



Midnight pact clears way for amendment

- Govt agrees to delay presentation of bill for a day at Fazl's request; JUI-F chief says differences sorted out, claims receiving 'positive response' from PTI
- Law minister hints at changes to draft in light of allies' suggestions as cabinet meets today
- Information minister says 'other options' available but govt wants to take everyone along
- PTI seeks another day for deliberations; Bilawal hopes the party will endorse tweaks; Mengal terms package 'hostage amendments'

By Syed Irfan Raza
and Kalbe Ali

ISLAMABAD: The ruling coalition on Saturday agreed to defer the passage of the much-hyped 26th constitutional amendment bill till Sunday (today) after getting positive signals from the opposition parties and at the request of JUI-F chief Maulana Fazlur Rehman to provide more time to PTI for an in-house consultation.

In another late-night development, the federal cabinet reviewed the draft of the amendment bill and after detailed deliberations decided to meet again on Sunday for the final approval before the proposed tweaks are tabled in both houses of parliament scheduled to meet in the afternoon.

Briefing reporters after the cabinet meeting, Law Minister Anwar Nasir Tarar hinted at the possibility of some changes in the draft that had been approved on Friday by the

special parliamentary committee led by PPP's Syed Khurshid Shah. He said the cabinet was expected to take up a new draft to be prepared in light of the recommendations made by the cabinet members and the government allies.

In response to a question, the law minister said that appointment of the new chief justice of Pakistan would be made in line with the new amendment if passed before Oct 25, the day incumbent CJP Qazi Faez Isa is set to retire.

According to the revised schedule, the Senate will meet at 3pm and the National Assembly at 4pm on Sunday (today). Just like the days before, a press conference at midnight featuring the JUI-F chief brought clarity to the uncertainty surrounding the negotiations.

Flanked by PPP chief Bilawal Bhutto-Zardari, Maulana Fazl said he had received a "positive response" from Imran Khan which was conveyed

to him by PTI leaders after a meeting with their jailed founding chairman.

The JUI-F chief stated that his party had agreed to support the bill after the government withdrew its original draft. He said there had been no controversy over the draft and the differences had already been resolved.

Thinking Imran Khan for his "positive response", the Maulana said it was through him that the PTI and its leadership were kept informed about the developments with regard to the constitutional amendment package. He expressed the hope that PTI would come up with its reply on Sunday.

In response to a question, the Maulana, however, said his party still had "reservations" over reports about the alleged harassment and intimidation of opposition members to get their support for the bill.

His response came hours after PTI Chairman



ISLAMABAD: PPP Chairman Bilawal Bhutto-Zardari discusses the proposed constitutional amendment with JUI-F amir Maulana Fazlur Rehman and BNP-M chief Akhtar Mengal on Saturday. —Wafa Star

PTI will not vote on tweaks without Imran's approval

- Party leaders meet ex-PM in Adiala; Gohar says party founder named four people for consultations
- Former premier praises Fazl for standing firm, wants talks with him to continue

By Ikram Junaidi

ISLAMABAD: The Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) has made it clear that it would not vote on the proposed constitutional amendment without the express approval of its founding chairman, Imran Khan, a position the party has also conveyed to JUI-F chief Maulana Fazlur Rehman, who has been playing a key mediating role over the issue.

The party's stance was announced by PTI Chairman Barrister Gohar Ali Khan during a press conference held at Khyber Pakhtunkhwa House on Saturday. He was speaking to the media after meeting the PTI founder in jail for the first time in over two weeks.

"For the first time since Oct 3, we had a 45-minute meeting with the

founding chairman in Adiala Jail. He was unaware of the developments regarding the constitutional amendment. He also condemned the arrest of his sisters," Mr Gohar stated.

Adiala jail admin, PTI disagree on facilities provided to Imran: Page 4

He said that former prime minister Imran Khan praised Maulana Fazl for standing firm on his stance over the proposed constitutional amendment and for his efforts to ensure that the amendment draft is acceptable to all political parties.

Mr Khan has advised his party to continue consulting with the JUI-F leader on the proposed amendment

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Two terrorists killed, five held in Zhob, Pishin: ISPR

By Saleem Shahid

QUETTA: Two terrorists were killed and five others, including a commander, arrested in separate operations in Zhob and Pishin districts of Balochistan, according to military's media wing.

The security forces recovered suicide jackets, explosives and a big quantity of arms and ammunition from their hideout.

The Inter-Services Public Relations (ISPR) said that security forces conducted a successful intelligence-based operation in Pishin on the reported presence of terrorists. "During the operation, five Kharwaris were apprehended and a large quantity of weapons, ammunition and explosives including three suicide

Four killed as two TTP groups clash in S. Waziristan: Page 5

vests were seized," it said. "Apprehended Kharwaris were involved in multiple terrorist attacks and were planning to target security forces as well as innocent civilians," the ISPR highlighted.

In another operation, two Kharwaris were killed during an exchange of fire with security forces in the Zhob district, it said. "In ensuing confrontation of the area, weapons and ammunition were also recovered in a large quantity."

The ISPR said that security forces of Pakistan remain steadfast in their commitment to eradicate terrorism from the country and protect innocent civilians from this menace.

President Asif Ali

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Two more polio cases take year's tally to 39

ISLAMABAD: Two more polio cases were confirmed on Saturday, making it six cases in two days.

According to the Regional Reference Laboratory for Polio Epidemiology in Islamabad, cases of wild poliovirus type-1 (WPV1) were reported in Sindh's districts of Sanghar and Mirpurkhas.

Pakistan has reported 39 cases of poliovirus in ten months of 2024. Of them, 20 were reported from Balochistan, 12 from Sindh, five from Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, and one each from Punjab and Islamabad.

The newest victims are a girl and a boy, officials said, adding that genetic sequencing of the cases was underway.

"These are the first polio cases from Mirpurkhas and Sanghar this year," the officials added.

The prevalence of the virus had already been confirmed in the two neighbouring districts as

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ON OTHER PAGES



FBR recovers Rs700m from manufacturer

The Federal Board of Revenue has recovered about Rs700 million from a prominent manufacturer in a crackdown on large enterprises engaged in sales tax fraud. Another Rs1.1 billion is expected to be recovered in coming days from another businessperson involved in sales tax fraud. The FBR has revealed plans to pursue those suspected of not paying their due taxes. Page 6



CJP angry over 'clarification' on reserved seats order

Justice Isa asks webmaster to explain why clarification was uploaded on SC website

By Nasir Iqbal

ISLAMABAD: Chief Justice of Pakistan (CJP) Qazi Faez Isa took exception for the second time over the issuance of the clarification by eight judges which stated that amendments made in the Elections Act 2017 cannot undo the July 12 judgement issued by the Supreme Court in the reserved seats case.

In an office note, the CJP regretted about the issuance of the clarification and summoned an explanation from the respective officers of the court.

Authorised by senior justice Justice Justice Mansoor Ali Shah, the second clarification on Friday explained that the apex court had granted the relief in the July 12 order to enforce the right of the electorate through political parties to have proportional representation under paragraphs (b) and (c) of Article 51(4) and paragraph (c) of clause (3) of Article 185 of the Constitution.

Issued on Saturday, the fresh office note by the CJP stated that it was reported that a clarification was issued on Oct 18 by

eight judges when the CJP was in the midst of writing a judgement. "Therefore, I sent for the file but did not find the original of the said 'clarification' therein," the note regretted.

PTI seeks larger bench in 'bat' symbol review case: Page 3

It went on to say that the assistant registrar (implementation) issued a letter to the secretary of the Election Commission of Pakistan and the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) even though the original of the second clarification was not in the file. The officials were subsequently directed to submit their explanation sug-

gesting why the said letter/notice was issued before it was filed in the office, the note said.

Likewise, the webmaster, Azim Javed, was also directed to explain why the second clarification was uploaded on the Supreme Court website on Oct 18 when the same had not been filed in the office.

On Sept 22, CJP has raised nine questions in a letter to the Supreme Court's registrar, seeking clarification on how an earlier Sept 14 clarification order was uploaded on the top court's website.

The Sept 14 order, issued by the eight judges led by senior justice Justice Justice Mansoor Ali Shah, had criticised the ECP for failing to implement the Supreme Court's July

12 judgement, which declared the PTI eligible for reserved seats in parliament.

In his letter dated Sept 21, the CJP wondered who had directed the uploading of the Sept 14 clarification order on the court's website.

His inquiry followed a note from the deputy registrar (judicial), who flagged the issue of the order's appearance on the website. The note questioned how the order was uploaded when no notice had been sent to the parties, and the order had not been received by the deputy registrar's office until 9pm on the day of its upload.

CJP's letter to the registrar

Continued on Page 5

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Policemen get age relaxation for PPSC exam

By Our Staff Reporter

LAHORE: In a career-boosting move, the Punjab police department on Saturday announced a one-time, five-year age relaxation for constables and head constables wishing to appear for the Punjab Public Service Commission (PPSC) examination for promotion.

The upper age limit has been increased from 35 to 40 years for the upcoming exams for sub-inspector (SI) and assistant sub-inspector (ASI) positions.

Inspector General of Police (IGP) Dr Usman Anwar said that the step was aimed to benefit over-age constables and head constables, particularly those who missed their chance due to disruptions caused by the Covid-19 pandemic and other unforeseen factors.

He said over 1,000 police personnel were previously unable to appear for the PPSC exam under the P-Cadet Scheme and would now be eligible to take part in the opportunity for promotion.

A Punjab police spokesperson highlighted that the age relaxation would positively impact thousands of constables who had been hoping for such a decision.

He said the officers, previously ineligible due to age constraints, could now advance in their careers and qualify for the much-anticipated SI and ASI posts.

The decision followed an appeal by a large number of constables who had directly approached IGP Anwar, emphasising their concerns about missing career progression opportunities.

Responding to the issue, IGP Anwar submitted a summary to the Cabinet Committee, which subsequently approved the age extension. However, the relaxation will apply only to the upcoming PPSC exam.

IGP Anwar encouraged eligible officers to begin preparations for the competitive examination, which is expected to be announced soon.

CM calls for polio eradication plan in Punjab

LAHORE: The chief minister has sought a practical and sustainable plan to eliminate environmental samples of poliovirus.

Maryam Nawaz was presiding over a meeting regarding elimination of polio here on Saturday. A decision was made to track and register mobile and migrant populations in Punjab.

The chief minister directed an effective vaccination campaign at all entry points of Punjab. She also ordered a comprehensive and effective vaccination initiative in order to achieve the desired goal of completely eradicating poliovirus.

She said accurate data on missing children should be compiled during the vaccination campaign. The meeting also reviewed micro-plans and proposals to further enhance the effectiveness of the vaccination campaign so as to make Punjab completely polio-free.

Ms Nawaz said that making Punjab completely polio-free was her government's commitment. She said that she was personally monitoring the vaccination campaign and underscored that the poliovirus could only be eradicated through vigorous and complete public support.

She directed that maintaining a cold chain according to SOPs during the vaccination campaign should be ensured. — Staff Reporter



LAHORE: A haze has engulfed the city with very unhealthy air quality. —White Star

Eight FIA officials booked for abetting human trafficking

By Zuqarnain Tahir

LAHORE: The Federal Investigation Agency (FIA) has booked its own eight officials for allegedly abetting human smuggling by air travel as a foreign airline's officials are also involved in it.

In Pakistan, human traffickers usually opt for a land route to transport illegal immigrants to 'greener pastures' but in this case air route was exploited to send two illegal immigrants to Italy and Canada through doctored travel documents.

The FIA booked its sub-inspectors Shayan Linaq and Imran Shaukat, ASI Sajjad Ahmed, traffic assistants Anil Masood and Osama Aslam, and constables Nadhem Musafa, Danish Ali and Faizal Nazir

posted at Sialkot International Airport for their alleged offences. All suspects are reportedly on pre-arrest bail.

According to the first information report, a suspect departed from Sialkot airport to Italy via Dubai on forged travel documents of Muhammad Irfan by changing the picture. The passenger was issued double boarding. The MRP verification showed that the passenger with possession of passport was not the rightful owner and the picture on the passport was changed. Later, the same passenger was deported by the Doha immigration authorities and on arrival at the Sialkot airport his documents were processed.

In another incident, suspect

Arslan Aslam departed from Sialkot airport to Canada via Dubai on forged travel documents of Umar Raza by changing the picture.

The MRP verification showed that the passenger with possession of passport was not the rightful owner and the picture on it was changed. The original passport holder, Umar Raza, had already departed for Canada from Allama Iqbal International Airport, Lahore.

Later on, the passenger was deported by the Doha immigration authorities and on arrival at the Sialkot airport his documents were processed.

The FIA inquiry has found the above suspects of facilitating the departure of [imposter] passengers on forged documents. "All the above alleged immigration and (foreign) air-

lines officials have committed the offence of criminal misconduct by misuse of authority by facilitating the imposter passengers on departure and arrival," the inquiry reports says.

The FIA has also booked passport holders - Muhammad Irfan and Umar Raza - and suspect Arslan Aslam - and unknown imposter under sections 17(18) I.O 1979, 201, 415, 420, 468, 471 PPC, s/o 5 (2) 47 PCA while the role of others agents, FIA, officers/officials and airline/SIAL officials will be determined during the course of investigation.

Recently, notorious human smugglers have started taking advantage of Pakistani immigrants trying to illegally reach Europe via Iran by holding them for ransom.

The smugglers in Pakistan

with the help of their sub-agents detain and torture immigrants aspiring to reach Europe, film the ordeal, and send it back to their respective families to seek money for the safe release of their loved ones.

A few months ago three such incidents were reported in which as many as 10 young men were tortured and incarcerated by these gangs. A few of them paid money to secure freedom while some were released by the Iran police in collaboration with the Pakistani embassy in Tehran.

According to the FIA, the dangerous trend of arranging the travel of illegal immigrants and detaining them abroad to extract heavy amounts — by local gangs in cohort with their international counterparts — has picked up steam in recent times.

Another day of protests, arrests of PTI activists

Dawn Report

TORA TER KINCH: A pro-independence crowdmen on Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) activists continued on Friday night and Saturday.

Several activists were rounded up for protesting against the government in Faisalabad. Muzaffargarh, Kot Addu, Layyah and Okara.

In Faisalabad, police filed cases against 75 PTI activists for holding a protest at Salween Chowk on Salween Road. Five PTI workers were nominated in the FIR, while the rest are unidentified.

According to the complainant, Inspector Shaukat Ali, Bilal Gajjar, Kashif Mahmood, Faryad Ali, Ali Sher Kamoka and Raza Farooq led a rally of about 70 people. They blocked traffic, damaged private vehicles and threw stones at policemen while chanting slogans against the government. The police resorted to tear gas to

disperse the crowd, after which the protesters fled.

MUZAFFARGARH: PTI MPA Nadia Farooq Khair was arrested on Friday night during a protest at Quasid Chowk.

Claiming to be protesting peacefully, Ms Khair was detained and transferred to Dera Ghazi Khan jail.

Meanwhile, the Muzaffargarh city police registered cases against more than a dozen lawyers, along with 26 unidentified participants, for violating Section 144 while protesting.

The local District Bar Association (DBA) had already been on strike over the detention of DBA President Shafiq Malana, who was jailed for 30 days. The government, however, caved in on lawyers' pressure and on Saturday, Malana was released after the district administration withdrew his detention orders following court directives.

In Layyah District, around

30 protesters were booked for staging a demonstration against the government. The protesters were charged with defying Section 144, and raids are underway to apprehend those involved.

OKARA: The police arrested seven PTI activists for violating Section 144 and staging a protest against the Punjab government on Friday night.

According to the first information report, filed by R190 Muhammad Riaz Shams, the protest was led by PTI provincial assembly ticket holder Razi Hammed Aslam Khair.

A Sialkot patrolling police team received reports that around 30-35 PTI workers, carrying party flags and placards, had blocked Okara/Faisalabad Road near Sanghar Mee, about 2km north of the city.

The protesters were chanting slogans against the Punjab government and demanding the release of Imran Khan.

Despite being warned by

the police to disperse and clear the road due to the enforcement of Section 144 across the district, the protesters refused to comply.

Reinforcements were called in, and the police were able to disperse the protest. Seven activists were arrested, including Razi Khair, Nasir Abbas, Nadeem Raza Makhdoom, Ibrahim Aslam, Syed Yousaf Raza and Imtiaz, while the rest of the group managed to escape.

Another PTI group, led by Chaudhry Saleem Nadeq and Mahr Javid Iqbal, also violated Section 144 during the protest but evaded arrest upon the arrival of the police.

The arrested workers were charged under Section 188 of the Pakistan Penal Code and Section 164 of the Maintenance of Public Order Ordinance, 1960. However, they were presented before Deputy Magistrate Shahid Farzana, who discharged them from the case, and all were released on the spot.

ATC discharges PTI lawyer in violence case

By Our Staff Reporter

LAHORE: An anti-terrorism court on Saturday discharged a lawyer of the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) from a case of violence related to Oct 4 protest and sent three activists to jail for their identification parade.

The police presented Advocate Zameer Ahmad (Shah) and others before the court seeking permission to shift them to jail for identification parade.

Seven of PTI lawyers, present on the court premises, cheered slogans in favour of their arrested fellow.

ATC Judge Irfan Haider turned down the police request to the extent of the lawyer, however, allowed it to shift these suspects to jail for their identification parade.

The suspects are Muhammad Usman, Ahsan Karim and Samiullah.

The judge also granted three-day physical remand of another suspect, Irfan alias Shams.

The cases were registered by Lorry Adda, Muzi Gato, Islamabad and Shafiqabad police in charges of attacking police personnel and damaging public and private properties.

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PTI seeks larger bench in 'bat' symbol review case

Hamid Khan wants 'unbiased' judges to hear cases against opposition party

By Nasir Iqbal

ISLAMABAD: The Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) on Saturday moved a fresh application before the Supreme Court, requesting for constituting a larger bench to hear its review petition in the election symbol case.

The PTI asked the SC to place the fresh application before a three-judge committee for the constitution of a bench comprising not less than five, and preferably at least eight judges, of the apex court to hear the matter, through the court while putting off the proceedings on an application seeking yet another adjournment on Oct 11 had contained that no further request for adjournment will be entertained.

A three-member bench, headed by Chief Justice of Pakistan (CJP) Qazi Faez Isa, is scheduled to resume on Monday the hearing of the review petition moved by the PTI against the Jan 13 court ruling that upheld the Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) decision to deny it the election symbol of cricket bat.

In its fresh application filed on behalf of senior counsel Hamid Khan, the PTI argued that the judgment under review was per-sonal (without jurisdiction) as it was passed by a bench that was "not legally constituted" under the Supreme Court (Practice and Procedure) Act, 2023.

It recalled that the PTI argued during hearing in the election symbol case that the ECP, being a constitutional and statutory body performing regulatory and quasi-judicial functions, was not an "aggrieved person". Therefore, its insistence upon depriving the party of its election symbol through its decision made it a "partisan party" in contravention of the mandate under Article 218(3).

It pleaded that the bat symbol case was per-sonal as it ignored two judgments of the Supreme Court larger bench in the 1988 Benazir Bhutto case and 1989 Benazir Bhutto case and more importantly, overlooked the legislative changes having taken place in Article 17 through the 69th Amendment whereby clause (4) was omitted. The clause had provided the legislative basis for Section 215 of the Elections Act, 2017.

The PTI was also surprised to note that the ECP contended as a "primary contesting party" against it as well as the Muslim League Council (MLC) during the first round

of litigation in the SC, though ECP's prime function, under Article 218(3), is to conduct honestly, fairly, in accordance with law, and that corrupt practices are guarded against.

In the present case, several political parties made counter claims regarding their right to the disputed reserved seats, and the ECP decided these counter claims as an adjudicatory body. The function performed by the ECP in the present case was, therefore, quasi-judicial.

"Biased judges"

In another application, Hamid Khan alleged that the benches headed by CJP Qazi Faez Isa and certain other judges had been consistently deciding cases against the PTI regardless of merits of such cases and past judicial precedents in their favour. It gave rise to a very strong perception that the CJP allegedly had strong bias against the party, he regretted.

According to the application, the executive authorities such as the ECP openly defied such orders despite their duties to act in compliance with SC orders. This situation has encouraged other authorities like the National Assembly speaker to call upon the ECP to openly defy the July 12 order of the SC, which act is clearly against the basic features of the Constitution.



MULTAN: Rescue operation underway at the site after firecrackers exploded inside a house, on Saturday—PTI

Four killed in Multan firecrackers explosion

By Our Staff Reporter

LAHORE: Four people, including a minor and a woman, died after the roof of their house collapsed following an explosion in Multan on Saturday.

Officials said the roof collapsed due to an explosion in fireworks stored inside the house in Mohala Nadeh Gharan at around 2am.

Six people were injured in the accident.

Following the explosion, Rescue 1122, police, bomb disposal squad

and district administration officials arrived at the scene and launched efforts to take out the people trapped under the debris.

Three rescuers initially recovered three bodies from the debris at night.

The body of a child was later recovered after two to three hours.

Multan City Police Officer (CPD) Rafiq Ali Dogar confirmed four deaths.

The bodies and injured were shifted to Nishtar Hospital.

The deceased were identified as Isha, Muhammad Arshad alias

Manaha, Raza alias Billa and Nafia while the injured included Eman, Nagma, Fayyaz, Ijaz, Rehman, and Ali Hassan.

Datta Gate police have registered a case under the Explosive Act 1884 against the deceased, Isha, his nephew Shabbir and others.

According to the FIR, Raza and Shabbir were involved in the firecrackers business and had stored the material at the house.

Shabbir filed the women in a statement, CPD Dogar said as per the initial investigation, fireworks were manufactured inside the house.

Legal experts question IHC order during army's deployment in capital

Article 245 bars court from giving verdicts about area where forces are deployed

By Malik Anad

ISLAMABAD: The legality of orders passed by the Islamabad High Court (IHC) when the army was deployed in Islamabad has become questionable as a constitutional provision barred the court from doing so.

During the two-day Shanghai Cooperation Organisation summit last week, the federal government invoked Article 245 of the Constitution and called the army for security duties from Oct 7 to 12.

Subsection 3 of Article 245 bars any high court from issuing orders "in relation to any area in which the Armed Forces [are deployed]".

The subsequent clause of this Article says: "Any proceeding in relation to an area referred to in clause (3) instituted on or after the day the armed forces start acting in aid of civil power and pending in any High Court shall remain suspended for the period during which the armed forces are acting."

However, the court issued orders on several petitions regarding the issues in Islamabad, where the army was deployed.

One of the petitions was filed by local traders after fierce clashes between police and PTI workers who tried to reach D-Chowk for a protest earlier this month.

The traders sought directives for relevant authorities to restore law and order during PTI protest at D-Chowk.

The high court ordered the police and district administration to restore law and order during the SCO summit.

Another petition was filed by the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa government against the Capital Development Authority, which had

sealed KP House for allegedly violating building laws.

On another petition, IHC ordered authorities to recover PTI's lawyer Imtiaz Hussain Paragana, who went missing from Islamabad.

The IHC chief justice also issued directions to authorities to arrange a meeting between former prime minister Imran Khan and his sister Norveez Nisat and ensure proper medical facilities for the detained leader.

No legal standing

According to legal experts, IHC's orders on these petitions when the army was deployed in Islamabad had "no legal effect".

Legal expert Mohammad Akram Sheikh explained that Article 199 empowers the high court to take up any matter "if it is satisfied that no other adequate remedy is provided by law".

The said article empowers a high court to issue orders on a petition "if it is satisfied that no other adequate remedy is provided

by law".

According to Mr Akram, the high court can annul the proceedings initiated without any lawful authority under Article 199.

Similarly, the court is also empowered to order government officials to fulfil their duties or correct an abuse of discretion.

It can also restrain someone from taking certain actions, question public office holders and decide habeas corpus petitions related to unlawful detention.

However, high courts can't hear petitions on these issues when Article 245 is invoked.

Pakistan Bar Council (PBC) Vice Chairman Farooq H. Noor said that constitutional provisions suspended the high court's jurisdiction when Article 245 had been invoked and IHC judges could not pass any orders after Oct 4, when the army was called in.

Senior lawyer Shah Khawar said it was the attorney general and advocate general's responsibility to properly assist the court on Article 245.

He said the orders issued on petitions filed while the army was acting in aid to civil power were without any legal force.

He pointed out that Article 5 of the Constitution makes "obedience to the Constitution" obligatory on every citizen.

This provision was contradicted when IHC exercised its jurisdiction under Article 199 when Article 245 was in place, Mr Khawar added.

An IHC official said the Interior Ministry's notification to deploy the army was not addressed to the high court.

The army was called in aid of civil power to maintain law and order, and the government did not issue any subsequent order for the IHC, he added. Additional Attorney General Barrister Munawar Iqbal Duggal said the attorney general's office had previously raised the objection before a bench. However, it was overruled on the grounds that the high court can exercise the conduct of civil bureaucracy even if Article 245 was in place.

In 2022 alone widespread flooding in Pakistan caused by climate change has wreaked havoc in the lives of over 33 million people residing in 84 urban and rural districts in Pakistan.

Between 1999 and 2018 international experts estimated that Pakistan has suffered economic losses worth over **US\$ 3.8 billion** and witnessed **152** extreme weather events due to catastrophic climate change.

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NDMA assesses relief efforts for Gaza, Lebanon

By Our Staff Reporter

ISLAMABAD: The coordination committee of National Disaster Management Authority (NDMA) on Saturday reviewed Pakistan's ongoing humanitarian relief efforts for Gaza and Lebanon.

The committee meeting was presided over by Minister for Planning Development and Special Initiatives Ahsan Iqbal and co-chaired by NDMA Chairman Lt Gen Inam Haider Malik.

Senior officials from the Prime Minister's Office, Foreign Ministry, and NDMA also attended the meeting. Ambassadors from Lebanon, Jordan, Syria, and Iraq also participated in the meeting via Zoom.

The discussions focused on the urgent needs of civilians in Gaza and Lebanon, as well as logistical challenges in transporting aid to these conflict zones. Lebanon's ambassador expressed gratitude, acknowledging Pakistan as one of the first three countries to extend relief during the crisis.

So far, Pakistan has sent 12 consignments totaling 1,251 tons of aid, with 70 deliveries directed to Gaza and two to Lebanon.

The relief packages include essential supplies such as tents, food packs, medicines, hygiene kits, winter bedding, and other critical items to support those affected by the ongoing conflict.

A statement issued here said that the minister emphasized that the prime minister had personally directed these relief efforts, underscoring Pakistan's commitment to standing with the people of Gaza and Lebanon.

As part of this initiative, the government had established the "Prime Minister's Relief Fund for Gaza and Lebanon" to encourage public contributions for those in need.

Pakistan's ambassadors to Lebanon, Palestine, and Syria briefed the meeting on the active humanitarian organisations working in the affected areas and outlined their distribution mechanisms.

Mr Iqbal directed NDMA to implement a hybrid transportation strategy that combines air and road routes for more efficient delivery of aid.

He also stressed the importance of integrating food and non-food item (NFI) suppliers to enhance the scale of assistance.

The meeting concluded with a firm resolve to continue supporting the war-affected populations of Gaza and Lebanon.

The minister reiterated Pakistan's solidarity with the people suffering from the conflict and highlighted the need to overcome logistical challenges to sustain future relief operations.

Session on stress management held

RAWALPINDI: The Rawalpindi Chamber of Commerce and Industry (RCCI), in collaboration with Maroof International Hospital, held an informative session on "Stress and Depression Management and Oral Health" at the chamber house on Saturday.

The session aimed at equipping participants with practical strategies for coping with mental health challenges, fostering a supportive community for those affected, says a press release.

Guest speakers Dr Sania, a psychiatrist, and Dr Waheedullah shared valuable insights on managing stress and depression, emphasising on the importance of mental health awareness.

Dr Waheedullah also led a segment on oral health, highlighting the connection between oral hygiene and overall mental well-being.—Staff Reporter



PLAYERS in action during a football match held at the Sports Complex in Islamabad on Saturday. As many as 4,000 students are participating in the three-day Girls Sports Carnival being organised by the education ministry. Various sports competitions, including track and field events, basketball, football, volleyball, table tennis and badminton, will be held during the sports festival.—APP

Adiala jail admin, PTI disagree on facilities provided to Imran

• Gohar says PTI founder not allowed to exercise, demands better facilities • Jail admin says former premier given all facilities as per jail manual, undergoing regular check-up

By Irum Juraidd & Aamir Yasin

ISLAMABAD: As the PTI interim chairman complained about the conditions party founder Imran Khan had to endure in Adiala jail, the prison administration on Saturday clarified that the former prime minister was enjoying all the facilities available under "B Class" and as per the jail manual.

In a press conference after a meeting with the PTI founder, Barrister Gohar Ali Khan claimed that Imran Khan was not being provided facilities in jail and power to his cell had remained disconnected for the past five days. He alleged that the electricity remained disconnected in Imran Khan's cell for five days and he had not exercised for the last two weeks.

"After October 3, we had a meeting with the founding chairman in Adiala Jail for 45 minutes. The good thing is that Mr Khan was looking in good health. However, for the first time in his life, the founding chairman shared the situation of his cell in Adiala Jail. He told us that there was no electricity

in his cell for five days and he has not done exercise for the last two weeks."

According to Barrister Gohar, "He informed us that he had been deprived of television for the last two weeks and was unaware of any development regarding the constitutional amendment. He (Imran) also criticised the arrest of his sister," he said.

"We were hoping that we would be allowed to meet [him] for one and half hours but we were directed to leave after 45 minutes. Imran Khan has given us four names and suggested discussing [the draft of the amendment] with them. We will try to meet Mr Khan again on Monday," he said.

Replying to a question, he said it was unacceptable the way the government was threatening people. Replying to another question, he said Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Chief Minister Ali Amin Gandapur had the full support of Mr Khan.

'All facilities for Imran'

On the other hand, the jail administration refuted the claims. The jail superintendent clarified that the PTI

founder was being provided all the facilities as per the rules and regulations under the 'Class B' status.

The jail official clarified that the PTI leader was provided with all the necessary facilities according to the law and rules, including food, health, study, and exercise.

"Power supply to the PTI founder's barracks is uninterrupted. The Punjab government has provided a prisoner to prepare meals for him, who prepares breakfast, lunch, and dinner," he said.

While giving the details of meals over the last few days, he said coffee, chutney, beetroot juice, yoghurt, and dates were being provided to the PTI founder for breakfast, chicken, yoghurt, cake, salad, and green tea for lunch, and partridge, coconut, coconut water, and grapes for dinner. The jail superintendent stated that the PTI founder's meals were prepared under the supervision of the assistant superintendent and served after proper checking.

"The doctors posted in the jail check the prisoner's health three times a day and all vital signs are checked

regularly. During the last two weeks, the prisoner has not been found to have any disease and is completely healthy," he clarified.

In response to the claims of the PTI leaders that only one doctor from the Pakistan Institute of Medical Sciences (PIMS) visited Mr Khan for his check-up, the jail superintendent stated that two days ago, medical specialists from PIMS Islamabad examined the PTI founder thoroughly and prepared a comprehensive report that was sent to the government and the PTI leadership.

Talking about the newspaper facilities, he said that the PTI founder was also provided with a daily newspaper.

Furthermore, the PTI founder was provided with walking and exercise facilities and he spent two hours daily exercising in the open courtyard of his barracks, he claimed.

"The jail administration is fulfilling its duties regarding the security, safety and health of the PTI founder according to jail rules, regulations and facilities provided by the government," he said.

Imran, Gandapur acquitted in May 25 cases

By Malik Asad

ISLAMABAD: In a significant development, a local court of Islamabad on Saturday acquitted former prime minister Imran Khan, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Chief Minister Ali Amin Gandapur, Imran Ismail, Raja Khuram Shahzad Nawaz, and Ali Nawaz Aslam in the case registered for violence in May 25 Haqqani Azadi March.

The case, registered at the Secretariat police station

May 2022, was filed during the PTI-led "Haqqani Azadi March", a protest movement that sought to challenge the sitting government's legitimacy and call for early elections.

The protests, which spanned across various regions, were marked by large crowds and heightened tensions between PTI supporters and law enforcement agencies.

The court, after examining the pleas of the accused, accepted their applications for acquittal.

Judge Shahid Khan

ordered the acquittal of all individuals involved in the case, effectively dismissing the charges against them.

Meanwhile, the Accountability Court of Islamabad during the trial of former prime minister Khan and his spouse Bushra Bibi adjourned the hearing till October 22, following concerns raised by the defence about their inability

to meet the accused since early October.

During the proceedings, defence lawyers Usman Riaz Gill, Faizal Chaudhary, and Khalid Younis appeared before the court on behalf of the accused.

Advocate Faizal Chaudhary urged the court to allow Mr Khan and Bushra Bibi to participate in the hearings via video link.

He argued that the legal team had not been able to meet with their clients since October 3, and insisted that

the court should issue an order enabling the lawyers to see the accused, either through video conferencing or in person.

"If the video link is not feasible, then we request the court to issue orders for the physical production of the accused," Chaudhary stated.

Judge advised the defence to submit a formal written application regarding their request for video link or court production.

After brief discussions, the court decided to adjourn the hearing until October 22.

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Four killed as two TTP groups clash in South Waziristan

• Militant commander killed in Lakki Marwat • Two FC personnel injured in D.I. Khan IED blast

By Adam Khan Wazir & Ghulam Murtaza Marwat

SOUTH WAZIRISTAN/LAKKI MARWAT: Four militants, including a local commander, were killed in a fierce exchange of fire between two factions of the banned Tehreek-e-Taliban Pakistan (TTP) in South Waziristan district on Saturday, sources said.

The deceased militants included commander Nisar Wazir, alias Umar, and three of his associates. According to the sources, the conflict erupted when commander Murtaza Bani, who recently returned from Afghanistan, ordered Fazal Sirki Khel Wazir to eliminate Nisar Wazir, who belonged to the Ada Khel tribe and commanded operations in Lower South Waziristan. But his motive for the attack remains unclear.

According to the sources, the clash occurred between the Mandrin and Nargana mountain areas of tribal Bernal, a region that has seen a significant uptick in militant activity over the past year, including attacks on security forces, police posts, and civilians.

Local political leaders expressed concern over the escalating violence, which has resulted in numerous fatalities. The TTP factions operating in the hilly areas near the Pakistan-Afghan border continue to threaten peace and stability in the region.

The confrontation underscores the intense infighting within TTP, which has led to the death of several key commanders and fostered fear and uncertainty among the local population. The banned outfit has yet to issue a statement regarding the incident, and the identities of the other three associates remain undisclosed.

Militant commander killed

In a separate incident, a militant commander was killed in a gun battle with

the Counter-Terrorism Department (CTD) of police following an exchange of fire between militants and armed villagers in the Takhtkhel area of Lakki Marwat district on Saturday.

A police official said a patrol team was alerted to the firefight between the militants and members of a local tribe.

The police soon arrived on the scene and discovered an injured villager, identified as Rehmat Nawaz, lying in the area. The man, shot by the militants, succumbed to his injuries while being shifted to a hospital.

According to the official, the law enforcement officers then encountered the militants, leading to a gun battle that lasted about half an hour.

After the firefight, police located the body of the militant commander, Bilal, a resident of Makhel in North Waziristan district, during a search of the area. His body was shifted to Tefail Headquarters Hospital in Sana Wazir town.

Two FC personnel injured

In a separate incident, two personnel of the Frontier Corps were injured when an improvised explosive device detonated near an FC convoy in the Barhala area of D.I. Khan district on Saturday.

Police said the IED, planted on the roadside, targeted the convoy during routine movement along Tank Road. Following the explosion, militants opened fire on the convoy, but the FC personnel retaliated, forcing the attackers to flee.

Police and other security personnel reached the site and launched a search operation.

The injured soldiers were taken to the Combined Military Hospital in Dera Ismail Khan.

Muhammad Irfan Mughal in Dera Ismail Khan also contributed to this report

Midnight pact clears way for amendment

Continued from Page 1

Barium Gohar, while talking to reporters, alleged that two of the party senators Faizal Saleem and Zameer Tahir might vote for the draft even if the PTI decided to oppose it.

Speaking on the occasion, Mr Bhutto-Zardari said his party could never support such acts of harassment against the opposition legislators. He said he desired that the Maulana should himself present the bill in the National Assembly.

Numbers game

However, despite claims of having the required numbers, the government could not table the bill in parliament earlier in the day despite marathon meetings to develop a consensus on the proposed reforms.

It was because of a lack of consensus on the draft of the constitutional amendment bill that the government had to defer the National Assembly and the Senate sessions several times throughout the day. Similarly, a special meeting of the federal cabinet to give a formal nod to the amendment bill was also deferred several times.

The sessions of the Senate and the National Assembly finally began near midnight, having a thin attendance of the members with both houses taking up the routine agenda business.

The residence of Maulana Fazlur Rahman remained the centre of political activities. The top leadership of almost all major parties, including Mr Bhutto-Zardari, visited the place several times to woo the Maulana, who has also been playing the role of a mediator between the government and the main opposition PTI.

According to sources, the Maulana had told a government team headed by Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Ishaq Dar, who visited him on Saturday night, that his party would not vote for the constitu-



PRIME Minister Shehbaz Sharif chairs a meeting of the federal cabinet in Islamabad.—Wafa Bilal

ution amendment bill in haste. He informed them that PTI had also sought one more day for an in-house consultation after the party leaders' meeting with former prime minister Imran Khan in Attila jail.

PPP Chairman Bilawal, who is leading the campaign for the passage of the constitutional amendment bill, called on Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif to discuss the possible ways and means to get the amendment passed after the JUI-F's constant reluctance.

Earlier, Mr Bhutto-Zardari reached Maulana's residence on Saturday morning with some key party leaders at a time when Balochistan National Party (BNP) chief Sardar Akhtar Mengal was already present there.

Talking to reporters after the meeting, the PPP chairman lamented the PTI leadership for the delay and said the PTI must now demonstrate its commitment to the political process, emphasising that success in politics came

through compromise and consensus.

'Hostage amendment'

Later, Sardar Akhtar Mengal told reporters that the amendment should be called "hostage amendment". He said when he was contacted and asked to vote for the amendment, he told them he had already submitted his resignation as MNA.

In the evening, a PTI delegation visited the Maulana's residence. Senator Ali Zafar told media persons that the forcible amendment was not acceptable to anyone.

All-out efforts for consensus

On the other hand, the government ministers claimed to have the required numbers in parliament to get the amendment passed.

Federal Information Minister Attaullah Tarar during a news conference outside Parliament House said that despite having the numbers, the coalition government was making all-out

efforts for a consensus. "We are democratic people; we try to create a consensus among all political stakeholders," said the minister.

According to the state-run news agency APP, Mr Tarar said people from Punjab were also kept in K/P and blame was shifted on institutions for what they called their disappearance.

Separately, speaking to the reporters, Defence Minister Khawaja Asif said the government desired to pass the 26th constitutional amendment with broad-based consensus.

Addressing the issue of misinformation, the minister criticised the creation of a false narrative suggesting that members of the Senate and National Assembly had been kidnapped. "They should reveal the names of those allegedly kidnapped, imprisoned, or held hostage," he said.

The constitutional package is legislation proposing a set of constitutional amendments, including an extension in the tenure of the chief justice.

CM inaugurates youth skills development programme

By Our Staff Correspondent

QUETTA: Balochistan Chief Minister Sarfaraz Bugti has inaugurated the Chief Minister Youth Skills Development Programme. The initiative aims to train 30,000 youth from Balochistan in various skills, providing them with job opportunities abroad.

