groundwater "even during extreme drought," she said. Meanwhile, above ground the trees' thick bark and the shells of the fruit act as "thermal insulators," said Isabel Schmidt, professor of ecology at the University of Brasilia.

Even if temperatures reach up to 800 centigrade (1,470 Fahrenheit), the vegetation can survive "as if it were just another hot day," she said. A month after the recent fires, the first rains saw grass and small plants quickly beginning to grow, and new leaves sprouted on charred trees in Brasilia National Park. "Even if it hadn't rained, we would have seen some resilience," Pellizzaro said. "I'm amazed by its capacity for regeneration," said Priscila Erthal Risi, a 48-year-old volunteer who took part in an operation by the Chico Mendes Institute to replant the reserve with native species such as donkey's tail and Magonia pubescens trees. Brazilian police are still investigating the cause of the fire in Brasilia National Park. Most wildfires in Brazil are started by farmers or

agribusiness workers to clear land for cattle grazing or crops.

Schmidt said the Cerrado's vegetation had always survived sporadic fires caused by lightning strikes during the rainy season. But she warned that if extreme droughts become more frequent the biome's resilience could be tested. "The resistance that plants and animals have to any type of fire was developed over millions of years, but climate change has taken place in a matter of decades. No organism can adapt that quickly," she said. The Cerrado is crucial not only for the survival of the thousands of species that call it home but for the water supply of a large part of South America. The so-called "cradle of waters" is home to the sources of some of the continent's biggest rivers and aquifers. But its role as a continental spring is endangered. With the rainy season starting later and later each year and the amount of rain declining by eight percent on average over the past three decades, the flow of the Cerrado's rivers has fallen by 15 percent. If wildfires become more frequent, Schmidt warned, "many ecosystems that are more vulnerable to fire," including in the Cerrado, "will simply not survive."

Starmer tells Interpol he will treat people-smuggling gangs like terrorists

LONDON (AP): Prime Minister Keir Starmer says he will double funding for Britain's border security agency and treat people-smuggling gangs like terror networks in an attempt to stop migrants crossing the English Channel in small boats.

In a speech Monday to a meeting of the international police organization Interpol, Starmer will say the gangs behind irregular migration are a serious threat to global security. Arguing that "the world needs to wake up to the severity of this challenge," Starmer will say that "we're taking our approach to counterterrorism, which we know works, and applying it to the gangs," according to extracts released by his office.

He'll call for more cooperation between law-enforcement agencies, closing

coordination with other countries and unspecified "enhanced" powers for law-enforcement. Starmer plans to increase the UK Border Security Command's two-year budget from 75 million pounds (\$97 million) to 150 million pounds (\$194 million). The money will be used to fund high-tech surveillance equipment and 100 specialist investigators. Like previous Conservative British governments, Starmer's Labour Party administration is struggling to stop thousands of people fleeing war and poverty from trying reach the UK from France in flimsy, overcrowded boats. More than 31,000 migrants have made the perilous crossing of one of the world's busiest shipping lanes so far this year, more than in all of 2023, though fewer than in 2022. At least 56 people have perished in the attempts this

year, according to French officials, making 2024 the deadliest since the number of channel crossings began surging in 2018.

Starmer leads a center-left government, and has raised some eyebrows in September when he visited Italian Premier Giorgia Meloni and praised her nationalist conservative government's "remarkable" progress in reducing the number of migrants reaching Italy's shores by boat. Starmer will argue on Monday that "there's nothing progressive about turning a blind eye as men, women and children die in the channel." The opposition Conservative Party argues that Starmer should not have scrapped the previous government's plan to send some asylum-seekers who reach Britain by boat on one-way trips to Rwanda. Supporters of the

Moldova's pro-Western Sandu claims election win after meddling allegations

CHISINAU (Reuters): Moldova's pro-Western incumbent Maia Sandu claimed victory at closely-fought presidential election, defeating Alexandr Stoianoglo, her rival backed by the traditionally pro-Russian Socialist Party.

With 98% of the ballots counted, Sandu led Stoianoglo with 54.35%, the Central Election Commission said at the end of an election and campaign that were marred by persistent allegations of interference denied by Russia. The victory for the 52-year-old ex-World Bank adviser, who has accelerated the nation's push to leave Moscow's orbit and join the European Union, is seen by her supporters as an endorsement of the resolutely pro-Western course she has tackled. But Stoianoglo's dominance across swathes of the country suggests her party faces a stiff challenge at key parliamentary elections next summer that will decide the composition of the government.

Stoianoglo campaigned saying he supported EU integration, but that he also wanted to develop ties with Russia in the national inter-

est. Sandu portrayed him as a Trojan horse for the Kremlin's interests, something he denied. The future of Moldova, a poor agricultural nation that has alternated between pro-Russian and pro-Western courses since the 1991 Soviet breakup, has been in the spotlight since Russia began its full-scale invasion of neighbouring Ukraine in 2022.

The vote was closely watched in Brussels a week after Georgia, another ex-Soviet state seeking membership, re-elected a ruling party regarded in the West as increasingly pro-Russian. "Moldova, you are victorious! ... In our choice for a dignified future, no one lost," Sandu said in a conciliatory victory speech, in which she said she had to address the concerns of those who voted against her.

The vote was closely watched in Brussels a week after Georgia, another ex-Soviet state seeking membership, re-elected a ruling party regarded in the West as increasingly pro-Russian. "Moldova, you are victorious! ... In our choice for a dignified future, no one lost," Sandu said in a conciliatory victory speech, in

which she said she had to address the concerns of those who voted against her. "I have heard your voice - both those who supported me and those who voted for Mr. Stoianoglo. I commit to being the president for all of you," she said. The vote marked the largest number of expatriate voters to take part in a Moldovan election since 2010 when the diaspora was first allowed to vote. Inside Moldova's borders, the results showed Sandu actually lost the election to Stoianoglo by a small margin of 48.8% versus his 51.2%. By contrast, she looked on course to win more than 80% of the diaspora vote, which was still being counted. "The increased turnout in the diaspora paid off. It changed the balance of power," said Ruslan Rokhov, a Ukrainian political analyst focused on Moldova.

Sandu's national security adviser Stanislav Secieru accused Russia of massive interference, the latest in a series of allegations also levelled at fugitive oligarch Ilan Shor who lives in Russia and denies wrongdoing. "We're seeing massive interference by Russia

in our electoral process ... an effort with high potential to distort the outcome," Secieru wrote on X. There was no immediate comment from Moscow, which has repeatedly denied allegations of meddling. Secieru cited reports of voters being taken to polling stations, cyberattacks and bomb hoaxes reported at overseas polling stations in Europe.

The police cracked down to try to avoid a repeat of what they said was a vast vote-buying scheme deployed by Shor in the first round and a referendum on the EU's aspirations that was held the same day. Sandu has said the meddling affected the Oct. 20 first round and that Shor sought to buy the votes of 300,000 people, more than 10% of the population. The referendum delivered a slender win of 50.35% for the pro-EU camp. Stoianoglo's East-West balancing rhetoric contrasted with Sandu's four years in power, during which ties with the Kremlin have unravelled, Moscow's diplomats have been expelled and she has condemned Russia's invasion of Ukraine.

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AI and tech can help mitigate the climate crisis

EVERY time a natural disaster destroys lives, homes and critical infrastructure – as the floods in Valencia, Spain have done most recently, with more than 200 people dying and thousands displaced – the need to take action, raise funds and collectively address climate change comes into even sharper focus.

Over the past decades, certain themes have remained constant. These include the need for public-private partnerships between stakeholders to raise capital so that climate solutions can be adopted and scaled up, which could then slow the warming and degradation of the planet. The need to raise vast sums of money required to implement climate solutions has been well-documented but to keep them going consistently for decades, until the crucial goals of net zero are achieved, are as pressing.

In recent years, given the undeniable march of technology, artificial intelligence has gained currency as one solution to the climate crisis. On Sunday, it was prominent on the agenda at the Enact Majlis in Abu Dhabi, which brought together global leaders across the fields of energy, technology, sustainability and investment to discuss the solutions needed to realise AI's full potential. Building partnerships to develop solutions at the nexus of sustainability, technology and energy is vital.

It is therefore telling that, as decarbonisation remains among the most important missions for the energy industry, this year's Adipee, the annual four-day energy conference and exhibition in Abu Dhabi that begins today, will focus on AI's role. This week, energy ministers, policymakers, academics and domain experts, chief executives and other influential figures in the oil and gas industry will meet at a time when a number of challenges in the area of climate mitigation remain.

One among these challenges is the need to reduce methane emissions, which would require industry-wide transformations, as Ibrahim Al Zubi, Adnoc's group chief sustainability and ESG officer, wrote in these pages. Even as technology progresses faster than many people can keep pace with, it is perhaps unsurprising that solutions to a variety of climate challenges – including tackling carbon emissions – may lie at the cross-section of innovation, research and development.

AI, for instance, has been criticised for being energy-intensive. But if harnessed correctly, it could turn things around. That is indicated in a joint report from Adnoc, Masdar and Microsoft titled Powering Possible: AI and Energy for a Sustainable Future. It reveals many interesting possibilities, including the fact that new AI tools can detect methane leaks much more accurately than older methods, and will be crucial in meeting the global goal of cutting methane emissions by 30 per cent by 2030. In any part of the world struck by unusual weather patterns, be it hurricanes or floods, and with each passing year, the case for climate mitigation solutions and their implementation grows only more urgent.

The energy sector is instrumental to help mitigate some of the worst effects of these calamities. Big industry events such as Adipee serve as a platform to take forward the dialogue on finding and financing solutions for the coming climate emergency.

With time to act being finite, the lives of future generations are intricately tied to the health of the planet, a driving motivation for all parties to focus on workable, sustainable solutions.

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PukhTooNo@gmail.com

Israel's campaign against UNRWA precedes Oct. 7

Dr. Ramzy Baroud

THE Israeli Knesset last week adopted two bills that will effectively ban the UN agency for Palestinian refugees, UNRWA, from carrying out any activity in Israel and the Occupied Territories.

Simply put, the decision is catastrophic, because UNRWA is the main international body responsible for the welfare of millions of Palestinians throughout the Occupied Territories and much of the region.

Israel followed up its decision by attacking and damaging an UNRWA office in the Nur Shams refugee camp in the West Bank.

This was the Israeli government's way of demonstrating its seriousness regarding the matter.

This is not the first time that Israel has pursued an anti-UNRWA agenda and, contrary to claims by Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and other Israeli officials, the decision is not linked to the current genocidal war on Gaza or the unfounded claims that UNRWA supports "terrorism."

An independent review commissioned by the UN in April revealed that Israel "made public claims that a significant number of UNRWA employees are members of terrorist organizations," but that it "has yet to provide supporting evidence of this."

However, Israel's claims did a great deal of damage to the organization, as 13 countries, including the US, Canada, Australia, the UK, Germany and Italy, withheld badly needed funds that were helping Gaza stave off a horrific famine. Eventually, most of these countries reinstated their

financial support, though without apologizing to the Palestinians who were adversely impacted by their unfair initial decisions.

Unrepentant, Israel continued to unleash its relentless war on the organization. "UNRWA workers involved in terrorist activities against Israel must be held accountable," Netanyahu said in a statement last week.

The anti-UNRWA rhetoric remains functional for Israel. Amplified by the ever-willing US mainstream media, Israel has managed to keep UNRWA's name in the news, always associating it with "supporting terrorism." So, when the Knesset voted for the anti-UNRWA bills, many media outlets conveyed the news as if it was the only rational conclusion to an essentially fabricated story.

Israel's problem with UNRWA has little to do with the organization itself, but with its underlying political representation as a UN entity whose mission is predicated on providing "assistance and protection to Palestine refugees."

UNRWA was established in 1949 by UN General Assembly Resolution 302 (IV). It began its operations on May 1, 1950, and, with time, it became central to the survival of a large number of Palestinian refugee communities in Gaza, the West Bank, Lebanon, Syria and Jordan.

Many have rightly criticized the UN for failing to supplement UNRWA's humanitarian mandate with a political equivalent

that would ultimately help Palestinians achieve their right of return in accordance with UN Resolution 194. For Israel, however, UNRWA remained problematic.

According to Tel Aviv's thinking, UNRWA's existence is a constant reminder that there is a distinct group of people called Palestinian refugees. And though UNRWA is not a political organization, the Palestinian refugee crisis and all related UN resolutions that emphasize the "inalienable" rights of these refugees are very political.

Taking advantage of the initial, albeit brief, sympathy with Israel worldwide and the massive campaign of misinformation emanating from Israel and its allies, Netanyahu used the Oct. 7 attacks as an opportunity to further demonize UNRWA. However, his campaign started much earlier.

One key player in the war on UNRWA has been Jared Kushner, the son-in-law of former US President Donald Trump. Kushner, who invested much time in helping Israel, made UNRWA a key point in his plan. He vowed to carry out a "sincere effort to disrupt" the work of the organization, a leaked 2018 email revealed.

Due to international rejection and solidarity, Kushner ultimately failed. Even the withholding of funds by the US administration did not force the organization to shut down, although it did negatively impact the lives of millions of Palestinians.

The ongoing war on

Gaza and the push to annex large parts of the West Bank represented a golden opportunity for Netanyahu and his extremist government to increase the pressure on UNRWA. They have been enabled by unconditional US support and the willingness of various Western governments to recklessly act upon Israel's false claims regarding the UN organization.

By allowing Israel to delegitimize the very organization responsible for enforcing international law, the UN's crisis becomes much deeper.

An impassioned plea made by UN Special Rapporteur Francesca Albanese last week reflected the frustration felt by many UN-affiliated officials regarding the growing irrelevance of the organization. In a speech, Albanese pointed out that, if the UN's failures continue, it will become "more and more irrelevant to the rest of the world," especially during these times of turmoil.

This irrelevance is already being felt by millions of Palestinians, mainly in Gaza but also in the West Bank. Though Palestinians continue to withstand and reject and resist Israeli aggression, they are fed up with an international system that seems to offer them only words and little action.

Israel's banning of UNRWA should represent an opportunity for those concerned about the standing of the UN to remind Israel that member states that have no respect for international law deserve to be delegitimized. This time, words must be accompanied by action. Nothing else will suffice.

Lebanese cities reduced to ashes

Baria Alamuddin

IN a speech that monotonously and mindlessly emphasized the word "victory," new Hezbollah leader Naim Qassem declared last week: "As we won in July 2006, we will win today." But Lebanon never won in 2006 and there is no victory to be obtained for the Lebanese people in 2024.

Qassem was unable to cite a single benefit that might accrue to Lebanon as a result of the current carnage. He boasted about the ability of the "resistance" to strike at an expanded range of Israeli cities, but for every building Hezbollah rockets hit, Israel destroys another dozen Lebanese villages: about a quarter of those in the south have already been razed to the ground and the destruction is spreading northward.

As in Gaza, civilians have been forced to move numerous times, with

ure and which Israel has dismantled with such ease and relish.