In the first phase, 2,500 youths, selected on merit, from various areas of the province will depart for training abroad, a senior official told Dawn. After completing their training, these individuals will secure jobs overseas.

During the inaugural ceremony, on Friday, the chief minister expressed that sending skilled youth from Balochistan abroad for employment has been a long-held dream, a sentiment he shared in his first speech to the provincial assembly.

He announced that this year marks the beginning of sending the first batch

of youth from the province abroad.

Acknowledging the significant challenge of unemployment, especially with limited job opportunities in the government sector, CM Bugti proposed that training youth for international employment is a viable solution.

He assured that the selection process would strictly adhere to merit, with equal representation from every district in Balochistan.

A third-party will oversee the selection of qualified candidates to ensure transparency and fairness.

The chief minister emphasised that no jobs in Balochistan would be sold and reiterated the importance of meritocracy.

He encouraged the youth to focus on development opportunities and cautioned against misguided paths, asserting that the Balochistan government is prioritising youth by realising resources from other means and projects.

BNP-M holds protests in Balochistan

By Our Staff Correspondent

QUETTA: Workers and supporters of the Balochistan National Party (BNP-Mengal) on Saturday blocked the National Highway in different parts of the province, cutting off Balochistan's road link with other provinces.

This protest was sparked by the alleged kidnapping of BNP senators' sons and proposed constitutional amendments.

Led by BNP's district organiser Nuhman Baloch and former district president Abdul Latif Qalandarani, the party blocked the Quetta-Karachi national

highway at Port Mansoor Khan Chowk. Other blocked routes included the Quetta-Karachi highway, Shabkadan-Larkana highway, Nod-Basima CPD Road, and more, causing traffic disruptions.

Although vehicles were halted from passing, ambulances and vehicles carrying the sick were allowed through. Fortunately, no untoward incidents were reported during the protest.

The BNP leaders declared that the protest would continue indefinitely until the senators are recovered.

As of now, national highways across several parts of Balochistan remain blocked, and demonstrations are ongoing.

CJP angry over 'clarification'

Continued from Page 1

ed the concerns raised in the deputy registrar's note, stating that some questions had arisen as a result of the development.

Among the questions posed were when were the applications for clarification filed, and why were they not presented before the three-judge constitution established under the Supreme Court (Practice and Procedure) Act, 2023. He also inquired about how the applications were filed for hearing without a cause list being issued and

whether notices were served to the parties concerned, including the attorney general for Pakistan.

The CJP had also questioned in which courtroom or chamber the applications were heard and by whom and why no cause list was issued for the announcement of the Sept 14 clarification order.

He also asked how the order was uploaded on the Supreme Court's website without first being deposited in the court's original file. Lastly, the CJP demanded to know who had authorised the upload of the order.

Two terrorists killed, five held in Zhob, Pishin: ISPR

Continued from Page 1

Zardari and Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif paid tribute to the security forces for the successful operation, appreciating their professionalism in conducting operations against militants.

In their separate statements, the two leaders said the entire nation stands side by side with the security forces in foiling designs of the country's foes and eradicating terrorism from Pakistani soil, Radio Pakistan reported.

President Zardari said security forces were fighting valiantly. "The entire nation stands with the security forces in the war against terrorism," he said.

Balochistan Chief Minister Mir Sarfaraz Bugti led the Levies force and supporting security agencies for their successful operations against militants associated with "Khawarij" in Zhob and Pishin.

Acknowledging efforts to restore peace, the CM announced a reward of Rs100,000 on behalf of the provincial government. In his statement, CM Bugti praised the Levies for thwarting the nefarious plans of militants and commended the dedication of the forces involved.

Levies man martyred

Earlier on Friday night, a Levies official was martyred in an attack on a post in Kalat, officials said.

They explained that armed men riding a motorcycle opened fire at a checkpoint in Nachra union council, about 40km from Kalat town. As a result, Levies official Abdul Qayyum died on the spot, while two others sustained injuries.

Levies personnel quickly rushed to the site and revived the injured and the injured to the district hospital in Kalat.

Later, security forces launched a search operation in the area to locate the attackers.

Abdul Wahid Shahzad in Khuzdar also contributed to this report

Two more polio cases

Continued from Page 1

several environmental samples collected from three tested positive for WPV1 since April, the official said.

"The increase virus transmission and increase in polio cases is indicative of the harm that children suffer when they miss opportunities for vaccination," he added.

On Friday, three cases of poliovirus were confirmed in Balochistan and one in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa.

The victims included a girl from Pishin, two boys from Chaman and Noshki and a girl from Lakki Marwat.

Officials claimed the fight against poliovirus in Balochistan and southern KP suffered throughout 2023 and early 2024, as immunisation campaigns were either staggered or postponed due to localised protests, insecurity and community boycotts, leaving a high number of children to miss out on vaccination.

As the number of cases continues to increase, the Pakistan Polio Programme has planned a new nationwide vaccination campaign from Oct 28 to immunise more than 45 million children under the age of five.

This would be the second drive in a month after a nationwide campaign in 115 districts conducted in September.

The prime minister's focal person on polio, Aysha Raza Farooq, has accepted that the virus is spreading across the country but reassured that a strategy has been made to eradicate the crippling disease by June 2025.

It was decided to hold "three quality campaigns" in September, October and December to stop the continued spread of the virus, she told Dawn. As the poliovirus becomes "less active during the cold or winter season", it will be eradicated through a scientific strategy, —Irfan Jinnah.

PTI will not vote on tweaks

Continued from Page 1

and to support him as he leads the struggle.

Mr Khan said he briefed Mr Khan on the proposed constitutional amendment, and upon hearing the details, the former prime minister appreciated Maulana Fazal Rehman's firm stance.

"Imran Khan has proposed four names and suggested discussions with them on the amendment draft. We aim to meet Mr Khan again on Monday," he added.

Omair Ayub Khan, Senator Shafiq Farooq, Leader of the Opposition in the Punjab Assembly Ahmed Raza Khan and KP Chief Minister Ali Amin Gandapur will join Mr Gohar for talks with the JUI-F leaders.

Responding to a question, Mr Gohar criticised the government's alleged

threats, stressing that it was unacceptable. He also claimed that the government lacked a two-thirds majority, something he said no government had enjoyed in recent years.

He confirmed that discussions about the constitutional package were also held with Imran Khan.

When asked about the political situation in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Mr Gohar insisted that CM Gansapur enjoyed Imran Khan's full support.

The party leadership would continue to engage with Maulana Fazlur Rahman, he added, criticising the government's conduct, which he described as "unconstitutional and undemocratic". PTI leaders' meeting with Imran Khan came a day after a special parliamentary committee approved the proposed draft of the constitutional amendment.

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• Please submit your expression of interest by October 22, 2024 before 5:00pm Pakistan time.		
• Viewing will be arranged between October 24, 2024 upon receipt of official request from the interested parties on email or on letterhead.		
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• All parties undertake to abide by local laws, confidentiality of transaction and comply with Anti-Bribery and Anti-Corruption practices and laws of Pakistan and their respective jurisdictions.		

EXPRESSION OF INTEREST		
Disposal of Bulb, Two Centry, Green, Spreader and Pesticide		
A multinational container terminal operator in Karachi, Pakistan is looking to dispose off Bulb, Two Centry, Green, Spreader and Pesticide, on as is where it basis.		
Sl. No.	Description	Available Qty
1	Bulb, Two Centry, Green, Pesticide	100
2	Spreader	10
3	Pesticide	10
Interested Parties may bid for one or more items, offers may be quoted in PKR currency. Physical inspection may be arranged at site, with prior request.		
• Please submit your expression of interest by October 22, 2024 before 5:00pm Pakistan time.		
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Human rights review

PAKISTAN is on shaky ground regarding human freedoms. In a recent review, the UN Human Rights Committee — which carries out periodic assessments of other countries' rights record too — has expressed concern about escalating human rights abuses: politically motivated oppression, torture, eroding freedom to practise religious beliefs, forced conversions, curbs on the freedom of expression, a ban on student unions, restrictions on assembly, harassment of rights activists, crimes against women and children, capital punishment and extrajudicial killings. Successive governments have been responsible for matters reaching this point, while certain state agencies can specifically be held responsible for crimes such as enforced disappearances. Besides, the state's failure to rein in radical religious elements has also contributed to a culture of fear.

While the scale of intimidation is significant, the rising crime graph is the outcome of a corrupt, ineffective and inequitable criminal justice system and structural flaws in the security apparatus. Among other things, these factors have contributed to the rampant violence against women: for instance, a rape takes place every two minutes in the country because of a 3pc conviction rate. As for Pakistan's children, not only are millions of them deprived of even basic freedoms like education and forced into manual labour, their existence itself is overlooked by the state: as the review notes, only 42pc of children under five were registered at birth. Meanwhile, religious communities experience persistent tyranny through the misuse of blasphemy laws, while forced conversions underscore the defensiveness of the marginalised. Thus, the UN body dismissed the figure of 74 cases of forced conversions from the state party and observed that the actual number was far higher.

The review is a reminder that our constitutional protections exist as mere aspirations, and that the state has no regrets about its citizens morphing into missing persons, while it actively crushes dissent in places such as KP and Balochistan where movements protesting against atrocities by both the state and radical anti-state elements are growing. Even peaceful protesters have encountered the might of the state. It is unfortunate that human rights are seen as a favour to the populace — an attitude that is visible in institutions and social groups, including the judicial system. It is an approach that prevents the authorities from forming pro-people policies or fortifying departments for social development and protecting them from exploitation. Instead of focusing solely on Pakistan's economic woes, the state must take a holistic view. It must understand that a fresh human rights regime will be realised when elected representatives are held accountable for rights abuses in their constituencies, policies are in line with international standards, and the state has a heart.

Sinwar's exit

IF Israel thinks its strategy of 'decapitation' — eliminating the leaders of outfits that confront it — will neutralise resistance groups, then it has not learned anything from history. While the killing of Hamas leader Yahya Sinwar by Israel in Gaza, first reported on Thursday and confirmed by the armed Palestinian group a day later, is a major setback for Hamas, it is unlikely to bring Israel any long-term benefits. If anything, resistance to its brutal methods in the occupied territories, and beyond, will only gain strength. Already Sinwar, who went down fighting, is being hailed as a hero by many in Gaza. Even the PLO, which has often clashed with Hamas, condoned his killing, terming it "martyrdom". Earlier this year, Israel assassinated Hezbollah chief Hassan Nasrallah and Sinwar's predecessor Ismail Haniyeh. Yet despite the loss of their top leadership, both Hezbollah and Hamas remain active and continue to resist Israel in the battlefield. In fact, Israel has a long history of assassinating Palestinian leaders. Nearly all of Hamas's top echelon — starting from founder Sheikh Ahmad Yassin and his successor Abdel-Aziz al-Rantisi — have been murdered by Israel, yet the group has today become the most powerful amongst the Palestinian factions, eclipsing even Fatah in the occupied territories as well as the diaspora in popularity.

While many in Western capitals have celebrated Sinwar's murder and renewed calls for a ceasefire, Tel Aviv seems uninterested in silencing its guns. Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu has publicly said the war is "not over" and that his military would operate in Gaza for "years to come", pointing to a reoccupation of the Strip. Not satisfied with putting over 42,000 people to the sword in Gaza — most of them women and children — and stepping up its campaign of terror in the West Bank, Israel has expanded its aggression to Lebanon, while also attacking Syria and Yemen. Moreover, the world is watching to see if and when it targets Iran. Israel will never see peace if it continues its murderous campaigns in the occupied territories, or threatens sovereign states. If anything, such rampages will strengthen the resolve of groups and states in the region to resist Tel Aviv's aggression and barbarism. Only an end to the genocidal onslaught in Gaza, and the establishment of a viable Palestinian state, can bring peace to the region.

Cricket relief

AS is always the case with Pakistan cricket, more common sense was required. And with some radical changes came the desired results for the Shan Masood-led Test team. The six-match losing run snapped with the first home victory in three years. Victory in the second Test against England provided a moment of relief to a cricket-crazy nation as Pakistan squared the series, raising hopes for the final game in Rawalpindi next week. It showed that Pakistan cricket is alive, and not yet on the ventilator. However, bold decision-making is needed to steer it back to where it belongs. It started with a revamp of the selection committee and the decision to use the same pitch for the second Test in Multan where Pakistan were crushed in the series opener. The recycled pitch was expected to turn and the selection committee made the call to rest out-of-form batter Babar Azam as well as pacers Shoaib Shah Afridi and Naseem Shah. Spinners Noman Ali and Sajid Khan as well as batter Kamran Ghulam were thrust into the side — the trio starring as Pakistan put England into a spin web they could not escape from. Noman and Sajid took all 20 wickets, Kamran struck a century in his debut innings.

Credit for Pakistan's recovery has largely and rightly gone to Aqib Javed, who was appointed to the selection committee after the first Test. In a podcast prior to the England series, Aqib had pointed to a trial by fire of the tourists as Pakistan's best chance of beating them. Immediately after his appointment, he delivered. What Pakistan now needs is continuity. This does not necessarily mean that the playing XI should remain the same — that the same players play every game. Instead, they should look at playing to their strengths as well as making full use of the conditions on offer. That is how the best teams produce results on a regular basis.

OPINION



BY MUHAMMAD AMIR RANA

Women and change

Comprehending women leaders is always a challenge for the power elites.

WITH their unwavering courage, Pakistani women have been challenging the odds and reshaping the country's social and political landscape. Their increasing participation in political and rights movements, a testament to their bravery, can be read as 'change is coming'.

The role of women significantly shapes the ongoing struggle against religious bigotry in the country. The images of police torture inflicted upon human rights activists, particularly on a young woman lawyer in Karachi, will be remembered. The visuals of Dr Mahrukh Baloch, who was prevented from travelling to New York, added to the existing deterioration of the government, which has been restricting freedoms in the country. She had been included in Time's 100 most influential people of the year and was on her way to deliver a talk at a ceremony organised by the magazine. The significant participation of women in a jirga organised by the Padma Tahafuz Movement (PTM) in Khyber district last week signals that silence is no longer an option, and women are becoming indispensable to the conduct of national affairs.

Change is underway, but its duration remains uncertain, as the perpetrators of oppression are still strong, especially given their solid institutional foundation and support from the power elite. However, recent developments offer a glimmer of hope that gender inequality is being challenged more structurally across the country. Many experts argue that the issue has gone beyond gender inequality, and reflects broader socio-political and cultural pressures that draw clear lines between the privileged elite and those who feel oppressed. It may also represent a silent transformation that has been unfolding for some time.

This shift is happening nationwide, including in Punjab, though the expressions of the change differ. When incidents of violence against women are normalised, and women leaders justify such acts — perhaps by importing a misogynistic analysis to fuel damaging debates — the hysteria following allegations of a girl being raped in a Punjab hotel should come as no surprise. The youth in Punjab, influenced by recent events and the report of a sexual assault, are voicing their

sentiments more than ever. Protests against extremism and movements advocating for rights in the other provinces are likely to have an impact in Punjab too. Amid political chaos and rising social discontent, misogynistic narratives propagated by certain religious factions are facing a backlash.

Many youth in Punjab have united behind a fair cause and are reacting against injustices that have become commonplace. Their unity mirrors reactions in other provinces and their increasing participation and prominent roles indicate that, with political awakening, social structures are also undergoing a transformation. The role of women in the political opposition, mainly the women in Punjab who are facing hardship, cannot be ignored. Women's participation in politics in the province can be considered as part of the ongoing transformation.

Indeed, Pakistan has a history of women playing critical roles in politics and social development. However, most of these women belong to the upper classes, and their role has not triggered any significant transformation in society. Few women have emerged as universal symbols of courage and resistance, like the late Aama Jhangir. Now, the major difference between the two generations is that the new women leaders come from humble backgrounds, and socio-political circumstances have pushed them to act for change. These women have been supported by their communities, and their leadership has evolved organically. This gives optimism that the change will last long.

Comprehending women leaders is always a challenge for the power elites, who resort to their character assassination. The second argument, often used against women's participation in social and political reforms, is taken from faith and culture. This approach creates hindrances. A combination of all these factors shows how power structures in Pakistan are inherently misogynistic; they don't even change when women become prime ministers or chief ministers.

The PPP was recently being criticised for its brutal treatment of civil society, which was protesting against extremism. But this is not new for the ruling party of Sindh. Ruling elites always

cater to the interests of the majority and those who are more powerful. The extremists are powerful in Sindh and have infiltrated the police, and the government is protecting their interests.

This is not limited to the PPP; all political parties are sympathetic to the establishment when they are in power. All major mainstream political parties sympathise with the oppressed and marginalised communities when they are in the opposition and use victimisation by the state instrument. While sympathising with the marginalised, these parties sell their victimhood to gain power. Once in power, they deal with these communities and rights movements as the establishment's worst wishes.

Rights movements may also reveal a tendency to ally with the establishment, as was witnessed recently when the Haq Dey Tehreek in Gwadar compromised to secure a few electoral constituencies. Similar examples can be found in the PTM. However, the risk of compromising is reduced with a women leadership and its increased participation within rights movements, as women leaders are seen as more dedicated to their cause and sacred in the art of negotiation.

One may argue that women also actively participate in religious parties' activities. This may be an encouraging thought, but such participation is mostly limited to attending the religious parties' rallies and holding fund-collection drives. These parties hardly allow their women to lead from the front or take an active role in decision-making in party affairs. Secondly, their participation in religious and political activities remains mostly confined to protecting the social and political status quo.

Women's role in the PTM is particularly critical. The fact that these women are facing multiple societal, political, and religious pressures as well as the 'PTP' charges in their areas cannot be underestimated. The harshest group in the ally of the worst misogynistic regime — the Afghan Taliban. The resistance of these women is a beacon of hope not only for Pakistani but also for Afghan women. ■

The writer is a security analyst.



BY ABBAS NASIR

Will order follow chaos?

THE chaos of the past several weeks, triggered by the fast-approaching retirement date of the chief justice of Pakistan on Oct 25 and concerns that his successor may take decisions signalling the beginning of the end of the hybrid government, looks like it may have peaked.

Whether these concerns are valid or whether it is the paranoia of a set-up that lacks mass support, legitimacy and credibility, due to an election where the overall result may not have reflected the will of those who voted, is difficult to say.

What is clear is that there would be few examples of a country amending its constitution to address such concerns pinned to an inability to predict the behaviour or actions of just over a dozen men and a woman. Many government politicians have described the toing and froing of the past weeks as the 'beauty of democracy'. I firmly disagree.

Let me tell you why. By the time you read these lines, either the so-called 'consensus' with the JUI-F and some smaller players would have reached or would be set to soon result in the passage of a constitutional amendment, clipping the wings of the judiciary; or, what Bilawal Bhutto-Zardari called the "total majority with their extra numbers", would have manifested itself with the same result. You'd agree such statements have no 'beauty' about them.

There is always the third possibility that all attempts to break the impasse would have failed, stripping the hybrid buffer and pitting the establishment and at least eight judges of the Supreme Court against each other in direct confrontation. How things spin away from such an eventuality is difficult to plot.

While the government has continued to say it has the numbers (whatever the factual position) to pass the amendment but wishes to reach a consensus in order to further the democratic cause, these they have tried to engage with have had their own reasons to enter into a dialogue.

For example, the PTI's game plan seems to be to buy time to somehow push the clock until the date changes to Oct 26, so that a new chief justice can take over and a new dynamic is triggered which, they hope, will eventually lead to the

ouster of this government.

They won't care much whether this ouster comes through the election tribunals or somehow via the annulment of the February elections, as long as any fresh election returns Imran Khan to the prime minister's office with much greater authority and powers than his last stint.

The JUI-F's Masluma Farid Rehman must be having the spotlight that's on him. Let's not forget he was a loyal ally who even brought his cadres to Islamabad to ease the pressure on Nawaz Sharif and his party when Imran Khan was the prime minister with the full backing of the then establishment.

If the amendment is passed, the hybrid government will think it is safe from any threats to its existence, at least in the short term.

Rehman. But he was treated shabbily once the new government came into existence after the February elections.

Small things matter hugely in Pakistani culture, such as joining in the wedding celebrations of each other's close family members, and even more important, making sure that in moments of loss and grief, such as the passing of family elders, people are not left alone.

The PML-N and PPP were guilty of ignoring these significant gestures, and this must have led to the Muslims feeling slighted. In addition, the replacement of his party's minister for government KP with a PPP politician was something that would not have met with his approval because it stripped his party, with stakes in the province, of the only office they could have had there.

This forced the JUI-F into taking a paradoxical position, allying itself with the PTI, which had ousted his party from its home base of KP. There

can be no denying that the Muslims, apart from the one lack of letting his party vote for Gen Musharraf, has been pretty consistent in taking democratic positions.

As this column's last few lines were being finalised, a five-member PTI team that met the party's founder Imran Khan in Rawalpindi's Adhala Jail had emerged from the meeting and told the media that Khan had directed his team members to continue to engage with the Muslims on this important piece of legislation.

At the same time, PPP leader Bilawal Bhutto-Zardari told the media outside the Muslims' Islamabad home, in the company of the chief JUI negotiator Kamran Murtaza, that the two parties had agreed on a draft amendment that the PML-N would also support, and that the PTI should make up its mind as to what it wanted to do.

It appeared that the PTI's strategy to buy time had run its course and that perhaps now the JUI-F and PTI may part ways in terms of how they vote and support the amendment. Of course, there is always a slip between cup and lip. And the job isn't done till it is.

If the amendment is passed, the hybrid government will think it will remove any threats to its existence at least in the short term. The longer term is another story. So far, Imran Khan does not seem to have bowed to the pressure started by a number of court cases and his imprisonment.

There can be no doubt he continues to enjoy considerable support across the country. So far, this support has not been able to exert enough pressure from the streets for either his release from prison or to seriously challenge those at the helm.

In our experience, sometimes even the smallest set of sparks can trigger effective snowballing movements that can force change. In the absence of finding its way back to power through the legal system, the PTI's only bet will be its large support base pulling off something spectacular at some point. ■

The writer is a former editor of Dawn. abbas.nasir@hotmail.com

OPINION



BY MUNA KHAN

Fighting toxic talk

I HAD to step outside social media silos to understand what was happening in Lahore, because my trusted sources — in this newspaper and other legacy outlets — were reporting on student protests while information about the alleged rape seemed muted. On social media, meanwhile, things were alarming, even horrific. No rape was as possible as the cover up of one. I wanted to create a timeline myself to make sense of things — this is before *The Chronicle* published a very good explainer — namely, had a rape occurred? While student protests and police brutality have continued across Punjab, there's more clarity, at least for me: a young woman and her family's name have been dragged through the mud, and they will likely have to spend the next few years explaining that she/their daughter was not raped. Students who are bearing police violence are being used for political point-scoring. No one believes the government, and likely won't even if Punjab Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz pursues criminal cases against those who spread misinformation, as her administration seems to be doing. Minds have been made up across the political divide.

Welcome to this age of disinformation — with dangerous consequences.

Let it be clear that misinformation about this case was spread at a dizzying speed. Investigative journalist Umar Chaudhry, who was one of the first to report there was no rape at the said college, tweeted a video of a woman claiming to be the rape victim's mother on Friday evening. She tells her followers on TikTok what happened to her daughter and asks them to call out the government and the news media for covering up the crime. After this tear-jerking confession, the post has most views, whereas she is lip-synching to a Bollywood song.

It's easy to dismiss this woman as an attention-seeker but it's the talks who believe it and share it that worry me more. According to Toon Bhachman, who wrote a paper on disinformation in 2020, those who deliberately create it do so "to deceive and mislead audiences for the purposes of causing harm, or for political, personal or financial gain". People who then share it do so because it aligns with their worldview. Many, citing the sheer strength and effectiveness of a particular political party's social media strategy, suspect its supporters of pushing news of this rape, saying they got the turmoil they wanted. Meanwhile, brave students will bear the brunt of police violence.

Of course, a rape can occur on campus. Of course, parents would seek it. Of course, a guard or male school employee

could be the harasser. CCTV footage could be deleted, the school administration could pressure and/or threaten students, the media could be involved in hushing things up. We have seen iterations of this play out plenty of times before. In this case, the police officer who told students to return to classes last "something else" happen to them too is no different to the police officer asking why a woman gang-raped on the Motorway was driving alone at night.

We live in a country where whatever women say is treated with suspicion. I'm lying if I say I was raped, I'm covering up rape if I say I wasn't. I'm telling the truth if I say a guard harassed me, I'm lying if I say an actor did. It is exhausting to be a woman in this country. Attitudes and policies done on basic humanity. Digital platforms do not protect us.

Disinformation is a global threat and requires a global strategy and policies to quell it. However, misogynist threats to unravel Pakistan's core. Misogyny is being monetised, and it is being used to create divisions in society. It should be seen as as big a national security threat as terrorism. In fact, misogyny is terrorism. In August, the UK said it was planning to tackle misogyny as an extremism. There are great concerns about incel culture in the West, promoted by the likes of Andrew Tate. Here, we elect men like Tate, invite them as state guests and fund campaigns for them to run the Oxford chancellery.

The government alone can't fight the kind of disinformation this Lahore 'rape' case has shown. It requires parents and schools to teach media literacy classes from grade 1. And laws that don't suppress civil liberties but punish those who spread false information. Not release them.

If not, I fear parents won't want to send their daughters to colleges, women won't want to stand for public office (given the disgusting hate campaigns they face) or report sexual harassment of violence due to the stigma. This will set us back decades. In 2022, Pakistan was the second worst country for women in terms of gender parity according to the World Economic Forum. Imagine striking lower.

The writer is an instructor of journalism. ✉️ @LeadingLady



BY JAMIL AHMAD

Road to Baku

IN 2015, the Paris Climate Accord, a legally binding international treaty, established a structured plan for climate action with supply-side targets for emission reductions, aiming for net-zero greenhouse gas emissions by 2050. It acknowledged that reducing GHG emissions alone would not be enough to control climate change; mutually supportive adaptation policies would be necessary to protect vulnerable people from its impact. According to the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change's (IPCC) Sixth Assessment Report, some 3.5 billion people, almost half the global population, are highly vulnerable to climate change.

The Paris Agreement, therefore, established a Global Goal on Adaptation to enhance adaptive capacity, strengthen resilience and reduce vulnerability to climate change in the context of its goal to limit the global temperature rise to 1.5 degrees Celsius above pre-industrial levels. This benchmark was based on the IPCC's analysis that crossing this threshold would unleash harsh environmental impacts, including severe heatwaves, frequent droughts and heavy rainfall — which are becoming common. Sadly, the Global Goal on Adaptation is yet to be operationalised.

For developing countries, the treaty also laid down a framework for financial, technical and capacity-building support, and "reaffirmed that developed countries should take the lead in providing financial assistance to countries that are less endowed and more vulnerable" for mitigation and adaptation. Developed countries had pledged, in 2009, to raise \$100bn by 2020 for this purpose. Belatedly mobilised in 2022, this amount fell short of requirements, which are estimated at \$600bn annually. Distressed by debt, most developing countries find it difficult to take climate action. They need sufficient financial means to raise adaptation to a level that guarantees a better degree of protection against the climate crisis.

In 2021, the Glasgow Climate Pact called for the doubling of "collective provision of climate finance for adaptation". But funding needs kept surging. Last year, UNEP estimated that the financial needs of developing countries for adaptation would soar from \$215bn to \$380bn by 2030. These figures are expected to be overtaken in this year's UNEP Adaptation Gap Report, due next month.

Climate COP29 in Baku, Azerbaijan, next month, has been dubbed the 'finance COP', and will seek to agree on a new global goal for climate finance to replace the current \$100bn adaptation target. The new goal is expected to be broad-based and open to contributions from the private sector and others.

Previously perched, developing countries are expecting concessional finance to be prioritised by COP29, as more loans will only add to their debt burden. Discussions in Baku will be informed by the report of the Independent Expert Group on Climate Finance, tasked by COP to assess how the climate finance system can support the implementation of the Paris Accord. The report notes that insufficient investment in developing countries in key areas — a just energy transition, adaptation and resilience, conservation and restoration of nature, etc. — was the primary reason that the Paris Agreement went off track. The report concluded that developing countries and emerging economies, minus China, would need around \$2.4 trillion annually by 2030 to invest in climate change and nature.

The expert group recommended that immediate debt constraints and lack of the oil sector impeding the ability of poor and vulnerable countries to invest must be tackled urgently. It said that country leadership was crucial for committed engagement with the private sector, MDBs, donors, and private philanthropy to unlock investment at scale. An integrated approach is required to mobilise all sources of finance — public and private, domestic and international. Domestic resource mobilisation is needed to anchor the macro-economic sustainability of all finance, while the elimination of harmful subsidies and imposition of carbon taxation are crucial to revenue generation.

Insufficient concessional climate finance for developing nations would render international efforts ineffective, aggravate the climate crisis, and deepen mistrust between the developed and developing countries. The expert group has urged developed countries to triple bilateral concessional finance by 2030.

Nearly a decade after its adoption, the Paris Agreement remains instrumental in spurring climate action and promoting low-carbon solutions across economic sectors. Overall, however, the agreement risks missing its goal of keeping the temperature rise under 1.5°C, unless fresh vigour, stronger political commitment and adequate financial resources are urgently pumped into its pipelines.

The writer is director of intergovernmental affairs, United Nations Environment Programme.

FROM THE PAST PAGES OF DAWN

1974 | Fifty years ago

Baluchistan White Paper

KARACHI: A White Paper issued by the Federal Government categorically states that at no stage has the Air Force been used for bombing attacks during military operations in Baluchistan. Forcefully denying the false allegations ... by Afghanistan and certain interested quarters, the ... Government declares ... that no village, house or band of hostiles has ever been subjected to an aerial attack, nor have paratroopers been dropped anywhere in the province.

[The White Paper says that military presence in aid of civil power has a dual purpose: preservation of law and order and economic development. The White Paper points out that the leadership of the National Awami Party, and an indirectly foreign agent, Afghanistan, synchronised moves in [and] ... attempt to internationalise an issue that is solely ... within the ... jurisdiction of Pakistan. — News agencies.]

[Meanwhile, as reported by news agencies from Washington, President Ford declared [US] continuing support for Pakistan's ... territorial integrity. [He] gave this assurance to Pakistan's Minister of State for Foreign Affairs and Defence ... when they discussed ... a "broad range of matters".]

1949 | Seventy-five years ago

Harassment in India

KARACHI: Pakistan has strongly protested to India against the undue harassment of Pakistani nationals, which also included Government employees, who had gone to India recently to evacuate their families, by the "local officials" in that Dominion. It was related to ... Pakistan ... its own note ... had to have a "grave view" of "this extremely harsh treatment" ... and asked the Indian Government to intervene and make the necessary amends "immediately". ... The harassment ... was a common occurrence, and Pakistan had protested several times earlier ... Recently, however, the behaviour ... had become "worse" and had thus occasioned this strong protest, it was said.

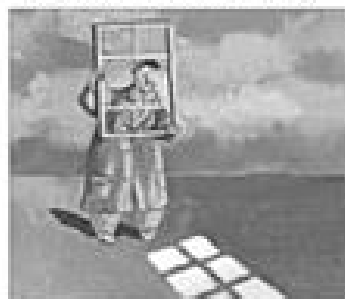
A party of Pakistan nationals, [including Government employees, were] recently detained at Saharanpur railway station in India and were deprived of all their belongings ... by the police. Even the 'Purdah' ladies were not spared who were relieved of their 'burqa'. ... [They were] transferred to the Muslim refugees' camp at Jalandhar ... The detention was so planned that by the time [they] arrived at Amritsar in transit to Pakistan their permits expired and they were again arrested by the Amritsar Police. ... — Staff correspondent

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

letters@dawn.com

Letters may be edited for purposes of clarity and space. All letters should carry the writer's address, CNIC and phone numbers.

'Solving' issues the utterly wrong way



IT is a bitter irony that while our all-styled-in-the-same-garment-in-plush, air-conditioned ballrooms to discuss urgent social issues, the voices of those directly affected by these challenges remain muted. The disconnect from the ground reality is alarmingly serious, and it is this disconnect that leads to an emotional disconnect, and ultimately undermines efforts to find real solutions to real-life problems.

How can one engage in meaningful discussions about poverty, inequality and social justice when seated in cosy chairs, sipping costly lattes, and being blissfully unaware of the lives of those who endure a litany of hardships on a daily basis? In such refined and comfortable settings,

the participants — knowingly or otherwise — remain shielded from the brutal truths of life they gather to address. These events, largely limited to academics, officials of non-governmental organisations (NGOs) and bureaucrats, rarely yield any meaningful change. They may produce eloquent reports and glossy brochures, but their outcome seldom reaches the grassroots level, where true transformation is fundamentally required.

Rather than wasting resources on high-profile conferences, we must redirect our focus towards genuine engagement with those affected. It is imperative that we amplify the voices of those grappling with these issues, allowing them to share their experiences directly, rather than relying on reports that fail to capture the depth of their struggles and the urgency of their interventions.

Take, for instance, rural poverty or domestic violence. These issues demand practical solutions from people who live in the reality of these problems. Instead of flying in experts from afar to discuss what the poor or marginalised need, why are not NGOs setting up local forums in villages, schools and community centres where these voices can guide the agenda? The true power for change belongs to the people, not with high-end seminars.

Muhammad Shafiqul Haque
Islamabad

Chaos in Lahore

THIS is with reference to the report "TIA identifies journalists, TikTokers for spreading 'fake' rape story" (Oct 18). The

current hype on conventional and social media platforms, and the anarchy on roads related to the alleged incident in Lahore has generated a great deal of controversy and public outcry. Adding fuel to the fire, students of the college in question have apparently been instigated to indulge in violence as a form of "protest".

Unfortunately, the prevalent chaos in Lahore that has resulted in large-scale arrest of violent protesters is despite the fact that the 'victim' family has issued a video statement, with the father clarifying that his daughter had suffered a spinal injury as a result of a fall. He has even presented the girl's medical records to negate the allegations.

Besides, the provincial chief minister also held a press conference where the girl could also be seen sitting, negating the allegations. One wonders why there continued to be anarchy on the roads. Moreover, the Punjab government has also formed a high-level committee to conduct a thorough investigation into the alleged incident.

Having witnessed the current incident, it is rather imperative that the public acts wisely to filter misinformation to avoid being misled by malicious propaganda disseminated by a anti-state elements.

Besides, as stressed by the editorial 'More questions' (Oct 17), the government must ensure transparency in the whole process. On its part, the national media must also practice responsible reporting in order to ensure the public is provided the correct information. To dispense justice and protect the rights of all parties concerned, responsible reporting is crucial.

Saeed Raheem
Lahore

Medical training

THERE is an urgent need to introduce post-graduation diplomas of six months or a year in various disciplines across the medical profession. No doubt, internationally recognised Fellowship of the College of Physicians and Surgeons (FCPS) is accepted as the standard postgraduate qualification, but it is not possible for everyone to invest four more years in studies after five years of MBBS.

The average age at which individuals generally pass medical school is 24 years. A series of social and psychological factors, including financial crisis and family responsibilities, push many to work for bread and butter. There is no chance for them to even attempt a four-year post-graduation qualification. The dream of such a qualification remains just that, a dream.

Thus, the government and the College of Physicians and Surgeons Pakistan (CPS) need to introduce short post-graduation medical courses, which would upgrade the knowledge of the doctors who are unable to opt for the FCPS path.

Dr Razi Raseeb Azam
Faisalabad

CAA's tardiness

THE complacent attitude of the Civil Aviation Authority (CAA) in addressing the issue of the ongoing ban on Pakistani airlines to European Union member states is disappointing. The issue has remained unresolved since the plane crash in Karachi back in May 2020. The post-accident reporting was badly mismanaged, bringing to light irregularities within the national aviation sector, prompting the European Union Aviation Safety Agency (EASA) to ban Pakistani airlines holding Third Country Operators (TCO) authorisation for operations in Europe.

Despite significant implications for the national airline and the broader economy, there has been a troubling lack of urgency in restoring these vital connections by addressing the issues raised by EASA. The CAA's failure to implement appropriate corrective measures undermines public confidence in the aviation safety standards, hampering the growth potential of tourism and business sectors.

It is imperative that the CAA acts swiftly to rectify the safety concerns highlighted by EASA and the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA).

Ensuring compliance with international safety and regulatory standards will not only help rebuild trust, but also support economic growth and connectivity. Clear communication about improvements and a commitment to maintaining high standards will be essential during this process.

K.A.J.
Karachi

THE ONLY NEEDED AMENDMENT

Currently, there is much heated talk going on about constitutional amendments that are of no interest to the common man. However, the only constitutional amendment required at the moment is the one that bounds the government to provide easily accessible and potable water to every Pakistani household, free primary education to every child, and health insurance against minimal charges to each and every Pakistani. Furthermore, under the very proposed amendment, any prime minister failing to provide these basic facilities within one year of assuming office shall cease to hold office.

Akshay Kumar
Karachi

TOLL TAX HIKE

The recent hike in toll tax of Lyari Expressway to Rs50 is mind-boggling as there has been no improvement in services. The expressway requires repairs at various segments. To start with, there is no proper lighting which poses a serious risk to both the commuters as well as the residents of adjacent localities. Moreover, the police patrolling is also unsatisfactory. There is a lack of proper lighting and security, especially at night, making the commute further perilous for the motorists. The expressway is dotted with beggars. People are paying more, but receiving the same substandard service. If the National Highway Authority (NHA) is collecting higher toll taxes, it should also provide a safer, smoother and more secure journey.

Syed Muhammad Shahid
Karachi

VOLATILE SITUATION

The rising tension between Iran and Israel poses several challenges to the region and Pakistan, such as abrupt and steep rise in terrorism in certain areas. In this scenario, Pakistan must devise an effective strategy in order to mitigate the impact. Further, the possible practical solutions include making the National Counter Terrorism Authority (Nicta) active. There should be a mechanism in place to ensure border trade continues regardless of the situation. These and other measures are necessary for Pakistan.

Pir Syed Muhammad Shah
Lahore

External Ombudsman

Veteran journalist Muhammad Ali Siddiqi is Dawn's External Ombudsman (DEO). His duty is to attend to our readers' complaints, and to respond to them professionally. DEO is the investigating authority to whom all complaints can be referred, and it is DEO who takes notice of any alleged violations of Dawn's code of ethics, and informs the Editor for appropriate action. Email: muhammadali@msd.com

The Margalla Towers tragedy clearly failed to wake us up

IT was 19 years ago this month that the collapse of Margalla Towers in Islamabad (Oct 8, 2005) in the wake of a powerful earthquake had resulted in the loss of 72 lives. The multi-rise building was the only one in Islamabad that fell because of the earthquake, raising serious concerns about its construction quality and safety standards.

The main reasons were poor quality of construction — including the use of substandard material, unauthorised expansion of the building (an extra tower was added that was not in the original plan), and a complete lack of technical supervision by the Capital Development Authority (CDA).

Although the builder was convicted by a court in Islamabad after a protracted legal battle fought by the residents, he was let go after a while. The government never released the report of a detailed investigation which was completed within a few months after the disaster. This was 19 years ago, mind you.

After the tragedy, the building codes were revised to incorporate more stringent safety measures across the board, including updated guidelines related to the use of material, structural design, and construction techniques, to make buildings earthquake-resistant.