Contrary to Qassem's boast that Hezbollah would impose its own terms for peace, Israel has strengthened its demands: it insists that the smoking remains of the south remain under some kind of occupation, while American diplomats shuttle uselessly around the region. Who does Qassem expect will rush in and bankroll the rebuilding of Lebanon? As winter brings colder, wetter weather, who will offer shelter, clothing and succor to the hundreds of thousands of forcibly displaced citizens, about a quarter of the population?

The soaring death toll and widening devastation are bad enough, but Israel and Hezbollah are also jointly working to erase Lebanon's history and cultural heritage. Last week, parts of Baalbek city, the site of one of humankind's oldest habi-

There was a time when many Lebanese would ridicule Hezbollah's self-aggrandizing, bellicose rhetoric, but nobody was laughing when Qassem last week declared: "If the Israelis want to stop, it will be on our terms," and Hezbollah "will come out of this even stronger." Such nonsensical language left the Lebanese physically repulsed, after so much of the country had been left homeless and destitute. Grasping at straws to cite every conceivable encumbrance and annoyance inflicted upon the enemy, Qassem gloated at a statistic suggesting that 300,000 Israelis would require psychological assistance after the war — forgetting the millions of Lebanese who will never receive psychiatric help for the traumas and losses they are currently enduring. As with the orphans of Gaza, the horrors of this futile war will permanently psychologically shatter yet another generation of Lebanese children, combined with the damaging impact of interrupted education. The continuing elimination of Hezbollah's leadership leaves it entirely reliant on Iran and submissive to Iranian orders. There is no longer even a pretense of responsiveness to national Lebanese priorities after Hezbollah hubristically picked a fight with the strongest military in the region, backed up by the strongest superpower on the planet.

thousands of people displaced every day as Israel incessantly widens the number of communities subjected to relentless bombing. What victory awaits these poor families who have lost everything, including their children under the debris?

There was a time when many Lebanese would ridicule Hezbollah's self-aggrandizing, bellicose rhetoric, but nobody was laughing when Qassem last week declared: "If the Israelis want to stop, it will be on our terms," and Hezbollah "will come out of this even stronger." Such nonsensical language left the Lebanese physically repulsed, after so much of the country had been left homeless and destitute.

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The continuing elimination of Hezbollah's leadership leaves it entirely reliant on Iran and submissive to Iranian orders. There is no longer even a pretense of responsiveness to national Lebanese priorities after Hezbollah hubristically picked a fight with the strongest military in the region, backed up by the strongest superpower on the planet. So much for the "axis of resistance" — the Houthis, Al-Hashd Al-Sha'abi and the Quds Force clearly cannot and will not come to Lebanon's rescue in any meaningful way.

Ayatollah Ali Khamenei vowed a "crushing response" to Israel's latest strikes on Iran, with some predicting that this retaliation would emanate from Iraq and Syria, serving only to draw wider swathes of the Arab world into the carnage.

It is high time for Hezbollah and Iran to take stock of their resistance project, which has proved to be an utter failure and which Israel has dismantled with such ease and relish.

tations, was reduced to rubble.

As the economy has disintegrated in recent years, Lebanon has endured a vast exodus of its professionals, young people and creative figures. With the onset of war, this brain drain has turned into a flood, as everybody who can escape does so, joining Lebanon's immense worldwide diaspora.

This is an outstanding country, composed of educated, cultured citizens, with a literate and sophisticated history stretching back to long before the Phoenicians. Is this what we have come to? Lebanon's various communities must unite and figures such as parliamentary Speaker Nabih Berri and Prime Minister Najib Mikati must demonstrate that they unambiguously stand in this national camp, for the sake of Lebanese salvation. Only then can Hezbollah and Iran be forced to accept that they are on the wrong path toward the annihilation of Lebanon, and Hezbollah with it.

Despite what Qassem has been led to believe by his Iranian handlers, there is nothing to be gained by allowing this war to drag on indefinitely. I do not appeal to Hezbollah's better nature, I do not even naively ask it to put Lebanon first: but if only for the sake of not committing collective suicide in service to a hostile state's agenda, Hezbollah's surviving leaders must swallow their pride and call an immediate halt, while there is still something to be salvaged.

Irrespective of US elections and ongoing mediation efforts, the medium-term outlook is relentlessly grim, with Israel not even heeding its closest allies' calls to rein in its offensives, along with fighting rhetoric from both Qassem and Khamenei.

The broader agenda is not just the neutralization of Hezbollah, but also the depopulation and de facto occupation of south Lebanon, the decapitation of the Lebanese state and a scorched-earth policy to humiliate the Arab world. The warmongering agendas of Israel and Iran are as malign as each other.

Qassem should take a long, hard look at the smoking ruins of south Lebanon: there is no victory for him there.

— China Daily

On November 5, I will vote against genocide

EARLIER this year, as genocide was unfolding in Gaza, I began volunteering with various medical organisations helping Palestinians. I went on a mission to the occupied West Bank and supported remotely medical professionals in Gaza. I taught and mentored Palestinian children, supported groups providing medical care to paediatric and geriatric patients with cancer, chronic disease and dementia, and led research collaborations on disease and injury patterns in Gaza and the West Bank.

What I write below is based solely on my views and my experiences and does not reflect the position of any organisation I have been involved in.

My work in Palestine and with Palestinians has profoundly affected how I view American domestic politics and how I will vote in the upcoming presidential election.

If there is one main takeaway from my work and recent mission to Palestine this summer, it is that the Israeli crimes reported are only a small fraction of what actually occurs. Many are not documented because cameras and phones are taken or destroyed or the victims fear reprisals in the form of direct violence or collective punishment if they speak up.

It is truly close to impossible to conceptualise the scale of the structural and physical violence imposed on this population on a daily basis, and the ingenuity of the crimes committed against them.

Palestinian life is disrupted and sequestered by hundreds of permanent and temporary checkpoints that litter the occupied West

Bank. They can prevent Palestinians from going to school or work, stop trucks with goods, including perishable food, from reaching their destinations, and impede the transport of people in urgent need of medical help. The Palestinian economy is fully dependent on the Israeli authorities, which often make decisions that suppress or bankrupt Palestinian businesses.

Israeli soldiers regularly raid Palestinian towns and villages in the occupied West Bank, breaking into homes, arresting Palestinians and sometimes killing civilians. In addition, Palestinian homes, lands and other property are attacked, destroyed, and seized by Jewish settlers protected by the Israeli army.

Violence against children is also a daily occurrence. Israeli troops have targeted Palestinian children during their regular assaults on the occupied West Bank, killing 165 over the past year. Many are also detained and abused, including sexually, by Israeli soldiers or detention centre staff. Palestinian children I met have told me of Israeli soldiers putting out their cigarettes onto their arms, cheeks and other parts of their bodies.

In Gaza, the horrors are even more unspeakable. The current official death toll of more than 43,000 does not in any way reflect the true scale of human suffering and demise. What this number does not capture are the deaths and life-altering injuries or conditions that Palestinians now are susceptible to because of Israel's restriction of food, basic medical supplies like sterile materials and antibiotics, as well as much-needed medicines for the

Bilal Irfan

chronically ill. This environment of uncontrollable infection and malnutrition is also a death sentence for many pregnant women and their babies. This is effectively equivalent to the prevention of births, which constitutes a crime of genocide.

Amid the utter dehumanisation of Palestinians by Israel, but also by its allies in US politics and media, many Americans feel detached from what is going on in Gaza and Palestine as a whole. But the truth is that Americans are also victims of the American-backed Israeli genocidal campaign.

Scores of Americans of Palestinian descent have been killed in Gaza and the West Bank. The Israeli authorities have harassed, arbitrarily arrested, and beaten Americans, and routinely denied entry to American medical missions to Gaza and the West Bank.

Even Americans with no Palestinian background have been harassed (including myself), shot at, and killed. Most recently, 26-year-old Aysenur Ezgi Eygi was shot dead by an Israeli sniper near Beita, Nablus.

In the West Bank, I observed Americans and other foreign nationals being yelled at by Israeli soldiers, had their passports rubbed against the genitalia of one soldier before being thrown at their faces, and denied entry at checkpoints.

On one occasion, while waiting to pass a checkpoint, I struck up a conversation with an Israeli soldier, who told me he participated in joint exercises with a police department in Ohio, where he and his fellow soldiers taught population control and military

occupation checkpoint procedures to American police officers.

It was jarring to hear that but it reminded me that it is not just the United States exporting technologies of violence and death to Israel, but also the other way around. Violent policing in the US, which disproportionately affects marginalised communities, has been shaped by the Israeli experience of colonial subjugation of the Palestinian people.

Indeed, the exchange of knowledge, ideas, weapons, and intelligence upholds the domination of the US imperial structure and the exertion of racial, cultural, economic, and military supremacy in the US, in Israel, and elsewhere in the world.

Palestinians recognise this symbiosis and see the US as an equal partner in their colonial oppression. One American doctor relayed to me how a patient in Gaza went hysterical when she saw the US flag on his scrubs, and her family had to restrain her so he could operate on her without anaesthesia due to the unavailability of such medication.

It is time for Americans to also recognise that unconditional US support for Israel is not only hurting and killing Palestinians, but is also detrimental for the American population as well.

The Joe Biden-Kamala Harris administration has gone out of its way to suppress opposition to the genocide at home, demonising the pro-Palestinian movement and showing disregard for the horrific spike in hate crimes against Arab and Muslim Americans.

Through its actions against international courts and the United Nations, as

well as coercion of other states, it is actively undermining the international legal order, which threatens to erase the codified concept of human rights. Its endorsement of racist, colonial brutality and crimes against humanity normalises these atrocities and will inevitably encourage such violence against minorities and vulnerable groups here in the US.

I was involved with and was an active supporter of voting “uncommitted” in the Democratic primaries, hoping that this could push the current administration to change course on Israel.

But the US president and the vice president ignored the message that hundreds of thousands of their voters sent them earlier this year. As the new Democratic candidate, Harris has gone out of her way to articulate her unwavering commitment to Israel. She has allowed the ridicule and mockery of voters and Democratic Party organisers attempting to raise awareness about Gaza, shut anti-genocide protesters up at rallies, and had Muslim Democrats kicked out of her events.

During a town hall event in October, Harris said there are people who care about “this issue” but also care about “bringing down the price of groceries”. I am one of those who cares much more about the real possibility of Palestinian life being erased from Gaza altogether than the price of food in the US.

On November 5, I will vote against genocide, and I will do so not only with the plight of the Palestinian people in mind but also with the fate of my fellow Americans in mind. It is an act of love and care, and I am quite committed to it.

Will America elect the unknown or the unpredictable?

Alistair Burt

The world this week awaits the verdict of its most important democracy. This US presidential campaign, astonishing in so many ways, reaches polling day on Tuesday with the outcome still uncertain, a contest between the unknown and the unpredictable. It is not an enviable situation either for the US or for the UK, EU, Middle East and others, which will be watching with perhaps greater anxiety than ever before.

It could still be the case that the most consequential decision in the campaign remains that of those who persuaded President Joe Biden to opt for a very early TV debate with Donald Trump. Shrewdly but secretly gambling that exposing the president's frailty would allow for a replacement candidate, it immediately shifted what had been gathering momentum toward Trump.

It refocused the issues of age and capacity squarely on the man who was now the oldest candidate. While that gamble to replace Biden may have worked, it remains to be seen if it has swayed the election itself.

Whatever the real or imagined preferences of foreign countries as to the outcome, the truth is that they will respect the decision of the American people and get to work with the new incumbent in the White House. They will deal with the specific differences in policy about which they already know, while recognizing there are generic issues that either can bring to the table.

Kamala Harris is still largely an enigma. If she were to win, we all assume there would be a degree of continuity in foreign policy, such as clear support for NATO and Ukraine, but probably also keeping with a rather more ill-defined approach to the Middle East. The Israel/Gaza/Lebanon policy of the Democratic incumbent seems to please no one. Whoever you talk to feels abandoned.

Benjamin Netanyahu feels he is not being supported strongly and unquestioningly enough, while Palestinians and the Arab street are outraged at the degree of catastrophe being inflicted on innocent civilians and which remains unimpeded, even actively supported, by the US. Regional powers will probably be assuming that the US under Harris will continue to prioritize the Far East and they will be left on their own to deal with long-unresolved issues, such as the future of the Palestinian question and what to do with Iran.

Trump brings a whole new suite of baggage — much of it terrifying. Europe and the world worry about climate change commitments, while Trump is a climate change denier, calling it a “hoax.” International consensus and agreements would either fall or need drastically reworking. Europe and the free world are engaged in confronting the first invasion of a sovereign country on the European continent since 1945 (allowing some license for Soviet actions against client states in the past) and the loss of US support in terms of aid or arms, as hinted at by Trump, would likely be decisive in Russia's favor, opening up the question of “where next?”

Trump has already threatened not to assist NATO states if they have not paid what he considers appropriate amounts to the alliance's funds. He said in February that he would encourage Russia “to do whatever the hell they want” toward “delinquent” NATO members, though in the current atmosphere of defense uncertainty both candidates will want to ensure greater defense commitments from Europe. Europe will fear being caught up in a Republican trade war, with tariffs imposed on itself and further pressure on

China. And while some in the Middle East may prefer Trump to the Obama years and the mixed messages from the Democrats, the region will not know quite what it is getting from a new Trump presidency. Israel may or may not get unqualified support, even to the point of annexation of the West Bank. A deal with Saudi Arabia may be seen as the answer to everything, but the terms of such a deal in relation to Palestine are now very different. Will renewed “maximum pressure” on Iran — the policy that tore up the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action nuclear deal and gave the region more and better quality enriched Iranian uranium — be accompanied by actions? Or will the opposite be the case to deliver on Trump's promise to the US people not to become militarily engaged in the Middle East again?

Apart from these specifics, there are deeper worries. What damage has the election already done to a polarized American people and political system? What is this fear of malevolent retribution, which has stopped major US newspapers from endorsing Harris? Will the result be contested, as seems certain if Trump is not declared the winner, and what may ensue? Authoritarians the world over would get a renewed boost. Can a united US emerge, with clarity in its foreign policy, if still divided by the election? And how will the international order, creaking with a dysfunctional UN, be affected by a US that might turn in upon itself, consumed by domestic bitterness?

None of us can affect the outcome, but most would settle for a clear winner, an absence of bitterness, signs of reconciliation among the American people and a renewed commitment to their place in the world.

— Arab News

Trump, if he wins, may well stick with Biden's Iran strategy

AS the US presidential election reaches its climax, the question on many a mind — particularly outside America — is likely to revolve around the nature of American diplomacy under either a Donald Trump or Kamala Harris administration.

The world knows Mr Trump much better than it does Ms Harris. The former president may be unpredictable, yet he is known. Ms Harris, on the other hand, remains largely unfamiliar, having spent a major part of her vice presidency under President Joe Biden's shadow.