However, the supervision system was not improved. Therefore, compliance with the construction codes has remained elusive.



Disasters like the 2005 earthquake come unannounced. Pakistan is prone to earthquakes and almost all its major cities are in the high-risk zone. If a similar tragedy strikes again, it will lead to unimaginable loss of lives and property. The relevant authorities should immediately start working on a comprehensive plan to enforce the building codes, start public awareness programmes, and initiating a campaign to inspect the already constructed buildings to assess their quality of construction.

Dr Farid Mithter
Ex-resident of Margalla Towers
Islamabad

Two drown in Indus River in Dera

By Our Correspondent

DERA ISMAIL KHAN: Two people drowned in the Indus River near Ramak area of Pithorah taluk here on Sunday, a rescue official said.

Rescue 1122 spokesman Asrar Mehmood said that former pro-vice-chancellor of Gomal University Prof. Dr. Khairul Khattak and National Bank Pithorah branch manager Ganiar Bilal Kund were fishing near Ramak area, but both drowned in the river.

Soon after receiving information about the incident, the rescue workers reached the spot, retrieved them from the water and shifted them to the District Headquarters Hospital, Dera, where doctors pronounced them dead, he said, adding that a third person was pulled out from the waters alive and was also shifted to hospital.

Meanwhile, by-elections on vacant seats of different village and neighbourhood councils would be held here on Sunday (today).

The relevant authorities finished arrangements for the by-elections.

The police have finalised a comprehensive security plan to maintain law and order during the local government by-polls, an official said, adding that under the plan, foolproof security would be ensured at all the polling stations.

"The election staff would have special security arrangements to ensure free and transparent by-elections," the police official said.

The official said that implementation of the election code of conduct for political workers and candidates would also be ensured on the polling day.

Bajaur boy ends life after fight with father

BAJAUR: A boy ended his life after inhaling poisonous pills in Mamond taluk here on Saturday, residents and the police said.

They said the deceased, identified as Harisullah, 18, took his life inside his home in Dawngal village. They said he took the extreme step after exchanging harsh words with his father.

The residents said that the deceased, who was a student of a local school, was earlier advised by his father to focus on his education instead of wasting his time in useless activities. However, the residents said the father's advice angered the boy, who started arguing with his father, and later led him to take his life.

The residents said that family members were shifting him to a hospital after finding him lying unconscious in a room, but he died on the way.

Meanwhile, an official at the Mamond police station told **Dawn** that they were investigating the incident.

—Correspondent



PEOPLE load firewood onto a vehicle in the Kuremat valley of Upper Dir district. The picturesque valley, which has recently emerged as a major tourist destination, lacks access to natural gas, electricity and other facilities of life. This issue, according to locals, is resulting in chopping down of precious trees for cooking and heating as the valley temperatures remain below zero for most part of the winter. —Photo and text by Mohammad Ashtag

Court seeks KMU's response as MDCAT candidates call for grace marks

Petitioners claim question paper had 'wrong answer keys, high difficulty level'

Bureau Report

PESHAWAR: The Peshawar High Court has directed the Khyber Medical University's vice chancellor to respond to a petition filed by several students to seek grace marks in the recent Medical and Dental Colleges Admission Test (MDCAT) over "fuzzy" question papers.

A bench consisting of Justice Shaukat Ahmad and Justice Sahibzada Asadullah directed the VC to file the reply to the petition within a fortnight.

It issued the order after preliminary hearing into a petition

jointly filed by Ahmad Nisar and 11 other students and MDCAT candidates from Peshawar, who sought orders for the respondents, including KMU, to award grace marks to them in existing universities in other provinces have awarded grace marks through public notices issued on Sept 24 and Sept 29 to candidates for admission to medical and dental colleges.

They also requested the court to declare void the denial of the respondents to entertain the requests and complaints of the petitioners regarding the entrance test held on Sept 22.

The respondents in the petition include the federal government through the secretary of the ministry of health services regulations, Pakistan Medical and Dental Council through its secretary, KMU through its VC, Higher Education Commission through its chairman, and provincial health secretary.

Advocate Sher Haidar Khan appeared for the petitioners and said that the PMDC had called for a screening test to admissions in MBBS and BDS courses for the year 2024-2025 through an advertisement in different newspapers on Aug 5, 2024.

He said that responsibility for administering the MDCAT had been delegated to various government universities in each province.

He said that the responsibility in Punjab was assigned to the University of Health Sciences Lahore, in Sindh to Dow University of Health Sciences, to KMU Peshawar in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, to Bolan University of Medical and Health Sciences in Balochistan, to Shaheed Zulfiqar Ali Bhutto Medical University in Islamabad and Karakoram International University in Gilgit-Baltistan.

The counsel said that as the

petitioners were qualified and eligible candidates they applied for the test conducted by the KMU and appeared in it.

He claimed that the petitioners attempted all questions but found out that some questions in the paper had "multiple interpretations, high difficulty level, wrong answer keys, and wrong or confusing answers."

The lawyer said that the petitioners filed complaints with the KMU for reviewing answer keys through independent subject experts and on their recommendations the petitioners were awarded grace marks against the "disputed" questions.

He, however, said that the respondent complaints had not been responded to.

Mr Haidar said that after so many controversial episodes related to MDCATs in the last couple of years, it was hoped that this year, the medical col-

leges entrance test would be conducted in a fair manner by the PMDC, but that didn't happen.

He claimed that there were large-scale protests in other parts of the country regarding irregularities in the test, including on-the-spot questions in the paper.

The lawyer argued that the petitioners had the constitutional right to file complaints about anything found wrong or misleading in the question paper, but the attitude of the respondents was highly unprofessional.

He claimed that in identical cases, the Shaheed Zulfiqar Ali Bhutto University Islamabad and University of Health Sciences Lahore awarded grace marks to their candidates as per expert recommendations and the difficulty index as per public notices on Sept 24 and 29, respectively.

Petition disposed of as inmates allowed cooking in prison

Bureau Report

PESHAWAR: The Peshawar High Court has disposed of a petition from inmates of the Peshawar Central Prison after learning that the jail authorities have allowed prisoners to prepare their meals after building a new canteen on the premises.

A bench consisting of Justice Ijaz Ahmad and Justice Syed Anwar Ali heard the petition of the two undertrial prisoners, including Waseelullah and Tahir Zia, against the non-provision of the facility to cook for themselves inside the prison.

Advocate Naeemullah Kakakhel appeared for the petitioners and said that their clients had challenged a prison circular, which declared that electricity boards were to be removed from barracks though it was the only facility available to them to prepare their own meals.

He said that the purpose of the circular was to curb the use of mobile phones in the prisons, where no number of signals were installed, but the Central Prison Peshawar had signal jammers.

The lawyer said that the KP Prison Rules, 2018, allowed undertrial prisoners to cook for themselves.

He said that those rules allowed such inmates to prepare their meals, while the same was only allowed by burning coal, which was injurious to health when used regularly and that food also had a taste of coal.

The counsel said that attendance in the prison was taken after 7pm in summer and 5pm in the winter and thereafter, barracks were closed and prisoners couldn't cook food for themselves even outside due to which 1,300 prisoners suffered in central prison alone.

He argued that there were no alternative measures for prisoners to cook and the one given there was unhygienic and not up to the standard.

An additional advocate general informed the court that prison authorities had constructed a new kitchen on the premises after the petition was filed.

He added that prisoners would be allowed to cook for themselves in the new cooking area.

The additional advocate general also presented photos of the newly constructed kitchen.

The bench observed that the grievance of the petitioners had been addressed through the construction of the kitchen.

Peshawar's major govt hospital performs 1,000 bariatric surgeries in five years

KTH doctor says obesity requires surgical procedure

By Ashtag Yusufzai

PESHAWAR: The public sector Khyber Teaching Hospital in Peshawar has performed 1,000 bariatric surgeries in the last five years, helping patients get rid of obesity, a problem that causes hypertension, diabetes and chest issues, and affects lifestyle, according to a senior doctor.

"Obesity causes high blood pressure, stroke, heart attack, high cholesterol, cancer and arthritis, so it is important to undergo surgery to get rid of it," KTH head surgeon Prof. Muhammad Zarin told **Dawn**.

He said Pakistan ranked 844 in the Global Obesity Observatory with 6.26 per cent of obese men, 164 with 11.7 per cent of such adult women, 151 with 3.5 per cent of boys and 181 with 2.52 per cent of girls.

Prof Zarin said 1,000 patients, including 626 men and 374 women, had been operated upon at the KTH since 2017 and only 10pc of them were shifted to the intensive care unit due to minor complications before being released to the ward within 24 hours.

He said the procedures performed included sleeve gastrectomy, non-anatomical gastric bypass, Roux-Y gastric bypass,

and some revision operations.

The surgeon said resolution of associated problems like hypertension, diabetes, joint problems, chest issues, sleep apnea infertility and cardiac issues, happened in 75-85pc patients, with the number being very close to international values.

He said that optimum weight loss was achieved in the majority of patients and follow-up by the bariatric team's surgical department and regular monitoring continued.

"Less than five per cent of patients needed re-operation for minor complications," he said.

Prof Zarin, who is the general secretary of the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa chapter of the Pakistan Society of Metabolic and Bariatric Surgeons and was assisted by Dr. Imran Marmat and Dr. Shah Zafar, said the people with obesity faced serious problems.

He said obesity had become a major public health issue but the people had yet to fully benefit from the latest form of surgery that had been introduced in public sector hospitals.

"There are misconceptions that it is unnecessary to undergo bariatric surgery as it can prove dangerous and the people can gain experience obesity," he said.

The PSMBS leader said that the procedures at the right time enabled patients to stay safe from problems.

He said at present, there were no proper medicines to control obesity, but after the research of five dec-

ades, health experts introduced bariatric surgery, which effectively controlled it.

Prof Zarin, a laparoscopic surgeon at KTH, said bariatric surgery was not dangerous but more than any chances of the people regaining weight after undergoing surgery.

"Regaining weight after surgery is one of the complications of bariatric surgery and can happen in 10-15 per cent of patients but these figures can be minimised by choosing the right patient for the right procedure," he said.

The PSMBS office-bearer said that obesity or metabolic syndrome was a complex disease and wasn't just a cosmetic concern and it increased the risk of other problems like diabetes, and caused blood pressure, arthritis, chest and cardiac issues, infertility and certain cancers.

He added that it was the surgical treatment of a disease, so it could have complications just like other surgical procedures.

Prof Zarin, however, said the surgery was not dangerous if carried out by trained advanced laparoscopic, robotic and bariatric surgeons in a well-equipped health facility having all specialists like nutritionist, diabetologist, psychiatrist, pulmonologist, cardiologist and anaesthesiologist.

He said that complications could be handled in a scientific way to achieve good outcomes through regular follow-up and adherence to the diet plan to help reduce the chances of weight regain.

Cadet passing out parade held at Military Academy

Bureau Report

PESHAWAR: Passing out parade of cadets of 150th PMA Long Course, 69th Integrated Course, 24th Lady Cadet Course and 30th Technical Graduate Course was held at Pakistan Military Academy (PMA), Kakul, on Saturday.

A statement issued here by Inter-Services Public Relations, the media wing of the army, said that cadets from several friendly countries, including Iraq, Jordan, Maldives, Sri Lanka, Nepal, Palestine, Sudan and

Yemen, also graduated from PMA. Chairman Joint Chiefs of Staff Committee (CJCSC) General Sahir Shamshad Mirza, NI CMU graced the occasion as the chief guest and the reviewing dignitary of the parade.

CJCSC reviewed the parade and gave awards to distinguished cadets.

The coveted Sword of Honour was awarded to Battalion Senior Under Officer Abdullah Afzal of 150th PMA Long Course.

The President's Gold Medal was awarded to Battalion Senior Under Officer Babarullah Arman of 150th

PMA Long Course. Chairman Joint Chiefs of Staff Committee Overseas Gold Medal was given to Friendly Country Senior Under Officer Khatij Gurnag of 150th PMA Long Course from Nepal.

Chief of Army Staff Came was awarded to Course Junior Under Officer Muhammad Umar Sheraz of 30th Technical Graduate Course.

Commandant's Came were awarded to Course Junior Under Officer Muhammad Salaman of 69th Integrated Course and Course Under Officer Pakistan Yaqoob of 24th Lady Cadet Course.

SHAHED ZULFIQAR ALI BHUTTO UNIVERSITY OF LAW KARACHI

NOTICE INVITING TENDER FOR HEALTH INSURANCE SERVICES (TENDER#SZABUL/PS/001/2024-25)

Technical and Financial Proposal are invited from SPC registered reputable Health Insurance Companies duly registered with IFP and SBI and should have AA Ratings of PACRA/CRYS. A company should be on list of Active Tax Payers of FBR.

INSTRUCTIONS:

- The tender documents containing detailed terms and conditions can be collected on written request with a copy of NTN & Sales Tax Registration Certificate, during working hours from 20th October 2024 to 11th November 2024 along with Pay Order of Rs.5,000/- (Five Thousand) in favor of Shaheed Zulfiqar Ali Bhutto University of Law Karachi.
- The tender bids should be accompanied by earnest money at 2% of the total bid value in shape of Bank Draft/Pay Order in favor of Shaheed Zulfiqar Ali Bhutto University of Law Karachi.
- The tender bids complete in all respects must reach the Assistant Director Finance (Purchase), Finance Department, Shaheed Zulfiqar Ali Bhutto University of Law, Chaudhry Khaliq -ur-Zaman Road, Block-08, Clifton, Karachi, Sindh, Pakistan on or before 11th November 2024 till 17:00 hours, the bids shall be opened on date i.e. 12th November 2024 at 15:00 hours.
- Bids shall be accepted under the "Single Stage Two Envelope Procedure".
- Hiring of Health Insurance services shall be made as per provision under the Sindh Public Procurement Regulatory Authority.
- Interested eligible firms may obtain further detailed information regarding tender from Assistant Director Finance (Purchase), Finance Department, Shaheed Zulfiqar Ali Bhutto University of Law, Chaudhry Khaliq -ur-Zaman Road, Block-08, Clifton, Karachi, Sindh, Pakistan at Tel: +92-21-99306432-3, Ext: 121 during office hours 9:00 Hours to 17:00 Hours.
- The university reserves the right to accept/reject any or all bids in accordance with Sindh Public Procurement Regulatory Authority rules or cancel whole the Tender procedure without any notice.

REGISTRAR

Chaudhry Khaliq -ur-Zaman Road, Block-08, Clifton, Karachi, Sindh, Tel: 021-99306432-3, Ext: 113 & 114 Fax: 021-99306435 Email: info@szabul.edu.pk website: www.szabul.edu.pk

PAKISTAN SECURITY PRINTING CORPORATION (PVT.) LIMITED

GOVERNMENT / ADDENDUM NO. 1
TENDER # PPS-3306

EXPRESSION OF INTEREST

Prequalification for supplying of Government of Punjab for establishment of Security Forces, Manufacturing & Services Production Facility in Pakistan.

Reference subject: Tender advertisement published in Daily Star and Business Recorder on 08.09.2024, following amendments have been made:

Issuing mode of advertisement of application:

Issued through a web advertisement website: www.pspc.gov.pk

Issued mode of advertisement of application:

Issued through a web advertisement website: [Downloaded from www.pakistan-newspaper-pdf.com](http://www.pspc.gov.pk</p><p>Whereas, the tender opening date has been extended upto 08.10.2024 (Monday) at 02.00 PM.</p><p>Other terms & conditions of the tender document shall remain the same.</p><p>Muhammad Asad Khan
Deputy General Manager
(Procurement)</p><p>Dr. Imran Marmat
Chairman Joint Chiefs of Staff Committee</p></div></div></div><div data-bbox=)

BUSINESS

FBR recovers Rs700m in crackdown against sales tax fraud

Study claims big companies rob the exchequer of Rs3tr every year

By Mubarak Zeb Khan

ISLAMABAD: In an unprecedented move, the Federal Board of Revenue has recovered about Rs700 million from a prominent manufacturer in a crackdown on large enterprises engaged in multi-billion rupee sales tax fraud every year. Another huge sum of Rs1.1 billion is expected to be recovered in coming days from another accused businessman involved in sales tax fraud, Dawn has learnt from informed sources.

On Oct 11, Finance Minister Muhammad Aunurrahman and FBR Chairman Rashid Mahmood Langrial revealed the findings of a study, which demonstrates that large firms and their managers have been complicit in an annual sales tax fraud of Rs3.4 trillion.

The study established sales tax fraud amounting to Rs227bn in five sectors — textile, beverages, battery, cement, and steel. The FBR has revealed plans to

pursue the top five per cent payers of sales tax and the top one per cent of income tax payers who are suspected of failing to pay their actual taxes to the exchequer.

As part of this plan, the Directorate General of Investigation and Intelligence, Inland Revenue, an implementing arm of the FBR, has been entrusted with expediting the crackdown on fraudsters who steal other taxpayers' payments through illegitimate ways.

The tax intelligence department detained eight people in six separate FIRs filed across the country over the past week. The detained people are suspected to be members of an organised mafia involved in the creation of dummy enterprises for fraudulent paper sales tax transactions.

"We have withdrawn an FIR against one manufacturer after he paid Rs700m voluntarily to the tax department," the source said. Recovery from the manufacturer confirms that big firms are involved in tax fraud.

These manufacturers were using sales tax and refund to defraud the exchequer of millions of rupees in collusion with gangs. They are also suspected of issuing fake invoices without having

genuine purchases.

Dummy accounts

The studies spearheaded by this exclusive arrangement was to open dummy accounts and to issue bogus transport receipts without actual transfer of goods. Then they would claim fake input/refund at all stages of the supply chain.

The arrested suspects include three chief financial officers (CFOs) and a procurement officer of two manufacturing firms. They are believed to have been fixed to the tune of Rs1.4bn from fake-flying invoices.

Another two of the arrested are declared proprietors of businesses engaged in imports, but they are suspected to have issued excessive and illegal flying invoices worth about Rs200 million.

Similarly, two other arrested accused were fraudulently creating dummy businesses and issuing fake invoices, causing a loss to the exchequer worth hundreds of millions of rupees. "We are anticipating a recovery of almost Rs1.1bn in the coming days from the arrested accused and their beneficiaries in these six FIR cases," the sources claimed.

The FBR recently unearthed organised gangs involved in sales tax fraud.

They are believed to help top firms steal other taxpayers' payments by issuing fake and flying invoices without having genuine purchases in order to claim input tax adjustments from the tax department.

To combat sales tax fraud, the FBR required company CFOs to file an affidavit providing personal guarantees that no fraud had occurred. This strategy has proven to be quite effective, since a few CFOs have admitted to fraud in identified sectors, resulting in significant recoveries.

At the same time, organised gangs are utilising their clout in the power corridor to halt the crackdown.

As a consequence of this pressure, the FBR has postponed the requirement of affidavit filing, along with sales tax returns, for one month.

The tax intelligence department has unearthed an amount of Rs136bn in sales tax evasion and fraud in crackdowns since April last year. Of these, Rs8.63bn was recovered from crooks.

The tax department has lodged 56 FIRs against 475 people so far. Eighty-nine suspects have been apprehended while investigations against others are ongoing.

SOE reforms fail to deliver desired outcomes: SBP

Study lists lack of political will, slow process and legal hitches as key issues

By Shahid Iqbal

KARACHI: The state-owned enterprises (SOEs), both existing and the privatised ones, are still facing pinching issues, indicating that the reforms have not achieved the desired outcomes.

The State Bank of Pakistan (SBP), in its Annual Report 2023-24, also included a 40-page study, "Reforming State-owned Enterprises in Pakistan", and cited several reasons, mainly a lack of political will, for the failure of SOE reforms.

For instance, the study said that the privatisation of Karachi Electric Supply Corporation (now K-Electric) showed improvements in service delivery and profitability. "However, its consumers still face high cost of electricity and frequent power outages because of a host of unresolved structural policy and governance issues," added the study.

Similarly, the capital market transactions of Sul Southern Gas Company (SSGC) and Sul Southern Gas Pipelines Ltd (SSGPL) helped the government to raise much-needed revenue amid hopes that stock market listing would enable more rigorous checks and balances through stringent corporate governance.

"However, the unresolved structural and business policy issues continue to be a burden on these SOEs' operations and finances," observed the study, adding that this is unlike the banking and telecom sectors, where privatisation of SOEs came alongside a series of policy and governance reforms.

Structural review of privatisation transactions reveals that the process has been prolonged — taking about 6 to 16 years to complete — even in small-sized and less complicated entities such as Ravi plants.

Further, large-scale transactions, mainly related to banks, telecom and energy sectors, were executed through the capital market after 2001 and onwards.

"Moreover, the privatisation process was marked by several legal and institutional weaknesses, whereas some privatisation deals also faced transparency and procedural issues due to which public confidence in the process waned," said the report.

Some attempts at SOE reforms involved improving the business operations of individual SOEs to revive them. Even when such efforts were undertaken with full political support, the lack of good corporate governance and other enabling reforms led to a deterioration of SOEs' business operations, profitability, assets and service delivery, such as in PIA and Pakistan Railways, said the study. "As a result, bailout packages were provided, and a vicious cycle ensued."

By the end of FY23, there were 121 federally-owned SOEs, of which 73 per cent were commercial, and the rest were non-commercial for various national development needs. The federal commercial SOEs are mainly categorised into the finance, oil and gas, power, infrastructure, transport and Information Technology & Communication (ITC), manufacturing, and trading and marketing sectors.

"While these entities contribute to the government's revenues and generate employment, they also require frequent government assistance, affecting fiscal sustainability. On a net basis, these SOEs had posted consistent losses between FY16 and FY23," said the study.

Pakistan holds first-ever trade expo in Oman

ISLAMABAD: Oman will import products in 12 categories from Pakistan during the current fiscal year to increase bilateral trade volume.

This resulted from a two-day first-ever Pakistan-Oman Expo and Business Conference, which concluded on Thursday in Muscat and resulted in millions of dollars of export orders for Pakistani businesses.

An official announcement said that Pakistani companies staged export orders for home textiles, sports, rice, children's garments, leather products, food, groceries, pharmaceuticals, plastics, and chemicals.

The expo was organised as 68 Pakistani business houses from 10 categories, including textiles, clothing, fashion apparel, agricultural products, marginal industries, sports goods, pharmaceuticals, handicrafts, and local investments, showcased their products for the first time in Oman under one roof.

More than 1,000 businesspersons attended the expo. Pakistani products received appreciation from both the private sector and the government of Oman.

According to the announcement, 172 business delegates from top Pakistani companies, which included female entrepreneurs, participated in the event. Pakistan's Ambassador to Oman Imran Ali expressed gratitude to the Omani government for facilitating the expo.

He said this forum marks a new chapter in the economic partnership between Pakistan and Oman. Making the business and trade communities meet such new opportunities for trade and investment, he added.

—Mubarak Zeb Khan

Gold hits record Rs281,000 per tola

By Aamir Shahid Khan

KARACHI: The 10-gram and one-tola gold rates (24K) on Saturday continued to post new records as they surged to Rs241,578 and Rs281,898, registering a jump of Rs272 and Rs280, respectively, over Friday's rates.

World gold prices rose to \$2,721 per ounce, up by \$9 per ounce from Friday. The All India Bull and Jewellers Association (AIBJA) said domestic and world prices were at all-time highs.

As the marriage season is at its peak, many businessmen must be in a quandary over massive local price hikes in Indian rates, thus forcing them to focus on low-weight jewellery sets.

The 10-gram and one-tola gold rates notified by a wholesaler Rs23,241 and Rs62,100 from Rs208,357 and Rs219,700, respectively, prevailed on Jan 1. The international gold rate on Jan 1 was \$2,082 compared to the current \$2,721 per ounce, reflecting

ing a rise of \$639. AIBJA President Haji Haroon Rashid Chaudh said as long as escalating tension in the Middle East persists, gold prices will continue to break new records.

He said investors in the world and Pakistan, who have surplus cash, are lifting gold for safe haven purposes. "Investors, who were previously purchasing dollars, have shifted towards the yellow metal," he added.

Mr Chaudh said the market is abuzz with reports the rich are withdrawing cash from their bank accounts to invest in gold as a low return amid a downward trajectory in the interest rates is no longer attractive but for multiplying their money. He said that sales of jewellery sets in the ongoing marriage season are subdued due to steep rises in prices as many people are hit by squeezing purchasing power amid rising costs of living triggered by high petrol and gas bills.

AJK bank profit hits Rs1.4bn in nine months

By Tariq Nigash

MUZAFFARABAD: The state-owned Bank of Azad Jammu and Kashmir (BoAJK) has posted a "historic" operating profit of Rs1.418 billion in the first nine months of 2024, while also registering substantial and unprecedented growth in deposits, assets, and remittances.

According to a press release issued by BoAJK spokesperson Ghulamullah Kayani, the bank's total assets reached an all-time high of Rs1.279bn during this period — the highest in its 18-year history.

Likewise, deposits surged to Rs39.188bn, while remittances totalled Rs3.309bn, marking the largest increase since the bank's establishment through an Act of the Assembly in 2006.

Mr Kayani noted that the bank disbursed loans amounting to Rs4.646bn in the same period, with the quality of lending services also improved.

He claimed that special schemes were introduced to promote tourism, enhance healthcare, and empower women through targeted financial support.

"Our bank supports various events and initiatives aimed at nurturing and promoting local talent in different fields," he said.

He expressed confidence that BoAJK was poised for even greater success, aiming to be counted among the most successful banks in the country.

He informed that Governor of the State Bank of Pakistan (SBP), Jamshed Ahmed, had praised BoAJK's performance and expressed support for the bank's efforts to secure scheduled bank status.

China boosts export controls

BEIJING: Chinese Premier Li Qiang has signed a decree of the State Council to unveil regulations on export control of so-called dual use items, which will take effect on Dec 3, 2024, state news agency Xinhuasaid on Saturday. The regulations aim to improve transparency and standardisation of export control policies and to boost export control capabilities of items that may be used either for civilian or military purposes, said Xinhuasaid.

The United States says Beijing is supporting

Russia's war effort in Ukraine by supplying dual use goods, including microelectronics, that can help it build weapons. China says it has not provided weaponry to any party, and that normal trade with Russia should not be interrupted.

The new regulations put in place a permit system for the export of dual use goods and create a list of restricted goods. Exporters of such goods will have to disclose the ultimate use and the intended use of the exported goods. —Reuters



SLOW growth in non-agricultural sectors like construction, trade and transportation has led to falling real wages. —AFP/PTI

Poverty rate to stay near 40pc until 2026: WB

By Amin Ahmed

ISLAMABAD: Poverty reduction in the country is expected to gradually resume as the nation makes progress on reforms and macroeconomic stability, according to a new report from the World Bank.

The "Macro Poverty Outlook for Pakistan", released by the World Bank on Friday, says limited growth in real wages and employment will keep the poverty rate near 40 per cent through fiscal year 2026. At the same time, monetary poverty will remain high, it says.

Rapid growth in non-agricultural sectors led to falling real wages for construction, trade and transportation, while employment and labour force participation rates and job quality indicators have not risen. These, together with fiscal consolidation and high inflation, led to a poverty rate of 40.5 per cent in the fiscal year 2024 and an additional 2.6 million Pakistanis falling below the poverty line.

Presenting the outlook, the report says that with high-base effects and lower commodity prices, inflation will slow to 11.1pc in the current fiscal year but remain elevated due to higher

domestic energy prices, expansionary open market operations and new taxation measures.

These price conditions are likely to exert more pressure on poor and vulnerable households by limiting real labour income growth to less than one per cent in the fiscal year 2025.

Social protection expenditures increased while development expenditures declined, weakening social service delivery and delaying reductions in alarmingly high stunting and learning poverty rates, the report says.

The fiscal deficit is projected to rise to 7.6pc of GDP in the fiscal year 2025 due to higher interest payments but is expected to decrease gradually as fiscal tightening measures and falling interest payments take effect.

Fiscal consolidation will lead to continued high energy inflation and higher taxes on goods and services, which will worsen monetary poverty, welfare and human development outcomes.

The recovery is expected to continue, with real GDP growth reaching 2.8pc in FY25, as the economy benefits from the availability of imported inputs, easing domestic supply chain disruptions and lower inflation.

Business confidence will also improve with credit rating upgrades, reduced political uncertainty and fiscal tightening measures, such as the development of constitutionally mandated expenditures to the provinces and higher agricultural income taxes. However, output growth will remain below potential as tight macroeconomic policy, elevated inflation and policy uncertainty continue to weigh on activity.

Pakistan faced an economic crisis at the beginning of FY24 with heightened risks of debt default. Political uncertainty, fiscal and external imbalances and global monetary tightening led to pressures on domestic prices and foreign reserves.

The situation has improved significantly since then, even if risks remain high. With the approval of the IMF Stand-By Arrangement in July 2023, exchange rate flexibility was restored, import controls were relaxed and fiscal consolidation measures were introduced.

Coupled with strong agricultural growth, the economy began recovering in fiscal year 2024. However, overall real labour income declined, and with elevated inflation, poverty rose in the fiscal year 2024.

PSX ends week in red despite index record

By Muhammad Kashif

KARACHI: The stock market was flat, posting a marginal loss in the ongoing week despite hitting an all-time high mid-week.

The market suffered losses during the first session due to mounting political tensions amid calls of protest by the PTI. However, a peaceful conclusion of the 26th Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO) summit, which boosted hopes for regional political and economic stability, restored investor confidence, pushing the index above 86,000 on Wednesday.

Further fuelling the rally was the government's announcement to release outstanding payments to five independent power producers (IPPs) from the 1994 policy and proposed four "take-and-pay" options to 18 IPPs of 2002 power generation policies.

However, Arif Habib Ltd (AHL) said

the index failed to sustain gains above 86,000 and faltered in the subsequent session due to a 2.66 per cent contraction in the Large-Scale Manufacturing Index (LSMI) output, though it saw a sequential recovery of 4.7pc month-on-month.

Additionally, Pakistan's trade deficit widened by 24pc year-on-year to \$1.8bn in September. Meanwhile, yields in the recent FBR auction saw a sharp drop across all tenors, with the two-year bond witnessing a significant 74pc decline.

Moreover, the State Bank of Pakistan's foreign exchange reserves crossed the \$11 billion mark, the highest in nearly three years, with an addition of \$215m during the week ended on Oct 11.

However, the rupee stayed flat, inching lower by two paise to Rs277.6 despite the fresh rise in reserves as the central bank didn't disclose the source of this inflow.

As a result, the benchmark KSE 100

index settled at 85,250 points after losing 233.3 points or 0.27pc week-on-week.

Sector-wise negative contributions came from commercial banks (293 points), power generation (131 points), fertiliser (95 points), cement (65 points) and paper and board (28 points).

Meanwhile, the sectors that mainly contributed positively were refinery (93 points), tobacco (82 points), engineering (65 points), pharmaceutical (49 points), and automobile assemblers (34 points).

Script-wise negative contributions were Pakistan Oilfield (180 points), Hub Power (142 points), MCB Bank (134 points), United Bank Ltd (119 points), and Engro Corporation (108 points). Meanwhile, script-wise positive contributions came from Mari Petroleum Ltd (173 points), Attock Refinery Ltd (101 points), Pakistan Tobacco Company (82 points), Fajri Fertiliser Company (65 points), and Indus Motor (58 points).

Foreigner selling continued checking

in at \$11.6m compared to a net sell of \$22.6m last week. Significant selling was witnessed in other sectors (\$7.6m), followed by fertiliser (\$1.6m). On the local front, companies reported buying \$825.6m followed by mutual funds (\$87.6m).

The average trading volume dipped 15.3pc to 442m shares, while the average value transacted by almost a quarter to \$81m week-on-week.

According to AKD Securities Ltd, the market will likely remain positive going forward, supported by declining interest rates, which are anticipated to continue channelling investment flows into equities. Additionally, corporate results would stay in focus with the ongoing earnings season.

Despite the recent upward trend, the market remains attractively valued, currently trading at a price-to-earnings ratio of 3.7x with a dividend yield of 11.7pc.

Xi asks Chinese troops to boost war preparedness

SHANGHAI: Chinese President Xi Jinping called this week for troops to strengthen their preparedness for war, state media reported on Saturday, just days after Beijing staged large-scale military drills around Taiwan.

Xi made his comments while visiting a brigade of the People's Liberation Army Rocket Force on Thursday, according to state-run broadcast CCTV.

Xi said the military should "comprehensively strengthen training and preparation for the war, guard ensure troops have solid combat capability", CCTV reported.

Soldiers must "enhance their strategic deterrent and combat capability," Xi said.

China, which claims Taiwan as part of its territory, has stepped up its shows of force around the self-ruled island in recent years.

On Monday, Beijing had deployed fighter jets, drones, warships and coast guard vessels to encircle Taiwan — its fourth round of large-scale war games around the democratic island in just over two years.

China's communist leaders have insisted they will not rule out using force to bring Taiwan under Beijing's control.

Xi on Thursday said the Chinese military must "strongly safeguard the country's strategic security and core interests", according to the CCTV report.

The dispute between China and Taiwan dates back to a civil war in which the nationalist forces of Chiang Kai-shek were defeated by Mao Zedong's communist fighters and fled to the island in 1949.

China and Taiwan have been ruled separately since then.—AFP

Israeli strikes kill 32 in Gaza, siege around hospitals tightens

IDF drops leaflets over the besieged territory showing Sinwar's body and message to Hamas

CAIRO: Israeli military strikes killed at least 32 people across the Gaza Strip on Saturday, Palestinian health officials said, as forces tightened a siege around hospitals in Jabalia in the north of the enclave.

In the central Gaza Strip camp of Al-Maghazi, an Israeli strike on a house killed 11 people, while another strike at the nearby camp of Nuseirat killed four others.

Five other people were killed in two separate strikes in the south Gaza cities of Khan Younis and Rafah, media said, while seven Palestinians were killed in the Shati camp in the northern Gaza Strip.

Later on Friday, media said 33 people, mostly women and children, were killed and 85 others were wounded in Israeli strikes that destroyed at least three houses in Jabalia.

Residents and medical staff said Israeli forces had tightened their siege on Jabalia, the largest of the enclave's eight historic camps, which it encircled by also sending tanks to nearby towns of Beit Hanoun and Beit Lahia and issuing evacuation orders to residents.

Residents and medical officials said Israeli forces were bombing houses and besieging hospitals, preventing medical



A DISPLACED Palestinian woman holds a child as she cries inside UN school-turned-refugee in Gaza City, on Saturday.—AFP

and food supplies from entering to force them to leave the camp.

Evacuation orders

Health officials said they refused orders by the Israeli army to evacuate the hospital or leave the patients, many in critical condition, unattended.

"The Israeli occupation is intensifying its targeting of the health system in the northern Gaza Strip, by besieging and directly targeting the Indonesian Hospital, Kamal Adwan Hospital, and Al-Awda Hospital during the past hours and its insistence on putting them out of service," the Gaza health ministry said.

It said two patients in intensive care at the Indonesian Hospital died "as a result

of the hospital's siege and the power outage and medical supplies". Israeli military said the troops operating in the area had been "briefed on the importance of mitigating harm to civilians and medical infrastructure".

"It is emphasized that the hospital continues to operate without disruption and in full capacity, and there was no intentional fire directed at it," it said.

Media said a nurse at the Kamal Adwan Hospital was killed along with some members of his family in an Israeli air strike on their house overnight in Jabalia camp.

Israel drops leaflets

Israeli planes dropped leaflets over southern Gaza on Saturday showing a picture of the dead Hamas chief Yahya Sinwar with the message that "Hamas will no longer rule Gaza", using language used by Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu.

The leaflet's wording was from a statement by Netanyahu on Thursday after Sinwar was killed by Israeli soldiers operating in Rafah, in the south near the Egyptian border, on Wednesday.

Wherever drops the weapons and bombs over the prisoners will be allowed to leave and live in peace," the leaflet, written in Arabic, read, according to residents of the southern city of Khan Younis and images circulating online.

Israel's conflict has devastated Gaza, killing more than 42,500 Palestinians, with another 10,000 unaccounted dead thought to be under the rubble, Gaza health authorities say.—Agencies

'Zombie' train spooks passengers

TOKYO: It's usually a serene two-and-a-half-hour ride on Japan's famously efficient bullet train. But the journey quickly descended into a zombie apocalypse, with passengers screaming in terror.

Organisers of Saturday's adrenaline-filled trip, less than two weeks before Halloween, touted it as the "world's first haunted house experience on a running Shinkansen".

On board one chartered car of the Shinkansen — the Japanese word for bullet train — were around 40 thrill-seekers, ready to have an encounter with the living dead between Tokyo and the western metropolis of Osaka. All seemed normal at first as the bullet train made a peaceful departure on Saturday evening, but it wasn't long until the first gory attack.

The victims — actors played in suits by the organisers — jerked in agony and then underwent a terrifying transformation before starting a rampage against their fellow passengers.

'Like I was in the film'

Striving not to use of the actors was Joshua Payne, one of many foreign tourists on board.

"I literally felt like I was in the film, just sitting here watching it take place in front of me," the 31-year-old American said.

"The fact that we can physically go from Tokyo to Osaka right now and have this whole performance at the same time... I think is really cool and maybe a little bit groundbreaking," he said.

Toy chainsaws and guns were used as props, but depictions of extreme violence and gore that could tarnish the Shinkansen's squeaky-clean reputation were avoided.

To counterbalance the subdued horror, the two-and-a-half-hour tour was peppered with light-hearted performances by zombie cheerleaders, magicians and comedians, including a choreographed dance to Michael Jackson's Thriller.—AFP

Protesters storm office linked to Saudi TV channel in Iraq

BAGHDAD: Supporters of pro-Iran armed groups in Iraq, angered over "terrorism" references, ransacked offices affiliated with a Saudi TV channel in Baghdad on Saturday, two security sources said.

Iraq's media regulator said it would suspend the channel over the broadcast, which aired with regional tensions soaring between pro-Iran groups and Israel, which is at conflict with both Hamas in Gaza and Hezbollah in Lebanon.

After midnight, between 400 and 500 people attacked the studios of a Baghdad production company that works for the Saudi broadcaster MBC.

"They wrecked the electronic

equipment, the computers, and set fire to a part of the building," an interior ministry source told on condition of anonymity.

He said the fire had been extinguished and the crowd dispersed by police. "Security forces are still deployed near the building," he added. There were no immediate reports of arrests.

"The demonstrators arrived at the offices before reinforcements of riot police were sent in," a police source said. The second source confirmed that the offices had been "set on fire" and "badly ransacked".

Iraq's official Communications and Media Commission

accused the MBC channel of "attacks" against "resistance leaders".

The media regulator said in a statement that it was "taking all necessary legal measures" against MBC and "suspending" the channel's activities in Iraq. The regulator also directed its executive body to "suspend the operating license" granted to the channel, it added.

'Insulting resistance leaders'

Excerpts from an MBC programme had spread on Iraqi social media, sparking angry reactions from the pro-Iran camp.

The report had focused on

"terrorism" in the region, and mentioned several groups and notable figures, including Qasbi bin Laden, the slain leader of Al-Qaeda. It included groups belonging to the Axis of Resistance backed by Iran, which counts Hamas, Hezbollah and armed Iraqi factions among its members.

Named in the report were former Hezbollah leader Hassan Nasrallah, who was killed by Israel in Beirut last month, and Hamas political leader Ismail Haniyeh, killed in Tehran in July. It also referred to Haniyeh's successor, Hamas chief Yahya Sinwar as the "new face of terrorism".—AFP

US posts \$10m reward, cites Russian 'poll interference'

WASHINGTON: The US State Department has offered a reward of up to \$10 million for information leading to any foreign person or entity engaging in election interference, it said just weeks before American select their next president.