From the little that can be gauged from the election campaign, it is fair to say that both candidates are vastly different and distinctive in their own ways. Mr Trump is direct and blunt, while Ms Harris is enigmatic and diplomatic.

These traits will influence the American voter. America is divided between those who view candour as a virtue, even if it is accompanied by arrogance and perhaps even hostility, and those who don't care for such traits, believing that America needs consensus, calm and gentleness — qualities associated with Ms Harris.

For the international community, the question is how either leader deals with the various challenges, including conflicts, and whether the world would be better off with the open book that is Mr Trump, or the relatively unknown Ms Harris.

During his first term in office, Mr Trump built a reputation of quickly, and sometimes unexpectedly, dismissing high-ranking officials. Instability and inconsistency characterised his administration, influenced by his own erratic behaviour.

Today, some of those former aides and officials have returned to his side while others have become very critical of him. Whatever one's impressions of the “Maga” movement, it does have a number of intelligent, organised and capable people in its ranks.

Ms Harris, meanwhile, struggles under Mr Biden's shadow but also that of former president Barack Obama. The Middle East team under Mr Biden is professional and experienced, and some members may become involved in a Harris administration. But will this administration be truly independent?

Raghida Dergham

Obama administration inadvertently enabled and strengthened both Iran and its proxies. Almost a decade later, the Biden administration has given Israel military and diplomatic support to severely degrade these same proxies, particularly Hezbollah and Hamas,

destroy Iran's proxies with decisive US support. This approach is likely to continue under Ms Harris if she wins the presidency, unless any Obama acolytes in her administration exert their influence. Needless to say, this strategy will also continue under Mr Trump if he is re-elected.

Mr Trump is unlikely to wage war against Iran

Yet he is not likely to encourage or assist Israel if it seeks to drag the US into a war with Iran.

The former president professes to disliking wars and prides himself on having avoided any direct conflict in the Middle East during his presidency, while he is only too happy to point out that the Biden administration has failed to end

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From the little that can be gauged from the election campaign, it is fair to say that both candidates are vastly different and distinctive in their own ways. Mr Trump is direct and blunt, while Ms Harris is enigmatic and diplomatic. These traits will influence the American voter. America is divided between those who view candour as a virtue, even if it is accompanied by arrogance and perhaps even hostility, and those who don't care for such traits, believing that America needs consensus, calm and gentleness — qualities associated with Ms Harris. For the international community, the question is how either leader deals with the various challenges, including conflicts, and whether the world would be better off with the open book that is Mr Trump, or the relatively unknown Ms Harris. During his first term in office, Mr Trump built a reputation of quickly, and sometimes unexpectedly, dismissing high-ranking officials. Instability and inconsistency characterised his administration, influenced by his own erratic behaviour. Today, some of those former aides and officials have returned to his side while others have become very critical of him. Whatever one's impressions of the “Maga” movement, it does have a number of intelligent, organised and capable people in its ranks. Ms Harris, meanwhile, struggles under Mr Biden's shadow but also that of former president Barack Obama. The Middle East team under Mr Biden is professional and experienced, and some members may become involved in a Harris administration. But will this administration be truly independent? Many in Mr Biden's Middle East team served under Mr Obama, too, but their diplomacy in the current term has diverged sharply from when they worked with the former president. Mr Obama made significant blunders in the region. Key examples include his disregard for the historical relations between Washington and key Arab countries, policy regarding the Arab uprisings, and a willingness to ignore some of the Iranian government's activities in the region, through its proxies. This matters now because some Biden-era policies have undone the legacy of some of the decisions his former boss made. For example, the Obama administration inadvertently enabled and strengthened both Iran and its proxies. Almost a decade later, the Biden administration has given Israel military and diplomatic support to severely degrade these same proxies, particularly Hezbollah and Hamas, as part of a strategy to dismantle the Tehran-backed “Axis of Resistance”.
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For example, the

as part of a strategy to dismantle the Tehran-backed “Axis of Resistance”.

In other words, the militarisation of diplomacy has become a strategic decision for the US during Mr Biden's tenure. The current administration has so far failed in its efforts to achieve a ceasefire in Gaza and Lebanon. It appears to be weak in the face of Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's belligerence over the past year, submitting to his refusals to comply with even the US President's pleas.

In reality, however, Mr Biden's diplomacy might be stemming from a strategy wherein the establishment seeks to empower Israel to

to coerce it into abandoning its expansionist policies. He is unlikely to engage with its government either. Instead, he is most likely to isolate it, impose sanctions against it, and economically cripple it. Ms Harris, likewise, isn't likely to wage war against Iran, but instead, continue a policy of engagement through intermediaries, while tacitly endorsing Israel's mission to dismantle Hezbollah's military infrastructure in Lebanon and that of Hamas in Gaza.

Mr Trump's actions, however, will not be surprising. He has made clear how he plans to deal with both Iran and Israel: he is opposed the current Iranian government and supports Israel.

World must act fast or face even bigger climate change bill

Chris Doyle

BACK in the days of Muslim rule in Spain, Valencia was known as Medina Al-Turab, or city of sand. After last week's deluge, it is now more of a city of water and mud. A year's rain in a single day led to the loss of more than 400 lives and enormous damage to one of Spain's finest and most historic cities.

Arab rulers installed irrigation systems to manage the waters of the River Turia. Even today, the Tribunal de las Aguas meets every week, as it has done for 1,000 years, to democratically determine the management of these waters. It is arguably the oldest court in the world and perhaps the oldest democratic body in Europe.

The city's inhabitants will have to tap into every ounce of collective endeavor to recover from this inundation. Already, as so often after disasters, the city's inhabitants have found unity in adversity, showing wonderful solidarity as they volunteer with brooms and mops to clean up their beloved city. Quite what the ultimate cost will be in the muddy realm of conjecture.

But of course, there are far broader implications. This is no longer some freak event. Flash floods are just one of the life-threatening challenges people around the globe will increasingly face as a result of climate change.

Warmer air can hold more moisture — about 7 per cent more for every 1 degree Celsius. This summer, Central Europe, including Germany, faced massive flooding. Coastal areas will be hit by storm surges.

Human-induced climate change brings with it these extremes. We live in a world where extreme weather events are becoming routine. Such events have increased fivefold over the last 50 years. These include massive

droughts, metal-melting heat and winds of 200 mph. Even the most obstinate climate change deniers will have to rethink as the link between cause and impact is directly experienced by more and more people.

Compound extreme events, where two or more extremes occur simultaneously, are also becoming more common. Concurrent disasters are far more challenging and they threaten global supply chains. Grain harvests lost in one country might ordinarily be compensated for by greater yields elsewhere, but not if both regions are affected at the same time. Going forward, this is more likely to occur.

These events cannot be dodged. They are baked into our collective future until, hopefully, solutions can be found and climate change slowed or even reversed.

How many cities in the richer states, let alone in the developing world, could cope with a year's rain in a day? My guess is that most could not handle a quarter of that.

These extreme weather events also impact our ability to harvest renewable energy. Solar power does not function as well in extreme heat. High winds disrupt wind turbines. Extreme drought affects hydroelectric power production.

What are the options? More stringent measures are required to curtail carbon emissions and fossil fuel consumption, as well as protecting and increasing forests worldwide. Clean energy systems need massive investment. This is happening but at too slow a rate. In 2023, the planet added 50 per cent more renewable capacity than in 2022. This is a start, but it needs to be accelerated. China has made considerable strides forward.

The evidence of recent

decades is not positive that sufficient measures will be taken fast enough. Many people and businesses are reluctant to pay the costs today.

What progress has been made in Europe? The EU has claimed that it reduced carbon emissions by 8 per cent in 2023, which is a minimum if it is to achieve its own target of cutting emissions by 55 percent by 2030. The EU is the world's fourth-largest carbon emitter after the US, China and India.

The US and China will play a key role. President Donald Trump pulled America out of the Paris climate change agreement, only for Joe Biden to reverse that move. If the Republican candidate wins this week's election, he is likely to pull out of the agreement again, almost certainly killing off the entire deal.

Can early warning systems improve our capacity to mitigate against the worst of these events? Hurricane and tsunami warnings have certainly improved. Further advances are vital.

What can be done to prepare for extreme weather events? First of all, politicians and planners have to stop seeing these as one-off, isolated events; instead, they are challenges that we will all face. Building regulations in hurricane and typhoon-prone areas have to be tightened, but this costs money. Public buildings need to be converted to withstand all weather events. Water systems and flood defenses need regular and increased investment, but will ailing economies be able to afford this?

Perhaps most of all, the global system requires a total about-turn in its approach. Acting now is going to cost far less than if we do nothing and pay later. Everyone should pay attention to these events. Most of us will be caught up in them.



PESHAWAR: President Sarhad Chamber of Commerce and Industry Fazal Moqeem Khan presenting a shield to Chairman Pakistan South Africa Trade Federation Muhammad Rafiq Memon.

PSX stays bullish, gains 1,078 points

ISLAMABAD (APP): The 100-Index of the Pakistan Stock Exchange (PSX) continued with bullish trend on Monday, gaining 1,078.15 points, a positive change of 1.19 percent, closing at 91,938.01 points as compared to 90,859.85 points on the last trading day.

A total of 589,546,678 shares were traded during the day as compared to 465,865,841 shares the previous trading day, whereas the price of shares stood at Rs29,959 billion against Rs23,089 billion on the last trading day.

As many as 445 companies transacted their shares in the stock market, 258 of them recorded gains and 140 sustained losses, whereas the share price of 47 companies remained unchanged.

The three top trading companies were Power Cement with 56,698,604

shares at Rs7.12 per share, K-Electric Limited with 38,931,623 shares at Rs4.85 per share and Maple Leaf with 36,957,197 shares at Rs41.53 per share.

Indus Motor Company Limited witnessed a maximum increase of Rs70.50 per share price, closing at Rs1,989.28, whereas the runner-up was Rafhan Maize Products Company Limited with Rs63.75 rise in its per share price to Rs7,505.35.

Bela Automotives Limited witnessed a maximum decrease of Rs40.59 per share closing at Rs365.31 followed by Blessed Textile Limited with Rs23.20 decline to close at Rs226.80.

Rupee sheds 08 paisa against dollar

Pakistani rupee on Monday depreciated by 08 paisa against the US dollar in the interbank trading and closed at Rs277.78 against

the previous day's closing of Rs277.70.

However, according to the Forex Association of Pakistan (FAP), the buying and selling rates of the dollar in the open market stood at Rs277.35 and Rs278.85 respectively.

The price of Euro increased by 66 paisa to close at Rs302.63 against the last day's closing of Rs301.97, according to the State Bank of Pakistan.

The Japanese yen went up by 01 paisa and closed at Rs1.82, whereas an increase of Rs2.25 was witnessed in the exchange rate of the British Pound, which traded at Rs360.30 as compared to the last day's closing of Rs358.05.

The exchange rate of the Emirates Dirham and the Saudi Riyal increased by 02 paisa each to close at Rs75.62 and Rs73.96 respectively.

Gold prices increase by Rs700/tola

ISLAMABAD (APP): The price of 24 karat per tola gold increased by Rs700 and was sold at Rs283,700 on Monday compared to its sale at Rs283,000 on last trading day.

The price of 10 grams of 24 karat gold also increased by Rs600 to Rs243,227 from Rs242,627 whereas the price of 10 gram 22 karat gold went up to Rs222,958 from Rs222,408, the All Sindh Sarafa Jewellers Association reported.

The price of per tola and ten gram silver remained unchanged at Rs3,430 and Rs2,940.67, respectively.

The price of gold in the international market increased by \$7 to \$2,742 from \$2,735, the Association reported.

JDW Sugar Mills: Leading way in employee social welfare

PESHAWAR: JDW Sugar Mills has been awarded special recognition award as the largest financial contributor to the Punjab Employees Social Security Institution (PESSI). This contribution underscores JDW's commitment to enhancing the welfare and security of its employees and their families.

Through these financial contributions, PESSI provides employees and their children with access to quality healthcare services, education support, pensions and financial assistance during crises or illness, ensuring both economic security and a brighter future for the next generation.

JDW spokesperson commented, "Pakistan's hardworking human resource is the backbone of our country's growth and development.

Supporting their welfare, including health and education services for their families, aligns closely with our mission, and we are proud to contribute to initiatives that promote their social and economic security."

The proceeds raised

SCCI, PSATF to initiate joint ventures to attract foreign investment in KP

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: The Sarhad Chamber of Commerce and Industry and Pakistan South Africa Trade Federation (PSATF) have decided to launch joint initiatives to attract foreign investment in various potentials and sectors of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa.

The decision came during a meeting with SCCI president Fazal Moqeem Khan and PSATF Chairman Muhammad Rafiq Memon, who is currently leading a delegation of the PSATF to KP, said in a press release here on Monday.

SCCI senior vice president Abdul Jalil Jan, vice president Shehryar Khan, former senior vice president of the chamber Shahid Hussain, Secretary General

of the chamber Muqtasid Ahsan were present during the meeting.

The PSATF delegation consisted of general secretary of the federation Ikramullah Jan, President for the Middle East, KP, and Islamabad region Mumtaz Khan Yousafzai, Members Advisory Shahid Khattak, Naseer Khattak and Coordinator Hafiz Khalid Zaheer.

The meeting exchanged in depth about prospects of Pak-South Africa investment in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa.

The participants highlighted KP' potentials and major sectors for foreign investment.

The speakers underscored the need of the launch of joint ventures and collaboration to boost up

the Pak-South Africa trade and economic relations.

It agreed both sides will take joint steps to provide an enabling environment for investors in KP and fully exploit potentials and experiences of each other to improve the bilateral trade between the two countries.

Rafiq Memon briefed the meeting about the purpose of the PSATF and expressed willingness to initiate joint ventures and work with SCCI to attract investment in Tourism, Hoteling and other important sectors in KP.

PSATF chairman said South African investors are ready to make investment in tourism, hoteling and other sectors in the K-P.

He, however, sought assistance from Sarhad Chamber of Commerce and

Industry to provide a friendly and conducive environment for investors in the province.

Responding to the request/proposals of the PSATF, Fazal Moqeem said vast opportunities are available to make investment in various sectors in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa.

He said KP' youth is fully capable and talented which successfully excelled in every field in the country and internationally.

Fazal Moqeem welcomed showing willingness of African investors about making investment in KP' potentials/sectors and assured SCCI will fully cooperate with PSATF to promote Pak-SA investment in tourism, hoteling and other important sectors in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa.

Honda exhibited its 30 years legacy at Pakistan Auto Parts Show 2024

F.P. Report

LAHORE: Honda Atlas Cars (Pakistan) Limited (HACPL) participated in the Pakistan Auto Parts Show (PAPS), held from October 25-27, 2024, at the Lahore Expo Center, showcasing a strong presence in the SUV and Sedan sectors. In line with their commitment to strengthening local manufacturing, Honda displayed a range of locally sourced parts, reinforcing their dedication to localization efforts and supporting Pakistan's automotive industry.

This year's participation was especially momentous as Honda celebrated its 30-years legacy in Pakistan. The event served as a reflection on Honda's three decades of innovation, quality, and customer satisfaction, further demonstrating its strong presence in the market.

This milestone was accompanied by exciting announcements about the



company's future, particularly its transition towards hybrid technology with the introduction of the e:HEV.

The announcement of advanced e:HEV Technology sparked considerable interest and enthusiasm among the visitors. The audience eagerly anticipated the impact of these hybrid vehicles on Pakistan's automotive landscape, especially considering the growing focus on sustainability and fuel

efficiency. The event positioned Honda as a key player in the era of eco-friendly, hybrid vehicles, creating a sense of the company's anticipation in the automotive transition era in Pakistan.

Honda's participation in PAPS 2024 showcased its commitment to innovation and sustainability, embodying the essence of its logo, "Honda How We Move You. | Create > Transcend, Augment." This bold vision

of mobility empowers people to create beyond limits, building on "The Power of Dreams" and highlighting Honda's dedication to breaking barriers and enhancing human potential. What began as a dream has evolved into a global movement, with Honda pledging to continue fulfilling the dreams of millions and ushering in a new chapter of green mobility solutions for Pakistan.

ATS conducts recruitment test for Cadet Colleges



F.P. Report

SUKKUR: Aror Testing Services (ATS) of Aror University Sukkur successfully

conducted the recruitment test for various Cadet Colleges across Sindh on November 3, 2024. The test was held on the university premises, where extensive arrangements were made to facilitate both candidates.

To maintain a secure and controlled environment, the university provided comprehensive safety measures, including the presence of Rescue 1122 teams, an Emergency Mobile Health unit, police security, and a general physician to ensure the health and safety of all participants.

Prof. Dr Zahid Hussain Khand, Vice Chancellor of Aror University, took an active role in inspecting the facilities and arrangements, reaffirming the institution's commitment to delivering a quality assessment process. His involvement ensured the university's dedication to creating a fair and conducive testing environment.

Dr. Khand expressed his gratitude for the hard work and professionalism of the ATS Team involved, acknowledging their efforts in ensuring the smooth conduct of the Test.

Court Notice

In the Court of Mohamed Ikram Civil Judge-III Tangi. Case No. 9/1. Next date 11-11-2024. Case title Ikram ul Haq Vs. Kamil etc. Notice to Irfan Khan S/o Sikandar R/o Hari Chand District Charsadda, presently residing at abroad England. (Defendant) In the case titled above, the above defendants are hereby informed by notice that on 11-11-2024, you must appear before the Court as a lawyer or attorney and follow the case, otherwise unilateral action will be taken against you.

Court Notice

In the Court of Ms Maliha Allauddin Senior Civil Judge Family Court Kohat, Suit no 165/FC. Date of hearing 19-11-2024. Titled Mst Kiran Basheer Vs. Arsalan Ahmad (etc.). Notice against (1) Arsalan Ahmad S/o Ahmad Khan R/o Mohallah Kallah Sade Garhi Mawaz Khan District Kohat, presently R/o (now in Abroad Dubai UAE) (Defendant). Whereas, the above plaintiff has instituted a family suit of Dower against you defendant in which date of hearing 19-11-2024 is fixed for your appearance. Since your intimation/service is not possible through ordinary means/mode therefore you defendant is intimated through this publication to appear before this court by person or by pleader on date fixed 19-11-2024 otherwise Court shall be proceeded in accordance with law order. Issued on 01-11-2024 (Court of SCJ FC Kohat).

Export of sport goods increases 2.13 per cent

ISLAMABAD (APP): The export of sport goods from the country witnessed an increase of 2.13 percent during the first three months of the current fiscal year (2024-25) as compared to the export of corresponding months of last year. The country exported sport goods worth US\$ 93,087 million during July-September (2024-25) as opposed to the export of US\$ 91.148 million during July-September (2023-24), showing growth of 2.13 percent, according to the Pakistan Bureau of Statistics (PBS). Among the sports products, the exports of footballs rose by 1.95 percent, surging from US\$ 55.260 million last year to US\$ 56.338 million during the current year.

Court Notice

In the Court of Ms Mashal Latif C.J-IV Kohat, Suit No. 238/1. Date of hearing 13-11-2024. Titled Mst Hina Ayaz Vs. Shahzad Naem (etc.). Notice against (1) Shahzad Naem S/o Muhammad Ishaq R/o Mohallah Sangair District Kohat, presently R/o (in Abroad Dubai UAE) (Defendant). Whereas, the above plaintiff has instituted a civil suit against you Defendant in which date of hearing 13-11-2024 is fixed for your appearance. Since your intimation/service is not possible through ordinary means/mode therefore you Defendant is intimated through this publication to appear before this court by person or by pleader on date fixed 13-11-2024 otherwise Court shall be proceeded in accordance with law order. Issued on 25-10-2024 (Court of CJ-IV Kohat).

Court Notice

In the Court of Fasih Ur Rehman Civil Judge-I, North Waziristan at Bannu. Suit No. 153/1. Institution 2024. Next date of hearing 07-11-2024. Case title Makar ali Khan Vs. Malik Sela Mir Khan etc. Notice to 2 Asad Din S/o Sher Alam Khan R/o Dandy Sidgay P/O Tehsil Ghulam Khan District North Waziristan, presently in UAE. Whereas, in the above case titled the service of above defendant(s) is not possible through ordinary means, therefore, you defendant(s) is/are informed through this publication that on 07-11-2024 at 8:00 A.M. You has/have to appear before this Court either personally or through attorney or through counsel to pursue the suit noted above, otherwise, ex parte proceeding will be initiated against you.

Court Notice

In the court of Civil Judge/Illaq Qazi-IV, Swat. Case No. 6/12/2. Instituted 22-06-2024. Next date of hearing 26-11-2024. Case title Mohammad Naem Vs. Anwar Hayat etc. Publication against Defendants No. 2 Nisar Ahmad S/o Sher Dad R/o Mohalla Banar Mingora Swat, presently abroad. In the case cited above the service of defendants are not possible in easy way, therefore, they are hereby informed through this publication to ensure his attendance personally or through their counsel or attorney on date fixed mentioned above.

in the mangrove plantation activity at WWF Wetland Centre, Karachi.

The Company will support plantation of 1,000 mangroves at a designated WWF site in Somyani. Through the collaboration, Pakistan Cables reaffirms its commitment to environmental conservation. The plantation drive reflects Pakistan Cables' broader environmental goals, which include reducing carbon emissions and promoting green initiatives as part of its corporate social responsibility agenda. The Company's carbon emission reduction targets were approved and validated by SBTi in 2023.

Pakistan Cables Ltd.

Founded in 1953, Pakistan Cables is the premiere and most reputable cable manufacturer in Pakistan. It is the first and oldest wires and cable manufacturer listed on the PSX since 1955. It is also a member company of the Amir S. Chinoy (ASC) group. The company has the largest geographical footprint in Pakistan with



presence in over 180 cities. It is ISO9001:2015, ISO 14001:2015 AND OHSAS 18001:2007 certified and various cables type tested by KEMA, Netherlands. Pakistan Cables is the only building material company in Pakistan that has its carbon emission reduction targets approved and validated by SBTi.

WWF, Pakistan

Operational since 1970,

WWF-Pakistan has grown from a small group of wildlife enthusiasts to the country's largest environmental organization. Today, we are part of an international network, established in 1961, which has an active presence in over 100 countries across five continents, and has the support of five million people.

As we have evolved, our focus has broadened from

localized efforts and individual habitats and species to an ambitious strategy that is protecting freshwater resources, securing our oceans, restoring and protecting vulnerable forests, transforming food and markets, protecting threatened wildlife and habitats, tackling climate change, and putting sustainability at the forefront in linear infrastructure development.



In brief

India to participate in T20 Blind WC

ISLAMABAD (APP): The India's Ministry of Sports has granted No Objection Certificate (NOC) to the Indian blind cricket team to feature in the 4th edition of T20 Blind Cricket World Cup, scheduled to be held in Pakistan from November 23. In a letter sent by Shri Shailender Yadav, Secretary General of the Cricket Association for the Blind in India, the Indian Ministry of Sports has permitted the team's tour to Pakistan, advising them to seek further clearances from the Ministry of External Affairs and the Ministry of Home Affairs, said a press release issued here. The Indian team is expected to arrive in Lahore on November 21 to participate in the World Cup. A high-stakes match between Pakistan and Indian teams is scheduled for November 25 in Lahore. Pakistan Blind Cricket Council (PBCC) Chairman, Syed Sultan Shah, expressed his appreciation for the NOC granted by the Indian Ministry of Sports, noting that Pakistan-India matches have always captivated fans. Shah also mentioned the enthusiasm among Pakistani fans for the upcoming World Cup clash between the two teams. He highlighted that cricket diplomacy has previously contributed significantly to improving relations between the two countries. Shah further remarked that the United Nations Charter emphasizes special provisions for individuals with disabilities, particularly in the context of sporting opportunities and other avenues for personal development. He expressed hope that India's Ministries of External and Home Affairs would promptly issue the necessary clearance for the Indian Blind Cricket Team's tour to Pakistan.

AFP inks MoU with housing society

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Athletics Federation of Pakistan (AFP) and a private housing society on Monday signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU), paving the way for enhanced collaboration and development in athletics. Gen. (R) Ehsan Ul Haq Bajwa was the chief guest at the ceremony, alongside notable figures and athletes, including former Prime Minister Raja Pervaiz Ashraf, Gen (R) Muhammad Akram Sahi, Chairman South Asian Athletics Federation, Zamaud Khan, Shoaib Suddle, Qamar Zaman, Nooh Dastgir Butt, Shajar Abbas and Sajid Sadpara. Bajwa expressed optimism about Pakistan's sports future, citing the country's athletics talent and the importance of merit-based selection. He acknowledged the vital role of sponsors and media, in sports development, highlighting AFP's achievements, including Paris Olympics gold-medalist Arshad Nadeem. Earlier, Brig. (R) Sultan Mehmood Satti announced Pakistan's hosting of the South Asian Cross Country Athletics Championship on November 24 here at the F-9 Park. Seven countries, including Pakistan, Bangladesh, Sri Lanka, India, Maldives, Nepal, and Bhutan, will participate in the 10km and 8km seniors and juniors categories. Winning athletes will receive prizes, promoting motivation and regional sports growth. The ceremony concluded with the MoU signing and a special recognition for Pakistan's fastest athlete, Shajar Abbas, who received a cheque for Rs One million.

Australia edge past Pakistan in hard-fought series opener

MELBOURNE (Monitoring Desk): Australia overcame Pakistan by two wickets in the first of the three-match ODI series at the Melbourne Cricket Ground (MCG) in a tense chase on Monday. Chasing 204 runs, Pat Cummins-led Australia reached the target in 33.3 overs with the skipper playing a crucial hand of unbeaten 32 off 31 balls hitting four fours.

Pakistan's pace quartet of Haris Rauf (3-67), Shaheen Shah Afridi (2-43), Naseem Shah (1-39) and Mohammad Hasnain (1-51) shared seven wickets among them but couldn't keep the defeat at bay.

At the beginning of the chase, Australia lost their opening batters, Matthew Short and Jake Fraser-McGurk to Shaheen and Naseem, respectively with the scorecard reading 28-2.

At this point, Steve Smith (44, 46b, 6x4s) and Josh Inglis (49, 42b, 4x4s, 3x6s) came together to stitch an 85-run third-wicket partnership solidifying Australia's position.

Haris inspired Pakistan to comeback in the game by

removing Smith in the 17th over as Australia went onto lose five wickets in a span of 8.5 overs as they were reduced to 155-7. Shaheen dismissed Inglis in the 20th over while Haris returned to eke out Marnus Labuschagne (16, 13b, 2x4s) and Glenn Maxwell on consecutive balls in the 21st over.

After Hardie was castled in the 26th over by Hasnain, Sean Abbott and Cummins put on 30 runs for eighth wicket taking just 27 balls. Abbott was run-out in the 30th over with Australia 185-8, requiring 19 more runs which Cummins and Starc achieved in 23 balls taking Australia home safely.

Earlier, after being put into bat Pakistan were dismissed for 203 in 46.4 overs. Captain Mohammad Rizwan, who was leading the team for the first time in ODIs, top-scored for the side with a 71-ball 44, hitting two fours and a six. He also added 39 runs for the third wicket with Babar Azam (37, 44b, 4x4s).

After the departure of Rizwan at 117 for six in 31.4 overs, the last four wickets added 86 runs on

the board with Naseem scoring a 39-ball 40, which included a boundary and four sixes. Shaheen scored 24 off 19, hitting three fours and a six, while debutant Muhammad Irfan Khan scored 22 off 35, smashing two fours.

For Australia, left-arm pacer Mitchell Starc was the most successful bowler, grabbing three wickets for 33 runs in 10 overs, which also included debutant Saim Ayub (1.5b) wicket as well.

Both sides will now feature in the second ODI at Adelaide Oval in Adelaide on 8 November.

Scores in brief: Australia beat Pakistan by two wickets. Pakistan 203 all out, 46.4 overs (Mohammad Rizwan 44, Naseem Shah 40, Babar Azam 37; Mitchell Starc 3-33, Pat Cummins 2-39, Adam Zampa 2-64). Australia 204-8, 33.3 overs (Josh Inglis 49, Steven Smith 44, Pat Cummins 32 not out; Haris Rauf 3-67, Shaheen Shah Afridi 2-43). Player of the match – Mitchell Starc (Australia).

China's Zheng beats Rybakina at WTA Finals



RIYADH (AFP): Zheng Qinwen improved her chances of advancing to the semi-finals at the WTA Finals with a 7-6 (7/4), 3-6, 6-1 victory over world number five Elena Rybakina in Riyadh on Monday.

The seventh-seeded Zheng rebounded from her opening round-robin defeat by Aryna Sabalenka by claiming her first win from three meetings with Rybakina.

Meanwhile, Rybakina suffered a second defeat in as many matches this week in Saudi Arabia and is facing elimination, with one more round-robin clash to go against Sabalenka on Wednesday. During her on-court interview, Zheng apologised to the Chinese fans in the stands for "losing control" of her emotions at one point during the match, admitting she was "harsh" in her reaction to them, and thanked them for their support.

"I'm really happy to have won this match because I never beat her before and she's one of the

greatest players right now on tour, huge serve and great groundstrokes," said Zheng.

"I didn't take my chances in the second set but I was able to come back in the third and I stayed focused. I had to stay really focused on my service games, because here, both of us are destroying our serves, it's really tough to return."

Zheng arrives in Riyadh on the back of an impressive second half of the season that saw her win titles in Palermo and Tokyo, and an Olympic gold medal in singles in Paris. No woman has won more matches than her within that span.