An announcement from the department's Rewards for Justice programme specifically singled out Russian media organisation Rybar LLC, which it said used social media to "sow discord, promote social division, make parties and racial discord, and encourage hate and violence in the United States." There was no immediate reaction from Rybar or Russian authorities.

The State Department said Rybar had established a channel on the X platform called "Texas vs USA," and used it ahead of the US election to exploit the issue of undocumented immigrants crossing the Texas border. It said Rybar also used social media channels #HOLD THE LINE and #STAND WITH TEXAS to spread pro-Russian propaganda.

Rybar, it asserted, receives funding from Russian defence industrial organisation Rosobornost, which the US Treasury Department imposed sanctions against in 2022. "Rybar relies on the connections and funding from Rosobornost to bolster Russia's military capabilities and advance pro-Russian and anti-Western narratives," the announcement said.

It encouraged anyone with relevant knowledge — particularly regarding this named individual — to help support US efforts to counter Russian influence operations — over the US election — to contact the Rewards for Justice hotline.

Rybar operates a channel on the Telegram platform that is popular among the pro-Ukraine-war hardliners of Russia's "Z community" — with 1.3m followers. It was co-founded by Mikhail Zvinchuk, a longtime member of Russia's special forces and former Defence Ministry employee, who has been under European Union sanctions since June 2023.—AFP

Kamala, Trump deploy celebrity power in must-win states

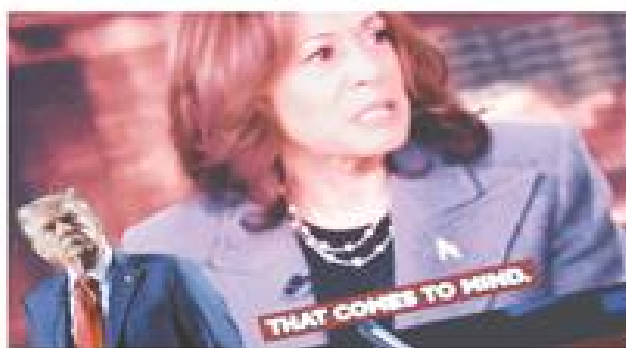
Musk emerges as one of Biden administration's fiercest critics and a loud voice in US politics

DETROIT: Kamala Harris and Donald Trump will roll out starry contrasting celebrity backdrops this weekend in Pennsylvania and Michigan — among the most prized of the battleground states set to decide the tightest of US presidential races.

Pop star Lizzo will throw multi-Grammy award winning glitter behind the vice president's campaign in Detroit, while the world's richest man Elon Musk is to stump for Trump in Pennsylvania.

Harris will also be joined by R&B star Usher at a get-out-the-vote rally in Atlanta, Georgia, on Saturday.

Both candidates are fighting an every-front to seal up voters' support in a race that polls suggest is effectively tied with fewer than three weeks to Election Day. Musk,



REPUBLICAN presidential nominee Donald Trump watches a video featuring Democratic presidential candidate Kamala Harris during a campaign rally in Detroit, Michigan.—AFP

who endorsed Trump in July, is one of President Joe Biden administration's fiercest critics and has emerged as a loud voice in US politics since taking over Twitter, now known as X.

The Tesla and SpaceX CEO has taken an increasingly visible role in Trump's campaign and has donated almost \$25 million to his political organisation America PAC.

Harris has deployed high-profile

surrogates, from ex-president Barack Obama to Megan Thee Stallion since replacing Biden as the Democratic nominee in July.

Early voting underway

Seeking to shift the polls in a desperately tight White House race, Harris has ramped up attacks on the mental fitness of the 78-year-old, who is the oldest presidential candidate in US history.

She questioned his ability to be president after Trump faced speculation that he is "exhausted" after backing out of a spate of interviews.

Police reported that a Trump aide had told producers at a website negotiating an interview that the ex-president was "exhausted" and refusing some appearances — a claim described by his campaign as "detached from reality." Beyond the accusations, both candidates are spending their final campaign days in pivotal battleground states where early voting is already underway.

With less than three weeks to go, Harris has been encouraging signs in her push for supporters to vote as soon as possible, as a harbinger



TESLA and SpaceX CEO Elon Musk jumps on stage as he arrives in Philadelphia to speak at a town hall event hosted by America PAC in support of Republican presidential candidate Donald Trump.—AFP

against the traditional Republican edge among Election Day voters.

Almost 12 million votes had been cast by Friday evening — around a third of them in the seven swing states expected to decide the election — according to data tracked by the

University of Florida Election Lab.

Georgia has been smashing records, while North Carolina reported a first day of voting on Thursday that beat 2020, when there was a pandemic-linked surge in early ballots.—AFP

Mexican navy claims seizing record 8.3 tonnes of drugs

MEXICO CITY: The Mexican navy announced on Friday it had seized more than 8.3 tonnes of drugs in the Pacific Ocean, a record for a single operation at sea.

"Navy personnel seized 8,303 kilograms of illicit cargo, which represents the largest amount of drugs seized in a maritime operation unprecedented in history," said a statement from the Ministry of the Navy. It did not specify the type of the drugs, but said they were valued at 2,099 billion pesos (about \$105 million).

Twenty-three people were arrested during the hunt which took place southwest of the port of Lazaro Cardenas, off the western coast of

Mexico. The drugs were distributed in up, small boats and one of the vessels was a submarine, which implied a "complex" action on the part of the sailors, added the ministry.

The largest drug seizure in Mexico's history was 23 tonnes of Colombian cocaine in November 2007. Mexico has for decades been the hub of drug trafficking to the United States, with a large number of cartels fighting for control of the trade.

The state of Michoacan, off the coast of which the seizure took place, is the scene of clashes between criminal gangs, including the powerful Jalisco Nueva Generacion cartel, one

of Mexico's most powerful and violent criminal groups.

The latest raid reported on Friday was carried out "days ago" by surface units backed by a helicopter, the ministry said.

Some 8,700 litres of fuel, another of the illicit trades controlled by drug cartels, were also found on the raided vessels.

On August 23, authorities reported they had impounded about seven tonnes of drugs in two separate operations in the same area of the country.

The Mexican navy, which conducts surveillance operations on a permanent basis, has discovered all kinds of drug shipments, including one of cocaine stuffed in 217 barrels of chili sauce in 2016.

Mexico has for decades been a drug trafficking route to the United States, which has sparked disputes between different narco groups. The country's first woman president Claudia Sheinbaum, who took office on October 1, faces a major challenge to tackle the drug cartels and related crimes.

She has pledged to stick with her predecessor Andres Manuel Lopez Obrador's "zero-tolerance" strategy of using social policy to tackle crime at its roots.

Across Mexico, more than 450,000 people have been killed and tens of thousands have gone missing in a spiral of violence since the government deployed the army to combat drug trafficking in 2006.—AFP



MARINES posing with packages of narcotics seized after intercepting a vessel southwest of the port of Lazaro Cardenas, off the state of Michoacan, Mexico.—AFP

CLIMATE CHANGE WAKE-UP CALL

Climate change is now Pakistan's lived reality. But is the business community doing enough to seize the window of opportunity to advance Pakistan's long-term economic sustainability?

CONVERGING BUSINESS SUSTAINABILITY WITH CLIMATE RESILIENCE

Pakistan businesses need to rethink their approach to climate change, argues Faraz Khan

A DANGEROUS CRISIS IN CLIMATE GOVERNANCE

Climate change should be recognised as a national crisis that is threatening our economy, writes Aisha Khan

SAVING KARACHI'S OXYGEN ISLANDS

Planting mangroves is not enough, argues Tariq Alexander Qasbi

REPOSITIONING FOR RENEWABLE ENERGY

In conversation with Kerem Karal, CEO, HUBCO

UNRAVELLING THE TALENT OF URDU

Fazlan Usmani decodes the tale of Urdu copywriting

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Israel pounds Beirut after 'attack' at Netanyahu's home

PM, wife weren't there when 'drone was fired'; Hezbollah fires rockets at northern Israel

JERUSALEM: Israel struck what it said were Hezbollah arms facilities in northern Beirut on Saturday after claiming the Lebanese armed group launched a drone at Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's holiday home.

A drone reportedly targeted Netanyahu's residence, an Hezbollah launched a barrage of projectiles into Israel from Lebanon, Israel said.

Netanyahu's office said the Israeli premier and his wife were not in Casarea during the drone attack, and "there were no injuries". Earlier, the military said a drone fired from Lebanon had "hit a structure" in the central Israeli town.

Hezbollah said it fired rockets at northern Israel, including at a military base near the city of Haifa. There was no immediate comment from it on any drone attacks or attacks targeting Netanyahu's house in the northern Israeli town of Casarea.

The "large salvo" of advanced rockets hit a military base east of Haifa, said Hezbollah, which has vowed to intensify attacks on Israel weeks into an all-out war that erupted in September 21.

Some of the rockets fired from Lebanon were intercepted, Israeli police said. But one person was killed and at least nine people were injured in different locations, the Israeli ambulance service said.

Five people were injured in Krayat Ata, in the Haifa district, mostly from shrapnel injuries, said a spokesperson for emergency service provider Magen David Adom.

A rocket damaged a three-storey building and burned two cars in Krayat Ata, with firefighting teams and ambulances dispatched to the area, AFP footage showed.

Strikes in Beirut

In Beirut's southern suburbs, Israel carried out heavy strikes on several locations, leaving thick plumes of smoke hanging over the city into the evening.

The strikes targeted "a number of

Hezbollah weapons storage facilities and a Hezbollah intelligence headquarters command centre", Israeli military said.

Earlier on Saturday, an Israeli strike killed two people as they were travelling on Lebanon's main highway near the Christian-majority town of Jisr al-Jawzi — the first such attack on the area.

A spokesperson for Israel's military said it was looking into the incident.

Witnesses described passengers running from a car after a blast, then seeing the charred remains of one passenger after a second blast.

Another strike killed at least four people in Lebanon's Bekaa valley, health authorities said. One of them was the mayor of a nearby town, making him the second mayor of a Lebanese town to be killed this week.

Israel's military said on Saturday it had destroyed tunnel shafts and underground infrastructure in southern Lebanon.

Israeli military spokesman Archibald Adamec issued an "urgent warning" to residents of the northern suburbs (of Dahiyeh), specifically those in... Harat Hreik neighbourhood.

"You are located near facilities and interests belonging to Hezbollah, against which the IDF (Israeli military) will be operating in the near future," he wrote in Arabic on X. He later also issued warnings for the Harat al-Barajneh and Chamsat neighbourhoods.

'Heavy price'

Netanyahu called the attack at his residence a "grave mistake" and added that Hezbollah-backed groups who tried to kill him and his wife would pay "a heavy price".

"Iran's proxies who tried to assassinate me and my wife today made a grave mistake," said Netanyahu, according to his office. Foreign Minister Israel Katz said the "attack" exposed the "true face" of Iran.

US Defense Secretary Lloyd Austin spoke to Israeli Defense Minister Yoav Gallant on Saturday, reviewing posture adjustments of United States forces, including the recent deployment of an autonomous system to reinforce Israel's defences against regional threats, the Pentagon said in a statement.

Austin also told his Israeli counterpart that he was relieved that PM Netanyahu was safe in the reported attack at his holiday home.—Agencies



PEOPLE inspect the site of an Israeli strike in the Lebanese town of Baalout, on Saturday.—Reuters

Indian charged in US murder plot previously held in Delhi

NEW DELHI: A former Indian government official charged in the United States this week for allegedly directing a failed murder plot had been arrested in New Delhi in December in an attempted murder case, according to court records and a police officer.

The US Justice Department unsealed the indictment of Vikash Yadav, 37, on Thursday, alleging he led a plot to murder a Sikh separatist in New York.

From May 2023, the US indicted recent alleges, Yadav, described as an Indian government employee at the time, worked with others in India and abroad to direct a plot to kill Gurpreet Singh Parmar, a dual US-Canadian citizen.

Delhi Police had arrested Yadav on Dec 18 in the Indian capital, the police officer told Reuters on condition of anonymity. Yadav and an associate were charged with attempted murder and other crimes, according to a filing in a

Delhi district court.

Yadav's lawyer, R.K. Handoo, called the Indian charges "bizarre", adding there was "an international plot to bring shame on the government of India and my client".

Handoo declined to comment further. He and the police did not respond to questions on Yadav's whereabouts.

The Washington Post, citing American officials, reported on Thursday that Yadav was still in India and that the US was expected to seek his extradition.

Yadav's arrest was based on a complaint by an Indian businessman, who alleged Yadav and an associate kidnapped him in December, assaulted and robbed him, according to details in a Delhi district court order dated February 23.

"The accused persons tortured and manhandled the complainant and demanded money in the name

of gangster Lawrence Bhatia," said the Feb 23 court order, summarising the complaint.

Bhatia, in jail in India's Gujarat state, is an organised crime gang leader, according to India's National Investigation Agency. Bhatia's lawyer says he is contesting more than 40 cases on charges including murder and extortion, with many trials yet to begin.

Indian government agents were separately accused by Canada this week of having links to Bhatia's gang and running a campaign to target Indian dissidents in Canada. India's government denies the allegations.

In Yadav's Delhi case, the court order citing the complaint said: "The accused persons also brought bank cheques back from the cafe of the complainant and got his signature on blank cheques and later on dropped him near his car, threatening to remain silent."—Reuters

Aurangzeb due in US today for talks with IMF, WB

By Arman Iqbal

WASHINGTON: Finance Minister Mohammad Aurangzeb is set to arrive in the US capital on Sunday to participate in the annual meetings of the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the World Bank Group.

Aurangzeb will lead a delegation that includes the finance secretary, economic affairs secretary, State Bank of Pakistan governor, and other key officials from the financial sector.

During their week-long visit, the Pakistani delegation is scheduled to engage in high-level discussions with IMF and World Bank leaders, and attend critical sessions of this annual gathering.

Bilateral meetings are also on the agenda, with discussions planned between Pakistani officials and their counterparts from China, Saudi Arabia, Turkey, and other allied nations.

Additionally, the delegation will hold talks with senior officials from the US Treasury Department.

The IMF and World Bank meetings will commence on October 21 and run through October 26, with the main ministerial sessions taking place from October 22 to 25.

This year's meetings hold particular significance for Pakistan, following the IMF's recent approval of a \$7 billion loan intended to help stabilise the country's struggling economy.

Senate passes bill to strengthen framework for Islamic banking

By Hiba A. Khan

ISLAMABAD: The Senate on Saturday passed banking companies amendment bill aimed at strengthening legal framework for Islamic banking in the country.

As many expected that the 26th constitutional amendment bill will land in the house, the time for the Senate session was repeatedly changed amid outcry over continued intimidation of opposition lawmakers and abduction of their family members.

The session was originally scheduled to be held at 11am, but the time was changed to 12.30pm, 1pm, 6.30pm, 8pm and then 9.30pm through separate notifications.

The session could only start at about 11.10pm during which the banking companies amendment bill was passed. The bill was moved by Finance Minister Mohammad Aurangzeb.

Sharing the main features of the bill, the finance minister said it will help strengthen legal framework to provide support for Islamic banking business. He said the regulatory role of the State Bank of Pakistan has also been strengthened to promote financial inclusion. He said the procedure of lodging complaints with Banking Mohtasib has also

been simplified.

The finance minister said that in 2008 many companies bank due to the global financial crisis, adding that Pakistan is not being reforms to overcome such a financial crisis under the bill.

The minister also informed the house that a law was on the way to end the practice of being a non-filer, adding that there were many countries where one cannot vote unless he/she holds a national tax number (NTN).

Asked if the State Bank is under the government, he said it was an independent entity and giving this status was a decision of parliament.

In reply to a question about denial of loans and credit cards to lawmakers for being politically exposed persons (PEPs), he said he was a PEP himself. He said extra diligence was required for PEPs, but added that there was no reason whatsoever to deny any facilities to PEPs and promised to take up the matter with the SJP government.

After former Senate chairman Farooq H. Naik pointed out that under the rules, the house must be adjourned before change of date, Deputy Senate Chairman adjourned the house to meet again at 12.30am. But it did not meet again and it was announced that the house will now meet on Sunday (today) at 3pm.

G7 alarmed over escalating crisis in Lebanon

- Concerned over attacks on peacekeepers; warns of further intensification in Middle East
- Defence ministers pledge 'unwavering support' for Ukraine

NAPLES: G7 defence ministers on Saturday met against the backdrop of multiple ongoing military conflicts, expressing concern over escalation in Lebanon while pledging "unwavering support" for Ukraine.

Italy, holding the rotating presidency of the Group of Seven countries, organised the body's first ministerial meeting dedicated to defence, staged in the southern city of Naples that is home to a Nato base.

At the top of the agenda was Russia's ongoing war against Ukraine, now in its third year.

"We underscore our intent to continue to provide assistance to Ukraine, including military assistance in the short and long term," read the G7 defence ministers' final statement that pledged "unwavering support".

But the G7 defence ministers — from Italy, France, Germany, Britain, Japan, Canada and the United States — also warned of the dangers of further intensification in the Middle East, including in Lebanon where the United Nations has blamed Israel for strikes on UN peacekeepers.

"We are concerned by the latest events in Lebanon and the risk of further escalation. We express concern over all threats to UNIFIL's security," read a



ITALY'S Defence Minister Guido Crosetto speaks during a roundtable, part of the G7 Defence Ministers Summit, in Naples on Saturday.—AFP

final statement from the ministers, while calling for Iran to stop supporting Hamas and Hezbollah.

The many, concurrent conflicts — including instability in sub-Saharan Africa and growing tensions in the Asia-Pacific region — "highlight a deteriorated security framework with forecasts for the near future that cannot be positive", said Italian Defence Minister Guido Crosetto at the start of the one-day talks.

The summit came two days after Israel announced it had

killed Hamas chief Yahya Sinwar.

"Certainly after the killing of Yahya Sinwar, a new perspective is open and we have to use it in order to reach a ceasefire, to release the remaining prisoners and to look for a political perspective," Crosetto told journalists.

The morning session included discussions over recent strikes on UN peacekeepers UNIFIL in Lebanon, where Israel is also at war with Hamas ally Hezbollah.

Crosetto suggested that the peacekeepers' mandate should be backed up by the UN Security

Council to give them more scope to act and respond attacks on their positions, which they blame on Israeli forces.

The G7's pledge of continued support for Ukraine comes as the country enters its third winter at war, with hundreds of thousands of Ukrainians displaced and the prospect of reduced US military support should Donald Trump be elected to the White House next month.

Biden urged Nato allies during a visit to Berlin on Friday not to step down in backing Ukraine, saying that supporters of Kyiv "cannot let up".—AFP

UN official laments funding cut by US, praises public generosity

By Fatima S. Altarawi

"WE are here to tell America the truth about what is happening," says Mara Kronenfeld, Executive Director in US of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency (UNRWA) for Palestinian refugees.

She poured her heart out about the catastrophe in Gaza in an exclusive interview with Dawn.

The UNRWA was established by the United Nations in 1949 after the forced displacement of 750,000 refugees in what is remembered by Palestinians as Nakba. The UNRWA USA has been hit hard by the suspension of US funding following Israeli accusations that 12 of the agency's 13,000 Gaza-based employees were involved in the Oct 7 raids in Israel.

As the largest donor, the US contributes between \$400 and \$450 million annually, according to Reuters.

The funding freeze has

come at the worst possible time, leaving a \$100m gap in the agency's budget.

The interview with Mara Kronenfeld was conducted with heavy eyes and tension as she recounted some of the horrors that Gaza is facing.

Young children have been forced to look for food for their families and people have to wait in queues of 500-1,000 souls to access basic necessities such as food.

American grassroots support

While mainstream media paints the US as steadfastly supporting Israel, Mara Kronenfeld believes there is a growing divide between public opinion and political decisions. "In my personal opinion, there is a strong divergence between the political elite and the public. Polls have shown that the vast majority of people in the United States, including Democrats, favour a ceasefire."

"But the administration is indifferent to public opinion," she said.



MARA Kronenfeld

Nevertheless, she added, American people have stepped up to bridge the funding gap. "Last year, donations to the agency in the United States amounted to \$5m. This year, they are projected to reach \$50m."

While the number of donors has surged from 7,000 to 130,000, the average contribution stands at \$400, an indication of "strong grassroots

momentum".

"Coming by the last names, donations are coming not just from Palestinians, but also from Arabs, South Asians, and even Jews," Ms Kronenfeld notes.

As a Jewish woman married to a Muslim, she reflects on the significance of Passover, a Jewish holiday that celebrates the liberation of the oppressed. This year, many Jewish people chose to donate their money to UNRWA — USA — during Passover.

As the granddaughter of a Jewish refugee who fled Germany during World War II, Ms Kronenfeld recalls how Jews have stood up and declared, "Not in our name", to express their disapproval of Zionist ideology and current Israeli policies.

'A stain on character'

Commenting on the moral state of the USA, Ms Kronenfeld said it is the "worst thing" that the US has withheld funding at a time when famine stalks Gaza

and over 42,000 people have been killed since Oct 7 last year.

About 17,000 children have been killed, with many more surviving as amputees, forming what may be the largest cohort of child amputees in history.

"To withhold funding at this moment is, in my opinion, a moral stain on this country (US) and on our government," she says.

While UNRWA was supposed to provide only primary and secondary care, it has become the largest medical provider in Gaza Strip.

In a scenario where 20-year-old Palestinian Shashan Al Dalou burned alive in a hospital, with an IV drip still in his arm, the US has blocked Gaza's largest medical provider's access to finances.

Petty actions

Israeli authorities continue to impede and through a complex and arbitrary inspection process, Mara Kronenfeld

said. Aid trucks destined for Gaza are subjected to excessive inspections at the Rafah border crossing, where even trivial items like tent poles or water taps are flagged for removal.

This deliberate obstruction slows down an already desperate aid flow, forcing trucks to return to the back of collecting queues that spill over into Egyptian territory, the UN official lamented.

According to a RBC report, no food aid has entered northern Gaza in the first two weeks of this month. This has strengthened fears that Israel is pursuing "a policy of starvation".

Talking about Hani Al Madhoun, Director of Philanthropy at UNRWA, Ms Kronenfeld says he has lost about 150 members of his extended family since October last year.

"Yet he continues to raise funds tirelessly, achieving the highest GoFundMe donation record in history."

"His efforts support a soup

kitchen, a school, and a health clinic in northern Gaza run by his family. These are critical lifelines that had to shut down after Israel's re-invasion of the region."

Zakat as a lifeline

Since she is married to a Muslim, Ms Kronenfeld appreciates the importance of Zakat. She emphasises that UNRWA donations are Zakat-certified and tax-deductible in the US.

"Every Zakat penny goes directly to those in need, with no overhead deductions. Donations can be made to UNRWA directly through its website, UNRWA.org, or to its American chapter."

As the war ravaged areas of Gaza descend further into hell on Earth, it's not just a test of international diplomacy, but of basic human compassion. With the American elections approaching, perhaps a spark of empathy from ordinary people can begin to turn the tide and make a difference where it's needed most.

SPORT



GIRESEN Racing's Spanish rider Alex Marquez crashes out of the Australian MotoGP sprint race on Saturday.—AFP

Martin extends championship lead with Australian MotoGP sprint win

PHILLIP ISLAND Spain's Jorge Martin extended his championship lead to 16 points over title rival Francesco Bagnaia on Saturday after leading from start to finish in a wind-swept Australian MotoGP sprint race.

Bagnaia's defending world champion Bagnaia could only come fourth, with Spaniard Marc Marquez second and another Italian, Enea Bastianini, completing the podium in third.

Fabio di Giannantonio was fifth and Franco Morbidelli sixth on a day marked by a huge crash between Aprilia rider Maverick Viñales and Marco

Bagnaia on his Ducati VR46.

Viñales appeared to get caught in Bagnaia's slipstream late in the race, making contact that sent the rider and bike hurtling into the gravel.

They both appeared to be OK, although battered and bruised. Several other riders hit the deck in the gusty conditions, with just 15 of the 22 starters finishing the 13-lap race.

"I saw it was increasing a lot, the gap, so I was trying to keep a really fast pace," said Martin, who started from pole on his Pramac for the third straight time in Australia and clocked

his first win at Phillip Island.

"When I saw I had a big gap already then I managed a bit to make it until the end.

"It wasn't easy," he added. "The wind was a bit and it wasn't constant, it was like coming and going out. So finally winning again, I am super happy and we have to be focused on tomorrow, it's going to be a really long race."

Ducati star Bagnaia won the sprint and main event in Japan two weeks ago to close the championship gap with Martin to just 19 points.

But Martin proved unstoppable on an overcast and cool

Australian day.

The win earned him 12 points to pile more pressure on Bagnaia ahead of the grand prix on Sunday, with just three race weekends left after Australia.

Six-time world champion Marquez moved up to joint third in the standings, 34 points behind Martin, alongside Ducati's Bastianini.

Martin had the perfect start, unlike Marquez who went wide on his Gresini at the first corner and slipped from second to eighth as Bagnaia moved up to fourth.

Marquez stormed back past Bagnaia and into contention but

could not catch Martin, who streaked away to open a 2.5-second lead at the halfway mark and cross the line 1.520sec clear.

"With the wind and everything I went wide (at first corner), but the pace was there," Marquez said. "Let's see if tomorrow I can avoid the mistake of that first corner. But the feeling of the bike was good and the pace was very similar to Jorge, so let's see if tomorrow we can fight with him."

It was the first sprint race at Phillip Island after last year's planned race was cancelled because of bad weather.—AFP

Lavreysen grabs record 15th world cycling title

BALEKUP Dutch cyclist Harrie Lavreysen on Friday won the men's one-kilometre time trial for a record 15th world championship title.

Two days after claiming team sprint gold the five-time Olympic champion took the men's time-trial ahead of compatriot and three-time defending champion Jeffrey Hoogland, Britain's Joseph Truman was bronze. Lavreysen overtook France's Arnaud Tournant's 14 world titles between 1997 and 2008.

"Fifteen titles, I don't even know what to say. There are so many prestigious names on this list, it's completely crazy," he told AFP. "It was hard because it's the first time I've raced the kilometre at this level but I managed it, it's special."

The 27-year-old could add to his tally in the individual sprint event on Sunday where he is the five-time reigning champion.

Lavreysen failed to medal in the keirin event on Thursday.

"He potentially still has five or six years left at the top. He could come close to 30 world titles," said French rival Sylvain Viguier during the Olympics when the Dutchman won three gold medals in the sprints (individual and team) as well as the keirin.

That triple success saw him dubbed "Har-trick Harrie".

"What's more, he is really cool and calm. He does not have a big head," added Viguier who named his rival as "a good party animal after competition".

Baby's Jonathan Milan took the men's individual pursuit title in a world record time.

The 24-year-old Italian, also an accomplished road racer, dominated young British rider Josh Charlton who himself had improved on the world record, previously held by Filippo Ganna, in qualifying.

Milan won in a time of 3:59.153 to better Charlton's afternoon effort of 3:59.304 over the 4,000m course.—AFP



SHANGHAI: France's Leon Marchand competes on his way to winning the men's 200m individual medley final of the World Aquatics Swimming World Cup at the Oriental Sports Centre Natatorium on Saturday. Marchand set a new World Cup and European record as he stormed to victory in a time of 1:50.30. Marchand had claimed victory in the 100m in the same discipline on Friday in what was his first race since clinching four gold medals at the Olympics in Paris during the summer.—AFP

Ten-man Monaco held by Lille

PARIS Ligue 1 leaders Monaco had a man sent off in a frustrating 0-0 draw with visitors Lille on Friday.

Monaco top the standings on 20 points after six wins and two draws, three points ahead of champions Paris-Saint Germain.

The hosts had the upper hand in the first half and continued to push forward after the break but both Eliesse Ben Seghir and Takumi Minamino's efforts narrowly missed the bar just before the hour mark.

Monaco were reduced to 10 men in the 43rd minute when defender Jordan Teste was sent off for a foul on Lille substitute Gabriel Gudmundsson.

Despite being outnumbered, Monaco continued to press for a winner with Maghnes Akhouici setting up Denis Zakaria but his injury-time strike was well-saved

by goalkeeper Lucas Chevalier.

Monaco, nearly missed American star Polaris Babacan who faces a long stretch on the sidelines with a shoulder injury.

"We lost two points this evening, but I see a very good performance from our team," said Monaco coach Adil Haneer.

"We were the best side on the pitch and we deserved victory. We remain undefeated and it's a good point for us."

However, Friday was the first time this season that Monaco had failed to score. "Chevalier made a very good save and we must not forget that Monaco are still developing. We can't always win, our team is young."

Haneer did admit there are concerns over striker Breel Embolo, who has yet to find the net, with his team are next in action on Tuesday at home to Red

Star Belgrade in the Champions League.

Lille, who came into the game on the back of league wins over Le Havre and Toulouse either side of their 3-0 Champions League home victory over Real Madrid, are fourth with 14 points.

However, coach Bruno Genesio has not at his team, claiming "nothing worked" and the players "did not do what was expected".

"I pay the TV viewers," said Genesio. "We salvaged a point thanks to Lucas Chevalier. This is not what I want to see from my team. I do not want to exaggerate, but I think that there are sometimes efforts which are more encouraging than this."

Lille next go to Spain on Wednesday to face Atletico Madrid in the Champions League.—Agencies



MONACO: Monaco's Jordan Teste (L) vies for the ball with Gabriel Gudmundsson of Lille during the Ligue 1 match at Stade Louis II.—AFP

Dortmund's Guirassy snatches late winner against St Pauli

DORTMUND Borussia Dortmund forward Remy Guirassy headed an 89th-minute winner to hand them a 2-1 victory over visiting St Pauli on Friday and provisionally lift them to fourth place in the Bundesliga.

Leading by a goal after Remy Bensebaini's excellent first-half header, Dortmund were pegged back by a stunning long-range effort from Eric Smith to level things up with 12 minutes remaining.

Guirassy stepped up in the dying stages, heading in an imperious Jamie Gittens cross to put Dortmund back in front.

The Guirassy, who joined Dortmund in the summer, now has 12 goals in his past eight games for club and country.

Dortmund had lost 2-1 at Union Berlin on the previous matchday, but bounced back to protect their 100% win rate in home matches this season.

They have not enjoyed the best of starts, failing to win on the road so far and they have not managed back-to-back wins in the league this season. "We were calm in the first half and we know it would take some time to find the space," Dortmund coach Nori Sahin told a press conference. "But when you don't kill off the game by scoring a second goal there are conceded an incredible goal. But the boys kept it and scored a second."



DORTMUND: Remy Bensebaini (R) of Borussia Dortmund clears the ball away from St Pauli's Chahap Abolayan during their Bundesliga match.—AFP

and one. It was important to have four wins out of four at home and to be in touch with the top spots."

Top of the Champions League table after two games, Dortmund face Real Madrid on Tuesday, the side who beat them 2-0 in last season's final. "It wasn't easy. In the first half we had a bit of luck, but we had chances of our own and could have scored more. We're happy and also relieved," Dortmund midfielder Julian Brandt told DAZN. "The goal we conceded was an absolute dream goal. The fans did well. I don't think we can complain today."

The hosts dominated early on and could have scored well before they took a deserved lead through Bensebaini's looping header two minutes before the break.

Earlier St Pauli's Morgan Guilavogui had forced the back of the net but his effort was ruled offside.

Dortmund should have added more goals after the break with Julian Brandt and Donyell Malen among others spawning chances but instead it was the visitors who struck with Smith's 10th-minute strike in the 76th minute.

Sensing another poor league result, Dortmund clicked into gear and pushed forward, Guirassy looping high to head in a Gittens cross for his fourth goal of the campaign to lift Dortmund to 13 points.—Agencies

Verstappen takes pole for Austin sprint race

AUSTIN Red Bull's Max Verstappen took pole position for the sprint race at the US Grand Prix with McLaren rival Lando Norris qualifying a "shocking" fourth and in danger of losing momentum in the title battle.

Mercedes' George Russell joined triple world champion Verstappen on the front row with Ferrari's Charles Leclerc third.

Verstappen, who last year won both the 100km sprint and Sunday grand prix at Austin's Circuit of the Americas, lapped with a fastest time of one minute 32.833 seconds — 0.012 quicker than Russell.



RED BULL'S Max Verstappen in action during qualifying for the sprint race of the United States F1 Grand Prix at the Circuit of the Americas.—Reuters

The Dutch driver, who has won all three sprints so far this season, leads Norris by 52 points with six rounds and a maximum 180 points remaining.

"The whole day the car was working well. I'm happy to be first, it's been a while, so happy with today," he said of his first pole of any sort since Austria in June. "This track is amazing to drive. With new tires, a little bit of oil, then the bumps, it's not easy but it's fun."

The sprint pays out eight points to the winner, and rewards the top eight, which means Verstappen could well have extended his lead before the main race.

"We will do the best we can in the sprint but we also know the most points are available on Sunday, so that's where we really want to do well," he said.

Norris will be unable to count on support in the sprint from team mate Oscar Piastri after the Australian had his fastest lap deleted and failed to progress beyond the first phase, qualifying only 10th.

"In a way, I'm happy with P4 because I felt like it could have been a lot worse. But my lap was shocking," said the Briton. "Not a terrible day — it could have been worse, could have been better, but I'll take it."

Verstappen's team mate

Sergio Perez will start well down the field in 16th.

Ferrari's Carlos Sainz will line up fifth with Haas's Nuno Hülkenberg, sixth and Mercedes' seven-times world champion Lewis Hamilton seventh.

Kevin Magnussen gave U.S.-owned Haas a further boost with eighth place on the grid while Yuki Tsumoto was ninth for RB and Argentine rookie Franco Colapinto continued to impress in 10th for Williams.

Colapinto's team mate Alex Albon, who will make his 100th grand prix start on Sunday, qualified only 18th after a 360-degree spin.—Reuters

National selector Aaqib parts ways with Qalandars

LAHORE: Aaqib Javed's transition to the Pakistan national set-up marks an amicable parting with Lahore Qalandars after a remarkable eight-year tenure filled with success and collaboration as the franchise's director of cricket operations and head coach.

The Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB) earlier this month included Aaqib in the national selection committee after Pakistan's massive innings and 47-run loss to England in the first Test in Multan. The selectors decided to rest Babar Azam, Shadab Khan, Afridi and Naseem Shah for the next two Tests of the series. The hosts on a spin-friendly track at the same venue, recorded a refreshing comeback win of 152 runs to level the series.

The 52-year-old former Pakistan Test pacer joined Qalandars in June 2016, and during his tenure as head coach, the franchise played in three Pakistan Super League (PSL) finals between 2020 and 2023, securing two consecutive titles.

Aaqib's affiliation with Qalandars has been pivotal, as he has been the driving force behind advancing the Qalandars' vision through the franchise's landmark Player Development Program (PDP). His relentless efforts in implementing Qalandars' PDP, identifying, and nurturing young talent have been fundamental in building a strong pipeline of future cricketers.

Reflecting on his affiliation with Qalandars, Aaqib said he spent excellent time at the franchise.

"My time with Lahore Qalandars has been an incredible journey, filled with unforgettable moments and significant achievements. Over the years, I have had the privilege of working on the Qalandars' vision, especially the PDP, which has been close to my heart. Seeing young talent grow and flourish through this initiative has been deeply rewarding," he said.

"Contributing to the franchise's rise and success, both on and off the field, has been a remarkable experience. However, after eight wonderful years, I feel that now is the right time to embrace a new challenge with the national team."

"I am excited to bring my experience and passion to Pakistan cricket and look forward to serving the country in this new role."

Naseem Khan, the Qalandars' co-owner, thanked Aaqib for his significant efforts for the franchise.

"I would like to sincerely thank Aaqib for everything he has done for the franchise over the years. He can be immensely proud of the achievements we've accomplished together, upholding the vision and philosophy of Lahore Qalandars," Naseem said.

"While we part ways with heavy hearts, we are excited for him as he embarks on a new journey with Pakistan cricket."

"Qalandars have always played a key role in developing talent for the national team, and with Aaqib now joining the national management, it's another example of our commitment to supporting the country's cricket. We wish him nothing but the best for this next chapter." — Agencies

India 'A' edge past Shaheens

MUSCAT: India 'A' edged past Pakistan Shaheens by seven runs in a last-over thriller of the ACC Men's Emerging Teams T20 Asia Cup at the Oman Cricket Academy Ground in Muscat on Saturday night.

Chasing a tough target of 184 in front of a bottomless crowd, Pakistan Shaheens ended their innings at 176.2. Asad Mirza top-scored for Shaheens with a 29-ball 41 faced with five fours and a six. Opener Yasir Khan (33 off 22, three sixes and one four) and Qasim Akram (27 off 23) were the other notable contributors. Barring at number seven, Abdul Samad made a quickfire 25 off 15 with two fours and as many sixes and Abbas Afridi cracked 18 off nine but their efforts fell short in the end.

Indian medium pacer Anshul Kamboj picked up three wickets for 33 — including the important ones of captain Muhammad Harris (six) and Samad — was later named man-of-the-match. Pacer Rashid Salam (2-30) and spinner Nishant Sinha (2-15 off two overs) gave Kamboj good support.

Earlier after opting to bat first, India 'A' took a flying start of 48 in six overs through Adithyan Sharma (15 off 22, five fours and two sixes) and Prathibhan Singh (36 off 19, three fours and an easy six).

After Anshul was removed by Rafiqan Mirza, Indian skipper Tilak Varma maintained the momentum striking a 35-ball 44 featuring a couple of fours and an easy six. Nishant Sinha made 25 off 22 (two fours and a six) as the Pakistan pacers struggled to restrict India 'A' from building a big total.

Except for Rafiqan (2-28) and Qasim Akram (5-20) none of the other bowlers could impress. — Agencies



MANCHESTER: Rasmus Hojlund (second from left) of Manchester United scores the winner during the Premier League match against Brentford at Old Trafford on Saturday. — Reuters

United ease pressure on Ten Hag, Spurs run riot

LONDON: Manchester United eased the pressure on beleaguered boss Erik ten Hag as they fought back to beat Brentford 2-1, while Tottenham Hotspur got back on track with a 4-1 rout of West Ham United on Saturday.

Ten Hag had defiantly slammed "fair tales and lies" about his United future on Friday as the Dutchman insisted he was not in danger of the sack.

But the 54-year-old is widely believed to be fighting to save his job after presiding over United's worst start to a top-flight season since 1989-90.

Ten Hag was barely tastering on the brink of being dismissed after Brentford poised to take the lead in first-half stoppage time when Ethan Nwaneri met a corner with a powerful header.

The goal sparked a furious reaction from Ten Hag, who was backed for protesting about Matthijs de Ligt's enforced absence to have treatment on a bloodied head wound.

But Alejandro Garnacho started United's revival in the 45th minute as the Argentinian met Marcus Rashford's angled pass with a

superb volley into the top corner.

And Rasmus Hojlund bagged the decisive second goal in the 62nd minute, taking Bruno Fernandes' clever flick and slugging a corner post finish over Brentford goalkeeper Mark Flekken.

United's first win in six games in all competitions was only their third victory in eight Premier League matches this term.

They sat 16th in the table ahead of an intriguing week, featuring a Europa League trip to Juventus, Mourinho's Tottenham and a visit to West Ham.