The first Chinese player to qualify for the WTA Finals since Li Na in 2013, Zheng amassed a 12-2 win-loss record during the Asian swing last month and is the tour leader in most aces struck and percentage of first-serve points won.

Rybakina's second part of 2024 could not have been more different.

The Kazakh had played

just two matches between Wimbledon and the WTA Finals as she struggled with allergies, insomnia, and a back injury.

After saving a pair of break points on her own serve in the third game, Zheng made her move, breaking Rybakina en route to a 4-1 advantage.

Rybakina wiped out her deficit, attacking Zheng's second serve, and was soon on level terms at 4-4.

The set fittingly went to a tie-break which Zheng sealed on a long forehand from Rybakina on the 58-minute mark.

In a pattern similar to the opening set, Zheng carved out a lead in the second frame, only for Rybakina to strike back and even the score. This time though, the big-hitter took four games in a row to claim the second set and force a decider.

Zheng shook off early trouble on her serve in the final set before surging ahead 4-1. It was the boost she needed to wrap up the win — the ninth of her career against a top-10 opponent.

Wasim reveals his favourites for Pakistan, India Test series



KARACHI (Web Desk): Although the world of cricket features some electrifying rivalries, none matches the attention garnered by Pakistan vs India matches regardless of the format.

With fans hoping to see the two arch-rivals take on each other other than international tournaments, former Pakistan skipper

Wasim Akram has opened up on his favourites in a Test series if the two teams are to go up against each other in the longest format of the game.

"Pakistan have a chance to beat India in Tests now on a spinning track. They have been hammered by New Zealand 3-0 at home," said Akram while expressing his views dur-

ing the commentary of the first ODI between Pakistan and Australia on Monday.

Akram's remarks came in response to former England cricketer Michael Vaughan's statement where he said that he believed that the Men in Green could triumph over the Indian side.

"Pakistan can now beat India on the turners," said Vaughan.

Remember, Pakistan, showcasing their spin prowess, made an astounding comeback to clinch the three-match Test series against England last month.

After being humbled by England in the opening fixture, the green shirts made major changes to their squad, which included resting key players like



MELBOURNE: Haris Rauf burst through Australia's middle order.

England, NZ, Zimbabwe women to tour Pakistan

LAHORE (APP): Pakistan will host England, New Zealand and Zimbabwe women's cricket teams for the first time as ICC announced Future Tours Programme 2025-29. Zimbabwe will tour Pakistan in April/May 2026, while New Zealand will tour Pakistan in April 2027. England will visit Pakistan in October in the same year.

The fourth cycle of the ICC Women's Championship, which will be played from 2026-29 will see 11 sides taking part in the event for direct qualification to the ICC Women's 50-over World Cup in 2029.

Zimbabwe will feature in the event for the first time.

In the Women's Championship, each team will compete against eight other teams, following the format of four home and four away series, similar to the current edition. Across 44 series, a total of 132 ODIs will be played, with each series consisting of three matches.

In the Championship, the fourth side to visit Pakistan will be Bangladesh and they will come in October 2028. As part of their four away assignments, Pakistan will travel to South Africa in February 2026, and then play

Sri Lanka in July the same year. Later in November 2026, Pakistan will visit the West Indies while their final away series in the ICC Women's Championship 2026-29 cycle will be in Ireland in June 2028.

The Future Tour Programme will see an ICC Women's tournament taking place every year, starting with the ICC Women's Cricket World Cup 2025 in India, the ICC Women's T20 World Cup 2026 in England, the inaugural ICC Women's Champions Trophy in 2027 and the ICC Women's T20 World Cup in 2028.

Also, to prepare for ICC

events, members have mutually scheduled tri-series tournaments. Ahead of the ICC Women's T20 World Cup 2026 in England, Ireland will host Pakistan and the West Indies.

Home series:
v Zimbabwe; April 2026
v New Zealand; April 2027
v England; October 2027
v Bangladesh; October 2028
Away series:
v South Africa; February 2026
v Sri Lanka; July 2026
v West Indies; November 2026
v Ireland; June 2028.

Arsalan Bullet leads Ehsan XI to victory

F.P. Report

JEDDAH: Arsalan Bullet from Buttkhela District Malakand has made Pakistan and especially Pashtuns proud in Jeddah Saudi Arabia, according to details Arsalan Bullet, the champion player of the tapball event champion team in Jeddah, Saudi Arabia, participated in the entire event.

He played a key role in making the team champions by performing destructive bowling for his team by turning the match over in difficult times in the final match.



He represented Ehsan XI team during the event and took 8 wickets throughout the tournament, which made him to the list of top 8 bowlers of the tournament. Players from all over the world were included in the event, by the people of Buttkhela district Malakand Congratulating Arsalan Bullet on his great success and praying for his further success.

Salah drops hint about his future at Liverpool

LONDON (AFP): Mohamed Salah dropped a cryptic hint about his Liverpool future on Sunday as the Egypt star said he would never forget the feeling of scoring at Anfield "no matter what happens".

Salah sent Liverpool to the top of the Premier League with a superb winner in Saturday's 2-1 victory against Brighton.

The 32-year-old's ninth goal this season underlined his huge value to the Reds as they chase their first English title since 2020.

However, Salah's long-term future remains uncertain as his contract is due to expire at the end of this season. Salah will be able to negotiate with non-English clubs in January and he

sparked fresh talk that he could be ready to leave with his latest social media post.

"Top of the table is where this club belongs. Nothing less. All teams win matches but there's only 1 champion in the end. That's what we want," he wrote on X 24 hours after his eye-catching curler saw off Brighton. "Thank you for your support last night. No matter what happens, I will never forget what scoring at Anfield feels like."

Paid a reported £350,000 (\$453,000) per week at present, Mohamed Salah revealed after Liverpool's 3-0 win at Manchester United earlier this season that he had yet to be contacted by the club

over a new contract.

"To be fair I was coming to the game, it could be the last time (playing at Old Trafford)," he told Sky Sports in September.

But Liverpool boss Arne Slot is not concerned about Salah's future, or fans' concerns about defenders Virgil van Dijk and Trent Alexander-Arnold, who are also out of contract at the end of this term.

"The contract situation becomes a problem if players don't perform as well as they are now," he said.

"At the moment all three are in good places performing really well. There are ongoing discussions with the people Virgil says he has to talk to, and that's not me as you know."

Peshawar, Abbottabad earned victories in Quaid-e-Azam Trophy

ISLAMABAD (APP): Peshawar beat Bahawalpur while Abbottabad outclassed Faisalabad on the fourth and final day of the second round Quaid-e-Azam Trophy on Monday.

Fast bowler Niaz Khan followed up his six for 97 with four for 39 to hand Peshawar their first win in the Quaid-e-Azam Trophy with a thumping 181 runs victory over Bahawalpur at Abbottabad Cricket Stadium, Abbottabad. Chasing 344 runs for victory and starting the day at seven for one, Bahawalpur were skittled out for 162 with only Mohammad Ammar offering some resistance while scoring 51.

Mohammad Amir Khan lent good support to Niaz when he bagged three wickets for 45 runs for match figures of five wickets for 93 runs.

At National Ground in Islamabad, Faisalabad, resuming the last day at 69 for two in pursuit of 419 runs target, were dismissed for 285 with Abbottabad's Israr Hussain causing maximum damage with figures of 28-3-69-6. Faisalabad's second innings revolved around Muhammad Awais Zafar (61), Ali Shan (58 not out), Atiq-ur-Rehman (55) and Abdul Samad (53). This was Abbottabad's first win and second successive loss for Faisalabad.

Scores in brief (day 4 of 4): Peshawar beat Bahawalpur by 181 runs, Abbottabad Cricket Stadium, Abbottabad, Pool B- Peshawar 301 all-out,

58.3 overs (Maaz Sadaqat 96, Waqar Ahmed 63, Mohammad Haris 34; Mehran Sanwal 4-106, Muhammad Imran 3-66, Ali Shabbir 2-48) and 321 all-out, 75.4 overs (Ifthikhar Ahmed 68, Maaz Sadaqat 65, Mehran Ibrahim 55, Nabi Gul 40, Mohammad Haris 32, Israrullah 22, Sajid Khan 21; Mehran Sanwal 4-75, Gulfam Aziz 3-60, Ali Shabbir 3-91).

Bahawalpur 279 all-out, 86.5 overs (Mohammad Faizan Zafar 83, Mohammad Ammar 44, Ali Hamza Wasim 37, Ali Umar 35, Mohammad Imran 30, Abid Ali 26; Niaz Khan 6-97, Mohammad Amir Khan 2-48, Moazzam Umar 2-57) and 162 all-out, 64.5 overs (Mohammad Ammar 51, Ali Umar 29, Ali Hamza Wasim 27, Mohammad Sheharyar 21; Niaz Khan 4-39, Mohammad Amir Khan 3-45, Sajid Khan 2-36).

Abbottabad beat Faisalabad by 134 runs, National Ground, Islamabad, Pool A- Abbottabad 405 all-out, 100.2 overs (Khalid Usman 139 not out, Ahmed Khan 65, Mohammad Adil 62, Shujah Zaheer 56, Yasir Shah 26; Mohammad Faizan 3-68, Khurram Shahzad 3-98, Shehzad Gul 2-100) and 203-8d, 49.2 overs (Khayam Khan 96, Afaq Ahmed 68, Ahmed Khan 21; Ahmed Safi Abdullah 3-52, Shehzad Gul 3-58, Khurram Shahzad 2-31).

Faisalabad 189 all out, 59.3 overs (Ahmed Safi

Abdullah 43 not out, Muhammad Awais Zafar 33, Mohammad Saleem 28, Ali Shan 26; Mohammad Adil 5-58, Ahmed Khan 2-20) and 285 all-out, 102 overs (Muhammad Awais Zafar 61, Ali Shan 58 not out, Atiq-ur-Rehman 55, Abdul Samad 53; Israr Hussain 6-69).

Pakistan AFL women's team trials held

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Pakistan women's team trials for the Australian Football League (AFL) Asia Cup, under the supervision of chief selector Abid Hussain were held here to finalize the names for the mega event.

The finalized names include Chaman Mushtaq, Hina, Arooj, Tahmina, Salma Jabeen, Hajra Shakeel, Sayeda Tasneem, Mahnoor Alam, Maryam Mukhtar, Zubia Malik, Salisbeel, Hajra Bibi, Noor, Samina, Nadia Zafar, Umira Arshad, Asma Khan - Arooj Altaf, Sabina, Farzana Batool, Nazia Batool, Farhat, Asbo Saeed, Ghazala Nelofer, Rabia, Kahkshan, Nazish, Noreen Baig and Saba Yasin will be finalized.

After the trial, the practice session for the 30-member squad of the Pakistan Women's team will begin from next week in Islamabad under the leadership of head coach Michael Gillis.



In brief

ICT admin nabs 13 for violating price lists

ISLAMABAD (APP): Islamabad Capital Territory (ICT) administration on Monday arrested 13 shopkeepers, on the customer complaints, for violating the notified price lists in vegetable market. According to ICT spokesperson, Assistant Commissioner Aniq Anwar Potohar division, raided on various shops and nabbed 13 shopkeepers on violating the price lists and warned others to follow the lists otherwise strict actions would be taken against them as well. Deputy Commissioner Irfan Nawaz Memon directed the authorities concerned to continue operations against vendors in vegetable markets on a daily basis and urged the citizens to pay the price as per the official price list.

Meeting to review crimes situation in Kahuta Circle

RAWALPINDI (APP): City Police Officer (CPO) Syed Khalid Hamdani on Monday chaired a meeting here at the Police Lines Headquarters to review the crime situation in the Kahuta Circle. Among others, the Senior Superintendent of Police (SSP) Operations, SP Saddar, SP Crime Investigation Agency, and other relevant officers attended the meeting. While reviewing the performance of officers, CPO Hamdani directed to ensure the arrest of suspects involved in the cases under investigation and timely submission of their challans in courts. He asked the officers to intensify their efforts in the ongoing crackdown against drug-related cases. He also stressed the importance of utilizing all available resources to apprehend the accused involved in illegal activities. The CPO further instructed that the Tenancy law should be implemented in letter and spirit, besides keeping the record of tenants and domestic servants by the respective police stations. He called for effective patrolling to combat street crimes and ensure public safety. He also stressed the need to closely monitor the proclaimed offenders and hardcore criminals. CPO reaffirmed that protecting the lives and property of citizens was the top priority of police for which all available resources should be utilized.

6 drug dealers arrested

RAWALPINDI (APP): The Police in their ongoing operation against criminal elements, arrested six drug dealers and recovered more than 5.5 kilogram drugs from their possession on Monday. According to a police spokesman, the Gujjar Khan Police held Javed with 1.4 kg drugs, while the Jatali Police apprehended Rashid with 1.3 kg drugs. Likewise, the Saddar Wah Police recovered 860 grams of hashish from Khayal and 620 grams of hashish from Asif, while Cantt Police arrested Saeedullah with 550 grams of hashish. The New Town police recovered 750 grams of hashish from Saddam and wanted by police in the drug dealing case.

IRSA releases 114,400 cusecs water

ISLAMABAD (APP): Indus River System Authority (IRSA) on Monday released 114,400 cusecs of water from various rim stations with inflow of 58,000 cusecs. According to the data released by IRSA, water level in River Indus at Tarbela Dam was 1525.49 feet and was 127.49 feet higher than its dead level of 1,398 feet. Water inflow and outflow in the dam was recorded as 30,700 cusecs and 55,000 cusecs respectively.



ISLAMABAD: Acting President Syed Yousaf Raza Gillani addressing the inaugural plenary of the 27th Sustainable Development Conference at Pak-China Friendship Centre. —APP Photo

Gilani for relentless efforts to achieve sustainable development goals

ISLAMABAD (APP): Acting President Syed Yousaf Raza Gillani on Monday highlighting the country's multiple initiatives to achieve resilience and a sustainable future, called for relentless efforts, massive awareness, and an innovative approach to meet the Sustainable Development Goals by 2030.

The acting president, addressing the inaugural plenary of the 27th Sustainable Development Conference organized by the Sustainable Development Policy Institute (SDPI), highlighted the transformative role of technology and said that by harnessing advancement in artificial intelligence and blockchain, the social protection and inclusive growth could be achieved through innovative methods.

He told the gathering of cabinet members, academicians, environmental experts, think tanks and researchers that the promotion of sustainable practices necessitated fostering a culture of responsible citizenship and environmental awareness.

He commended the second edition of the Sustainability Investment Expo 2024 held alongside the moot to showcase cutting-edge technology, fostering collaboration and

attracting investment. He said the theme of the conference "From Fragility to Resilience: Enhancing Sustainable Development" was a reminder of the critical importance of transforming and turning vulnerabilities into strengths, besides innovation and adaptability.

He said the deliberations at the conference would be a clarion call for survival and prosperity as Pakistan being the fifth most vulnerable country, had been faced with the impacts of climate change.