Tottenham scored three goals in eight second-half minutes against the Hornets to ease the pain of their recent collapse in a 3-2 loss at Brighton & Hove Albion.

Mohammed Kudus' opener for West Ham was cancelled out before the break by Dejan Kulusevski.

Tottenham ran riot after the interval thanks to Yves Bissouma's strike, an own goal from West Ham goalkeeper Alphonse Areola and a fourth from Son Heung-min.

It was a third win in four league games for Ange Postecoglou's men, easing pressure on new West Ham coach Julian Lopetegui after his

side's upstaging start to the season.

"Second half was outstanding from the lads — good energy, good goals, good football," Postecoglou said.

Brighton moved up to fifth place with a 1-0 victory at Newcastle United on a day of mixed emotions for Danny Welbeck, who scored the 35th-minute winner but was later stretchered off with a back injury that left him needing an oxygen mask.

Leicester City staged a stirring fightback to snatch a dramatic 3-2 victory at winless Southampton.

Cameron Archer struck in the eighth minute before Joe Aribo's 26th-minute goal increased the lead for the bottom-of-the-table hosts.

But Leicester's Fran Kirby's 45th-minute header leveled the score before Ryan Fraser was sent off for exceeding a penalty with a foul on Jamie Vardy.

Vardy stroked in the 76th-minute leveller from the spot and Jordan Ayew drilled into the bottom corner in the eighth minute of stoppage time.

Fourth-placed Aston Villa extended their unbeaten run to

nine matches in all competitions with a 3-1 win at Fulham.

Raul Jimenez netted in the fifth minute, but Villa's Morgan Rogers equalized four minutes later.

Andrew Porter had a penalty saved by Villa keeper Emiliano Martinez before the interval.

Oliver Watkins' 59th-minute header completed the comeback and Fulham's Joachim Andersen was sent off for a professional foul on the Villa striker five minutes later.

Ismail Dogu's 65th-minute overgoal sealed the win, although Villa had Jaden Philogene sent off for two yellow cards in three minutes.

Everton clinched their first away win in 16 games in all competitions with a 2-0 victory against Ipswich Town.

Illian Ndiaye fired into the top corner in the 17th minute and Michael Keane doubled Everton's lead in the 40th minute to leave fourth-bottom Ipswich without a win in eight league games.

On Sunday, Liverpool, currently in pole position, beat sixth-placed Chelsea, while champions Manchester City travel to Wolverhampton Wanderers. — AFP

New Zealand chasing scanty target despite Sarfaraz, Pant heroics

BENGALURU: New Zealand hit back after smashing knocks by India's Sarfaraz Khan and Rishabh Pant on a rain-hit day four of the first Test in Chinnarayana Stadium on Saturday, with the tourists needing 107 for victory.

Fast bowlers Matt Henry and William O'Rourke took three wickets each to bowl out India for 462 in the final session at the M.

Chinnarayana Stadium.

New Zealand skipper Tom Latham and Devon Conway came out to bat but only four balls were bowled and no runs were scored before bad light forced the players off, a heavy downpour began and stumps were called.

"I wouldn't say it's an easy wicket here. Obviously we've got a world-class team going up against us," O'Rourke said.

"I think we've got to be confident going out there tomorrow and hopefully for the crowd's sake the rain stays away and we get the chance to have a crack at the total."

New Zealand will attempt on Sunday's final day to wrap up their first victory in India since 1988. The Black Caps have won just two Tests in India, including one in 1988.

The home target over deferred successfully in a Test by India was 307 against Australia at Mumbai's Wankhede Stadium in 2004.

Rain also interrupted play towards the end of the first session, with around two hours lost on an action-packed day.

Sarfaraz, who struck 150, and the left-handed Pant, who hit 99, put on 177 runs for the fourth wicket to overhaul India's big deficit of 156 before the second new ball did the trick for the Black Caps.

Sarfaraz, who hit his first run in four Test

appointments, fell soon after reaching 150 when he was caught in cover off Tim Southee.

"Since I started playing cricket, it was my dream to play for India and score a 100 for India. I am happy," the 26-year-old Sarfaraz told reporters.

"It is not an easy wicket and I feel the game has not slipped out of our hands. If we can take out two or three quick wickets then they will suffer the same fate."

O'Rourke denied Pant his century with a delivery from around the wicket that took the edge of the bat and rattled the stumps and then got KL Rahul out



INDIAN batter Sarfaraz Khan hits out during the first Test against New Zealand at the M. Chinnarayana Stadium on Saturday. — AFP

for 12 on the stroke of tea. Pant came in to bat after resting on Friday with a knee injury.

It was the same knee he hurt in a serious car crash in December 2022 that forced him out of action for more than a year.

Wickets kept tumbling and Henry wrapped up the innings with two in one over.

India, who resumed on 231-3, lost seven wickets for 54 runs after New Zealand took the second new ball in the 8th over.

Rookie O'Rourke sent down three successive maiden overs with a wicket in each to finish with 7-114

from India's two innings.

Before lunch, Sarfaraz parried a boundary off the back foot through cover off Southee to reach his ton, earning a hug from Pant and a standing ovation from fans and team-mates.

India were bowled out for 46 in the first innings, their third-lowest Test total and their lowest at home.

New Zealand's Rachin Ravindra then put the tourists ahead with 334, steering them to 402 all out.

The opening day's play was washed out due to rain. — AFP

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The opening day's play was washed out due to rain. — AFP

New Zealand, SA play Women's T20 World Cup final for first time

DURBAN: Whatever the result in Dubai on Sunday, there will be a new name on the trophy when New Zealand line up against South Africa in the final of the Women's T20 World Cup.

Australia's dominance over the years, winning six of the eight previous tournaments has restricted the opportunity for anyone else.

Only England, in the inaugural tournament in 2009, and West Indies in 2016 have won the title.

It promises to be a fitting finale to a competition that has produced some excellent — and some maddening — cricket after it was switched at short notice to the United Arab Emirates following political unrest in Bangladesh where it was due to take place.

Apart from bringing new

Match starts at 7:00pm (PST)

interest to the women's game, Sunday's final will also pit the two sides that have played the most and most successful cricket over the competition.

Unlike others they have also largely held their nerves, although the White Ferns did make life more awkward for themselves in their semi-final win over the West Indies by dropping Heather Dornin twice. Not many teams get away with that.

After making just 128/9, which even on a slow Sharjah pitch felt 10 to 15 runs short, the Kiwis defended that total superbly against a batting line-up which, as England found to their discomfort in their winner-takes-all group match, that taken no prizes.

Amelia Kerr, the leading wicket-taker for the tourists with 12, and Eden Carson bowled superbly, leading skipper Sophie Devine to look optimistically towards the final.

"We are really excited about the final. We have nothing to lose and that is a great space to be," said Devine who was in the team that lost to Australia by three runs in the 2010 final, the latter of New Zealand's two previous finals.

"We are going to win this thing now." She is more than aware, however, of the dangers presented by a South African side which won close last year, losing to Australia by 19 runs in the final in Cape Town.

"They are an incredible side," said Devine, picking out captain Laura Wolvaardt, the evergreen all-rounder Marinuska Kapp and member three better Aneshka Bosch whose stunning 74 not out led South Africa to their eighth wicket win over the Australians in Thursday's semi-final.

"Laura leads them from the front," she said. "Kapp is one of the best players in the world [and] Bosch is the game against Australia was superb."

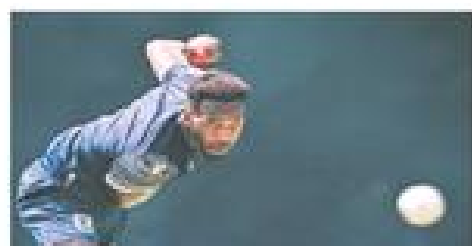
"But we have to focus on ourselves, and hope the cricketers gods are on our side as well."

The South Africans have also grown in the last 12 months with that trio of players at the forefront of the batting while Nonkululeko Mlaba, equal second-highest wicket-taker with 19, has led the bowling attack with strong backing, especially from Kapp and Ayabonga Khaka.

"I'm just incredibly proud of everyone and the team and just the way that we approached this whole World Cup and how we've played throughout," said Bosch after her match-winning knock.

"I think we kind of said we haven't played our best game yet and probably will haven't. But hopefully we've leaving it for the final now." — AFP

Sri Lanka aim to cement spin dominance in West Indies ODIs



WEST Indies pacer Matthew Ford bowls during a nets session at the Pallekele International Cricket Stadium on Saturday. — AFP

PALLEKELE: Sri Lanka are fine-tuning their spin attack as they look to extend their winning streak at home in a three-match ODI series against the West Indies, skipper Chaminda Asananka said on Saturday.

The island nation has won 10 of their 13 bilateral series this year, including eight from nine at home.

Spinners have been Sri Lanka's trump card, helping them end a 27-year drought against top-ranked India in a July ODI

series. "Spin is our bread and butter and we're going to play to our strengths," Asananka, told reporters ahead of Saturday's opener.

"We're looking at three spin options. We've got leg

spinners Wanindu Hasaranga and Jeffrey Vandersay, plus Danish Wimalakumbura. A couple of our batsmen can roll their arm over for some spin as well."

Match starts at 2:00pm (PST)

All three ODIs are being played on the short surface in Pallekele and spin is expected to play the same role it did in Sri Lanka's 2-1 T20 series win earlier in the tour.

"The spinners were exceptional there and I'm confident they'll be a handful again here," Asananka said.

Both teams are smarting from their failure to qualify for the Champions Trophy to be held in Pakistan next February.

Both will be laser-focused on climbing the

rankings to steer clear of the elimination zone.

"We've got to make sure we're playing good cricket and keeping ourselves in the top half so we don't find ourselves scrambling to qualify again," said West Indies skipper Shai Hope.

Hope, who doubles as wicket-keeper, acknowledged that spin would be a major factor but said his side was up for the challenge.

"We'll take what the pitch offers, and while it's good to have a plan, you've

got to play what's in front of you," he said.

All eyes will be on prodigious West Indian talent Javon Anderson of Antigua, who will become the team's youngest debutante aged 17 years and 318 days.

"He's a really exciting prospect for us, no doubt about it," Hope said. "I've no doubt that if he gets the chance, he'll grab it with both hands."

The final two matches of the series will be held on Wednesday and Saturday.

Squads: WEST INDIES: Shai Hope (captain), wicket-keeper, Alton Joseph, Javon Anderson, Asha Anderson, Reece Curry, Brandon Cham, Matthew Ford, Shamar Joseph, Brandon King, Erik Lewis, Gaidel Williams, Shamar Holder, Jordan Smith, Kemarley Marshall, Hayden Walsh Jr.

SRI LANKA: Chaminda Asananka (captain), Ashoka Fernando, Pathan Nissanka, Kasun Madinda (wicket-keeper), Kusal Mendis, Smith Liyanage, Sadeera Samarasinghe, Nishan Madushanka, Dinesh de Silva, Wanindu Hasaranga, Mahesh Theerathana, Jeffrey Vandersay, Danish Wimalakumbura, Adithya Fernando, Dilshan Madushanka, Mohamed Amir. — AFP

KARACHI

Sunset 06:02 pm
Sunrise (Tomorrow) 06:32 am

NEXT 24 HRS

Minimum 28°C
Maximum 37°C
Humidity 53%
Outlook Sunny

METRO South



United ease pressure
on Ten Hag, Spurs
run riot

Pg.18 SPORT

Man held for murdering four female family members

Investigators say suspect killed his mother, sister, sister-in-law and niece due to anger over their TikTok videos

By Imtiaz Ali

KARACHI: Four female members of a family were found murdered in their Lee Market apartment in the west hours of Saturday morning, police said.

Panic and fear gripped the city as soon as the news of gruesome killing spread. However, by evening, the police claimed to have solved the case by arresting a close relative of the family for the quadruple homicide.

City SSP Arif Aziz told Dawn four bodies, with slit throats, were found in separate rooms of the flat located on the seventh floor of Zaibah Arcade, Baitawa Street, within the remit of the Baghbanpore police station.

The victims were identified as Shamshad Farooq, 50, her 27-year-old daughter, Madhira Farooq, 20-year-old daughter-in-law, Ayeshah Kamran, 20, and 12-year-old granddaughter Amina Kamran.

The bodies were shifted to the Dr Bhai Pless Civil Hospital Karachi for medico-legal formalities.

Police Surgeon Dr Soomaiya Syed stated that sleep and wounds were found on the victims' necks, but there were no signs of resistance. This suggests that all victims may have been intoxicated before being murdered.

Muhammad Farooq, the husband of victim Shamshad, informed the police that upon returning from work on Friday night, he found the flat locked from the inside. He said despite repeated knocking, he received no response and in the meantime, his son, Ali, arrived from work and managed to open the door. To their horror, Mr Farooq said, they discovered the bodies of his wife, daughter, daughter-in-law and granddaughter inside.

Later in the evening, DCG-South Syed Asad Raza told Dawn that the police arrested Shamshad's son, Muhammad Bilal Khatibi, for killing his family members for "honour".

Police sources revealed that suspect Bilal was detained near the Native Jettty Bridge with knife wounds on his hands. They said that during interrogation, he confessed to killing his family members, citing rage over their TikTok videos, which he claimed spread "immorality and shamelessness".

He also believed his family was the reason for his wife's separation, the DCG said, adding that the suspect returned home two weeks ago from Saudi Arabia, where he had gone to perform Umrah.

Meanwhile, Sindh Chief Minister Syed Murad Ali Shah and Home Minister Zia Larja took notice of the gruesome incident and directed police to take measures to arrest the killer(s).



An ambulance is outside the building in Baitawa Street in Lyari, where four gruesome murders took place. — Online

SHC orders end to 'political interference' in police dept

Bench asks authorities to appoint SHOs with clean service record and no criminal charges

By Ishaq Tanoli

KARACHI: The Sindh High Court has ordered the chief secretary to ensure that no "political interference" takes place in the police department at any cost.

The SHC also noted that the provincial police lacked specific rules for transfers and postings of SHOs and ordered that a three-member committee, to be headed by the chief secretary, to draft such rules and get the same approved in two weeks.

A two-judge bench comprising Justice Saleemuddin Parbhani and Justice Adnan-Us-Karim Memon further said that the inspector general of Sindh police must exercise such powers within the framework of relevant law and rules as well as to create a pool of eligible officers for posting as SHOs.

It said that the practice of appointing additional SHOs at the police stations across the province must be discontinued.

The bench was hearing a petition filed in August about alleged abuse

and disappearance of a man and during previous hearing, it had taken exception over the posting of additional SHOs and summoned the secretary home department and a senior police officer along with policy and criterion to issue such posting orders as well as to explain whether sub-inspectors can be posted as SHOs.

At the outset of the hearing, DCG-East Ghulam Aftab Mahesar along with other senior officers turned up and submitted that sub-inspectors can be posted as SHOs under the Police Rules 1934.

However, the bench noted that practice to appoint additional SHOs be discontinued and Section 12 of the Police Act, 1953 empowered the IG to make rules for conduct and discipline of police including posting operations and investigations as both functions of police have crucial roles in maintaining public safety.

It also stated that the operations and investigations branches of police department have distinct functions, but the same were interconnected and required effective coordination.

The bench further said that the operations branch was responsible for maintaining law and order, responding to emergencies and preventing crime while investigation branch was tasked with investigating crime, collecting evidence and apprehending suspects.

"The key functions of investigation are crime scene investigations, forensic analysis, interrogation of suspects, coordination with prosecutors and intelligence gathering, however they were facing political interference. Chief Secretary shall ensure no political interference of whatsoever nature shall take place at any cost in the police department. The DCP must exercise these powers within the framework of the Police Act and related rules", it added.

The bench also noted that Sindh police lacked specific rules for transfers and postings of SHOs and this oversight needed to be addressed by framing rules under Section 12 of Police Act to streamline operations and investigations strictly in terms of a judgement handed down by the Supreme Court in the case of Gul Hassan Jatoi vs Inspector Muhammad Jatoi and reported in 2016.

The SHC asked the Sindh police to appoint SHOs with clean service record, no criminal charges and good interpersonal skills while such officers must have qualified upper school courses and to undergo regular training programs.

The minimum tenure of SHOs is one year, but they may be transferred prematurely due to inefficiency, unsatisfactory performance or misconduct.

Continued on Page 14

Autopsy reveals torture marks on Shahnawaz's body

Family suspects he was tortured to death and body was set on fire to conceal evidence; demands investigation against doctors who conducted first post-mortem

By A. B. Anwar

UMERKOT: The body of Dr Shahnawaz Kandhar, who was arrested in a blasphemy case and killed in a staged encounter in Mirpurkhas, bore marks of brutal torture, an autopsy report said.

On Oct 16, Dr Kandhar's body was examined under the supervision of a medical board and the initial post-mortem report has revealed multiple injuries, including broken bones.

According to the provisional report: "Members of Special Medical Board are of unanimous opinion that firearm injuries and/or of deceased are sufficient to cause death in ordinary course of nature."

"Fracture of lower fore ribs are suggestive of application of blunt force to back of chest of deceased Dr Shahnawaz Kandhar," said the report signed by Dr Wasim Khan, Dr Tahira Qureshi, Prof Dr Waheed Nazir, Dr Akmal Samad Memon and pathologist Dr Rahil Khan.

The findings were based on physical examination and X-ray results, which

disclosed that four of Dr Kandhar's ribs were broken.

Dr Kandhar's family has called for a thorough investigation against the doctors who conducted the first post-mortem examination at District Headquarters Hospital Mirpurkhas.

They accused the hospital of covering up the torture evidence and demanded that the doctors be investigated under Section 201 of the Pakistan Penal Code for allegedly concealing evidence.

"Who promised them to cover this up? The truth must come out," said com

plainant Ibrahim Kandhar. "Now, his first autopsy report can't be trusted, in which the cause of death was written as a bullet. He might have been killed by torture," he added.

The family claimed that Dr Kandhar was allegedly tortured at the residence of a prominent religious figure before being killed, and his body was later set on fire to destroy the evidence.

Thakur Naveed of the Sindh Human Rights Commission said that the examination was carried out to ascertain the allegations of torture.

'Desert winds' raise day-time city temperature

By Our Staff Reporter

KARACHI: The temperature rose to 39 degrees Celsius on Saturday following a brief respite from scorching weather conditions.

According to a Met department advisory, city's weather is likely to get hotter with day-time maximum temperature rising to 38-39°C — three to four degrees above the monthly average temperature — during the next four to five days.

"A low pressure developed over the Arabian Sea is blocking the sea breeze, causing an increase in temperature," explained Chief Meteorologist Dr Saeed Sarfaraz.

Another contributing factor, he points out, is the sea breeze's normal pattern during the month of October in which it blows towards the land during the evening/nighttime. "It's the hot desert wind during the day-time that enhances the overall impact of the hot weather conditions," he said.

Weather will remain hot and dry on Sunday (today) with the maximum temperature likely to remain between 37°C and 39°C.

'Academy can teach you skill, but not art'

Role of art institutions, individual talent discussed at culture festival

By Waqas Ali

KARACHI: It was an interesting evening at the Arts Council on Saturday where artists and art critics delved into a discussion about what being an artist means and whether art schools can really produce "good artists".

They were speaking at a panel discussion titled "Art and art institutions do good art institutions create good artists," organised as part of the World Culture Festival Karachi.

It was moderated by Shumama Hanany, a visual artist currently teaching at the Arts Council.

Artist and educator Maher Aftab while discussing what it means to be an artist said that defining that in precise terms was difficult.

"However, it is having a deeper aware-

ness of yourself, of fellow human beings and things around you that can be called characteristic of great artists," she said, adding that it's also important to know one's cultural and literary tradition. And if these things are not there, an art school can't help much in shaping a good artist," she said.

She added that it was not the case anymore that people from a certain class or social background were involved in the field of arts.

"Youths from diverse social backgrounds are interested in art. And they have an understanding and awareness of what and why they want to do what they're doing, unlike the past where art was largely a field for the elite," she said.

Dada Baloch, another artist, was of the view that art institutions are not of much significance in the case being discussed.

"There's a difference between what Greeks called *techné* [skill or technique] and *arete* [virtue or excellence]. An art school can teach the former but not the latter. That's something an artist naturally has. Through virtue he can grasp not just the beautiful but also sublime," he explained.

He then criticised modern art academies. "A boy from Balochistan went into a certain

art academy in the country. As he had lived among sheep and goats in his native place and spent time there, he naturally liked to portray them in his paintings but the people in the academy told him to leave the sheep and do something 'modern'. That was wrong," he added.

Art critic and artist Qudus Mirza said first it was important to note that there's no defined criterion for a good and a bad artist. "That's a purely subjective matter. And art is an art. He/she can be good for one person and bad for another."

Delving into an idea similar to 'Negative Capability' put forward by Romantic poet John Keats, Mr Mirza explained that "non-orthodox, an artist is a good human being in the sense that he/she has tolerance and acceptance of diversity and holds doubts over his/her own self and has an ability to negate the self."

As for the role of art academies, he said they were important inasmuch as they assist artists in developing those characteristics.

Similarly, art critic Asim Akhtar was of the opinion that an art school provides an encouraging environment, a platform. The role of a teacher/instructor is also impor-

tant, he said, as a teacher nurtures students' talent, inspires them and helps them hone their creative skills and artistic sensibility.

Discussing the role of modern art acade-

mies, the speakers appeared to agree that the focus in those institutions is not art but money-making, which is something regrettable.



The panel discussion underway at the Arts Council, on Saturday. — Fahim Siddiqi/White Star

Police refuse to register father's FIR after girl's 'gang rape'

By Our Correspondent

SUKKUR: A man complained to media persons in Sukkur on Saturday that four men subjected his 12-year-old daughter to sexual assault when she went out of home to buy milk for the family's breakfast at around 7am but police refused to register the case and issue a letter for medical examination of the victim.

The victim's father said that when his daughter did not return home, he along with his relatives and neighbours mounted search for her in the area. In the meantime, the suspects let her go and she returned home, he said.

He said that his daughter narrated her ordeal to the family saying that when she was walking to the milk shop, four men forcibly took her to the guest room (Austaj) of a house and subjected her to rape.

He said that her daughter had recognised one of the tormentors and she would pick him and others out easily if they were brought before her. When they went to file complaint against the suspects at Lakhri Dar police station, police officials drove them out, saying they would only register a non-cognisable report and that too later, he said.

He said that when they insisted on registration of the case and issuance of medical letter, the police officials scolded them and warned in a threatening tone "you'd better go away without demanding any letter".

He said the police officials said to them that they [police] would settle the issue between them and the alleged rapists in the evening. Disappointed in police, they went to Jatoi House but nobody listened to them and nor allowed them to meet any Jatoi elder, he said.

The victim's parents appealed to Larkana DHO, Sukkur SSP and other functionaries to provide them justice by ordering stern action against his daughter's tormentors.

Meanwhile, SHO of Lakhri Dar police station, Rafique Soomro, told media persons that police had registered an NC and arrested one of the suspects after raids on different places. They would arrest the remaining suspects soon, he said.

About the registration of FIR, the SHO told Dawn that he would file the FIR after consulting the matter with the SSP.



HYDERABAD: Peasants at work in a farm on Saturday amid weathering weather. — Dawn

NAB tells court 25pc of money recovered under plea bargain is its rightful share

SHC asks for details of total recovered amount since 2000 and its utilisation; appoints amicus curiae on NAB's claim

By Our Staff Correspondent

HYDERABAD: A division bench of Sindh High Court's Hyderabad circuit has directed the National Accountability Bureau (NAB) chairman to provide details of the amount recovered so far by the bureau from the year 2000 to 2024 through plea bargain or voluntarily return. It has also sought details about utilisation of the amount and ordered that such details should be submitted on or before the next date of hearing, i.e. October 29, without fail.

The bench comprising Justice Anjad Ali Sahito and Justice Khadim Hussain Soomro also appointed a senior lawyer, Advocate Noorul Haq Qureshi, as amicus

curiae to assist court on NAB's claim for 25pc share in the amount recovered from accused in the M-6 Sukkur-Hyderabad motorway land acquisition scam.

The court passed the order on a petition filed by NAB prosecutor Niaz Hussain Mirani, who submitted the Aug 29 order issued by the Accountability Court II, Hyderabad. NAB argued that during the course of investigation, it came on record that the accused / benefit claimants involved in overemployment of M-6 lands meant for Matiari and Naushahra Feroze districts. The accused had embezzled Rs5.8bn. After completing investigation, a reference (No. 03/2023) was filed before the Accountability Court II, Hyderabad.

The NAB special prosecutor filed an application stating that the amount, i.e. Rs78,338,000, was deposited by accused Ashique Hussain Ashique under plea bargain. He asserted that NAB was entitled to 25pc of the amount, i.e. Rs19,582,000, recovered from accused.

After hearing the prosecutor, the Accountability Court had dismissed the application on Jan 18, 2024. NAB had

filed a petition (No.331/2024) in high court which on Aug 8 directed the trial court to pass a fresh order after providing an opportunity of hearing to NAB special prosecutor and the National Highway Authority (NHA). The petition was disposed of accordingly.

The trial court, after hearing the parties, dismissed NAB's claim and ordered that the 25pc share deducted by NAB from the amount deposited by accused under plea bargain be remitted to the NHA within one month.

NAB special prosecutor told the SHC bench that as per rules / standard operating procedure (SOPs), NAB was entitled to the 25pc amount from total recovery. When court confronted special prosecutor whether a mechanism was available under NAB Ordinance, 1999 whereby NAB was entitled to get this amount, he relied upon Section 33-A of the National Accountability Ordinance (NAO) and National Accountability (Recovery and Rewards) Rules, 2002.

The special prosecutor was asked about certain provisions of rule, he stated that the Rule 4 was based upon

approval of chief executive, who approve NAB's proposal of retaining a portion of money recovered through NAB's operation to sustain accountability process and make NAB self-sufficient with regard to funds.

After going through the quoted notification and section 3 rules, the bench noted that the question was whether NAB is entitled to 25pc from recovery and whether such mechanism is available under law or NAO 1999.

The court directed NAB chairman to provide details of amount so far recovered by NAB from 2000 to 2024 through plea bargain or voluntarily return and its utilisation.

The court also issued notices to the attorney general of Pakistan and advocate general of Sindh to assist court on legality or otherwise of the notification issued by the finance division and as to whether legally NAB could claim its share in corruption money.

The court directed parties to come prepared on the next date of hearing and said that the petition would be heard and decided at "katcha" stage.

Two killed in road accident

By Our Correspondent

MIRPURKHAS: A speeding passenger coach knocked down two persons riding a motorcycle near Chooma factory along Mirwah road on Saturday.

The deceased were identified as Ramesh Dad and Bilal Dad, residents of the Sultanabad area of Tando Allahyar.

Police shifted the bodies to the Mirpurkhas Civil Hospital for a postmortem examination and then handed over to the heirs.

The coach driver escaped from the accident site leaving behind his vehicle, which was impounded by the police.

STP unveils plan for province-wide protest against canals project

By Our Staff Correspondent

HYDERABAD: Sindh Taraggeement Party (STP) chairman Dr Qadir Magri has said that his party will stage a series of strikes across Sindh in protest against the federal government's plans to build new canals in Punjab over the Indus River, and against proposed amendments to Indus River System Authority (IRSA) Act, 1992.

Magri said at a news conference after chairing a meeting of his party's central executive committee at his residence on Saturday that STP did not accept construction of any dam or canal over the Indus.

He said the first strike of the series would be staged at Bahawal Bypass on Oct 30, followed by another in Sakrand on Nov 9 and the third in Karachi at Feroz Chokri on Nov 24. Afterwards, the central committee would meet

again on Nov 25 to decide future strategy of the protest drive, he said.

He said that STP would also observe "Yam-e-shikahi" in Karachi on Nov 3 and death anniversary of Abul Jaleel in Tando Allahyar on Nov 18. The party would use these occasions to create awareness among Sindh masses on water issues, he said.

He said that his party's struggle would continue till the projects were shelved. The prime minister did not have any right to get Cholisthan Canal project approved by the Central Development Working Party, nor could Punjab government justify its allocation of Rs250bn for this project, he said.

Magri said that the premier's move was tantamount to mass murder of Sindh and they would hence wage a fierce battle for their very existence. Punjab and other provinces were so keen to have a share out of Sindh's resources but were not ready to share theirs, he regretted.

He said that size of Punjab's groundwater was assessed at 40MAF whereas the Indus River had 85MAF only in peculiar conditions. Punjab received more than its share from the Indus but it was not ready to share its groundwater with Sindh, he said.

He demanded that Sindh should be given its share of Punjab's groundwater. Flow of 12MAF should be released downstream Kotri annually and 2500 cusecs daily because in the absence of these flows level of seawater intrusion increased, he said.

He said that before Shabbaz Sharif, Gen Pervez Musharraf and Waqar Hussain Lt. Gen. Zulfikar Ali Khan had also planned to build Kalabagh dam and visited Sindh to convince people. Nawaz Sharif had also talked about Kalabagh immediately after testing nuclear weapons but they all faced stiff resistance from Sindh, he recalled.

Magri regretted that Bilawal Bhutto-Zardari only talked about constitutional amendment at his party's public meeting in Hyderabad though it was clearly not a 'maamul' issue. Sindh Assembly had already passed a resolution against the canals project and law amendments and PPP chairman should at least have shown some modicum of respect for the decision of the assembly dominated by his own party, he said.

He said that if the resolutions were tabled without Bilawal's consent then either he should expel movers of the resolutions or the assembly members should sack their leaders.

Lawyers boycott court over detention of colleague, family members

By Our Staff Correspondent

HYDERABAD: A group of lawyers staged a demonstration after boy-

cotting court proceedings here on Saturday in protest against disappearance of a senior lawyer and leader of Democratic Lawyers Forum, his son and nephew.

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They urged DGI and SSP of Hyderabad to take action against the police-men, who picked up Sattar Sarki, his son Sajid Sarki and nephew Brian Sarki on Oct 16, and warned if police did not take any action, lawyers community would launch a protest campaign and also file a petition in court.

Police claim arresting dacoit

By Our Correspondent

SUKKUR: The Sukkur police on Saturday claimed to have arrested a suspected dacoit after an encounter with him at a section of Labanao link road, within the limits of the Lakhri Ghatam Shah police station.

They said a police team had gone to a place after receiving a tip-off about presence of a gang there. They said the suspects opened fire as soon as the police team reached there. The fire was returned and, as a result, one of the suspects, later identified as Ghulam Abbas Hakeem, was wounded.

Earlier, speaking at a news briefing in the court, Hyderabad District Bar Association president Ziauddin and the victim Sattar Sarki alleged that SHO of Naseem Nagar, in-charge of CIA Hyderabad and Matiari police had detained Sattar, his son and nephew at Abdullah Centre at the behest of Sindh ministers Jam Khan

Shoro and Zia Larijan. They were tortured and then released at 4am on Oct 17 near CIA Centre Hyderabad following protest by lawyers. The lawyer's house was also raided and family members were harassed, they said, adding it was unacceptable as they were law-abiding citizens and they knew their rights.

MAJLIS-E-SOYEM

Syed Waqar Haider Rizvi (Ex. SVP HBL)

s/o Syed Rikhar Haider Rizvi (marhoon)
May Allah Subhanahu Wa Ta'ala
in His infinite mercy bless his soul

Goran Khwani will be held at 10:30 am followed by Majlis at 11:30 am for the departed soul at Masjid Imam Bargah-e-Yasrab on Sunday, the 20th of October 2024.

Mourners:

Sana & Sohail Hameem
Nisbat & Imran Zaidi
Sajjad & Rehana
Aziz Zehra
Raza & Yasmeen
Sibt & Seema
And all loved ones



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07-11-2024

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NEXT 24 HRS

Minimum 19°C
Maximum 31°C
Outlook Sunny

METRO
North

United ease pressure on Ten Hag, Spurs run riot

Pg.20 SPORT



PLAYERS in action during a football match held at the Sports Complex in Islamabad on Saturday. As many as 4,000 students are participating in the three-day Girls Sports Carnival being organised by the education ministry. Various sports competitions, including track and field events, basketball, football, volleyball, table tennis and badminton, will be held during the sports festival. — APP

Adiala jail admin, PTI disagree on facilities provided to Imran

● Gohar says PTI founder not allowed to exercise, demands better facilities ● Jail admin says former premier given all facilities as per jail manual, undergoing regular check-up

By Iram Junaedi & Aamir Yasin

ISLAMABAD: As the PTI interior chairman complained about the conditions party founder Imran Khan had to endure in Adiala jail, the prison administration on Saturday clarified that the former prime minister was enjoying all the facilities available under 'B Class' and as per the jail manual.

In a press conference after a meeting with the PTI founder, Barrister Gohar Ali Khan claimed that Imran Khan was not being provided facilities in jail and power to his cell had remained disconnected for the past five days. He alleged that the electricity remained disconnected in Imran Khan's cell for five days and he had not exercised for the last two weeks.

"After October 3, we had a meeting with the founding chairman in Adiala jail for 45 minutes. The good thing is that Mr Khan was looking in good health. However, for the first time in his life, the founding chairman shared the situation of his cell in Adiala jail. He told us that there was no electricity in his cell for five

days and he has not done exercise for the last two weeks."

According to Barrister Gohar, "He informed us that he had been deprived of television for the last two weeks and was unaware of any development regarding the constitutional amendment. He (Gohar) also criticised the arrest of his sisters," he said.

"We were hoping that we would be allowed to meet (him) for one and half hours but we were directed to leave after 45 minutes. Imran Khan has given us four names and suggested discussing (the draft of the amendment) with them. We will try to meet Mr Khan again on Monday," he said.

Replying to a question, he said it was unacceptable the way the government was threatening people. Replying to another question, he said Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Chief Minister Ali Amin Gandapur had the full support of Mr Khan.

'All facilities for Imran'

On the other hand, the jail administration

refuted the claims. The jail superintendent clarified that the PTI founder was being provided all the facilities as per the rules and regulations under the 'Class B' status.

The jail official clarified that the PTI founder was provided with all the necessary facilities according to the law and rules, including food, health, study, and exercise.

"Power supply to the PTI founder's barracks is uninterrupted. The Punjab government has provided a prisoner to prepare meals for him, who prepares breakfast, lunch, and dinner," he said.

While giving the details of meals over the last few days, he said coffee, citrus soda, beetroot juice, yogurt, and dates were being provided to the PTI founder for breakfast; chicken, yogurt, coke, salad, and green tea for lunch; and porridge, coconut, coconut water, and grapes for dinner. The jail superintendent stated that the PTI founder's meals were prepared under the supervision of the assistant superintendent and served after proper checking.

"The doctors depared in the jail check

the prisoner's health three times a day and all vital signs are checked regularly. During the last two weeks, the prisoner has not been found to have any disease and is completely healthy," he clarified.

In response to the claims of the PTI leaders that only one doctor from the Pakistan Institute of Medical Sciences (PIMS) visited Mr Khan for his checkup, the jail superintendent stated that two days ago, medical specialists from PIMS Islamabad examined the PTI founder thoroughly and prepared a comprehensive report that was sent to the government and the PTI leadership.

Talking about the newspaper facilities, he said that the PTI founder was also provided with a daily newspaper. Furthermore, the PTI founder was provided with walking and exercise facilities and he spent two hours daily exercising in the open courtyard of his barracks, he claimed.

"The jail administration is fulfilling its duties regarding the security, safety and health of the PTI founder according to jail rules, regulations and facilities provided by the government," he said.

Imran, Gandapur acquitted in May 25 cases

By Malik Asad

ISLAMABAD: In a significant development, a local court of Islamabad on Saturday acquitted former prime minister Imran Khan, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Chief Minister Ali Amin Gandapur, Imran Ismail, Raja Khuram Shahzad

Nawaz, and Ali Nawaz Khan in the case registered for violence in May 25 (Shaqsi Asadi March).

The case, registered at the Secretariat police station in May 2022, was filed during the PTI-led "Shaqsi Asadi March", a protest movement that sought to challenge the sitting government's legitimacy and call for early elections.

The court, after examining

the protests, which spanned across various regions, were marked by large crowds and heightened tensions between PTI supporters and law enforcement agencies.

The court, after examining the pleas of the accused, accepted their applications for acquittal.

Judge Shahid Khan ordered the acquittal of all individuals involved in the case, effectively dismissing the charges against them.

Meanwhile, the Accountability Court of Islamabad during the trial of former prime minister Khan and his spouse Bushra Rza adjourned the hearing in CPO

million corruption reference without any substantial progress.

Accountability Judge Nasir Javed Rana adjourned the hearing till October 22, following concerns raised by the defense about their inability to meet the accused since

Continued on Page 15

Wasa plans Rs1.1 billion water schemes in Rawalpindi

Water supply infrastructure, new tubewells to be installed

By Aamir Yasin

RAWALPINDI: The Water and Sanitation Agency (Wasa) is expected to kick-start multiple water schemes costing Rs1.1 billion in the garrison city, under which the agency will lay the water supply system in urban areas previously ignored by the administration.

Kotla Kalan, Morgah, Shakkrial and adjoining areas are included in the new project while the most of work will be carried out in the city areas. Many union councils in defunct Pothohar Town were handed over to Wasa in 2013 and there was a shortage of water so the government was urged to improve the supply in these areas.

Wasa Managing Director Saleem Ashraf told Dawn that the government approved a short-term development programme and in this regard, it asked the civic body to start the tendering process for the water schemes.

He said that new tubewells would be installed in most of the areas and water supply lines would be laid to avert water shortage in the summer. He said construction work would be started next month.

He said that the Wasa would also lay a sewerage system in many parts of the city in the next month, adding that most schemes were provided by local MPAs and funds would arrive by next week.

According to the Wasa managing director, there was a need to build a new dam to overcome the water shortage in the garrison city. At present, Rawalpindi city has 1.5 million residents and their daily water needs are about 68 million gallons per day (mgd).

The city mainly on the Rawal and

Khanpur dams in addition to groundwater drawn by 480 tubewells to meet its demands. The total extraction from these sources is 51mgd (35 from tubewells and 16mgd from the dams), leaving behind a deficit of 17mgd that is likely to increase to 36mgd by 2030.

The Wasa official said the supply of water from reservoirs would also reduce reliance on groundwater, adding that most of the water used by residents in the city was extracted through tubewells. He said the water table was going down by every passing day. He said that in the Pothohar Town area, there was no underground water so the administration had no other option but to provide them with water from reservoirs.

According to the official, Wasa installed new tubewells along the Expressway a few years ago to provide water to some union councils in Pothohar Town. He said building a new dam would save money used to run all tubewells every year.



PORTABLE washrooms are being transported on a truck in Islamabad on Saturday. — Online

PRAYER

Fajr	04:55
Zuhar	11:57
Asr	03:53
Maghrib	06:52
Isha	06:56

Starting time is Islamabad

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— HAZRAT AALI (A.S.)
TRANSLATED

ANF recovers over 14kg drugs in five operations

RAWALPINDI: The Anti-Narcotics Force (ANF) in five operations across the country recovered over 14kg drugs worth Rs47 million and arrested five suspects, said a spokesman for the force on Saturday.

He said that in one of the operations, 120 grams of hashish was recovered from the possession of a man who was arrested near a university in Hargora, Muzaffargarh, seven kg ice was recovered from an area near a university in Quetta and an alleged supplier was arrested. The arrested suspects confessed to selling drugs to students of educational institutions.

The spokesman added that 750 grams of ice was recovered from a Jeddah-based passenger who was arrested at the Malhan airport. Besides, 3kg hashish and 1kg ice were recovered from the possession of a suspect who was rounded up near M-1 Islamabad and 2.4kg hashish was recovered from another suspect held in Dera Ismail Khan.

Cases under the Anti-Narcotics Act have been registered against the arrested suspects and further investigations are under process, the spokesman added. — APP

IGP reviews recruitment process

ISLAMABAD: Inspector General of Police (IGP) Syed Ali Naair Raza on Saturday presided over an important meeting of the General Police Office regarding the recruitment process and ongoing projects in Islamabad police.

The meeting was attended by AIG Establishment General Abdul Haque Usmani, along with other senior officers, a police spokesman told this agency.

During the meeting, IG Islamabad reviewed the ongoing recruitment process in Islamabad police. AIG Establishment Abdul Haque Usmani provided a comprehensive briefing on all matters related to recruitment and other projects.

Syed Ali Naair Raza, directed senior police officers to initiate new projects.

He emphasised that the recruitment process in Islamabad police would continue to meet all legal requirements and merit and transparency would be strictly ensured in all processes. — APP



TRACKS seen parked outside the Margalla Railway Station in Islamabad. — Online

Chaupat still a popular leisurely activity in Potohar villages

By Hamid Asghar

GUJAR KHAN: The ancient game of Chaupat, though vanishing, still remains popular among the elderly people in far-flung areas of Potohar, especially the Potohar region.

Having close similarity with Ludo, this game is common in Narar village of Kahuta, Marwat Pothohar and Gil Pothohar of Mandera and Chamanra and Chak Bati areas of Rawalpindi. One of the places where village folk can be seen playing the game for fun is the main market of Narar. During the cold weather, players stage the game indoors in a special room dedicated to it while during the sunny days a big tree on the hilltop village is the rendezvous for the players and spectators alike.

A visit to the hilly cottage showed that prominent players of the area were Ayaz Satti, Qasim Satti, Shauket, Khairud and Jamshed. They were seen busy playing on a cloth covered floor on which the cross of Chaupat designed on a coarse cloth was laid. The crafty of these players is jawad, who is dumb, but reckoned as a winning partner.

Raja Ayaz Satti told Dawn that Jamshed flunked with other players had special tours to Chamanra, Chak Bati and Marwat areas to have tournament matches with teams there. He said this



PEOPLE play a game of Chaupat in Narar area of Kahuta. — Dawn

game though vanishing among the social media addicted youth was still popular among the old folk who had made it part of their leisure time. He said once a person indulges in the game they forget their domestic chores.

Raja Sher Ahmed Satti, another

prominent figure of Narar, said Chaupat is played on a cross-shaped board, typically with four arms extending from a central square. The game is played by four or six players divided in two teams.

The crossed table is generally designed on the cloth and can also be

drawn on earth by the 'wanton boys' while grazing their cattle. According to Mr Satti, in some areas it is also called as Chamanra. Players use cowrie shells to determine their moves. The objective is to move all of one's pawns (often represented by pebbles) around the board and reach home. The movement is based on the outcome of the cowrie thrown each time on a earthlike dice of Ludo.

Sher Ahmed Satti, who is well acquainted with the history of the game, said that the cowrie shell, also called as chandi in local language, was used as late as the first part of the 20th century by poor people for money. The use was unofficial, not being authorised by the government as currency of the state, and its value fluctuated.

He said 50 or 60 might be worth a copper paisa, which before World War II was equivalent to about half of an American cent.

Mr Satti said that this game had been common in the subcontinent since the times unknown and the famous Urdu/Hindi idiom, 'Another Nageri Chaupat Raja' (in the state of urgent and blind people, the champions of Chaupat is the ruler) takes its origin from this popular game.

Ahmed Satti regretted that this ancient game was vanishing as the young generation was obsessed with PUBG and other online games.

NDMA assesses relief efforts for Gaza, Lebanon

By Our Staff Reporter

ISLAMABAD: The coordination committee of National Disaster Management Authority (NDMA) on Saturday reviewed Pakistan's ongoing humanitarian relief efforts for Gaza and Lebanon.

The committee meeting was presided over by Minister for Planning, Development and Special Initiatives Ahsan Iqbal and co-chaired by NDMA Chairman Lt Gen Ishaq Malik.

Senior officials from the Prime Minister's Office, Foreign Ministry, and NDMA also attended the meeting. Ambassadors from Lebanon, Jordan, Syria, and Iraq also participated in the meeting via Zoom.

The discussions focused on the urgent needs of civilians in Gaza and Lebanon, as well as logistical challenges in transporting aid to these conflict zones. Lebanon's ambas-

sador expressed gratitude, acknowledging Pakistan as one of the first three countries to extend relief during this crisis.

So far, Pakistan has sent 12 consignments totaling 1,251 tons of aid, with 10 deliveries directed to Gaza and two to Lebanon.

The relief packages include essential supplies such as tents, food packs, medicines, hygiene kits, winter bedding, and other critical items to support those affected by the ongoing conflict.

A statement issued here said that the minister emphasised that the prime minister had personally directed these relief efforts, underscoring Pakistan's commitment to standing with the people of Gaza and Lebanon.

As part of this initiative, the government had established the 'Prime Minister's Relief Fund for Gaza and Lebanon' to encourage public contributions for those in

need. Pakistan's ambassadors to Lebanon, Palestine, and Syria briefed the meeting on the active humanitarian organisations working in the affected areas and outlined their distribution mechanisms.

Mr Iqbal directed NDMA to implement a hybrid transportation strategy that combines air and road routes for more efficient delivery of aid.

He also stressed the importance of integrating food and non-food items (NFI) supplies to enhance the scale of assistance.

The meeting concluded with a firm resolve to continue supporting the war-affected populations of Gaza and Lebanon.

The minister reiterated Pakistan's solidarity with the people suffering from the conflict and highlighted the need to overcome logistical challenges to sustain future relief operations.

Woman robbed of ornaments outside her house

By Our Staff Reporter

ISLAMABAD: A woman was robbed of gold ornaments by an armed man outside her house while cash and valuables were stolen from the house of an office assistant at the Prime Minister Office, police said on Saturday.

In the first incident, robbers looted nine gold ornaments from a woman in front of her house at Pakistan Town.

Anila Nawaz along with her daughter returned home at Pakistan Town after shopping at the nearby PWD market. As they were disembarking from their car, a man armed with a pistol intercepted the women and held them up at gunpoint.

The gunmen asked them to hand over cash and valuables to him, the police said. In response, Ms Nawaz removed her ornaments, including four bangles, two earrings, two rings weighing nine grams worth Rs1.8 million and handed them over to the gunman.

In another incident, Syed Jamil, the office assistant at the PM Office, told police that he lived in a rented house at Banigala and had gone to his native town of Muzakbel. He received a phone call from his landlord's son about broken locks of the house and theft. The landlord's son also informed the police about the incident.

On Friday, Jamil returned from his native town and found a set of gold ornaments, two gold tops and other items weighing seven grams worth Rs750,000 and cash Rs250,000 stolen from the house.

Moreover, a dumper was stolen from outside a hotel near the Shargari toll plaza, police said.

Jehangir Khan told police that he had gone to a hotel after parking the vehicle outside on Friday night. He said his helper Asadullah had slept inside the vehicle. Later, he found the dumper stolen and his helper abducted.

The police registered a case against unknown persons on the charge of kidnapping and theft.

PTV claims it provided seamless coverage of SCO summit

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan Television (PTV) on Saturday said it successfully provided live coverage of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) Summit, held in Islamabad on October 15 and 16.

This significant achievement highlights the dedication and seamless collaboration of the entire organisation.

The coverage was made possible through the deployment of cutting-edge equipment at Nur Khan Airbase, Islamabad International Airport, Jinnah Convention Centre and all key venues, supported by ISMC units, EPUs, fibre optic connectivity, and HD cameras to ensure a top-quality broadcast, a news release said.

In preparation for the summit, PTV World was upgraded from SD to HD, allowing foreign media outlets and other TV broadcasters of the world to access high-quality signals, further enhancing Pakistan's global image.

A live feed was provided to foreign media at the P a k i s t a n - C h i n a Friendship Centre (PCFC), and the broadcast featured multi-lingual feeds to accommodate international audiences.

Additionally, sign language interpretation was included in the broadcast of the leaders' address and major events, ensuring inclusivity and accessibility for all viewers.

Alongside the live television broadcast, extensive coverage was provided on PTV's social media platforms, offering a wide-reaching and engaging online presence. Real-time updates and highlights of the summit were shared across PTV's digital platforms, expanding the audience reach and enhancing overall engagement.

Importantly, this comprehensive coverage was successfully executed using available resources, with no additional expenses incurred. The in-depth analysis, reporting, and social media engagement during the summit reflect our strong commitment to excellence in broadcasting.

The success of the SCO 2024 coverage underscores the professionalism and dedication of PTV in elevating the nation's profile on the global stage. — APP

Girl abducted in Hassanabdal

By Our Correspondent

TAXILA: A teenage girl was abducted while three persons were arrested for trapping a married woman in two different incidents in the limits of Hassanabdal police station on Saturday.

According to police sources, in the first incident, a woman has reported to police that she went to work as a house maid when a man abducted her 18-year-old daughter.

Separately, a mother of Khosrawanagar, reported to police that her husband has been in Attock jail for the last two years. She said that she was sleeping with her three children in her house when three persons came to her house and tried to occupy the upper portion of the house and when she resisted they trashed her besides tearing her clothes.

CORRIGENDUM/ADDENDUM

In continuation of the Advertisement of Public Health Engineering Division Tribal District Bajaur No. 19(P) 2670/24 Published in Daily Express Newspaper on dated 13 October 2024 vide this office letter No. 24-237-T/PHE dated 07 October 2024, the following correction/addition must be incorporated in tabular data:

1. AT SECTION "C" Serial No. 14 may be read as: CONSTRUCTION OF PCC STREET PAVEMENT, DRAINS, AND CULVERTS AT ARANG & SURROUNDING AREA.

2. AT SECTION "C" Serial No. 17 may be read as: CONSTRUCTION OF PCC STREET PAVEMENT, DRAINS, AND CULVERTS VC MATAKO & SURROUNDING AREA.

NOTE: Other columns of the above serial nos. and terms and conditions of the NIT will remain the same.

EXECUTIVE ENGINEER
PHE DIVISION
TRIBAL DISTRICT BAJAUR
19(P)2731/24

Session on stress management held

RAWALPINDI: The Rawalpindi Chamber of Commerce and Industry (RCCI), in collaboration with Marwat International Hospital, held an informative session on 'Stress and Depression Management and Oral Health' at the chamber house on Saturday.

The session aimed at equipping participants with practical strategies for coping with mental health challenges, fostering a supportive community for those affected, says a press release.

RCCI President Usman Shaukat, Senior Vice President Khalid Farooq Qari and Vice President Fahad Barlas warmly welcomed guests and attendees. Executive committee members, distinguished members and a large number of audience attended the informative session.

Guest speakers Dr Sarita, a psychiatrist, and Dr Waheedullah shared valuable insights on managing stress and depression, emphasising on the importance of mental health awareness.

Dr Waheedullah also led a segment on oral health, highlighting the connection between oral hygiene and overall mental well-being.

He discussed effective dental care practices and the importance of regular checkups to prevent complications. — Staff Reporter



COMMUTERS board a Blue Line metro bus at a stop in Islamabad on Saturday. — Online

Constitutional courts will play key role in governance: PPP

By Our Staff Reporter

ISLAMABAD: Human Rights Cell of Pakistan People's Party (PPP) Vice President Zohra Asghar has said constitutional courts will play a substantial role in the country's governance and democratic development.

"These courts will be responsible for constraining the Executive, ensuring that laws and government actions should be aligned with its provisions and protecting people's civil rights. One of the primary functions of constitutional courts is to safeguard people's civil rights, such as freedom of speech, equality and social justice. These rights are protected in the Constitution and the courts ensure that they are upheld and safeguarded," he said in a statement.

"In a world where political leaders often prioritise power over principle, Bilawal Bhutto Zardari stands out as a beacon of hope for democracy and human rights. As the Chairman PPP, Bilawal has emerged as a crusader for the values of justice, equality and freedom, inspiring countless individuals with his unwavering dedication to the democratic cause," he said.

"The efforts of Bilawal have been contributory in consolidating constitutional courts and guaranteeing that they continue to guard the rights of citizens. One of the key areas where Bilawal Bhutto Zardari has made a significant impact is in the realm of 26th constitutional amendments. The PPP and the Jamiat Ulema-e-Islam Fathul Rehman (JUI-F) reached a consensus on constitutional amendments. This consensus is a major step forward in ensuring that the constitutional courts remain effective and independent," Mr Asghar said.

"Judicial reforms are essential for Pakistan's democratic development and ensuring the governance structure aligns with citizens' evolving needs. Addressing key areas like multidimensional inequalities, devolution, the judiciary's role, electoral reforms and military interventions will help create a more just and equitable society. By prioritising these reforms, Pakistan can move towards a more robust democracy, ensuring the well-being and prosperity of its citizens," he said.

Multipurpose hall demanded in higher secondary school

By Shafiq Butt

SAHRAWAL: The village community, schoolteachers, students and their parents are advocating for a multipurpose hall for the Government Girls Higher Secondary School, Chak 73/5-4.

It was a high school that upgraded in 2001 with only minor improvements to its infrastructure spread over 38 kanals. The school has 1,644 girls, including 17% of intermediate classes.

Atish Masood, the village Lundardar, said the school was originally established in 1955. When it was upgraded to higher secondary level, a few rooms were added to the old structure, but a multipurpose hall—vital for conducting co-curricular activities—is never built, he added.

A senior teacher, speaking anonymously, says due to the absence of a hall, half of the available classrooms remain occupied during the Sahrawal Board's 9th and 10th grade annual exams held twice a year.

"As the school becomes an examination centre, the administrators are forced to hold classes for senior students outdoors," he said.

Approximately 250 to 300 students participate in these exams and the figure was confirmed by Mr Naveed, the controller of Sahrawal Board of Intermediate and Secondary Education (SBISE).

Reports indicate that there are 36 sanctioned teaching positions and 37 non-teaching positions at the school but 19 posts are currently vacant. This shortage adds further pressure on the administration as the teachers are forced to manage overcrowded classrooms. While the education department mandates 40 students per class, the number here remains 60 to 70 students in each class.

The school has enough land for building the hall due to its spread over 38 kanals, including five playgrounds.

Samina Iqbal, the principal, says the lack of a multipurpose hall disrupts classes, particularly during the peak study season when SBISE exams are held.

"The school has sufficient land for the construction of a multipurpose hall but lacks funds," she adds.

Aziz Chaudhry, a prominent local figure, points out that schools in the area are consistently underfunded and elected representatives focus more on road construction to connect villages to markets than educational infrastructure.

A senior teacher notes that over the past two years the school received two non-salary grants of Rs154,000 and Rs274,961.

The principal says she approached the village community to raise funds but the construction of a 75x50 foot hall would require a much larger sum. The villagers had previously come together to repair the school's boundary wall damaged in recent years.

Muhammad Hameed, CEO education, admits that the demand is genuine but the question of funds needs to be answered yet.



A CHILD puts a sack in a handcart at the I-11 fruit and vegetable market in Islamabad on Saturday. — Online

Call for non-discrimination as world observes bioethics day

By Iram Junaidi

ISLAMABAD: The world bioethics day was observed on Saturday under a slogan of 'non-discrimination and non-stigmatisation'.

The day was commemorated by the United Nations chair in bioethics at the Department of Psychiatry, Pakistan Institute of Medical Sciences (PIMS).

This year's theme aligns with Article 11 of UNESCO's Universal Declaration on Bioethics and Human Rights.

The residents of the psychiatry department participated in the event.

Prof Dr Hameed Taj, head of the bioethics unit in Pakistan, emphasised the crucial role of non-discrimination and non-stigmatisation in developing human connections and relationships.

He explained that stigma encompasses negative and stereotypical attitudes and feelings toward people based on characteristics such as gender, ethnicity, religion and mental illness.

"This can lead to labelling certain groups as less deserving of respect and

rights. These attitudes in the community are supported by ignorance, prejudice and discrimination, and are perpetuated when mental illness is represented inaccurately. Discrimination may be obvious and direct, such as someone making a negative remark about the person's mental illness, HIV etc., or his treatment," he said.

It may be unintentional or subtle such as someone avoiding the individual living with mental illness because the person assumes the ill person could be unstable, violent or dangerous due to his/her mental health condition. Discriminating against someone at work, denying access to education, accommodation, entry to premises or the provision of services under the guise of the individual having HIV, mental illness is unlawful.

Prof Taj said many people hold negative perceptions of individuals with mental health issues due to a lack of understanding and reliance on myths and misconceptions. As health professionals, he stressed their commitment to ensuring that people with mental

health challenges have equal rights and are treated without discrimination.

Discrimination can manifest in various forms: either overtly, such as negative remarks about an individual's mental health or HIV status, or subtly, such as avoiding someone with a mental illness due to unfounded fears of instability or danger.

Discriminating against individuals by denying access to work, education, housing, or services based on their mental health or HIV status is illegal and goes against fundamental human rights.

Addressing the causes of stigma, he pointed out that a lack of knowledge and fear surrounding conditions like HIV/AIDS were significant contributors. Gender-based stereotypes also played a role, as women with disabilities were often more stigmatised than men, facing challenges in literacy, employment and stable relationships.

He highlighted the detrimental effects of stigma and discrimination, which included rejection, loss of confidence, reluctance to seek medical care, low self-esteem, financial difficulties, and isolation. People with HIV/AIDS, mental health issues or those who identify as transgender often experience feelings of shame, denial, depression, and even suicidal thoughts.

To combat stigma and discrimination, Prof Taj emphasised the need to educate communities about the realities faced by individuals living with HIV/AIDS, mental health conditions, and other gender-related issues.

He advocated for increased community involvement in discussions on stigma, improving service access, and promoting accurate representations through media.

Additionally, he underscored the importance of providing microcredit opportunities to empower those facing discrimination and to help boost their self-esteem.

"By working on this critical human rights issue, we can nurture an inclusive and understanding society that respects the dignity of every individual," Prof Taj added.



A WORKER sits amidst flower pots at a nursery in Islamabad's H-9 sector. — Online

Imran, Gandapur acquitted in May 25 cases

Continued from Page 13

early October.

During the proceedings, defense lawyers Usman Raza Gill, Faizal Chaudhary, and Khalid Younis appeared before the court on behalf of the accused.

Advocate Faizal Chaudhary urged the court to allow Mr Khan and Bashra Bita to participate in the hearings via video link.

He argued that the legal team had not been able to meet with their clients since October 3, and insisted that the court should issue an order enabling the lawyers to see the accused, either through video conferencing or in person.

"If the video link is not feasible, then we request the court to issue orders for the physical production of the accused," Chaudhary stated.

Judge advised the defence to submit a formal written application regarding their request for video link or court production.

After brief discussions, the court decided to adjourn the hearing until October 22.

Operation launched to address traffic woes in Muzaffarabad

By Tariq Naqash

MUZAFFARABAD: A joint operation by the administration and police is set to start to tackle the escalating traffic issues and frequent violations of traffic laws within the municipal limits of the Azad Jammu and Kashmir (AJK) capital.

An announcement for this effort was made by Deputy Commissioner Muzaffarabad, Musharraf Farooq, during a meeting held to identify and address the factors contributing to the city's traffic problems.

He expressed the hope that citizens would cooperate fully to ensure the success of the joint operation in their own interest. The meeting was attended by Senior Superintendent of Police Muzaffarabad, Kamran Ali, Assistant Commissioner Muzaffarabad Rural, Zeshan Nisar, Syed Qasim Abbas, Estate Officer, and Syed Shaukel Gilani, Secretary of Muzaffarabad Municipal Corporation, as well as Muhammad Asif Mir,

Tehsilkar, and Waheed Hussain, Anti-Encroachment Officer of the Development Authority Muzaffarabad.

Deputy commissioner Farooq expressed concern that despite efforts, significant improvements had not been made to the traffic control system in Muzaffarabad. He cited encroachment as one of the primary reasons for the worsening traffic situation.

"Shopkeepers have set up stalls on sidewalks in front of their shops, further aggravating traffic problems," he said, asking the civic bodies to ensure the immediate removal of these encroachments without showing any leniency.

He specifically directed the removal of encroachments by street vendors in areas like Upper Aala, CMH Road, Bank Road, especially from Neelum Bridge to Haidari Bazaar, and from Old Secretariat, particularly from Raheli Sarkar to Garhi Pan Chowk.

"These encroachments force people to park improperly and pedestrians to walk on main roads due to

blocked sidewalks, disrupting the flow of traffic," he said.

The deputy commissioner noted that the city's already narrow roads were becoming more congested, exacerbating the traffic crisis.

He also pointed out that the entry of vehicles and motorcycles into Muzaffarabad's popular commercial hub, Medina Market, along with the presence of street vendors, had made it increasingly difficult for pedestrians to navigate.

Additionally, Mr Farooq raised concerns about consistent complaints regarding debris from rains and landfills, as well as the dumping of building materials on Kohala Road and Jhelum Valley Road.

These obstructions not only disrupt traffic flow but have also led to fatal accidents, he said, and urged the National Highway Authority (NHRA) to take prompt action to clear these roads and ensure the safety of travellers.

He also stressed the need to remove unnecessary speed breakers without delay.



A MAN walks along a horse-drawn carriage, commonly called boggy, at Committee Chowk in Rawalpindi on Saturday. — Photo by Mohammad Asim

LAHORE

Sunset 05:28 pm
Sunrise (Tomorrow) 06:07 am

NEXT 24 HRS

Minimum 21.0°C
Maximum 34.0°C
Outlook Sunny

AQI

Maximum (Yesterday) 327

METRO Central



United ease pressure
on Ten Hag, Spurs
run riot

Pg.20 SPORT



A HAZE has engulfed the city with very unhealthy air quality. — White Star

Eight FIA officials booked for abetting human trafficking

By Zulqarnain Tahir

LAHORE: The Federal Investigation Agency (FIA) has booked its own eight officials for allegedly abetting human trafficking by air travel as a foreign airlines' officials are also involved in it.

In Pakistan, human traffickers usually opt for a land route to transport illegal immigrants to "greener pastures" but in this case air route was exploited to send two illegal immigrants to Italy and Canada through doctored travel documents.

The FIA booked its sub-inspectors Saifullah Liaqat and Irfan Shoukat, ASI Sajjad Ahmed, traffic assistants Aul Masood and Omis Aslam, and constables Nadim, Mustafa, Danish Ali and Faizal Nazir

posted at Siakot International Airport for their alleged offence. All suspects are reportedly on pre-arrest bail.

According to the first information report, a suspect departed from Siakot airport to Italy via Dubai on forged travel documents of Muhammad Irfan by changing the picture. The passenger was issued double boarding. The MRP verification showed that the passenger with possession of passport was not the rightful owner and the passport was changed. Later, the same passenger was deported by the Doha immigration authorities and on arrival his papers were processed without MRP verification. The original passport holder, Muhammad Irfan, had already departed for Italy.

In another incident, suspect

Ardan Aslam departed from Siakot airport to Canada via Dubai on forged travel documents of Umar Raza by changing the picture.

The MRP verification showed that the passenger with possession of passport was not the rightful owner and the picture on it was changed. The original passport holder, Umar Raza, had already departed for Canada from Atlanta International Airport, Lahore.

Later on, the passenger was deported by the Doha immigration authorities and on arrival at the Siakot airport his documents were processed.

The FIA inquiry has found the above suspects of facilitating the departure of [imposed] passengers on forged documents. "All the above alleged immigration and (foreign) air

lines officials have committed the offence of criminal misconduct by misuse of authority by facilitating the impostor passengers on departure and arrival," the inquiry reports says.

The FIA has also booked passport holders - Muhammad Irfan and Umar Raza - and suspect Ardan Aslam and unknown impostor under sections 17/18 E.O 1979, 201, 413, 425, 468, 471 PPC, r/o 5 (2) 47 PCA while the role of others agents. FIA officers/officials and airline/PIAL officials will be determined during the course of investigation.

Recently, notorious human smugglers have started taking advantage of Pakistani immigrants trying to illegally reach Europe via Iran by holding them for ransom.

The smugglers in Pakistan

with the help of their sub-agents detain and torture immigrants aspiring to reach Europe, film the ordeal, and send it back to their respective families to seek money for the safe release of their loved ones.

A few months ago three such incidents were reported in which as many as 10 young men were tortured and incarcerated by these gangs. A few of them paid money to secure freedom while some were released by the Iran police in collaboration with the Pakistani embassy in Tehran.

According to the FIA, the dangerous trend of arranging the travel of illegal immigrants and detaining them abroad to extract heavy amounts — by local gangs in cohort with their international counterparts — has picked up steam in recent times.

Student injured during protests stable now

By Wassam Asfand Bhatti

GUJRAT: The condition of a 17-year-old student who was critically injured during the recent protest against the Punjab Group of Colleges (PGC) as police chased the protesters on the GT Road reportedly got stable and ventilator support was removed from him after 72 hours.

Dr Asad Naeir, the medical superintendent of the Azeem Shaukat Teaching Hospital (ABSTH), confirmed to Dawn that Asadullah was getting stable and ventilator removal indicated that the neurosurgeon had conducted a successful surgery.

He said Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz had sent a team of senior neurosur-

geons from Lahore on Friday and they had thoroughly examined Asad. On the senior neurosurgeons' recommendation, he was shifted to the Institute of Neurosurgery in Lahore on a ventilator.

Mr Naeir said on Saturday the condition of the patient improved so much that he had been removed from the ventilator for the first time after being operated upon at the ABSTH on Tuesday.

Asad had suffered a fatal head injury after his motorbike struck a median on the GT Road. He was being chased by police. The police van was chasing the fleeing students after the first violent protest at the Gora Campus of the Punjab College on Tuesday.

Continued on Page 14

LHC stays land transfer for corporate farming under CPEC

By Our Staff Reporter

LAHORE: The Lahore High Court has granted an injunctive order in favour of a tenant against the Punjab government's action of transferring his cultivated land to Corporate Agriculture Farming (CAF) under the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC).

Petitioner Muhammad Jafar, a sub-tenant of Muhammad Naeir Seed Farm in Pakpattan Sharif, pleads that the land measuring 525 acres owned by the provincial government was allotted to the farm from 1912 to 1928.

Later, the farm engaged sub-tenants on the land around 400 acres and the petitioner's predecessor had been cultivating the land in question since 1928. He states that the land at the time of allotment was barren and in the shape of stacks of sand.

The petitioner alleges that the authorities recently threatened and restrained him from continuing cultivation of the land.

Asked about any written notice, he says, the officials showed him a notice of Feb 23, 2024, issued in the name of other tenants.

He further submitted that the agriculture department, when approached, showed him a letter of 2021 wherein a no objection certificate (NOC) was issued for the transfer of the land to the CAF scheme.

The petitioner argues that the government unilaterally handed over the land to the CAF retaining him from cultivation, which is unlawful and a violation of fundamental rights.

He points out that the government had announced giving only barren land for the CAF, not the fertile land.

He asks the court to set aside the

impugned decisions of the government for being unlawful.

Justice Shaukat Mahmood Mirza directed a provincial law officer to seek instructions from the respondents, including the federal secretary for defence, by Nov 27.

"Till the next date of hearing, the possession of the petitioner over property in dispute shall not be disturbed in any manner whatsoever," the judge wrote in the order.

It is to mention that a LHC single bench had on June 21, 2023, struck down the handing over of over 45,000 acres of land to the Pakistan army by the caretaker government of Punjab on a 20-year lease for the purpose of the CAF under the CPEC for being beyond the mandate of both — the caretakers and the army.

However, a division bench on July 17, 2023, suspended the single bench's decision.

Another day of protests, arrests of PTI activists

Dawn Report

TORA TER SINGH: A province-wide crackdown on Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) activists continued on Friday night and Saturday.

Several activists were rounded up for protesting against the government in Faisalabad, Muzaffargarh, Kot Addu, Layyah and Okara.

In Faisalabad, police filed cases against 75 PTI activists for holding a protest at Kalambi Chowk on Saturday. Five PTI workers were nominated in the FIR, while the rest are unidentified.

According to the complainant, Inspector Shaukat Ali, Bilal Gajjar, Khalid Mahmood, Faraz Ali, Ali Sher Kamoka and Raza Fayaz led a rally of about 70 people. They blocked traffic, damaged private vehicles and threw stones at policemen while chanting slo-

gans against the government. The police resorted to tear gas to disperse the crowd, after which the protesters fled.

MUZAFFARGARH: PTI MPA Rafia Farooq Khan was arrested on Friday night during a protest at Qureshi Chowk.

Claiming to be protesting peacefully, Ms Khan was detained and transferred to Dera Ghazi Khan jail.

Meanwhile, the Muzaffargarh city police registered cases against more than a dozen lawyers, along with 25 unidentified participants, for violating Section 144 while protesting.

The local District Bar Association (DBA) had already been on strike over the detention of DBA President Sharif Malana, who was jailed for 30 days. The government, however, caved in to lawyers' pressure and on Saturday, Malana was released after the district administration withdrew his detention orders following court directives.

In Layyah district, around 30 protesters were booked for staging a demonstration against the government. The protesters were charged with defying Section 144, and suits are underway to apprehend those involved.

OKARA: The police arrested seven PTI activists for violating Section 144 and staging a protest against the Punjab government on Friday night.

According to the first information report, filed by SHO Muhammad Raza Bhatti, the protest was led by PTI provincial assembly ticket holder Rai Hamid Aslam Khan.

A Sadrul-patrolling police team received reports that around 30-35 PTI workers, carrying party flags and placards, had blocked Okara Faisalabad Road near Naigrah Man, about 2km north of the city.

The protesters were chanting slogans against the Punjab government and demanding the release of Imran Khan.

Despite being warned by the police to disperse and clear the road due to the enforcement of Section 144 across the district, the protesters refused to comply.

Reinforcements were called in, and the police were able to disperse the protest. Seven activists were arrested, including Rai Khairat, Nasir Abbas, Nadeem Raza Maghiana, Hasham Aslam, Syed Yousaf Raza and Imtiaz, while the rest of the group managed to escape.

Another PTI group, led by Chaudhry Saleem Sadiq and Mahr Javed Iqbal, also violated Section 144 during the protest but evaded arrest upon the arrival of the police.

The arrested workers were charged under Section 188 of the Pakistan Penal Code and Section 16 of The Maintenance of Public Order Ordinance, 1960. However, they were presented before Duty Magistrate Shahid Farzana, who discharged them from the case, and all were released on the spot.

Policemen get age relaxation for PPSC exam

By Our Staff Reporter

LAHORE: In a career-boosting move, the Punjab police department on Saturday announced a one-time, five-year age relaxation for constables and head constables wishing to appear for the Punjab Public Service Commission (PPSC) examination for promotion.

The upper age limit has been increased from 35 to 40 years for the upcoming exams for sub-inspector (SI) and assistant sub-inspector (ASI) positions.

Inspector General of Police (IGP) Dr Usman Anwar said that the step was aimed to benefit over-age constables and head constables, particularly those who missed their chance due to disruptions caused by the Covid-19 pandemic and other unforeseen factors.

He said over 1,000 police personnel were previously unable to appear for the PPSC exam under the P-Cadet Scheme and would now be eligible to take part in the opportunity for promotion.

A Punjab police spokesperson highlighted that the age relaxation would positively impact thousands of constables who had been hoping for such a decision.

He said the officers, previously ineligible due to age constraints, could now advance in their careers and qualify for the much-anticipated SI and ASI posts.

The decision followed an appeal by a large number of constables who had directly approached IGP Anwar, emphasising their concerns about missing career progression opportunities.

Responding to the issue, IGP Anwar submitted a summary to the Cabinet Committee, which subsequently approved the age extension. However, the relaxation will apply only to the upcoming PPSC exam.

IGP Anwar encouraged eligible officers to begin preparations for the competitive examination, which is expected to be announced soon.

CM calls for polio eradication plan

LAHORE: The chief minister has sought a practical and sustainable plan to eliminate environmental samples of poliovirus.

Maryam Nawaz was presiding over a meeting regarding elimination of polio here on Saturday. A decision was made to track and register mobile and migrant populations in Punjab.

The chief minister directed an effective vaccination campaign at all entry points of Punjab. She also ordered a comprehensive and effective vaccination initiative in order to achieve the desired goal of completely eradicating poliovirus.

She said accurate data on missing children should be compiled during the vaccination campaign. The meeting also reviewed micro-plans and proposals to further enhance the effectiveness of the vaccination campaign so as to make Punjab completely polio-free.

Ms Nawaz said that making Punjab completely polio-free was her government's commitment. She said that she was personally monitoring the vaccination campaign and underscored that the poliovirus could only be eradicated through vigorous and complete public support.

She directed that maintaining a cold chain according to SOPs during the vaccination campaign should be ensured.

Ms Nawaz said that increased spreading of polio virus in Punjab was a matter of great concern and focused attention must be paid on the districts with weak vaccination coverage. — Staff Reporter

Seven falcon poachers held

LAHORE: The Punjab Wildlife Department's special squad has intensified efforts to clamp down on falcon poachers.

The squad carried out an operation on Saturday in the riverine area near the river Chenab in Chisht, leading to the arrest of seven poachers, including a landlord involved in falcon hunting.

The team also recovered the hunted falcons, nets and other equipment used in the illegal activity.

The department said habitual poachers used to hunt falcons along the Chenab, and the special squad had been monitoring their activities.

The squad conducted a raid on a local settlement, apprehending the poachers, despite facing resistance during the operation. It said legal proceedings had been initiated against the arrested poachers. — Staff Reporter

PRAYER

Fajr	4.47
Zuhar	1.00
Asr	3.48
Maghrib	5.28
Isha	6.47

Praying time in Lahore

REFLECTIONS

DO NOT GET WORRIED AND DEPRESSED OVER THE OPPRESSION BECAUSE WHOEVER OPPRESSES YOU IS IN REALITY DOING HIMSELF HARM AND IS TRYING TO FIND WAYS FOR YOUR GOOD. 35

— HAKRAT ALI (L.A.)
(7841427)

ATC discharges PTI lawyer in violence case

By Our Staff Reporter

LAHORE: An anti-terror court on Saturday discharged a lawyer of the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) from a case of violence related to Oct 6 protest and sent three activists to jail for their identification parade.

The police presented Advocate Zameer Ahmad Chishti and others before the court seeking permission to shift them to jail for identification parade.

Scores of PTI lawyers, present on the court premises, shouted slogans in favour of their arrested fellows.

ATC Judge Irfan Haider turned down the police request to the extent of the lawyer, however, allowed it to shift three suspects to jail for their identification parade.

The suspects are Muhammad Usman, Adnan Karim and Samadullah. The judge also granted three-day physical remand of another suspect, Irfan alias Shams.

The cases were registered for Lorry Abdu, Manti Gate, Islamabad and Shaligah police on charges of attacking police personnel and damaging public and private properties.

Student...

Continued from Page 13

by student groups against the alleged rape of a girl in Lahore.

Taking notice of the incident, the Punjab CM had issued instructions for registering a case against the police officials chasing the motorcyclist students. The case was lodged against the station house officer (SHO) and other policemen of the Lorry Abdu Police Station.

It is learnt that the CM also spoke to the parents of Asad twice over the telephone and sent **S u b j e c t s** a Commissioner. Naveed Haider Sheroori to hospital to inquire after him.

Senior PTI leader Parvez Elahi had also sent his cousin Samara Elahi to the ASSTB to inquire after Asad and assured his family of all support.

HARKING BACK

The forgotten mass massacres in Lahore in 1857

By Majid Shahid

In history we read about various invasions followed by massacres. Many of these were carried out by Iranian, Arab, Turkish, and Afghan forces. In some cases, Lahore suffered destruction with countless women and children taken into slavery. History is about learning from the past, and not repeating the same mistakes. Sadly, the response these days to these horrors of the past is a "shut disinterest". The normal response is "Oh, I never knew that." Why have we become like this?

The most recent massacre took place in 1947, in which over one million people of various faiths were killed ruthlessly. When faith was taken as a consideration, the outcome is mass murders. Faith is blind say the sages. But then our new generation, call them Generation X, given an indifferent shrug to these happenings. Our school textbooks barely mention the details, or if a mention is made it's the Muslim version only, not the complete picture. In this column we have advocated the conversion of the Badshahi Hall on Rattigan Road into a Partition Museum. Our

bureaucrats have shrugged it off. But then given that our investment in among the world's lowest in education, this is not surprising. Before the Partition killings, the one before it, specifically concerning Lahore, was the 1857 mass massacre carried out by the East India Company.

In an earlier column we had listed a few events, but today let us go over the actual massacres that took place in Lahore. I am aware most of us may not be interested in it, but let's go over events only.

The War of Independence has been, rightly or wrongly, blamed on soldiers protesting over the use of cow fat and also ate fat, depending on one's faith, in the making of the latest rifle cartridges. Recent research by a Cambridge historian proves that both fat types were used, given that industrial lubricants were not available then. That is understandable. As discontent spread all over the subcontinent, on the 15th of May 1857, the soldiers at Meerut revolted murdering English officers. As the killing spread, a large army of disgruntled "freedom fighters" were marching towards Delhi, hoping that the cholera emperor Bahadur Shah Zafar — then on British prison — would lead them. The aging Mughal emperor, confused that he was, allegedly supported this uprising rapidly spread to all the cantonments in the subcontinent and in the Punjab the first to rise against foreign rule was Ferozpur, where the 45th Native Infantry had attacked the EIC defences.

The revolting soldiers headed towards Lahore en route to Delhi. On the morning of the 15th of May all the EIC Indian soldiers in Lahore were ordered to disarm. A munition ran through the ranks as on one side the entire English artillery stood ready to fire, and on the other three sides the cavalry stood ready to attack. It was a hopeless situation. All the arms were moved to the Lahore Fort, where

rations for six months were rushed from all the markets for 4,000 months. The traders sided with the EIC, and most were later well rewarded. With the arsenal secure and preparations for a possible siege in place, it was all set for a massacre. Here, like even today, the Lahore Police assisted the rulers, and assisted mercilessly.

Mind you the Punjab Police have been trained to support the rulers, not the people. The

British, especially trained them into virtual robots, which they remain even today. It was surely an unplanned revolution, like all revolutions are. The stage was set for a final battle at Delhi, and Lahore was the collection point.

The EIC soldiers and their supporters, over half of them Punjab, mostly Sikh from the Ranjit Singh's defeated Army, gathered at the Company Bagh, later renamed Lawrence Garden, and now called Jinnah Bagh. In those days, the Mian Mir Cantonment did not exist, and Lahore's cantonment was in the Old Anarkali Bazaar. The Parade Ground was at the old university cricket ground. The first martyr was a soldier who shouted in praise of the 'freedom' in Old Anarkali Bazaar. He was immediately halved, put in front of a cannon and blown apart. This method of punishment was to be the standard way of dealing with every person opposing the British invaders. As a first step lead and sulphur were used, and all stocks confiscated. Inside Lahore Gate a small procession against the EIC showed slogans.

The Lahore Police under Subhan Khan's Police Battalion arrested five of the

'freedom seekers'. In front of Lahore Gate a cannon was placed and they were all blown to pieces. A row of cannons was also put in place outside Shahalahi Gate and Bhadi Gate. Two rows were installed outside the Lahore Fort gate as well as on the walls.