However, he said the country had made commendable strides towards climate governance and sustainable development as the national climate and sustainable development policy outlined a comprehensive strategy to address resilience, mitigation, poverty alleviation, social equity, women empowerment, agriculture, water resources and energy efficiency, women empowerment, water resources, and energy efficiencies.

Besides, he said that Pakistan had linked its Vision 2025 to the SDGs to demonstrate commitment to reaching sustainable development outcomes for a wider human well-being. The 5Es Framework by the Planning Ministry also defines Pakistan's short

to medium-term strategy on exports, e-governance, environment and climate change, energy and infrastructure, and equity and empowerment, he added. The acting president told the gathering that the Benazir Income Support Program had provided financial assistance to the millions of vulnerable families while additional economic reforms were being made to reduce poverty and promote inclusive growth.

He said Pakistan's parliament was the first to go green by switching to solar energy, besides making legislation to establish the standing committees on climate changes of both houses of parliament and integrating SDGs into the national development agenda. Acting President Gilani called for efforts to reduce poverty, address gender disparity, ensure education, health, clean drinking water and development of infrastructure and environmental conservation.

He said that the country's progress was linked to the prerequisite of women's empowerment by providing them with education, employment and leadership as gender equality was not merely a moral imperative but also a key driver of sustainable development.

Education Ministry formally recognises donors, attached departments

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Ministry of Federal Education and Professional Training On Monday organized an Appreciation Meeting to recognize the invaluable contributions of its sponsors and attached departments.

The event was chaired by Secretary Education Mohyuddin Ahmad Wani and Higher Education Commission (HEC) Chairman Dr. Mukhtar Ahmed. Prominent personalities included Additional Secretary Hassan Saqlain, Senior Joint Secretary Junaid

Akhlaq, and PSO to Parliamentary Secretary Madam Faiza Fatima.

Addressing the gathering, Secretary Wani expressed gratitude to the sponsors and attached departments for their unwavering support. Dr. Mukhtar Ahmed emphasized the significance of collaborative efforts in advancing country's education sector.

The Appreciation Meeting acknowledged the dedication of our amazing sponsors including, Saviour Foods, OGDCL, Adam and E-Travels, ARG Personal

Care, Cancer Foundation, PTCL/UFONE, Cheezious, Crunches, TDFPC, Riphah International University, J-7 Emporium, Fauji Ghee.

The attached departments, were also lauded including FBISE, FDE and NBF. Representatives from these organizations received certificates & shields of appreciation, recognising their tireless efforts. This event reinforced education ministry's commitment to fostering meaningful partnerships, ensuring quality education and professional training for all Pakistanis.

ANF arrests 11 drug dealers with 63 kg drugs

RAWALPINDI (APP): Anti-Narcotics Force (ANF) while conducting 13 operations across the country managed to arrest 11 drug dealers and recovered over 63 kg drugs worth more than Rs 15 million, said an ANF Headquarters spokesman here on Monday.

He informed that 500 grams ice was recovered from an accused arrested near a university in Multan.

500 grams hashish was recovered from the possession of an accused rounded up near Jhang Road, Faisalabad. 300 grams hashish and 100 grams ice were recovered from a drug dealer netted near a university in Sialkot. The arrested

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

He said, in another operation, 360 grams heroin was recovered from a passenger going to Bahrain at Islamabad Airport.

1530 grams hashish was recovered from a parcel sent to Australia at a courier office in Lahore.

240 grams heroin was recovered from a parcel sent to Bahrain from a courier office in Karachi.

47 kg opium was recovered from Chagai area and 5 kg ice was recovered from two suspects arrested near Super Highway, Jamshoro.

2.4 kg opium and 3.6 kg hashish were recovered

from an accused held near Sheikhpura Road.

850 grams weed was recovered from an accused arrested in Shah Faisal Road, Korangi, Karachi.

In two operations conducted near Babu Sabu Toll Plaza Lahore, 2.9 kg heroin was recovered and an accused and a woman were arrested.

530 grams heroin and 410 grams ice were recovered from a drug dealer rounded up near Tall Plaza, Jhelum.

Cases under the Anti-Narcotics Act have been registered against the arrested accused and further investigations are under process.



ISLAMABAD: A view of long queues of vehicles due to the extension work of Club Road is underway during development work in the Federal Capital.

‘Pollution serial killer in Pakistan’: Sherry Rehman

ISLAMABAD (APP): Chairperson Senate Standing Committee on Climate Change and Environmental Coordination, Senator Sherry Rehman on Monday said pollution was a serial killer in Pakistan.

She was speaking at the 'Pioneering Solutions for Climate Resilience' session at 27th Sustainable Development Conference (SDC) organised by the Sustainable Development Policy Institute (SDPI) in collaboration with the Ministry of Climate Change, said a press release.

Sherry Rehman said measures as small as tuning our engines were needed to help control smog.

She commended the SDPI for taking sustainabil-

ity beyond a cliché and making it applicable and congratulated the winners of the Sustainability Awards.

Senator Sherry Rehman deplored lack of coverage by the mainstream media on climate emergency, stating that "media is treating climate as a disaster tool". She said media only focuses on climate change when a disaster occurs, primarily holding print media responsible because "they know better".

Therefore, SDPI should have a "journalist category" for the awards to reward those who focus on climate change as a priority, she added. Sherry Rehman said according to data, Pakistan was the fifth country on the list of countries vulnerable

to climate change.

"However, I think that we are at an even higher risk because our population is not trained to deal with climate emergency," she added. On water, the Senator said Pakistanis had one of the highest per capita water usage which means we are wasting water which is a "finite, precious" resource which would not last forever.

She deplored that a large amount of unfiltered sewage was being dumped into Rawal Dam on a daily basis, which was the main source of water for Rawalpindi and Islamabad.

In the end, Sherry Rehman inaugurated the 2nd Sustainability Investment Expo 2024.

Danish envoy calls on Minister Qaiser Ahmed Shaikh

ISLAMABAD (APP):

Ambassador of Denmark in Pakistan Jakob Linulf on Monday called on Federal Minister for Maritime Affairs Qaiser Ahmed Shaikh to discuss the practical implications of memorandum of understanding (MoU) in maritime sector ahead of Danish Foreign Minister visit.

During the meeting, the Minister said that MoU with Maersk Line (Danish company) through Danish Government was a landmark achievement for Pakistan's maritime sector.

First time in the history, a company was ready to invest USD 2 Billion in maritime sector, said a press release. He assured full support and provide conducive environment to Denmark's Government and investors to invest in

maritime sector.

Qaiser Shaikh expressed the hope that MoU with Maersk Line turn into agreement on the arrival of Danish Foreign Minister H.E. Lars Lokke Rasmussen. He added the government was ready to welcome him because both countries have a long history of brotherly relationship.

Moreover, the minister directed all ports and relevant authorities of maritime ministry to develop a comprehensive framework for the support of Danish investor (Maersk).

The minister further said that he chaired performance review meeting of port authorities to address the problems before this huge expected foreign investment. He told that the management of all port authori-

ties were working effectively and sincerely to facilitate the foreign investors because our ports had potential to contribute 8-10 percent of GDP.

He further said that a mechanism was developed to ensure the transparency of investments in maritime sector. Qaiser Shaikh said that through this investment the capacity of ship recycling industry, Pakistan Marine Academy and ports would be on the next level.

The minister thanked to Denmark's government and management of Maersk line company. He also appreciated the role of Ministry of Maritime Affairs, Special Investment Facilitation Council (SIFC) and Ministry of Foreign Affairs in bringing foreign investment in maritime sector.



ISLAMABAD: Jakob Linulf, Ambassador of Denmark, calls on Federal Minister for Maritime Affairs Qaiser Ahmed Shaikh. —INP Photo

Capital gears up for Annual Lok Mela A celebration of Pakistan's cultural tapestry

ISLAMABAD (APP): The capital is gearing up for the much-anticipated Lok Mela 2024 scheduled to be held from November 08-17 promising an exciting journey into Pakistan's rich cultural tapestry.

This year's festival promises to be bigger than ever, featuring a rich array of festivities such as musical nights, youth and international pavilion as it marks the golden jubilee celebrations of Lok Virsa.

Lok Mela, is an annual event that showcases the traditional colors of the country in collaboration with provinces, will bring together around five hundred artisans, musicians, and performers and entrepreneurs.

According to an official, the visitors can enjoy a range of activities including traditional music and dance performances, craft workshops, delicious local cuisine, and much more, during the celebrations. The objective of the Lok Mela is to promote Pakistan's indigenous folk heritage, strengthen national harmony and integration among all federating units through a cultural perspective and provide a much-needed platform to the master artisans, folk artists, folk musicians and folk dancers to demonstrate their skills at the national level.

The festival is being organized in close collaboration with all provincial culture departments. All provinces, Gilgit-Baltistan and Azad Jammu and Kashmir have confirmed to set their cultural pavilions at the festival grounds, the official informed.

The main features of the Mela, as

per the official, are provincial cultural pavilions, artisans at work, an exotic craft bazaar, international cultural pavilion, youth cultural pavilion, folk musical and folk-dance performances, puppet shows, stalls by civil society organizations, folk cuisine, and many other attractions.

The Lok Mela is not merely a celebration but also an effort to promote Pakistan's rich cultural tapestry and encourage intercultural harmony.

The festival is an essential platform for preserving and promoting the country's traditional heritage and promises to be a colorful and enriching experience for people of all ages, giving a glimpse of all provinces' heritage. The official conveyed that the Lok Mela, running daily from 10:00 AM to 10:00 PM, includes Provincial and Regional Cultural Pavilions, where visitors can explore unique crafts, enjoy folk music, and indulge in a variety of regional delicacies.

A Lok Virsa Special Pavilion will be set up, dedicated to highlighting traditional craftsmanship and regional culture. The Youth Pavilion will celebrate the creativity and talent of Pakistan's younger generation, while the Folk Dance Performances at Lok Virsa would offer dynamic displays of traditional dance, set against the vibrant atmosphere of artisans at work.

Adding to the festival's appeal are the PNCA National Puppet Theatre Performances, with shows scheduled at 11:00 AM and 3:00 PM daily at the Open Air Theatre, entertaining families with cultural storytelling through

puppetry. The festival will also feature an Open Mic Evening from 4:00 PM to 7:00 PM at the Anarkali Facade, where local talents take the stage to share their voices and stories.

A special highlight of this year's Lok Mela will be a Climate-Themed Performance by Youth, celebrating 50 years of culture through a fusion of traditional and contemporary music and dance. This unique segment will include youth-centered activities from 5:00 PM to 6:00 PM at the Rooftop Theatre, encouraging the younger generation to engage with cultural heritage while focusing on environmental awareness.

The tickets for Lok Mela 2024 are priced at Rs. 200 for adults and Rs. 100 for students, making it accessible for families, students, and individuals to experience the diverse cultural landscape of Pakistan. Besides this, the annual festival will feature a vibrant lineup of regional cultural nights, showcasing the unique traditions, music, and heritage of each province and region.

The event will open with an inaugural ceremony on November 08 (Friday) at the Open Air Theatre, followed by Balochistan Cultural Night on November 09, Punjab Cultural Night on November 10, and Youth Cultural Night on November 11. Gilgit Baltistan Cultural Night will be celebrated on November 12, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Cultural Night on November 13, Azad Jammu Kashmir Cultural Night on November 14, and Sindh Cultural Night on November 15.

Non-oil exports rise by 31%

KABUL (Ariana News): Iran's non-oil exports to Afghanistan surged by 31% in the first half of this solar year (April to September 2024), totalling over \$1.77 billion. According to Iran's trade association in Afghanistan, both the value and volume of non-oil exports to Afghanistan saw substantial growth. Statistics provided by the association indicate that nearly 560,000 tons of Iranian goods, including iron, steel, cement, eggs, and potatoes, were exported to Afghanistan during this period.

Deportation intensified

KABUL (Ariana News): A committee of the High Commission for Addressing the Problems of Migrants said the process of forced expulsion of Afghan migrants from neighboring countries has intensified. However, members of the committee emphasized, in their meeting with the Prime Minister's administrative deputy, that they have managed the resettlement of the returnees well in cooperation with relevant institutions.

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

Ministry responds to OCHA report

KABUL (TOLONews): The spokesperson for the Ministry of Public Health, Sharafat Zaman Amar Khil, says that Afghanistan's health system has largely become self-sufficient. Speaking to TOLONews, Amar Khil stated that many services are now funded through the national budget. "Alhamdulillah, the health system is moving towards self-sufficiency. More services are funded through the national budget, the structure has expanded, and most health centers are now funded by the government. However, we still need international coordination and cooperation for quality services and the control of infectious diseases," added Amar Khil.

The spokesperson made these remarks in response to a report from the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA).

OCHA's report, covering the past three years of humanitarian assistance, highlighted challenges such as drought, climate change, an unstable banking system, and economic hardships, all of which threaten the stability of the health system.

The report said that humanitarian support "coincided with record-high humanitarian needs following the transition – reaching an unprecedented 29.2 million in 2023 – as a result of severe economic decline brought about by disruption to the banking sector and the abrupt sus-

pension of bilateral development cooperation, rising food insecurity and poverty levels, the worst drought in 30 years, and concerns over a potential collapse of the public health system."

The report also notes that millions of dollars in aid have been provided to Afghanistan since the Islamic Emirate took power over three years ago, with aid levels peaking in 2022.

"Afghanistan has received approximately US\$6.7 billion in humanitarian funding since the Taliban takeover on 15 August 2021, with resources peaking at nearly \$3.3 billion in 2022," read part of the report. The report also emphasizes the importance of respecting women's rights.

IE's share from mine extraction reaches 56%

KABUL (TOLONews): The Ministry of Mines and Petroleum said that the government's share from contracted mines ranges from 13% to 65%.

Houmayoun Afghan, the spokesperson for the ministry, told Tolonews that the process of giving contracts of mines is transparent and is being held among private companies through an open competition.

"The ratio of Islamic Emirate's share from the mines depends on the nature of mines and minerals. For instance, the share from Iron mines is 13%, from copper mines is from 19.5% to 30%, from lead mines is between 20% and 50% and the share from gold mines is 56%," the spokesperson said.

Meanwhile, the Afghanistan Chamber of Industry and Mines said the mine extraction by the private sector is beneficial for the economy of the country.

"It will be better if part of the income from major mines is allocated to infrastructure projects in the country to help economic growth. Currently, some projects like building roads is funded from the very income," said Sakhi Ahmad Paiman, first deputy director of the chamber.

Nasir Reshtia, an economic analyst stated: "If mines are extracted and processed inside the country, it will not only provide employment, but we will also be able to add to its quality and sell it on high prices."

Earlier, the ministry said the process of mine extraction has become transparent after the Islamic Emirate regained power and that they had contained the mines mafia in the country.

Concerns rise over Mpox outbreak in Afghanistan

KABUL (Khaama Press): The Ministry of Public Health has reported that its deputy recently met with representatives from international organizations to discuss measures to prevent the spread of the Mpox virus in Afghanistan.