Throughout the walled city it was announced that those including in 'negative' discussions would be pointed out to agents, and they would be all blown apart. For a good three weeks thousands of innocent citizens were picked up and their throats lay outside these three main gateways. The objective was total submission. Police agents in plainclothes walked through every lane and street listening to discussions. The next day a few people would be picked up and blown apart. The terror was such that people stopped discussing events in the streets. All these events played on the minds of the disarmed soldiers stationed in the Badshahi Cantonment.

On the 30th of July, their commanding officer, Major Spencer, was murdered. Hundreds of totally confused sepoys fled towards the River Ravi at the Mahmood Bosti area. There the Deputy Commissioner of American, Mr.

Cooper of Cooper Road Bosti, headed a battalion of soldiers who started killing anyone seen in the area.

One document states that "the killings were by the hundreds a day". Those running towards Anarkali were all gunned down. In the jails of Lahore there was a 'rush' of prisoners and using an official policy of 'elimination of all Undesirable' hundreds of 'suspects' were shot dead. One account claims that the number killed could be over 15,000 plus.

It is important that we recognize these claims that supported the EIC against the people of this land. They were the Punjab Police trained by the British that led the killings. Then there were soldiers of the defeated army of Ranjit Singh. But the most telling support for the English came from the local landlords of the Punjab, who organized armed horsemen who went about murdering anyone in sight.

Our history books need to be rewritten to include the massacres of old, and how our city and its citizens suffered and came through to emerge time and again. That is why being honest to ourselves is a primary trait that we must nurture.

High court upholds conviction of patwari

By Our Staff Reporter

LAHORE: Upholding the sentence of a patwari on corruption charges, the Lahore High Court has observed that it is not easy to find direct evidence against an official involved in cheating and forgery of the record under his maintenance.

Convicts Arif Zaman (patwari) and Zulfikar Ali (private person) filed an appeal against a 2012 sentence awarded by a special judge, Anti-Corruption, (Enlightened under sections 420, 468, 471 of Pakistan Penal Code, and section 5(2) of Prevention of Corruption Act, 1947).

Justice Farooq Haider allowed the appeal of the private individual, however, upheld the conviction of the patwari, an official of the revenue department.

In his judgement, the judge observed that while deciding a criminal case, the approach of the court must be inquisitorial instead of adversarial.

He said in case of forgery, cheating and particularly by an accused who being official is also holder of the relevant record, it is not easy to find out the direct evidence because such officials when become cheaters, make planning, manage the atmosphere, material, try their level best to conceal the rele-

vant incriminating material.

He observed that in such cases accused officials usually argue that forgery comes to the knowledge of the affected person at a belated stage and it is more difficult to find out evidence due to passage of considerable time.

Therefore, the judge said in such offences the relevant material can be given due credence while appreciating the evidence in light of existing "the thing speaks itself", instead of emphasising the oral direct evidence.

Justice Haider noted that the convict being patwari of the relevant area had full knowledge of an incomplete/dubious aspect of the record he forged to issue an immutational mutation.

The judge ruled that the prosecution proved its case against appellant Zaman beyond shadow of doubt as he had been rightly convicted and sentenced by the trial court.

The judge dismissed the appeal to the extent of Zaman (patwari) and also recalled an earlier order of the LHC with respect to suspension of execution of the appellant's sentence.

The judge directed the police concerned to proceed further in accordance with law.



CITIZENS buy belts in Lardis Bazaar. — Online

JI emir urges opposition to reject proposed amendment

LAHORE: Jamaat-i-Islami Emir Hafiz Naeem-ul-Rehman has again urged opposition parties to firmly reject the proposed constitutional amendment, calling on the government to issue a notification regarding the appointment of senior-most judge Mansoor Ali Shah as chief justice of Pakistan.

Speaking at a press conference in Marmora on Saturday, he advised the opposition not to entangle themselves in the amendment issue at this critical juncture.

He suggested that the debate on the amendment could be postponed until the retirement of the current chief justice.

The judge directed the police concerned to proceed further in accordance with law.

this matter.

Rehman emphasised that the Constitution is a consensus document, and any changes to it must be agreed upon by all political parties, including those not currently in parliament, and should take place after the chief justice's retirement.

He called for a broader dialogue on judicial reforms, reiterating that the appointment of the chief justice should remain based on seniority. He firmly opposed any change to this method, arguing that allowing a parliamentary committee to appoint the chief justice would undermine judicial independence.

According to Rehman, the government's approach to judicial appointments reflects its desire for control and pick and choose

favoritism, which he said compromises the judiciary's autonomy.

The JI emir also criticised the government, saying it lacked legitimacy to amend the Constitution, as it came to power through a fraudulent mandate, referring to the manipulation of Form 47.

He also formed a committee under the chair of party rails emir Liaqat Baloch to prepare a draft for judicial reforms.

Rehman welcomed the formation of a full bench to address the alleged rape case of a female student at a private college. He called on the government to provide its investigation report to the public, stressing that the public deserved to know whether the incident was a case of fake news

or an actual crime.

He announced that the JI had established a legal forum under its Lahore chapter emir Advocate Ziaur Rehman Ansari to provide free legal aid to the people who could not afford lawyer's fee.

The JI leader condemned the killing of Hamas leader Yahya Sinwar and denounced Israeli atrocities in Gaza, expressing solidarity with Hamas and the people of Palestine.

He urged the government to honour the Rawalpindi agreement by providing relief to the public in the form of reduced electricity bills and the abolition of agreements with independent power producers (IPPs). — Staff Reporter

Thar coal rail plan faces environmental backlash

By Nisar Jinnat

LAHORE: Both the federal and Sindh governments must address the serious environmental and socio-economic concerns related to their plan to construct a 105-km railway track linking Thar's coal fields with existing railway network at Mirpur Khas for further coal transportation across the country for power generation and cement factories.

Another 7-km long double-line track is to be laid from Karachi's Bin Qasim area to two power plants located near Port Qasim.

"Comprehensive mechanisms to assess the social and environmental costs of the project should be studied and sustainable and effective remedies be implemented before undertaking it," a new study, *Thar Railway Project: The Social and Environmental Costs of Coal Transportation*, demands.

Pakistan Railways (PR) has already awarded the contract for Tharparkar Railway line project to connect Thar Coal mines with its network through new rail links for bulk transportation of coal, federal secretary for railways Syed Mazhar Ali Shah told a Senate panel earlier this month. He added the project is

likely to be completed in one year and its costs would be covered equally by both the Sindh and federal governments.

The Rs5.2m proposed track will have the capacity to transport 10 million tonnes of coal annually and is part of the strategy to convert coal-based power plants from imported to Thar coal, a cheaper and indigenous alternative.

The policy brief authored by Hussain Asad and Zahra Naeem of the Policy Research Institute for Equitable Development (PRIED) says that coal development has seriously hurt the fragile ecological balance that sustains local communities living in Tharparkar.

"In the absence of any effective and sustainable mitigation strategies by the state, the population has already been left to themselves to deal with the negative environmental, economic and medical fallout of coal extraction and usage right next to their homes and herds. The railway line being constructed to increase mining activities to replace imported coal with Thar lignite will only exacerbate these ailments," it argues.

Policymakers believe that Thar's coal is the best way for Pakistan to break out of its energy and financial

crises simultaneously. The development of these reserves — including their mining and transportation — is, therefore, considered to be the only viable means for a sustained energy supply to the industry. The rail line project, thus, forms a vital link in the coal supply chain to these key industries: electricity, cement and fertilisers. It is, indeed, seen as a necessary step to create a country-wide market for Thar coal — much larger to the world. The policy brief seeks to explore how this new rail network will impact the socially unique, environmentally fragile and economically marginalised region of Thar. It, thereby, questions some aspects of the prevailing argument usually put forward to support the expansion of Thar coal development projects. The project Environment Impact Assessment (EIA) itself acknowledges the problem of livelihood loss, albeit indirectly.

It says that "most households in the project area do not own land, with land ownership being particularly rare among women-headed households". It also states that "low agricultural productivity in the area often leads to insufficient cereal production for household consumption, especially in female-headed households." While recog-

nising these "key socioeconomic challenges", the EIA acknowledges that it "lacks depth in addressing how the railway project might exacerbate or mitigate these issues, particularly the vulnerabilities of landless and women-headed households".

The planners say the coal transportation via rail will save 65 per cent in fuel costs, have a much smaller climatic and environmental impact, and drastically cut fuel imports, slash operational and manufacturing cost of power producers, cement manufacturers and fertiliser producers benefiting consumers. It is also expected to increase land value, regional income and economic activity in Thar as the track would connect the region with the rest of the country for business and public transport.

"Even the EIA report admits that it is important to carry out detailed studies on the potential effects of the railway line on agricultural practices and food security in the project area. These studies should take into account socio-cultural, economic, medical and biodiversity aspects of the project and also provide detailed mitigation measures to address the problems related to agriculture and food security," the brief insists. "This is being done

even when producing electricity through renewables such as solar has become far more cheaper than even local coal," it laments.

Moreover, since the expansion of coal mining in Thar and transportation of coal through rail are both certain to increase the level of greenhouse gas emissions and other environmentally hazardous substances, they should be allowed to go ahead only after all necessary environmental, social, and economic safeguards have been put in place — and that too according to internationally acceptable standards.

"Coal transportation also generates PM 2.5 which has proven to be a serious health and environmental hazard globally. Any development project that increases the generation of this particulate matter must, therefore, be subjected to serious and detailed scrutiny involving independent experts, civil society, and local communities," it says.

Quoting the experience of the US, Australia and India, the brief says the health and environmental price of pollution caused during coal extraction and its transportation for Thar's population is too high to be overlooked. And, it will also offset the supposed climatic and environmental advantages that coal

rail may have over road transport.

"This is also likely to cause numerous problems outside of Thar. For one, it will increase health hazards in all those areas where the coal will be transported to and stored. That coal storage and transportation cause serious public health risks and environmental problems is evident from the numerous letters that the Sindh Environmental Protection Agency (SEPA) has written to the Port Qasim Authority about these very risks and problems. Secondly, coal mining and coal-based power generation in Tharparkar are already known to have caused early health and environmental hazards for the residents. The economic costs of these hazards could easily outweigh the financial benefits that Pakistan may reap from replacing imported fuels with local coal. Thirdly, the argument that the prices of electricity, cement and fertilisers will come down due to the usage of local coal is not likely to turn out to be valid. Pakistan is also likely to disqualify itself from accessing climate-specific financing tools such as Green Climate Fund (GCF) if it continues to expand its mining, transportation, and usage of coal and thereby increase its hazardous emissions profile," the study says.

Speed bump claims youth's life

By Our Correspondent

MUZAFFARGARH: A youth died on Saturday after falling from his motorcycle due to a bump from a speed breaker in the Talhari area of Muzaffargarh, where the Deputy Commissioner's House is located.

The deceased was identified as a 24-year-old Muhammad Wassan, a resident of Talhari, while his two brothers, who were riding as passengers, sustained serious injuries in the accident.

The incident drew the attention of Deputy Commissioner Qasim Ali who ordered an investigation.

This comes despite the fact that deputy commissioner since then the road and passed over the raised section of the road almost every day, which was primarily installed to slow down traffic near the DC House. The speed breaker has reportedly been the site of multiple accidents.

Highway Department officials said the speed bump was constructed without proper authorisation, while the contractor claims it was built under orders from the administration.

The road was constructed last year, and at that time, the speed breaker in question was missing. Because speed breakers are prohibited on

highways, the deputy commissioner acknowledged that several accidents had occurred due to the illegal speed bump on the road. She claimed that many citizens, including women, had formally requested its construction due to speeding concerns, but the height and slope of the bump were improperly designed, making it hazardous for vehicles.

Conventional speed bumps continue to be used to enforce speed limits in populated areas, but they can be inconvenient for road users.

Assistant Commissioner Irfan Hira attended Wassan's funeral and announced that an inquiry would be launched into the matter.

BOY RETRIEVED: The body of Agha, a young man from Sarawan who jumped into the river Jakes at Tamsa Barrage on Oct 13, was found on Saturday.

Upon receiving the information, a rescue team arrived at the scene on the first day, collected evidence from eyewitnesses and began rescue operation. An area of 25km was searched for two days, but the body was not found.

On the third day, the rescue team, using boat patrol techniques, found the body and transported it to his relatives' home in Sarawan.

PTI workers sacrifices won't be forgotten: Parvez

GUJRAT: PTI central President Chaudhary Parvez Elahi assured his party workers that their sacrifices rendered for the party and his family in the recent testing times would never be forgotten and they would always be given respect by him and his family.

He said this during his visit to Gujrat on Saturday. He visited his hometown after a gap of four months. Flanked by his son Raahil Elahi and cousin Samra Elahi, he attended the Qul of his family friend Zahoor Elahi, a former member of the district council who was a close aide to the late Chaudhary Zahoor Elahi. Sahi died on Thursday at village Tapala Sahi near Karpal at the age of 93.

Speaking to the sons of Sahi, including Saifullah Sahi, a former union council chairman, and Saifullah Elahi, he thanked the services of their father for the area.

This was only the second time that Parvez visited his hometown since his release from jail. A large number of people and local politicians met him.

Earlier, former ministers Qasim Zaman Kaira and Ch. Waqar Hussain, former lawmakers, Kadir Ghosh, Tariq Tarrar Malik, Rehman Naseer Marah, Jafar Iqbal Patta Marah, Mirza Khalid Anwar Ghosh, Syed Masud Ali Shah and Javed Waqar Shahabuddin also visited the Sahi home to offer condolences. — Correspondent

Five students arrested

RAHAWALPUR: Multan police arrested five students on Saturday for violence.

According to police sources, a group of students allegedly indulged in violence and broke the main gate of a private college in Multan's Radhakrishna locality on Friday. Its CCTV footage went viral on social media which alerted the Multan police. A heavy contingent of police rushed to the scene and claimed to have arrested five students while several others managed to flee on their motorcycles.

The police said the arrested students were lodged in the lockup and further action against the fleeing student was under process.

NEET DEAD: A man

and a woman were shot dead allegedly by unidentified persons near village 7 Poll Akhla Lar at Bani Malook in Lodhran district on Saturday.

According to police sources, Asim and Malika Rats were frequently seen travelling in the area on a motorcycle. They suspect that it may be an honour killing case.

Police registered a double murder case and sent the bodies to hospital for a post-mortem examination.

BURN KILLS: Four

brick kilns were destroyed while another 56 were sealed after imposing a fine of Rs1 million on their owners over violation of rigging technology in Lodhran district on Saturday. — Correspondent



LAHORE: Women buy dried fruits in Akbari Mandi. — Online

Family disputes cause of death of young woman

By Our Correspondent

TOKA TEK SINGH: A young woman was found dead in her house in the Raiwal locality of Jaranwala, Faisalabad, on Saturday.

Her brothers say that 18-year-old Maskeen Bibi, a divorcee, was upset about her future and took poison, resulting in her death.

However, the deceased's elder sister has submitted an application to the Jaranwala City police, asking for registration of a murder case against her brothers, Iftikhar and Ahmad. She alleged they poisoned Maskeen for honour.

The police took the custody of the body and shifted it to the THQ Hospital for an autopsy.

KILLED: A man was killed over an old enmity in Chak 70-JB, Mansoorpur, on Jhang Road in Faisalabad, on Saturday.

Reports said Rana Shahzad Agha was near a government high school in the village when his rival opened fire. He suffered multiple gunshot wounds. He was taken to the Allied Hospital, where he succumbed to his injuries.

Thakriwala police registered a case and are conducting raids to arrest the killers.

ASSAULT: The Bhawal police in Kamalia arrested a primary teacher on Saturday for allegedly raping a child.

The complainant from Chak 723-GB stated in his FIR, registered under Section 376 of the Pakistan Penal Code, that his son, who was learning the Holy Quran at Madrasa Ghosia in Chak 717-GB, was raped by his teacher. Doctors have confirmed the assault in the medical examination report.

DEATH: A worker died after a heavy cable fell on him in a factory in the Faisalabad industrial estate on Chak Jhanra Road on Saturday.

Reports said Muhammad Tajammal, 36, from Chak 139-JB, was unloading rolls from a trailer when one of the rolls fell on him. He was taken to Chak Jhanra THQ Hospital, where he succumbed to his wounds.

Also, in Faisalabad, one family member died and two women were seriously injured after a dumper hit their motorcycle near the dry port on Chak Jhanra Road on Friday night.

According to Resine 1122, Bilal Ghani, 41, of Chak Nawabwala, was riding his motorcycle with his wife, Shazia, 42, and sister-in-law Maria, 30, when a dumper coming from the opposite direction ran over their motorcycle. Bilal died instantly, while Shazia and Maria were taken to the Allied Hospital.

SENTENCED: A Jaranwala additional district and sessions court judge sentenced a murder case accused to death and imposed a fine of Rs500,000 on Saturday. The prosecution stated that convict Ghulam Yasin and his three accomplices shot dead Abdullah over a farmland dispute during an attack in 2021 while the deceased was travelling in a rickshaw.

The court acquitted three co-accused granting them the benefit of the doubt.

ARRESTED: Faisalabad's Bahawal police arrested a man of Chak 605-GB for raping a married woman.

The complainant alleged in her FIR registered under Section 376 of PPC that she was not at home when the accused forcibly raped her daughter-in-law.

By Our Correspondent

Following notice and instructions from DC Khushab Pervez, the technicians submitted an application to the Anti-Harassment Unit in the office of Additional Deputy Commissioner Revenue.

AJCH Qasimul Fatima Memon sponsored the technicians, and their in-charge MD for a hearing at the hospital.

During the hearing, evidence from both parties was reviewed and information was collected from hospital staff.

The doctor could not deliver himself. The inquiry committee recommended termination of the doctor from service.

RAHIM YAK KHAN: A medical officer (MO) at a welfare trust hospital, owned by a private company, was terminated from service following allegations of harassment made by two female dialysis technicians, according to an official inquiry.

In a statement released by the Deputy Director Public Relations on Saturday, two female technicians from a trust hospital in Sadighabad (rebel accused a doctor of harassment. The victims filed a complaint with the deputy commissioner's (DC) office.

SARGODHA: A target of 1.74 million hectares for wheat sowing has been set this year in the Sargodha division.

The breakdown includes 520,000 hectares in Sargodha district, 298,000 hectares in Khushab, 470,000 hectares in Mianwali and 443,000 hectares in Bhakkar.

These details were discussed in a Divisional Wheat Monitoring Committee meeting presided over by Commissioner Jahanzeb Awan.

The meeting learned that the Agriculture Department has 113,000 bags of wheat seeds, while farmers also have ample seed available.

The meeting learned that to promote timely wheat cultivation, 60 agriculture officers and 136 agricultural gradestates are visiting 1,800 villages across the division. Currently, there are 250,000 bags of urea and 150,000 bags of DAP available, ensuring no disruption in fertilizer supply

this season.

The commissioner proposed celebrating Mega Farmers Day and distributing educational materials. He said that farmers should not face any canal water shortages throughout the season.

So far, 90,000 farmers have registered for Kisan Cards across the division, with 40,000 cards received and 25,000 distributed. Starting Oct 21, farmers with Kisan Cards can obtain interest-free fertilisers and agro-medicines from dealers. Registration for the Kisan Card is still ongoing.

Commissioner Awan urged the four deputy commissioners to finalise the verification of annual applications for the green tractor scheme by Monday.

The meeting also set a target of 12,874 hectares for vegetable cultivation during the Rabi season. The government offers a subsidy of Rs100,000 for tomato cultivation and a model agricultural estate is being developed on an 18-hectare area near Ludhiana in Sargodha.

Demand for a hall in higher secondary school

By Shafiq Butt

SATIWAL: The village community, schoolteachers, students and their parents are advocating for a multipurpose hall for the Government Girls Higher Secondary School, Chak 73-5-L.

It was a high school that upgraded in 2001 with only minor improvements to its infrastructure spread over 38 kanals. The school has 1,044 girls, including 175 of Intermediate classes.

Akhtar Rashid, the village Lundardas, said the school was originally established in 1995. When it was upgraded to higher secondary level, a few rooms were added to the old structure, but a multipurpose hall-vital for conducting co-curricular activities—was never built, he added.

A senior teacher, speaking anonymously, says due to the absence of a hall, half of the available classrooms remain occupied during the National board's 9th and 10th grade annual exams held

twice a year.

"As the school becomes an examination centre, the administrators are forced to hold classes for senior students outdoors," he said.

Approximately 250 to 300 students participate in these exams and the figure was confirmed by Mr. Naveed, the controller of National Board of Intermediate and Secondary Education (NBISE).

Reports indicate that there are 36 sanctioned teaching positions at the school but 19 posts are currently vacant. This shortage adds further pressure on the administration as the teachers are forced to manage overcrowded classrooms. While the education department mandates 40 students per class, the number here remains 60 to 70 students in each class.

The school has enough land for building the hall due to its spread over 38 kanals, including five playgrounds.

Samina Iqbal, the principal, says the lack of a multipurpose

hall disrupts classes, particularly during the peak study season when BISE exams are held.

"The school has sufficient land for the construction of a multipurpose hall but lacks funds," she adds.

Ajif Chaudhry, a prominent local figure, points out that schools in the area are consistently underfunded and elected representatives focus more on road construction to connect villages to markets than educational infrastructure.

A senior teacher notes that over the past two years the school received two non-salary grants of Rs154,000 and Rs274,961.

The principal says she approached the village community to raise funds for the construction of a 75x50-foot hall would require a much larger sum. The villagers had previously come together to repair the school's boundary wall damaged in recent years.

Muhammad Iqbal, CEO education, admits that the demand is genuine but the question of funds needs to be answered yet.

Working women urge action amid climate, connectivity challenges

By Our Staff Reporter

LAHORE: Members of the Women Workers Forum called on the government to take immediate action to safeguard their livelihoods as they were facing increasing socio-economic challenges due to climate change and unreliable internet connectivity.

The forum, representing gig and platform workers across Pakistan, emphasised that these issues disproportionately impact women workers, who were among the most vulnerable in the platform economy.

At a recent gathering, All Pakistan Women's Association (APWA) Chairperson Samia Zahid, demanded the government to regularise online busi-

nesses to protect workers from exploitation. "Many platform workers are being overworked and underpaid, often lacking legal protections. It's time the government steps in to ensure fairness and transparency in online work," Samia stated.

WWF's Dura-Shawar highlighted how these socio-economic challenges are exacerbating gender-based violence (GBV) and increasing the care burden on women. "When women lose income due to disrupted work caused by extreme weather or poor internet infrastructure, it puts them at a higher risk of domestic violence and other forms of exploitation. Additionally, the increased care responsibilities at home, combined with the pressure to

earn, are pushing women into deeper poverty," she noted.

The forum also featured testimony from Aysha, a gig worker who has been working on various digital platforms for seven years. "I work tirelessly and do not know when I will get a salary. The uncertainty and lack of a clear timeline for payments take a toll on my mental health," she shared.

She explained how platform work, while providing some level of flexibility, often leaves workers vulnerable to delayed payments, irregular earnings, and mental stress due to the lack of job security.

The WWF and platform workers collectively urged the government to regularise online businesses to protect gig and platform workers from

exploitation, ensuring fair contracts, timely payments, and transparent working conditions for all.

They also demanded the legal recognition of platform workers in Pakistan's labour laws, granting them access to essential rights such as minimum wage, social security, paid leave, and proper contracts.

Furthermore, they emphasised the need to ensure the right to collective bargaining and freedom of association, guaranteeing that platform workers can organise and form unions to negotiate for better wages, working conditions, and protection from exploitation.

Additionally, the forum called for policies to address the rise in GBV linked to economic stress and ensure that

women platform workers have access to GBV protection mechanisms and support services. Improving digital infrastructure, particularly in underserved areas, is also critical to providing reliable and affordable internet access so platform workers can maintain a stable income.

They urged the government to develop targeted social safety programs to protect vulnerable platform workers, especially women, from income loss during extreme weather events and other crises.

The WWF also called on digital platform companies to establish worker-friendly policies, including clear payment timelines, better mental health support, and mechanisms for addressing worker grievances.

اَللّٰهُمَّ صَلِّ وَسَلِّمْ وَارْحَمْنَاهُ بِرَحْمَتِكَ
OBITUARY

Begum Mukhtar Hussain

With great sorrow we announce the peaceful passing of our dear mother Begum Mukhtar Hussain on 17th October 2024. She was a devoted wife, mother and a faithful servant. May she rest in eternal peace surrounded by the light she so generously shared with the world.

Soyam will be held on

Sunday 20th October between 3:00 PM - 5:00 PM

Muhammadi Masjid

Hall Road, Block B-1, Gulberg-3, Lahore

Mohsen and Syed Faisal Hussain

Shahen and Ali Raza

Begum Nafis Ghouseh, Begum Jamil Nishar

Syed Ali Mustafa Hussain

Nafisa and Syed Hamza Ali Hussain

Atia Zahra Hussain, Zahra Ali

Shorah Family

0344 4172325, 0300 4437545

PESHAWAR

Sunset 05:37pm
Sunrise (Tomorrow) 06:20am

NEXT 24 HRS

Minimum 18°C
Maximum 31°C
Outlook Sunny

METRO North



United ease pressure on Ten Hag, Spurs run riot

Pg.20 SPORT



People load firewood into a vehicle in the Kurel valley of Upper Dir district. The picturesque valley, which has recently emerged as major tourist destination, lacks access to natural gas, electricity and other sources of fuel. This issue, according to locals, is resulting into chopping down of precious trees for cooking and heating as the valley temperatures remain below zero for most part of the winter. — Photo and text by Mohammad Ashtaq

Court seeks KMU's response as MDCAT candidates call for grace marks

Petitioners claim question paper had 'wrong answer keys, high difficulty level'

Bureau Report

PESHAWAR: The Peshawar High Court has directed the Khyber Medical University's vice chancellor to respond to a petition filed by several students to seek grace pass marks in the recent Medical and Dental Colleges Admission Test (MDCAT) over "factual" question paper.

A bench consisting of Justice Shahid Ahmad and Justice Sahibzada Asadullah directed the VC to file the reply to the petition within a fortnight.

It issued the order after preliminary hearing into a petition

jointly filed by Ahmad Noor and 11 other students and MDCAT candidates from Peshawar, who sought orders for the respondents, including KMU, to award grace pass marks to them insisting universities in other provinces have awarded grace marks through public notices issued on Sept 24 and Sept 29 to candidates for admission to medical and dental colleges.

They also requested the court to declare void the denial of the respondents to entertain the requests and complaints of the petitioners regarding the entrance test held on Sept 22.

The respondents in the petition include the federal government through the secretary of the ministry of health services regulations, Pakistan Medical and Dental Council through its secretary, KMU through its VC, Higher Education Commission through its chairperson, and provincial health secretary.

Advocate Shair Haider Khan appeared for the petitioners and said that the PMDC had called for a screening test to admissions in MBBS and BDS courses for the year 2024-2025 through an advertisement in different newspapers on Aug 5, 2024.

He said that responsibility for administering the MDCAT had been delegated to various government universities in each province.

He said that the responsibility in Punjab was assigned to the University of Health Sciences Lahore, in Sindh to Dow University of Health Sciences, to KMU Peshawar in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, to Bafra University of Medical and Health Sciences in Balochistan, to Shahdud Zulfikar Ali Bhutto Medical University in Islamabad and Karakoram International University in Gilgit-Baltistan.

The counsel said that as the

petitioners were qualified and eligible candidates they applied for the test conducted by the KMU and appeared in it.

He claimed that the petitioners attempted all questions but found out that some questions in the paper had "multiple interpretations, high difficulty level, wrong answer keys, and wrong or confusing answers."

The lawyer said that the petitioners filed complaints with the KMU for reviewing answer keys through independent subject experts and on their recommendations the petitioners were awarded grace pass marks against the "disputed" questions.

He, however, said that the respondent complaints had not been responded to.

Mr Haider said that after so many controversial episodes related to MDCATs in the last couple of years, it was hoped that this year, the medical col-

leges entrance test would be conducted in a fair manner by the PMDC, but that didn't happen.

He claimed that there were large-scale protests in other parts of the country regarding irregularities in the test, including non-syllabus questions in the paper.

The lawyer argued that the petitioners had the constitutional right to file complaints about anything found wrong or misleading in the question paper, but the attitude of the respondents was highly unprofessional.

He claimed that in identical cases, the Shahdud Zulfikar Ali Bhutto University Islamabad and University of Health Sciences Lahore awarded grace pass marks to their candidates as per expert recommendations and the difficulty index as per public notices on Sept 24 and 27, respectively.

Petition disposed of as inmates allowed cooking in prison

Bureau Report

PESHAWAR: The Peshawar High Court has disposed of a petition from inmates of the Peshawar Central Prison after learning that the jail authorities have allowed prisoners to prepare their meals after building a new canteen on the premises.

A bench consisting of Justice Ijaz Ahmad and Justice Syed Asad Ali heard the petition of the two undertrial prisoners, including Waseelullah and Tufail Zia, against the non-provision of the facility to cook for themselves

inside the prison.

Advocate Maamun Mubli Kakakhel appeared for the petitioners and said that their clients had challenged a prison circular, which declared that electricity boards were to be removed from barracks through it was the only facility available to them to prepare their own meals.

He said that the purpose of the circular was to curb the use of mobile phones in the prisons, where no jammers of signals were installed, but the Central Prison Peshawar had signal jammers.

The lawyer said that the KP Prison Rules, 2018, allowed undertrial prisoners

to cook for themselves.

He said that these rules allowed such inmates to prepare their meals, while the same was only allowed by burning coal, which was injurious to health when used regularly and that food also had a taste of coal.

The counsel said that attendance in the prison was taken after 7pm in number and 5pm in the winter and thereafter, barracks were closed and prisoners couldn't cook food for themselves even outside due to which 1,100 prisoners suffered in central prison alone.

He argued that there were no alternative measures for prisoners to cook and

the one given there was unhygienic and not up to the standard.

An additional advocate general informed the court that prison authorities had constructed a new kitchen on the premises after the petition was filed.

He added that prisoners would be allowed to cook for themselves in the new cooking area.

The additional advocate general also presented photos of the newly-constructed kitchen.

The bench observed that the grievance of the petitioners had been addressed through the construction of the kitchen.

Peshawar's major govt hospital performs 1,000 bariatric surgeries in five years

KTH doctor says obesity requires surgical procedure

By Ashtaq Yousufzai

PESHAWAR: The public sector Khyber Teaching Hospital in Peshawar has performed 1,000 bariatric surgeries in the last five years, helping patients get rid of obesity, a problem that causes hypertension, diabetes and chest issues, and affects lifestyle, according to a senior doctor.

"Obesity causes high blood pressure, stroke, heart attack, high cholesterol, cancer and arthritis, so it is important to undergo surgery to get rid of it," KTH head surgeon Prof Muhammad Zarin told Dawn.

He said Pakistan ranked 144

in the Global Obesity Observatory with 6.26 per cent of obese men, 10% with 11.7 per cent of such adult women, 151 with 3.6 per cent of boys and 181 with 2.52 per cent of girls.

Prof Zarin said 1,000 patients, including 620 men and 374 women, had been operated upon at the KTH since 2017 and only 10pc of them were shifted to the intensive care unit due to minor complications before being released to the ward within 24 hours.

He said the procedures performed included sleeve gastrectomy, one anastomosis gastric bypass, roux-en-y gastric bypass, and some revision operations.

The surgeon said resolution of associated problems like hypertension, diabetes, joint problems, chest issues, sleep apnea infertility and cardiac issues, happened in 75-90pc patients, with the number being very close to international values.

He said that optimum weight loss was achieved in the majority of patients and follow-up by the bariatric team's surgical department and regular monitoring continued.

"Less than five per cent of patients needed re-operation for minor complications," he said.

Prof Zarin, who is the general secretary of the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa chapter of the Pakistan Society of Metabolic and Bariatric Surgeons and was assisted by Dr Imran Marwat and Dr Shah Zeb, said the people with obesity faced serious problems.

He said obesity had become a major public health issue but the people had yet to fully benefit from the latest form of surgery that had been introduced in public sector hospitals.

"There are misconceptions that it is unnecessary to undergo bariatric surgery as it can prove dangerous and the people can again

experience obesity," he said.

The PSMBS leader said that the procedures at the right time enabled patients to stay safe from problems.

He said at present, there were no proper medicines to control obesity, but after the research of five decades, health experts introduced bariatric surgery, which effectively controlled it.

Prof Zarin, a laparoscopic surgeon at KTH, said bariatric surgery was not dangerous nor were there any chances of the people regaining weight after undergoing surgery.

"Regaining weight after surgery is one of the complications of bariatric surgery and can happen in 10-15 per cent of patients but those figures can be minimised by choosing the right patient for the right procedure," he said.

The PSMBS office-bearer said that obesity or metabolic syndrome was a complex disease and

wasn't just a cosmetic concern and it increased the risk of other problems like diabetes, and caused blood pressure, arthritis, chest and cardiac issues, infertility and certain cancers.

He added that it was the surgical treatment of a disease, so it could have complications just like other surgical procedures.

Prof Zarin, however, said the surgery was not dangerous if carried out by trained advanced laparoscopic, robotic and bariatric surgeons in a well-equipped health facility having all specialties like nutritionist, diabetologist, psychiatrist, pulmonologist, cardiologist and anesthesiologist.

He said that complications could be handled in a scientific way to achieve good outcomes through regular follow-up and adherence to the diet plan to help reduce the chances of weight regain.

Cadet passing out parade held at Military Academy

Bureau Report

PESHAWAR: Passing out parade of cadets of 150th PMA Long Course, 69th Integrated Course, 24th Lady Cadet Course and 36th Technical Graduate Course was held at Pakistan Military Academy (PMA), Kakul, on Saturday.

A statement issued here by Inter-Services Public Relations, the media wing of the army, said that cadets from several friendly countries, including Iraq, Jordan, Maldives, Sri Lanka, Nepal, Palestine, Sudan and Yemen, also graduated from PMA.

Chairman Joint Chiefs of Staff Committee (CJCSC) General Sahir Shamshad Mirza, NI (M) graced the occasion as the chief guest and the reviewing dignitary of the parade.

CJCSC reviewed the parade and gave awards to distinguished cadets.

The coveted Sword of Honour was awarded to Battalion Senior Under Officer Abdullah Afzal of 150th PMA Long Course.

The President's Gold Medal was awarded to Battalion Senior Under Officer Babarullah Aman of 150th PMA Long Course. Chairman Joint Chiefs of Staff Committee Overseas Gold Medal was given to Friendly Country Senior Under Officer Kafeel Gurung of 150th PMA Long Course from Nepal.

Chief of Army Staff Cane was awarded to Course Junior Under Officer Muhammad Umar Sheraz of 24th Technical Graduate Course.

Commandant's Cane was awarded to Course Junior Under Officer Muhammad Suleman of 69th Integrated Course and Course Under Officer Pakistan Vajood of 24th Lady Cadet Course.

Bajaur boy ends life after fight with father

BAJAUJI: A boy ended his life after inhaling poisonous pills in Mamond taluk here on Saturday, residents and the police said.

They said the deceased, identified as Hanifullah, 16, took his life inside his home in Dewaji village. They said he took the extreme step after exchanging harsh words with his father.

The residents said that the deceased, who was a student of a local school, was earlier advised by his father to focus on his education instead of wasting his time in useless activities. However, the residents said the father's advice angered the boy, who started arguing with his father, and later led him to take his life.

The residents said that family members were shifting him to a hospital after finding him lying unconscious in a room, but he died on the way.

Meanwhile, an official at the Mamond police station told Dawn that they were investigating the incident. — Correspondent

PRAYER

Fajr	05:00
Zuhar	12:00
Asr	03:58
Maghrib	06:37
Isha	07:01

Starting time in Peshawar

REFLECTIONS

DO NOT GET WORRIED AND DEPRESSED OVER THE OPPRESSIONS BECAUSE WHOEVER OPPRESSES YOU IS IN REALITY DOING HIMSELF HARM AND IS TRYING TO FIND WAYS FOR YOUR GOOD.

— HAZRAT ALE (A.S.)
TRANSLATED

Swabi people complain of inadequate health facilities

By Our Correspondent

SWABI: The people of Swabi have complained about inadequate health-care facilities despite the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf government's tall claims of implementing a health emergency in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa.

They alleged that doctors at public sector hospitals have referred patients to hospitals in Mardan and Peshawar.

People belonging to different walks of life, including political activists, told Dawn that even minor cases were usually referred to Peshawar and Mardan by doctors here.

Major public sector hospitals in the district include Basheer Khan Teaching Hospital, Shahmansoor, District Headquarters Hospital, Tehsil Headquarters Hospital, Chota Lohar, Topi, Kassar, Yar Hussain Civil Hospital and various basic health units and rural health centres.

Residents of Topi city said it was often observed that no doctor was available at the Tehsil Headquarters Hospital at night, and usually a technician or paramedical staff handled the patients.

They said the doctors often referred the patients to either the District Headquarters Hospital, or Basheer Khan Teaching Hospital, Shahmansoor.

The residents said similar tactics were used by doctors at other hospitals. They said even after ruling the province for 12 consecutive years the PTI government could not turn around the health sector.

The residents complained that the affluent class, including politicians, got quick services at the local hospitals, but the poor patients faced problems in availing healthcare.

"Lack of proper patient care forces most people to visit the private health facilities to avail treatment," Nabe Khan of Manser Bala area said.

He said behaviour of staff at the public sector was also unbecoming. He said the majority of doctors of public sector hospitals focused on their private clinics.

When contacted, officials at the DHO Hospital said they tried their best to provide quality health care to patients. They admitted that some critical patients were referred to Peshawar or Mardan hospitals.



A TRACTOR ploughs a field in Maneri Bala region of Swabi. — Photo by Mageddian Khan

Mansehra revenue collectors call off strike after two months

Committee declares graft, bribery charges baseless

By Our Correspondent

MANSEHRA: Revenue collectors called off their two-month-long strike here on Saturday after a committee formed by the commissioner of Hazara division declared corruption and bribery charges against their colleagues baseless.

"We have ended our strike across Hazara division after the government accepted all our demands and initiated proceedings to quash FIRs registered against our officers and collectors in Mansehra, Abbottabad and Haripur districts," central president of Parwaris and Qomogyan Association Sarfaraz Abbasi told reporters here.

Accompanied by other officers

bearers of the association, Mr Abbasi said a three-member committee was formed to investigate the cases registered by anti-corruption establishment against five revenue officers and collectors.

He added that the committee, headed by settlement officer in Mansehra Muhammad Sohail, found all those cases based on mala fide intentions.

The association leader said the ACE's director recently constituted a separate committee to investigate FIRs lodged against five officers and collectors of the revenue departments in Mansehra, Abbottabad and Haripur, which was expected to submit its findings in the next two weeks.

He said provincial minister for revenue Nazeer Abbasi, commissioner Zohoorul Islam, and senior member Board of Revenue Irtiza Shah promised justice to the revenue collectors during a recent meeting.

"Under Section 381 of the Revenue Act, the SMIER barred

the registration of FIRs by the ACE against revenue collectors and their officers before the findings of the departmental inquiry, which also led to the end of our strike throughout Hazara Division," he said.

Revenue officials across Hazara Division had launched a complete go-down strike after the ACE registered FIRs against revenue officials, including tehsildar Gul Rehman, gildawars Muhammad Siddique and Dilawar and patwaris Hamid and Tanveer in the districts of Mansehra, Haripur and Abbottabad following a series of raids two months ago.