This meeting included discussions with UNICEF and migration officials. During the meeting, the deputy emphasized that, as of now, there have been no confirmed cases of Mpox in Afghanistan, highlighting the importance of preparedness.

He instructed ministry staff to take necessary precautions to ensure the country is ready to respond effectively.

Mpox, also known as monkeypox, is a contagious viral disease that first emerged in the Republic of Congo in 2022.

Taliban announces formation of mobile security unit



KABUL (Khaama Press):

Abdul Mateen Qani, spokesperson for the Ministry of Interior of the Taliban, announced the formation of a motorcycle patrol group in Badakhshan as part of ongoing efforts to enhance security.

He stated this patrolling group in Badakhshan on social media.

According to Qani, this mobile patrol unit has been created to better ensure the safety of citizens in Badakhshan province. The security patrol, equipped with military gear, will operate 24/7 to prevent

criminal activities within the province.

According to details provided by the Taliban's Ministry of Interior spokesperson, the 100-member mobile unit will operate in the security sectors of Faizabad city and other districts in Badakhshan province.

A similar motorcycle patrol unit had previously been established in Kabul. These patrols ride through the city on motorcycles, with the primary goal of ensuring citizen security.

The images shared by Qani depict more than 15 security personnel of the Taliban

riding motorcycles in Faizabad, the capital of Badakhshan province.

This comes amid rising insecurity in the province and attacks by several groups, raising concerns among the local population.

This situation arises amid a dire humanitarian crisis and widespread poverty in the country, which could further exacerbate insecurity and contribute to a significant brain drain in Afghanistan.

Several factors drive this insecurity, including ongoing violence from extremist groups, political instability,

and economic hardship.

This exodus not only depletes the country of its skilled workforce but also deepens the challenges faced by those who remain, as the cycle poverty continues to spiral downward.

As these patrols become operational, it will be important to monitor their effectiveness in crime prevention and community safety.

Continuous assessment and feedback from the public will be crucial for adapting these strategies to meet the evolving security needs of the region.

Registration for varsity entrance exam and religious schools begins

KABUL (Khaama Press): The officials at the Ministry of Education have announced the start of registration for the upcoming solar year 1404 general entrance exam and for religious schools.

Mansoor Ahmad Hamza, spokesperson for the Ministry of Education, stated, that graduates from 12th grade and religious

schools intending to register for the 1404 entrance exam must fill out an online form.

Officials at the Ministry mentioned that candidates from both schools and religious institutions can complete the registration form. According to the announcement, applicants can obtain the form until the end of the current month.

However, this announcement comes amid restrictions on girls attending schools and universities since the return of Taliban, with girls above the sixth grade being prohibited from education. The ministry's announcement did not clarify whether girls can also register for the exam.

This situation raises significant concerns about

educational equity and access for young women in Afghanistan. The continuation of educational opportunities for all, regardless of gender, is essential for the country's future development and progress.

The Ministry of Education must address these inequalities to ensure that all students can pursue their academic aspirations.

MoE begins capacity building seminar for madrasa teachers

KABUL (TOLONews): The Ministry of Education said that enhancing the capacity of madrasas [religious schools] is one of its main priorities. The Deputy Minister for Islamic Education said at the seminar on "Capacity Building for Professional Development of Madrasa Teachers" that multiple programs have been designed to strengthen teachers' abilities.

"Today, thanks to God, we have thousands of madrasas in Afghanistan that have been established and identified [registered]. To improve teaching quality, our first condition is to

have good teachers," said Keramatullah Akhundzada, Deputy Minister of Islamic Education for the Ministry. Meanwhile, several madrasa teachers welcomed the seminars, considering them effective in improving teaching methods. "This program is very beneficial for teachers because many have studied but lack familiarity with teaching methods," said Naqibullah Sahibzada, a madrasa teacher.

"Organizing such seminars does have its impact, and after attending the seminar, we can pass on the knowledge to other teach-



ers in different areas," stated Saifullah Mohammadi, another madrasa teacher.

According to the Ministry of Education, the purpose of this seminar is to raise the

professional capacity of teachers through standard teaching methods and techniques to improve the quality of education across the 34 provinces of the country.

No corruption in this Directorate, says Omari

KABUL (TOLONews): Officials from the General Directorate of Passports told TOLONews that they have eradicated corruption within the department.

Omari Logari, spokesperson for the General Directorate of Passports, said that currently passport applicants can receive their passports within a week without any issues.

Omari Logari told TOLONews: "With the efforts of the Passport Directorate's leadership, there is no corruption within this directorate, and the level of corruption has reached zero. Our aim in providing these facilities at the Passport Directorate is to prevent corruption."

According to the spokesperson for the General Directorate of Passports, the distribution process is proceeding normally, with seven thousand passports issued daily to applicants. He said that patients can receive their passports urgently.



The spokesperson said: "We are now able to distribute passports to twelve thousand applicants daily. Currently, we print approximately six to seven thousand passports every day."

Meanwhile, some passport applicants express satisfaction with the improvements in the distribution process but emphasize that further facilitation is necessary. "I came here to get a passport, and now the distribution process has become very simple and easy. I received my pass-

port within a day," said Mohammad Khan, a passport applicant.

"Previously, it would take six months, even up to a year, to obtain a passport. Now it has become much easier to get one," said Nematullah Haqyar, another applicant.

According to information from the General Directorate of Passports, all facilities are available for both men and women at the distribution centers. With the opening of new centers, the passport distribution process has been expedited.

Wooden handicrafts flourish in Kunar

KUNAR (TOLONews): The market for wooden handicrafts in Kunar has grown significantly compared to previous years.

Some handicraft artisans in Kunar say these decorative items made from local wood have caught the attention of tourists visiting the province. Baz Mohammad, a shopkeeper in Kunar, told a TOLONews reporter: "We have fruit trays, platters, tables, clocks, spoons, and fruit baskets of all kinds. We also have platters that are both handmade and simple."

Another shopkeeper, Sabghatullah, said, "The

wood used here is better than Chinese or Pakistani products and lasts longer."

Safiullah, another shopkeeper, said, "The demand for these products has grown. Tourists from other places prefer wooden items, taking them as souvenirs, attracted by both their type and quality."

Handicraft makers seek support for transporting their products to other provinces. Abdul Wahab, a craftsman, explained, "Our problem is that wood is restricted in Kunar, and the items we make cannot be transported to other provinces."

Ismail, another artisan, added, "We need an open market for our items. There's a shortage of wood here, demand is high, but we can't meet it."

Meanwhile, local officials say they plan to hold a three-day exhibition this week in Kunar to promote local products.

The head of Kunar's Department of Industry and Commerce, M. Yousuf Tayeb, stated, "This exhibition is for the growth and development of local products to promote them so that our people can see and use these items in daily life."

UN survey reveals severe impact of Taliban restrictions on women in humanitarian sector

KABUL (Amu TV): A new UN report released by the Gender in Humanitarian Action (GiHA) Working Group and the Humanitarian Access Working Group (HAWG) details the operational challenges that Afghan and international aid organizations face under increasing restrictions on women imposed by the Taliban.

This survey, the ninth of its kind, tracks trends since the Taliban's ban on Afghan women working for NGOs in December 2022, which was extended to the UN in April 2023, as well as additional restrictions imposed by the Taliban's new morality law.

The survey has covered 142 respondent organizations, including national NGOs (NGOs), international NGOs (INGOs), civil society organizations (CSOs) and UN agencies, delivering assistance under both the humanitarian and basic human needs sectors.

The results spotlight both the ongoing humanitarian efforts and the formidable barriers posed by

Taliban policies, particularly regarding women's participation in humanitarian operations.

Key findings: Women's participation and organizational operations

Operational status: Among respondents, 32% reported full operation with male and female staff, while 43% reported partial operation with both genders. However, 15% stated they were only able to operate with male staff, largely because 72% of organizations allow only men to work in the office. Women's participation in offices is limited to certain provinces and field roles.

New adjustments for women staff: Organizations have implemented measures to continue working with Afghan women, despite restrictive policies. Adjustments include establishing separate working spaces (55% of organizations), offering financial incentives for mahrams (60%), and organizing gender-segregated distribution spaces or days (86%).

Nevertheless, 27% of

respondents reported losing women staff due to Taliban decrees, with the "Promotion of Virtue" law further impacting women's workplace participation.

Operational challenges under Taliban policies

According to the report, the Taliban's new law, known as the Promotion of Virtue and Prevention of Vice law, has compounded challenges for Afghan women working in humanitarian roles:

Travel and safety concerns: The report says that women are now required to travel with a mahram to work, a restriction that affects 23% of respondents, and in certain provinces, women are no longer able to report to offices or field sites at all (22%).

Reports of increased anxiety and safety concerns were recorded for both male and female staff, with 34% of respondents citing these issues.

Restricted access to information and resources: The report says that Taliban-imposed restrictions have created barriers

to communication and collaboration, with 62% of organizations reporting difficulty in maintaining effective communication due to women working remotely.

Additionally, 49% of organizations stated that women lack access to crucial humanitarian response information, assessments, and protective services, the report says.

Sectors most impacted by restrictions

According to the report, sectors most affected include those that rely heavily on female staff and community engagement:

Health, education, and nutrition: The report finds that health services remain the most authorized sector, with 37% of organizations securing local permissions for women's involvement. Education and food security also received partial authorizations, though the restrictions on gender-based violence services, child protection, and legal aid for women were more pronounced, limiting women's participation.

Geographic variations: The report says that restrictions on women's mobility and access are applied inconsistently across provinces, with Kandahar, Nangarhar, Kabul, and Herat reported as highly affected areas. Challenges in rural and urban areas vary, with restrictions enforced more stringently in rural regions.

Negotiations and temporary exemptions

To maintain services, organizations report ongoing negotiations with the Taliban officials to secure temporary exemptions for Afghan women:

Conditional arrangements: The report says that nearly half (45%) of respondents noted that securing women's participation often requires agreeing to Taliban-set conditions, such as adhering to strict mahram policies and involving Taliban officials in program oversight. Some organizations also reported that they must agree to allow Taliban officials to monitor and, in some cases, participate in the imple-

mentation of their programs.

Short-term approvals: The report shows that the temporary nature of these permissions is a recurring challenge, with 43% of organizations reporting that authorizations were granted only for specific activities. Short-term project funding further complicates the ability to maintain women's involvement in humanitarian efforts.

Women's access to humanitarian services at risk: The report says that the Taliban's policies are not only impacting the operational aspects but are also diminishing Afghan women's ability to access vital services:

Barriers to humanitarian assistance: Almost half of the surveyed organizations indicated that women were unable to access essential information, protection services, and health assessments, severely restricting their engagement with aid programs. In total, 49% of respondents reported that the Taliban restrictions prevent women from receiving

critical protective services and emergency assistance, the report says.

Reduced oversight and monitoring: The report says that organizations face significant challenges in monitoring programs, as 44% of respondents cited Taliban-imposed restrictions as an impediment to conducting regular assessments. Reporting mechanisms, including channels for reporting sexual exploitation or abuse (SEA), have also been limited, with 45% of organizations identifying this as a major concern.

UN agencies and International NGOs less affected than national NGOs

While all organizations face challenges under the Taliban, the survey noted a disparity in impact levels: NGOs vs. UN agencies: The report says that UN agencies report fewer disruptions due to their greater leverage with Taliban officials and reduced dependence on direct implementation. In contrast, NGOs and CSOs are more vulnerable to Taliban interference,

such as being required to replace women leaders with men or even to change organizational names if they include the word "women."

The UN report underscores that while humanitarian organizations are adapting, the restrictive environment limits Afghan women's role in relief operations.

Humanitarian efforts remain tenuous, with the report cautioning that the progress achieved in women's participation could quickly unravel should the Taliban impose further restrictions. The report calls for continued funding and global support to help sustain humanitarian operations, warning that any funding shortfall could endanger Afghan communities reliant on this assistance.

With Afghanistan's humanitarian crisis far from resolved, the international community faces an urgent need to advocate for Afghan women's access to work and services amid escalating restrictions by the Taliban.

KP CM vows to promote education on modern lines

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Chief Minister, Ali Amin Khan Gandapur has said that the incumbent provincial government is working under a well devised strategy to promote education sector on modern lines with special focus on imparting quality education to students especially to females adding that Alte-rnate Learning Pathways (ALP) program is an integral part of that strategy.

Under ALP program, 1,267 centers have been established in 27 districts of the province, presently imparting formal and informal education to 42,644 students, while 62,000 students have completed their education so far under the program.

He further said that the main objective behind launching ALP program was to provide educational opportunities to those children who are out of school and cannot be enrolled in formal schools for being over aged. He mentioned that the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa government had been working on introducing an Education Card, prioritizing the merged dis-

tricts and backward areas of the province.

The Chief Minister added that female students in the schools of merged districts were being provided with a monthly stipend to improve literacy rates in those districts. He was addressing a graduation ceremony organized by the Elementary and Secondary Education Department here on Monday at Nishtar Hall, Peshawar.

Besides, the provincial cabinet members Faisal Khan Tarakai, Major (R) Muhammad Sajjad, Syed Qasim Ali Shah, and Zahid Chan Zeb, government officials, representatives from partner organizations, students, and teachers, attended the ceremony. The Chief Minister distributed certificates to students who completed the ALP Cycle of education. Under Package E alone of the ALP program, 14,487 students have completed their education while so far 62,000 students have benefited from this program collectively.

The Chief Minister in his address said that, 'the provincial government has also decided to provide desks and chairs in all gov-

ernment schools to ensure that no child has to sit without proper seating arrangements in schools'. He emphasized that providing educational opportunities to children is the state's responsibility, and the provincial government would go all out to fulfill this responsibility effectively.

He said, "Our primary goal is to provide people with access to quality education and healthcare, not just to construct buildings. School's building construction takes time; hence, we have chalked out a policy to start schooling in rented buildings immediately to avoid any delays and ensure that children's time is not wasted." He further emphasized that the provincial government was paying special attention to girls' education because educated mothers can build an educated nation. The Chief Minister disclosed that the provincial government would soon initiate the hiring process for 16,000 teachers in the elementary and secondary education sector, ensuring complete transparency and merit in recruitment process.

Bushra Bibi breaks down in tears

F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: Judge Afzal Majoka of the District and Session Courts Islamabad reserved the decision on the pre-arrest bail applications of Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) founder Imran Khan and his wife, Bushra Bibi, on Monday. The decision is expected shortly, as the judge announced to reserve a decision for a while and pronounce it soon.

On Friday, Bushra Bibi appeared before the judge and, after the bail requests were reserved, she broke down with tears in the courtroom, claiming they were being unfairly punished. Bushra Bibi voiced her frustrations, stating, "I am not here to seek justice; I've kept my belongings in the car and am ready to go to jail whenever instructed."

She further expressed that all lawyers, including her own (advocates from PTI), were merely wasting time and questioned, "Isn't the person inside also human? Can no judge see this?" During the hearing, Bushra Bibi took the position that she was a victim of judges sitting in the chair of justice for the last nine months. She then announced, "I will no longer come to this court; only injustices happen here."

Aleema rejects rumours of any deal

F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: Aleema Khan, the sister of PTI Founder and former Prime Minister Imran Khan, claimed that her brother's life is in danger in her view. Aleema Khan also rejected the rumours of any deal between her brother Imran Khan and those in power. She expressed these words while talking to the reporters in Islamabad on Monday.

Aleema Khan said that the founder of PTI is now firmly committed to bringing about a revolution for justice. "We know they will imprison us; we receive threats. There are 10 FIRs against us, and one FIR dated the 5th was registered, but we were taken on the 4th." She mentioned that children as young as ten are being dragged from their homes, appealing to the new Chief Justice to take notice of these matters. "If lawlessness does not stop in the country, people might take the law into their own hands. In our view, the founder of PTI's life is in danger." Aleema Khan further stated that Imran Khan has said he is not making any deals and no one has approached him.

"These are just speculations that Imran Khan is negotiating; the founder of PTI is not ready to compromise on anything." She added, "Every day we hear good news that the founder of PTI will be released soon. We know there is no intention to release him from jail; peaceful protest is our right, and we will get the founder of PTI out of jail."

On this occasion, PTI Secretary General Salman Akram Raja said, "This is the moment when we can truly gain our freedom. If we do not stand up today, we will die in despair. There is no sanctity of home and privacy. The founder of PTI has made an appeal to the entire nation today." Salman Akram Raja also stated that there will be a rally in Swabi on the 9th, marking a new beginning. "This is not a political game; it is about survival. We all must come out for our freedom, and our movement will end with the release of the founder of PTI."

Ji challenges 26th amend in Apex court

F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: Jamaat-e-Islami (JI), too, on Monday filed a petition in the Supreme Court (SC) against the 26th constitutional amendment.

Making the federal and all four provincial governments respondents, the party, in its petition, argued that the amendment was against fundamental human rights. "It also contravenes basic constitutional structure and several constitutional provisions.



PESHAWAR: Chief Minister of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Ali Amin Khan Gandapur, addressing a graduation ceremony organized by Elementary and Secondary Education Department.

Court reserves verdict on bail pleas of Imran

F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: Islamabad's district and session court has reserved verdict on bail pleas of Imran Khan in six cases while Bushra Bibi's in one case. The reserved verdict on the bail pleas in various cases would be pronounced together on November 18. The court also sought arguments on November 18.

Additional session judge Muhammad Afzal Majoka heard the bail pleas of Imran Khan and his spouse Bushra Bibi in various cases. Bushra Bibi and lawyers including Salman Safdar appeared before the court. During the hearing, the judge inquired about the appearance of Imran Khan through video link.

Safdar told the court to direct jail administration to make sure the appearance of Imran Khan then only Imran Khan could be presented. Lawyer informed the court that five accused including Imran Khan, Farah and Shehzad were nominated in this case but bail pleas of only two accused were filed, not others.

Salman Safdar added that his clients were accused of fraud and presenting fake receipts. The court inquired from the prosecutor what the progress on the investigation of this case was going on and a half and presented the evidence of receipts. Judge added that the police allegations were not satisfactory and what was the response to the letter written to the Election Commission.

Imran Khan's lawyer stated that Imran Khan couldn't appear through video link as video link was not working and he requested court to decide on Bushra Bibi as she was present in the court. Bushra Bibi stated that she was ready to go to jail and she had brought her essentials like blankets. "All lawyers including ours only waste time. Why doesn't any judge see that an imprisoned person is also a human. I would never appear in the court as it only serves injustice," Bushra Bibi broke down in tears in the courtroom.

Doctors declare Imran's health as satisfactory after examination in Jail

F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: The Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) founding chairman, Imran Khan, underwent a complete medical examination at Adiala Jail, with a four-member team of doctors concluding that his health was satisfactory. It reported in media that doctors, including three from the Pakistan Institute of Medical Sciences (PIMS) and Dr Asim Younis from Shaukat Khanum Hospital, conducted the examination. The doctors' team advised additional medical tests for PTI founder Imran Khan. The medical report will be prepared and submitted to the Islamabad High Court (IHC).

Previously, on October 24, the Islamabad High Court (IHC) directed the Executive Director of the Pakistan Institute of Medical Sciences (PIMS) to form a medical board for the health examination of PTI's founding leader, Imran Khan. The court also ordered that Imran Khan's personal physician, Dr Faisal Sultan, should be included in the medical board. The decision was issued by Justice Miangul Hassan Aurangzeb, who ruled that the petition filed by the PTI founder had been resolved with directions. The court's order emphasized that Imran Khan, a 72-year-old former prime minister and an under-trial prisoner, should not face any security obstacles in Adiala Jail during his medical examination by a qualified doctor. Imran Khan had filed a petition in the Islamabad High Court, requesting a medical examination by his personal doctors.

Meanwhile, Islamabad High Court (IHC) on Monday served notice to the Federal Investigation Authority (FIA) in PTI founder Imran Khan's bail plea in Toshakhana-II case.

As per details, the special judge central had rejected Imran Khan's bail plea whereas his wife Bushra Bibi was granted bail in the same case. The case has been adjourned for indefinite period, the registrar will fix the case on the given dates. Yesterday, the FIA challenged Bushra Bibi, wife of Imran Khan, bail in the Toshakhana-II case in the Supreme Court.

The FIA stated in its plea that bail was granted in Islamabad High Court judge's chamber and it violates Supreme Court guidelines. The FIA also claimed that Bushra Bibi was involved in the case along with her husband Imran Khan. Earlier, the Islamabad High Court (IHC) granted bail to Bushra Bibi in the Toshakhana-II case.

IHC Justice Miangul Hassan Aurangzeb accepted the post-arrest

bail plea of Bushra Bibi against Rs1 million surety bonds. The court also directed authorities concerned to immediately release the former first lady. It is important to note here that a special judge central rejected the post-arrest bail pleas of former prime minister Imran Khan and his spouse in Toshakhana-II case.

On July 13, Imran Khan and his wife Bushra Bibi were arrested in a fresh National Accountability Bureau (NAB) reference related to Toshakhana, hours after their acquittal in the Iddat case. The NAB team headed by Deputy Director Mohsin Haroon arrested Imran Khan and his wife from the Adiala Jail. The development came after the Islamabad district and sessions court accepted the appeals filed by former prime minister Imran Khan and his spouse against their conviction in the Iddat case. The couple was sentenced to seven years in prison and awarded a fine of Rs500,000 each, in February earlier this year after a trial court found their nikah to be fraudulent.



LAHORE: Passengers waiting for a train at a railway station amid smoggy conditions.

US rivals in last ditch effort to win photo finish

WASHINGTON (AFP): Kamala Harris and Donald Trump began a frantic last push across US swing states, with less than 48 hours of campaigning left to secure a decisive edge in a bitterly fought and historically close presidential election.

Over 76 million people have cast early ballots ahead of Tuesday's climax and the battle is down to the wire with more states functionally tied in polls. A final New York Times/Siena poll on Sunday said the results from all seven swing states were within the margin of error. The closeness of the race is all the more remarkable given its dramatic twists and the fact that the candidates could hardly be further apart in their campaign styles and visions for the future.

"The fate of our nation is in your hands. On Tuesday, you have to stand up," Trump told his first rally of the day in Pennsylvania, where he doubled down on unfounded claims of election rigging. Harris' desperate to shore up the Great Lakes states seen as essen-

tial to any Democratic ticket was to spend the day in Michigan, beginning in Detroit before a stop in Pontiac and an evening rally at Michigan State University.

Trump's Sunday timetable centred on Pennsylvania, North Carolina and Georgia, the three biggest prizes in the "Electoral College" system that awards states influence according to their population. Trump is expected to reject the results if he loses, as he did four years ago. On Sunday, he seized on isolated irregularities caught by election officials to amplify his claims of widespread "cheating". "They are fighting so hard to steal this damn thing," he insisted at the rally.

Republicans are also scrambling to contain fall-out in Pennsylvania?home to a large Puerto Rican community?after a speaker at Trump's New York rally prompted outrage by describing the US territory as a "floating island of garbage."

Like Pennsylvania, Michigan is among the seven closely watched battlegrounds.

Trump flipped the state, a former Democratic stronghold, on his way to defeating Hillary Clinton in 2016. Joe Biden returned it to the Democratic column in 2020, buoyed by unionised workers and a large Black community.

But this time, Harris risks losing the support of a 200,000-strong Arab-American community that has denounced Biden's handling of the Israel-Hamas war in Gaza. Pollsters have noted an erosion in Black support for the Democratic ticket and Harris's aides acknowledge that they still have work to do to turn out enough African American men to match Biden's winning coalition in 2020.

But with reproductive rights emerging as a top voter concern, her campaign has taken some comfort from the large proportion of women turning out among the early voters. Harris wrapped a day on the campaign trail Saturday with a surprise appearance on "Saturday Night Live," mocking her presidential election rival Donald Trump on the iconic sketch show.

Israeli settlers burn cars in West Bank attack

AL-BIREH (AFP): Israeli settlers torched nearly 20 cars early Monday in the occupied West Bank city of Al-Bireh, near Ramallah, according to the Palestinian Civil Defence and an Israeli security source. An AFP journalist saw several cars completely charred, and the blackened facade of the five-story building outside which they were parked.

An alert rang "at 3:30am (0130 GMT) signalling that settlers entered the area and committed acts of vandalism," said Rami Omar, head of the local civil defense office. An Israeli security official told AFP notification of the incident came at 4:00 am and soldiers were sent who arrived on site after the settlers had gone. The official, who was not authorized to speak publicly on the matter, said 19 vehicles had been burned by settlers. Israeli police, soldiers and Shin Bet security agency officers collected evidence in Al-Bireh for the investigation, the official added.

Israeli authorities did not yet know where the settlers came from and what their motives were. Ihab Al-Zabin, a resident of the damaged building, told AFP he saw the arsonists run away toward the nearby Israeli settlement of Beit El. Zabin said he saw around 10 people he identified as settlers "pouring liquids on vehicles in front of the building and then setting them on fire." "I yelled from my apartment, and at that moment they ran away," he said. "When I went down with my neighbors to put out the fire, settlers shot toward us."

Abdullah Abu Rahmah from the Palestinian Commission against Settlements told AFP that the attackers belong to a group of arsonists who have attacked other nearby villages in the past. Laila Ghannam, governor of Ramallah and Al-Bireh, told journalists at the scene "there could have been a massacre in this building," which residents say housed more than 60 people. "Attacks are increasing because of impunity" for attackers, she said.

Violence in the West Bank has soared since Hamas's unprecedented attack on Israel on October 7 last year triggered war in the Gaza Strip. The UN's office for the coordination of humanitarian affairs (OCHA) said in August: "Between 1 and 28 October, OCHA documented nearly 270 settler-related incidents affecting Palestinians and their property." Some 490,000 settlers live in settlements considered illegal under international law in the West Bank, which Israel has occupied since 1967. The territory is home to three million Palestinians.

Meanwhile, Syrian state media reported Israeli strikes on Monday near the Sayyeda Zeinab area south of Damascus, home to an important Shiite sanctuary and guarded by pro-Iranian groups, including Hezbollah. "At approximately 5:18 pm (14:15 GMT), the Israeli enemy launched an air aggression from the direction

Israel informs UN of end to ties with Palestinian relief agency

JERUSALEM (Reuters): Israel has officially notified the United Nations that it was canceling the agreement that regulated its relations with the main UN relief organization for Palestinian refugees (UNRWA) since 1967, the country's foreign ministry said on Monday.

Last month, the Israeli parliament passed legislation banning UNRWA from operating in Israel and stopping Israeli authorities from cooperating with the organization, which provides aid and education services to millions of Palestinians in the occupied West Bank and Gaza. The UNRWA warned on Monday that Israel's ban on its operations would lead to the "collapse" of humanitarian work in the war-torn Gaza Strip. "If this law is implemented, it would be likely to cause the collapse of the international humanitarian operation in the Gaza Strip — an operation of which UNRWA is the backbone," Jonathan Fowler, an UNRWA spokesman, told AFP. Israel has long been critical of UNRWA, set up in the wake of the 1948 war that broke out at the time of the creation of the state of Israel, accusing it of anti-Israel bias and saying it perpetuates the conflict by maintaining Palestinians in a permanent refugee status.

of the occupied Golan Heights, targeting a number of civilian sites south of Damascus, which led to some material losses," the official SANA news agency said, citing a military source.

Mehdi Mahfouz, a 34-year-old resident of the area, said he "heard three successive explosions, one of which was very strong." "Then I saw a large black cloud of smoke rising," Mahfouz added. The blasts were heard in the neighbouring Jaramana suburb of Damascus, according to an AFP photographer, as ambulances headed to the area. The Syrian Observatory for Human Rights, a Britain-based war monitor, reported at least three strikes in the area.

The targets include a house "used by members of Hezbollah and the Iranian Revolutionary Guard," the monitor added, saying it is located in a farm in the Sayyeda Zeinab area. Since the beginning of the Syrian civil war in 2011, Israel has carried out hundreds of strikes in Syria mainly targeting army positions and Iran-backed fighters including from Hezbollah.

Trudeau condemns violence at Hindu temple

OTTAWA (AFP): Canada's Prime Minister Justin Trudeau condemned as "unacceptable" violence at a Hindu temple near Toronto on Sunday, following skirmishes blamed by some leaders on Sikh activists. Local police in the city of Brampton, roughly 50 kilometres northwest of Toronto, said they had deployed heavily outside the Hindu Sabha Mandir in order to maintain calm during a protest.

A spokesman for the Peel Regional Police told AFP that no arrests had been made. Police have also declined to assign blame for the reported violence. "The acts of violence at the Hindu Sabha Mandir in Brampton today are unacceptable. Every Canadian has the right to practice their faith freely and safely," Trudeau wrote on X.

A federal lawmaker and member of Trudeau's Liberal Party, Chandra Arya, blamed the incident on "Khalistanis," a reference to supporters of the fringe separatist movement for an independent Sikh homeland in India's Punjab state. Relations between Canada and India have nosedived after Ottawa accused the Indian government of orchestrating the 2023 killing in Vancouver of a 45-year-old naturalised Canadian citizen Hardeep Singh Nijjar, a prominent Khalistani activist.

Beyond Nijjar's killing, Canada has accused India of directing a broad campaign targeting Sikh activists on Canadian soil, which Ottawa says has included intimidation, threats and violence. "A red line has been crossed by Canadian Khalistani extremists today," Arya, who is Hindu, posted on X. "The attack by Khalistanis on the Hindu Canadian devotees inside the premises of the Hindu Sabha temple in Brampton shows how deep and brazen has Khalistani violent extremism has become in Canada," he said.