Meanwhile, local body representatives from Peshawar on Saturday visited model Safada village council and lauded efforts taken by its chairman and members for redressal of people's issues without the government help.

The chairmen and members of Shab-e-Ahmad and Razi Akbar neighbourhood councils in Peshawar visited the Safada village council and met with the local community.

They asked them about development projects and services rendered by council chairman Basheer Ali Swati and members.

"We have successfully carried out dozens of development projects from the funds of local lawmakers to the benefit of the entire community," he said.

Mr Swati said that awareness walks and seminars were also organised with the support of devolved departments and non-governmental organisations.

On the occasion, Safada Village council members Ayil Nawaz, Razaq Amin Akhtar, Muhammad Muhsin, Ayaz Maghan and Nagina Bibi informed visitors that the joint efforts had authorities into declaring their village council a model one.

Local elder Javed Khan Swati briefed the delegates about the olive gardens grown by the community and revenue generated by the yield.

Kohat hospital staffers protest suspension of colleagues

By Our Correspondent

KOHAT: A joint protest meeting of doctors, paramedics and nursing associations condemned suspension of several employees of the Liaquat Memorial Hospital (LMH) and demanded their immediate reinstatement.

Addressing a protest meeting here on Saturday, the representatives of doctors and paramedics associations including Dr Ubaid Afridi and Rashid Bokhari criticised the parliamentarians for not making efforts to upgrade the medical facilities at the district's hospitals to give relief to the poor masses of Kurrum, Bannu, Orakzai, Khyber, Bara, and Jand area.

They said that make-holders should all together for the resolution of all issues concerning finances, human resources, and long-due promotions of hospital staff. They said that the divisional hospital and LMH lacked vital medical equipment including

MRI machine due to which the patients had to be shifted to Peshawar hospitals.

ACCUSED FIELD: The district police arrested a man on charges of making immoral videos of teenage boys to extort money from them.

According to a statement of the DPO's office, the accused identified as Ubaidullah, a resident of Muslimabad, had allegedly harassed his victims by uploading their immoral videos on social media, extorted money and subjected them to sexual assaults.

Police registered a case against the accused in Jarma police station under sections 328 A, 369, 372A, and 372 C, the statement added.

Meanwhile, Jarma police busted a two-member gang of cattle thieves and recovered goats and a motorcycle from the custody of the accused.

The gangsters were identified as Muhammad Hamidullah of Naurakhel and Saleem of Junglakhel police are busy in further investigation.

E-commerce training programme begins for Bajaur youth

By Our Correspondent

BAJAUR: Speakers at the opening ceremony of an e-commerce training course here on Saturday stressed the need for the youth to acquire digital skills to be empowered economically.

The ceremony was held at Governor Model School and College (boys' section) in Civil Colony, Khar.

Deputy commissioner Shahid Ali Khan, Khar assistant commissioner Dr Saadiq Ali, digital and e-commerce experts and students and youths attended the opening ceremony of the three-month-long free e-commerce training course.

A total 2,000 candidates applied for the course being arranged jointly by the district administration and a private digital centre, but only 70 were selected for the course after screening tests, which were conducted a week ago.

The speakers said the training course was designed to educate the participants about the merits and skills of e-commerce, which employs millions of people around the world.

They said that unprecedented expansion and development of e-commerce had transformed the world, showing that the current era was of the digital trade and business.

The speakers observed that like the rest of the country, there was a great potential of e-commerce in Bajaur, saying that the training course would introduce the local youth to digital ways of doing business.

On the occasion, deputy commissioner Shahid Ali Khan said that the district administration was committed to providing such training to more youth by extending the initiative to other parts of the district.

He said e-commerce was the easiest way to empower the youth economically.

Saif urges HRW to take note of Imran's 'isolation' in jail

Bureau Report

PESHAWAR: Adviser to the CM on Information Baristan Muhammad Ali Saif said the incarcerated former prime minister Imran Khan was kept in isolation and requested the Human Rights Watch (HRW) to take notice of the inhuman treatment meted out to him.

A statement issued from his office read that Mr Khan was confined to a small cell, and the power supply to the cell had been suspended for the last 14 days.

"I appeal to the Human Rights Watch to take notice of this inhuman treatment," the statement quoted the chief minister's aide as saying, adding, "The illegal government will have

to answer for each and every step." Ali Saif said the Constitution was secretly being amended without bringing the amendments to the knowledge of general public, adding that the judiciary's supremacy was being undermined.

"Only political figures should do the politics; we stand by Khan," he said. He also congratulated Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) workers for holding peaceful protest on last Friday and said that the protest proved the incumbent government never represented people of the country.

He said that the party workers would continue to struggle for the release of their leader as Mr Khan was the only hope to steer the country out of crisis.



CUSTOMERS buy dry fruits at a shop on Ashraf Road in Peshawar. — BNP

Chitral chamber's office-bearers take oath

By Our Correspondent

CHITRAL: The oath-taking ceremony of the newly elected office-bearers of Chitral Chamber of Commerce and Industry held here on Friday.

Lower Chitral Deputy Commissioner (DC) Mohsin Iqbal administered the

oath to the office-bearers.

Speaking on the occasion, Mohsin Iqbal said that the chamber had a prominent role in the economic development of the region and there was a great potential of economic activities in the area which could lead to poverty alleviation.

He also stressed the inclusion of women in economic activities by identifying possible roles for them as part of the workforce and as

entrepreneurs, while the high rate of literacy among women here was an additional benefit.

Earlier, the newly elected president Mubashir Azam and other office-bearers including Muhammad Waiz, Sahar Muhammad Baig and khansab of Shahi Masjid Madana Khaleeqar Zameer also expressed their views and highlighted the achievements of the chamber during the past ten years.

Surging HIV incidence in KP a major concern

PESHAWAR: Peshawar's (not her real name) story is one of resilience and hope. She was diagnosed with HIV following blood transfusion when she was 18. Now 34, she lives a fulfilling life despite the challenges. But she is grateful that treatment coupled with prevention, she was able to limit the disease to herself. "I am happy that my husband and children have tested negative," she says, her voice filled with gratitude.

However, Peshawar's experience is not unique. Khyber Pakhtunkhwa is grappling with an alarming rise in HIV cases. The province's HIV prevalence has increased significantly, particularly among pregnant women, drug users, and the general population.

Dr Yasir Hayat Taj, HIV programme officer, attributes the increase to improved testing capacity. "Previously, HIV testing was not frequently performed, even in established setups," he says. Mandatory HIV testing before blood transfusion and surgeries has also contributed to the surge, he adds.

High-risk groups include transgender persons, injectable drug users, sex workers, and pregnant women. Factors contributing to the surge include inadequate testing, stigma, high-risk behaviour, and limited access to self-testing kits.

The current statistics paint a grim picture. Khyber Pakhtunkhwa has recorded a total of 8,063 registered HIV cases with disturbing trends indi-

cating a shift from high-risk groups to the general population.

This includes 5,656 adult males, 1,847 adult females, 345 transgender individuals, 343 children, and 168 children. Alarmingly, 1,196 patients have succumbed to the disease while on Antiretroviral Therapy (ART), and 1,126 patients have been lost to follow-up. Peshawar has been hardest hit, accounting for over 4,000 cases, followed by Bannu.

Peshawar's story highlights the human cost of stigma and ignorance. Initially, she hid her diagnosis from her family, fearing rejection. "People reacted poorly, stigmatising HIV as a disease of immoral individuals," she says. Her husband's unwavering support helped her

cope with the disease.

As president of the Association of People Living with HIV/AIDS Community, Peshawar dedicates herself to supporting HIV-positive patients. "I facilitate access to treatment, provide vital information, conduct awareness sessions, and serve as a public relations counselor."

KP's HIV programme has expanded, with 13 centres providing free testing, prevention, and treatment services. Primary centres include BMC, ERB, and Ayub Medical Complex Abbottabad.

However, confidentiality concerns and societal stigma hinder efforts. Many patients seek treatment in other districts to maintain anonymity. Self-testing kits are unavailable in

KP unlike Punjab and Sindh.

The treatment is lifelong, but with medication, HIV-positive individuals can live up to 70-80 years. HIV rarely kills people, AIDS is the extreme case where body organs stop working.

To combat the spread, KP must prioritise enhanced testing, awareness, and confidentiality measures. By addressing stigma and promoting education, KP can mitigate the impact of this growing concern.

For Peshawar, her journey is a testament to resilience. "If there's a disease, there's a cure," she says. Her story serves as a beacon of hope for those affected by HIV/AIDS in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. — Wajeeha Khatun

CORRIGENDUM/ADDENDUM

In continuation of the Advertisement of Public Health Engineering Division Tribal District Bajaur No. IMFP/ 2670/24 Published in Daily Express Newspaper on dated 13 October 2024 vide this office letter No. 24-237T-UPHE dated 07 October 2024, the following correction/addition must be incorporate in tabular data:

1. AT SECTION "C" Serial No. 14 may be read as: CONSTRUCTION OF PCC STREET PAVEMENT, DRAINS, AND CULVERTS AT ARANG & SURROUNDING AREA.

2. AT SECTION "C" Serial No. 17 may be read as: CONSTRUCTION OF PCC STREET PAVEMENT, DRAINS, AND CULVERTS VC MATAKO & SURROUNDING AREA.

NOTE: Other columns of the above serial nos. and terms and conditions of the NIT will remain the same.

EXECUTIVE ENGINEER
PHE DIVISION
TRIBAL DISTRICT BAJAUR
INFP/2731/24

Non-discrimination stressed as world observes bioethics day

By Iqram Junaidi

ISLAMABAD: The world bioethics day was observed on Saturday under a slogan of 'non-discrimination and non-stigmatisation'.

The day was commemorated by the Unesco unit chair in bioethics at the Department of Psychiatry, Pakistan Institute of Medical Sciences (PIMS).

This year's theme aligns with Article 11 of Unesco's Universal Declaration on Bioethics and Human Rights.

The residents of the psychiatry department participated in the event.

Prof Dr Rameen Taj, head of the bioethics unit in Pakistan, emphasised the crucial role of non-discrimination and non-stigmatisation in developing human connections and relationships.

He explained that stigma encompasses negative and stereotypical attitudes and feelings toward people based on characteristics such as gender, ethnicity, religious and mental illness.

"This can lead to labelling certain groups as less deserving of respect and rights. These attitudes in the community are supported by ignorance, prejudice and discrimination, and are perpetuated when mental illness is represented incorrectly. Discrimination may be obvious and direct, such as someone making a negative remark about the person's mental illness, HIV, etc., or his treatment," he said.

It may be unintentional or subtle such as someone avoiding the individual living with mental illness because the person assumes the ill person could be unstable, violent or dangerous due to his/her mental health condition. Discriminating against someone at work, denying access to education, accommodation, entry to premises or the provision of services under the guise of the individual having HIV, mental illness is unlawful.

Prof Taj said many people hold negative perceptions of individuals with mental health issues due to a lack of understanding and reliance on myths and misconceptions. As health professionals, he stressed their commitment to ensuring that people with mental health challenges have equal rights and are treated without discrimination.

Discrimination can manifest in various forms: either overtly, such as negative remarks about an individual's mental health or HIV status, or subtly, such as avoiding someone with a mental illness due to unfounded fears of instability or danger.

Discriminating against individuals by denying access to work, education, housing, or services based on their mental health or HIV status is illegal and goes against fundamental human rights.

Addressing the causes of stigma, he pointed out that a lack of knowledge and fear surrounding conditions like HIV/AIDS were significant contributors. Gender-based stereotypes also played a role, as women with disabilities were often more stigmatised than men, facing challenges in literacy, employment and stable relationships.

He highlighted the detrimental effects of stigma and discrimination, which included rejection, loss of confidence, reluctance to seek medical care, low self-esteem, financial difficulties, and isolation. People with HIV/AIDS, mental health issues or those who identify as transgender often experience feelings of shame, denial, depression, and even suicidal thoughts.

To combat stigma and discrimination, Prof Taj emphasised the need to educate communities about the realities faced by individuals living with HIV/AIDS, mental health conditions, and other gender-related issues.

He advocated for increased community involvement in discussions on stigma, improving service access, and promoting accurate representations through media.

Additionally, he underscored the importance of providing microcredit opportunities to empower those facing discrimination and to help boost their self-esteem.

"By working on this critical human rights issue, we can nurture an inclusive and understanding society that respects the dignity of every individual," Prof Taj added.

Contract termination leaves 300 teachers jobless in Khyber

By Our Correspondent

KHAYBER: Abrupt termination of employment contracts of 3000 hired teachers for government primary schools in the province by the provincial education authorities rendered around 300 highly qualified teachers jobless in the district.

Sources in the Education Department said on Saturday that provincial government had hired the services of these teachers, both male and female in March 2022, on a one-year contract to temporarily fill the vacant posts at the primary school level.

They said that around three hundred male and female teachers were employed in 87 government primary schools in Khyber district. Their contracts were later extended in March 2023 for another year, but were abruptly terminated by the provincial education department without any prior notice to the hired teachers.

Taroon-i-Azmat president Shaukatullah told media persons at Lardhi Kot Press Club that sudden termination of these hired teachers resulted in shortage of primary teachers in the district. He asserted that the standard of education had considerably improved with the induction of contract teachers. "On the one hand, the government is struggling to increase the number of students in the state's schools, while on the other hand, qualified teachers are rendered jobless due to flawed policies," he regretted.

He warned that his association would hold a demonstration at the provincial assembly buildings if the contracts of terminated teachers were not renewed by the end of this month.



A WORKER of local municipal administration fumigates a street in Bajaur tribal district. — Dawn photo

Haripur college stops offering admission in three BS courses over teachers' shortage

Education dept asked to hire faculty urgently to save students' future

By Muhammad Sadaqat

HARIPUR: The administration of Government Girls College, Khulabul Township, has stopped offering admissions in three BS subjects for the fall semester 2024 due to shortage of teachers, official sources told Dawn here on Saturday.

The decision was taken on the directives of the directorate of higher education, said

the sources while sharing a letter from the office concerned.

A letter issued to the regional directorate of higher education, Abbottabad, from the office of deputy director academics, directorate of higher education, KP, on August 28, 2024, while referring to the minutes of the 8th meeting of the BS committee asked for compliance and necessary action.

The same letter carried the copy of a letter issued from the office of Said Wali, BS coordinator, directorate of higher education KP, under the subject "Follow up meeting of the committee to streamline and enhance the quality of education" held on

June 20, 2024.

Through this letter the BS coordinator also quoted the reference of the meeting of the committee held on June 5, 2024 at the office of special secretary, higher education department wherein it was decided that the colleges having BS programmes with 0-1 faculty would not offer admissions for fall semester 2024.

Official sources at the Government Girls College, Khulabul Township, confirmed that the administration had, in compliance with a letter from the directorate of higher education department, decided not to offer new admissions in Urdu, political science and English. Each department had sanctioned

40 seats, the official sources told Dawn.

The college's principal was not available for comments. However, the official staff confirmed the college had only one teacher for each of the three departments for the last few months, and the frequent transfer of the faculty forced the administration to temporarily freeze the admissions for the first semester of the three programmes until the filling of vacant posts.

Official sources said the college's principal had written to the higher education directorate for either filling the vacant seats with permanent staff or allowing her to make arrangements locally on contract basis. They

expressed the hope that the matter would be resolved shortly.

Commenting on the situation, general secretary of KP Professors and Lecturers' Association Prof Qasir Zafar Iqbal said besides the Khulabul college, all the 14 boys and girls' colleges of Haripur were facing shortage of teachers. He said the department was not advertising the new posts, which had been vacant for years across KP.

Mr Iqbal said the provincial government should allow the college's administration to make arrangements on its own to cope up with the situation until the permanent faculty was hired.

Operation launched to address traffic woes in Muzaffarabad

By Tariq Naqash

MUZAFFARABAD: A joint operation by the administration and police is set to start to tackle the escalating traffic issues and frequent violations of traffic laws within the municipal limits of the Aard Jammoo and Kashmir (AJK) capital.

An announcement to this effect was made by Deputy Commissioner Muzaffarabad, Madam Farooq, during a meeting held to identify and address the factors contributing to the city's traffic problems.

He expressed the hope that citizens would cooperate fully to ensure the success of the joint operation in their own interest. The meeting was attended by Senior Superintendent of Police Muzaffarabad, Kamran Ali, Assistant Commissioner Muzaffarabad Rural, Zaidan Nisar, Syed Qasim Abbas, Estate Officer, and Syed Shabbir Gilani, Secretary of Muzaffarabad Municipal Corporation, as well as Muhammad Asif Mir, Tehsil Officer, and Waqar-ul-Hassan, Area Development Officer of the Development Authority Muzaffarabad.

Deputy commissioner Farooq expressed concern that despite efforts, significant improvements had not been made to the traffic control system in Muzaffarabad. He cited encroachments as one of the primary reasons for the worsening traffic situation.

"Shopkeepers have set up stalls on sidewalks in front of their shops, further aggravating traffic problems," he said, asking the civic bodies to ensure the immediate removal of these encroachments without showing any leniency.

He specifically directed the removal of encroachments by street vendors in areas like Upper Aard, CMH Road, Bank Road, especially from Newish Bridge to Haidari Bazaar, and from CHS Secretariat, particularly from Rahel Sarkar to Garhi Pan Chowk.

"These encroachments force people to park improperly and pedestrians to walk

on main roads due to blocked sidewalks, disrupting the flow of traffic," he said.

The deputy commissioner noted that the city's already narrow roads were becoming more congested, exacerbating the traffic crisis.

He also pointed out that the entry of vehicles and motorcycles into Muzaffarabad's popular commercial hubs, Madina Market, along with the presence of street vendors, had made it increasingly difficult for pedestrians to navigate.

Additionally, Mr Farooq raised concerns about consistent complaints regarding debris from rains and landslides, as well as the dumping of building materials on Kohala Road and Jhelum Valley Road.

These obstructions not only disrupt traffic flow but have also led to fatal accidents, he said, and urged the National Highway Authority (NHA) to take prompt action to clear these roads and ensure the safety of travellers. He also stressed the need to remove unnecessary speed breakers without delay.

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Constable martyred, drug peddler killed in encounter

RAWALPIND: A police official was martyred while a drug peddler was killed during an encounter between a police party and drug traffickers in Rawat area on Friday.

Police raids were underway to arrest the other accomplices of the drug traffickers going operating in the limits of Rawat police. Police spokesman said that following information that some drug traffickers were operating in Bagha Shokh area of Rawat, a police party was constituted to conduct a raid and arrest the culprits. He said as the police conducted raids, the drug traffickers opened fire on the police party.

The police retaliation resulted in the killing of a drug peddler and martyrdom of constable Muhammad Ishaq. However, the accomplices of the drug traffickers managed to escape.

Shortly after the encounter, SP Rawat Division Muhammad Nadeem Khokhar with police reinforcement reached the spot and started a search for the escapees.

Constable Muhammad Ishaq, 33, joined the police department in September 2015, and was currently posted at Rawat police station. He was laid to rest in his native village in Mandra. — Mohammad Aghar

Over 100 patients test positive for dengue

By Our Staff Reporter

RAWALPIND: As many as 108 dengue patients came to the government run hospitals of the garrison city on Saturday where a total 248 dengue patients — 95 in Holy Family Hospital (HFIH), 94 patients in Benazir Bhutto Hospital (BBH) and 59 in Rawalpindi Teaching Hospital — are under treatment.

Total 114 patients discharged from the three hospital after getting treatment while there were 82 patients are suffering from dengue haemorrhagic fever and four of them were critical.

According to hospital sources, 266 patients arrived in dengue cohorts of three government run hospital, among them 208 tested positive for dengue.

A senior doctor of Holy Family Hospital told Dawn that 23,025 patients arrived in the outdoor patients department of three government run hospitals from January 1 to October 19 and 1,203 were confirmed dengue patients.

He said that five people died in three government run hospitals while remaining went back home after getting treatment. He said that the number of dengue haemorrhagic fever patients increased during the last one month.

"The basic reason for the increase is self-medication and they report to the hospital after the case worsens."

The people should not wait for the symptoms of dengue and visit government run hospitals immediately to their dengue test could be conducted and treatment could be started," he said.

Chaupat still a popular leisurely activity in Potohar villages

By Hamid Asghar

GUJAR KHANI: The ancient game of Chaupat, though vanishing, still remains popular among the elderly people in far-flung areas of Punjab, especially the Potohar region.

Having close similarity with Ludo, this game is common in Narar village of Kahuta, Marood Pharak and Gul Ferya of Mandra and Chaurra and Chak Bell areas of Rawalpindi. One of the places where village folk can be seen playing the game for fun is the main market of Narar. During the cold weather, players stage the game indoors in a special room dedicated to it while during the sunny days a big tree on the hilltop village is the rendezvous for the players and spectators alike.

A visit to the hill cottage showed that prominent players of the area were Ayaz Satti, Qadeer Satti, Shaukat, Shahzad and Jawaid. They were seen busy playing on a cloth covered floor on which the cross of Chaupat designed on a coarse cloth was

laid. The crafty of these players is Jawaid, who is dumb, but reckoned as a winning partner.

Raja Ayaz Satti told Dawn that Jawaid flanked with other players had special tours to Chaurra, Chak Bell and Marood areas to have tournament matches with teams there. He said this game though vanishing among the social media addicted youth was still popular among the old folk who had made it part of their leisure times. He said once a person indulges in the game they forget their domestic chores.

Raja Sher Ahmed Satti, another prominent figure of Narar, said Chaupat is played on a cross-shaped board, typically with four arms extending from a central square. The game is played by four or six players divided in two teams.

The crossed table is generally designed on the cloth and can also be drawn on earth by the 'wanton boys' while grating their cattle. According to Mr Satti, in some areas it is also called as Chaurra. Players use cowrie shells to determine their moves. The objective is to move all of one's pieces (often

represented by pawns) around the board and reach home. The movement is based on the outcome of the cowrie thrown each time on earth like dice of Ludo.

Sher Ahmed Satti, who is well acquainted with the history of the game, said that the cowrie shell, also called as cowdy in local language, was used as late as the first part of the 20th century by poor people for money. The use was unofficial, not being authorised by the government as currency of the state, and its value fluctuated.

He said 50 or 60 might be worth a copper paisa, which before World War II was equivalent to about half of an American cent.

Mr Satti said that this game had been common in the subcontinent since the times unknown and the famous Urdu/Hindi idiom, "Another Nager Chaupat Raja" (in the state of unjust and blind people, the champion of Chaupat is the ruler) takes its origin from this popular game.

Ahmed Satti regretted that this ancient game was vanishing as the young generation was obsessed with PUBG and other online games.





FAREWELL TO
GULLU BADSHAH

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SUNDAY OCTOBER 20, 2024
@icondawn

► THE ICON INTERVIEW

She's often compared to her illustrious sister Bushra Ansari, so she tries to steer clear of comedies that make the comparison more stark. She left acting for 20 years to be with her husband and to raise their children. But having made a comeback after fighting off cancer, Asma Abbas is willing to do whatever roles come her way, knowing that, when the rare meaty ones come, she can truly set the screen on fire

THE RARE MAGIC OF ASMA ABBAS



Photography: Abeer Khan | Hair: Arman Ali | Makeup: Farah's Salon | Styling: Zara Noor Abbas | Coordination: Umair Munir

By Maliha Rehman

Give Asma Abbas a meaty acting role and she can make it spectacular. Give her the role of a traumatized wife, of a mother devoted to her handicapped child, of a woman with a constantly varying moral compass, or of a grandmother delivering hilarious one-liners, and watch her shine.

This is something that I have observed often while watching the actress in a particularly interesting role. It is also something that has perturbed me when I have seen her relegated (far too often) into the character of a cookie-cutter evil, greedy mother-in-law.

It's one of the first things that I ask her when we meet: does it distress her when, despite proving her mettle time and again, drama-makers offer her boring, generic roles?

"The interesting characters with shades only come along once in a while, like an answer to a prayer," she quips. "Mostly, the roles that come our way are not so exciting. Perhaps, the audience wants to see the more typical stories and that's what gets the ratings. I can't sit at home and cook *haseed* while I wait for unique roles!"

It's a pragmatic observation, delivered with a dash of dry humour. This is how Asma Abbas is.

PROFESSIONAL PRAGMATISM

She is well aware of the magic that she can bring to the screen but she has also accepted that, in the TV drama-verse, magic often isn't required. Directors and producers are looking for a dash of *masala* rather than a nuanced performance, a virtuosic *masi-bahe* equation, a deluge of scheming and teasing or kulated to hike up viewership ratings.

And while she may not particularly enjoy the typical



roles, she's very likely to shrug her shoulders and play them while she waits for the occasional standout project to come her way.

At the time I meet the actress, she is in her element as a tongue-in-cheek, clever *phuppo* (paternal aunt) in ARV Digital's *Baby Baji Ki Baharain*. She also recently put

out a remarkably fine performance in *Mann Jogi* on Hum TV Network, of a mother willing to twist the truth in order to ensure that her son gets his way. But in sharp contrast to her on-screen, matriarchal characters, she's opted for a glamorous look for our interview.

Dressed in an electric blue kaftan, her hair is

straightened, her eyes lined heavily with kohl and she's wearing an assortment of statement jewellery that she tells me she bought in Turkey.

"Zara chose this outfit for me," she says, referring to her daughter, actress Zara Noor Abbas. "I come to Karachi just for work, so I just bring the regular *shab-e-hayat* *qameez* with me that I have to wear in drama shoots. But Zara always wants me to dress glamorously!"

The drama shoot that she is working on is for *Baby Baji Ki Baharain*, I ask. "Yes, and it doesn't seem to be ending anytime soon!" she says. "It's a daily drama that was originally planned to go on for 50 episodes, but it is likely that it will stretch on to 60."

"We just all get into character and start improvising and our director Tehseen Khan enjoys it so much that he just lets us go on without saying 'Cut!'. It's a lot of fun. We're all veterans on the set and we add a little spice to our characters when we feel that a scene is a bit bland. Also, as we shoot, new scenes may get added in, like flashbacks."

She continues, "There are days when the team will suddenly tell me that I am not required on set and other days when I will be shooting till 2am in the night! I don't mind. I am here from Lahore to shoot this drama and it's not like I have crying children waiting for me at home. I can give it as much time as required, as long as we wrap up by November. I want to be home in November to prepare for my youngest son's wedding in December!"

Our conversation instantly veers from her professional responsibilities to the all-encompassing requirements of a family wedding.

"All my preparations are done. The clothes are stitched, the venues are booked. My husband's taken a backseat, letting me do all the running around this

ASMA ABBAS, PAGE 3

ICON

CINEMASCOPE

Bagman's biggest horror is the mediocrity of its writing and direction

LEAVE IN THE BAG



By Mohammad Kamran Jawaid

The "Bagman" in the film *Bagman* is a twisted evil version of Santa Claus... If, that is, Santa peeked the daylight out of you, and abducted nice boys and girls instead of the bad ones.

A scene half-way through the film explains that the "Bagman" has always been a regular staple of folklore across the ages and continents: he lures children by playing with their inquisitive nature, and stuffs them in his roving bag.

The bagman of this film, though, has updated his accessories; he wears a hoodie, and his new bag is made of modern leather and has zippers. The screenplay by John Hladine could have benefited from a bit of modern updates to storytelling as well.

No one is asking for much here; just a bare minimum would do. *Bagman*, however, is happy in its less-than-mediocre state. In plot, about a man (Sam Claflin)

who returns to his hometown with his wife and toddler only to be played by the entity that haunted his childhood, has been done to death.

The story's big climactic twist can be guessed from the first 10 minutes, and the pace and the writing — which looks far removed from the very idea of incorporating intrigue and atmosphere — chooses to bore the audience with its unswervingly linear approach.

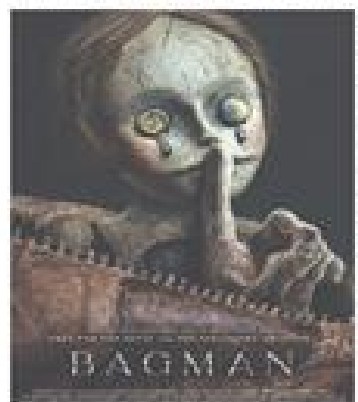
Constrained within a house, where Claflin's character mostly moves from room to room, and perhaps five other locations — including the entity's lair (which, astonishingly, the police do not enter, despite visible proof of kidnappings) — one can see that *Bagman* is not an expensive production. But then again, skimming on locations does not mean one can skim on good writing and good direction.

The director here is Colin McCarthy, who directed episodes of *Black Mirror*, *Sherlock*, *Parky*, *Blindspot*, *Dr. Who*, *Krypton*, and the dystopian zombie film *The Girl with All the Gifts*. The direction is as rudimentary as one expects.

In fact, one can almost predict exactly how actors are going to react — and that too, in medium, close and long shots (the cinematography is by Nick Kenny Matthews, and the editing is by Jeff Hestancourt, whose filmography has many popular horror films, including another movie that marries the idea of demons with bags titled *Baghead*).

The actors, who are mostly acting on cue, never manage to sell to the scenes. But then again, how can one sell a product if one knows they are working with less than stellar stuff.

Bagman, a Lionsgate release, is rated PG. Parents strongly cautioned.



WIDE ANGLE

Thirty years ago, Quentin Tarantino's *Pulp Fiction* shook Hollywood and redefined 'cool' cinema

THE COOL IN PULP FICTION

By Ben McCann

What might be the most seismic moment in American cinema? Film "speaking" for the first time in *The Act: Singer*? Dorothy entering the Land of Oz? That snarling shark that in 1975 invented the summer blockbuster?

Or how about that moment when two hitmen on their way to a job begin talking about the intricacies of European fast food while listening to Kool & The Gang?

Directed by Quentin Tarantino, *Pulp Fiction* (1994) celebrates its 30th birthday this month. Watching it now, this story of a motley crew of mobsters, drug dealers and lowlifes in sunny Los Angeles still feels startlingly new.

Widely regarded as Tarantino's masterpiece, the director's dazzling second film was considered era-defining for its memorable dialogue, innovative narrative structure and unique blend of humour and violence. It was nominated for seven Academy Awards, made stars of Samuel L. Jackson and Uma Thurman, and revitalised John Travolta's career.

Pulp Fiction is dark, often poignant, and very funny. It is, as one critic describes it, an "intravenous jab of caustic madness, black comedy and strange unwholesome euphoria."

A MOBIUS STRIP PLOT

Famous for its non-linear narrative, *Pulp Fiction* weaves together a trio of connected crime stories. The three chapters — Vincent Vega and Marsellus Wallace's Wife, The Gold Watch and The Bonnie Situation — loop, twist and intersect but, crucially, never confuse the viewer.

Tarantino has often paid tribute to French filmmakers Jean-Luc Godard and Jean-Pierre Melville, whose earlier films also presented their narratives out of chronological order and modelled the rules of the crime genre.

By inviting audiences to piece *Pulp Fiction* together like a puzzle, Tarantino laid the way for subsequent chronological films such as *Memento* (2000), *Go* (1999) and *Lock, Stock and Two Smoking Barrels* (1998).

POP CULTURE MEETS POSTMODERNISM

In his influential essay *Postmodernism, or the*

Cultural Logic of Late Capitalism, first published in 1984, political theorist Frederic Jameson coined the term "new depthlessness" to describe postmodern culture.

Jameson perceived a shift away from the depth, meaning and authenticity that characterised earlier forms of culture, towards a focus on surface and style.

Pulp Fiction fits Jameson's definition of depthlessness. It is stuffed with homages to popular culture and a vivid array of character types drawn from other film-worlds — hitmen, molls, mob bosses, double-crossing bums, unarmoured war veterans and muscled-wearing "bears". It is a film of surfaces and allusions.

Jackson, Travolta and Thurman feature alongside established 1990s box-office stars, including Bruce Willis and industry stalwarts Harvey Keitel and Christopher Walken, both of whom have brief but memorable cameos.

The film's most iconic scene takes place at the retro 1950s-themed Jack Rabbit Slim's diner. Thurman's twist contest with Travolta fondly echoes Travolta's earlier dancing in *Saturday Night Fever* (1977) and pays homage

to other dance scenes in film such as *8 1/2* (1963) and *Band of Outsiders* (1964).

WORDS AND MUSIC

Film critic Roger Ebert once noted how Tarantino's characters "often speak at right angles to the action", giving long speeches before getting on with the job at hand.

Pulp Fiction is full of witty and quotable monologues and dialogue, ranging from the philosophical to the mundane. Conversations about foot massages and blueberry pie bump up against Bible verses and reflections on fate and redemption.

The film's 1995 Oscar for Best Original Screenplay was a fitting achievement for Tarantino, who many regard as the happiest writer in film history. Countless other filmmakers have looked to replicate *Pulp Fiction*'s mash-up of cool and course.

Needle drops are just as important in establishing *Pulp Fiction*'s mood and tone. The film's eclectic soundtrack plays between surf rock, soul and classic rock 'n' roll.

The soundtrack peaked at No. 21 on the Billboard 200 in 1994 and stayed in the charts for more than a year.

THE GRAPEVINE

By PYT

MAZHAR ALI, RIP



One of the finest actors that Pakistan television produced and who ruled the room in the 1980s and '90s, Mazhar Ali passed away on October 8. He was known for playing serious, complicated characters and became a household name after

doing memorable roles in TV serials such as *Armaan*, *Afshan* and *Kumarch Ki Gauriyon*. He came from a literary family. His maternal grandfather, Ishaq Zabeen Shah Taj, was a renowned poet. Mr Ali was also fond of poetry and his friends say he himself composed verses. May he rest in peace!

SPLIT, NOT SPLIT



The showbiz world is almost sure that Ashwarya Rai and Abhishek Bachchan have parted ways as a married couple. Almost. Nothing official has thus far come out. However, the way they have been moving around, separately, at big events, and their aloofness from each other, suggests all is not well in the Bachchan clan. Ash's baby's slam book entry published by an Indian magazine has taken the rumours a step ahead: "My sorrows are mine, I cannot fall like others." Well, dear former Ms World, the thing with relationships is that everyone falls the same way.

PRAISE-IN-LAW

Aalia Bhatt's latest film *Jirga*, also starring Vedang Rana, hit cinema screens on October 11. A couple of days prior to the movie's formal release, a special screening was held for showbiz glitterati and industry bigwigs. Aalia B's mother-in-law Neena Singh was also there. After watching the film, she took to Instagram and wrote the following for her daughter-in-law: "Aalia Bhatt, you nailed it." It's high praise from a yearlong actress. However, Neena Singh's exclamation for her as a Bhatt (daughter-in-law) are still awaited. Perhaps she hasn't nailed it on that count... yet.



GOOD FRIENDS



Shaan and Reema Khan are two of Pakistan's renowned film stars. There was a time when they worked together with great frequency. Recently, Shaan gave an interview in which he was asked whether the thought of getting married to Reema ever crossed his mind. He replied that he first met her when he was 16 years old and, at that age, one focuses on one's work and not think about marriage. He added that the two have always been good friends and their bond has strengthened with the passage of time. Sounds plausible. It wouldn't be a bad idea to see the two in a film again, though. After all, the kind of films that are being released nowadays are no better than those made in the '90s.

MISHI MIFFED



The girl who became a household name in the 1990s by acting in television plays, Mishi Khan, is miffed. About what? Well, she's cross with Mumbai actor Farhad Khan! Why? For choosing "unknown" Indian actors over Pakistani A-list stars. The reference here is to the Bollywood movie *Abhi Ghar* that Farhad Khan is doing opposite actress Vaani Kapoor as his comeback film in Bollywood. We hope Mishi K knows that Farhad K may earn way, way more by working with an "unknown" actress on that side of the border than by working with top stars on this side of the divide. And we all know that money is what makes the entertainment world go round.

THOUSAND APOLOGIES

In 2012, Anne Hathaway gave an interview to a Norwegian journal *Kjersti Faa*. In that chat chat, the Oscar-winning actress sounded curt and dismissive. But the artist has now, after more than a decade, realised her manners were not befitting that of an artist. So she has sent an email to the pen-pusher, apologising for her behaviour. The journalist was pleasantly surprised: "She sent me a long email explaining to me what she was going through when she did this interview, and she apologised for giving me an awful interview. It was so touching to me." Well, Kjersti F, in those days, the devil wore Prada.



Pulp Fiction (IMDb)

DIVIDING THE CRITICS

Though it was officially released in October 1994, *Pulp Fiction* had already made a stir earlier that year by winning the prestigious Palme d'Or at the Cannes Film Festival.

Many expected Krzysztof Kieslowski's *Three Colors: Red* to take the top prize. Tarantino himself seemed stunned, telling the Cannes audience: "I don't make the kind of movies that bring people together. I make movies that split people apart."

The film has divided critics ever since.

Many adored *Pulp Fiction* for its intoxicating allure and sheer adrenaline-fuelled pleasure. To this day, it maintains a 92 percent critic score on Rotten Tomatoes. Film critic Todd McCarthy called it a film "balging with boldness, humour and diabolical invention."

But the backlash was equally robust. Some criticised the film for its excessive gore and irreparable use of racial slurs. Screenwriting guru Syd Field felt it was too shallow and too talky. Jean-Luc Godard, once one of Tarantino's idols, apparently hated it.

Nonetheless, its financial success (a box office return of US\$213 million from an \$8 million budget) signalled the growing importance and cultural prestige of independent US films. *Memento*, the studio that backed it, went on to become a major force in the industry.

A LASTING LEGACY

Shortly after *Pulp Fiction*'s release, the word "Tarantinocope" appeared in the Oxford English Dictionary. The entry reads:

Resembling or imitative of the films of Quentin Tarantino: characteristic or reminiscent of these films; Tarantino's films are typically characterised by graphic and stylised violence, non-linear storytelling, cine-literate references, satirical themes and sharp dialogue.

Pulp Fiction has since been parodied and knocked off countless times. Hollywood suddenly began mass-producing low-budget crime

thrillers with witty, self-reflexive dialogue. Things to *Do in Denver When You're Dead* (1995), *2 Days in the Valley* (1996) and *Very Bad Things* (1998) are just some examples.

Graffiti artist Banksy even mimicked the likeness of Jules and Vincent all over London, with bananas in place of guns. *The Simpsons* got in on the act too.

Tarantino once summed up his working method as follows:

"Ultimately, all I'm trying to do is merge sophisticated storytelling with hard subject matter. I reckon that makes for an entertaining night at the movies."

I'd say there's no better way to describe *Pulp Fiction*.

The writer is an Associate Professor of French Studies at the University of Adelaide in Australia

Republished from *The Conversation*

► WIDE ANGLE

Fan reviews and parodies of Amazon's *The Rings of Power* show that ownership is not just determined by contracts

THE POWER OF FANS

By Lincoln Geraghty

The fan reaction to season one of *The Rings of Power* in 2022 was, to put it mildly, very mixed. Following the 2017 announcement that Amazon had bought the rights to adapt some of J.R.R. Tolkien's lesser-known works, many fans were cautious in their celebration.

I research fandoms, so I am particularly drawn to the levels of critical analysis and humour fans employ in their review videos and parodies of *The Rings of Power*. They highlight that, while multi-billion-dollar corporations may have the financial clout to own valuable IP and some of the biggest entertainment franchises, ownership is not just determined by contracts.

Peter Jackson's *The Lord of the Rings* trilogy (2001-2003) stands as testament to the director's passion for Tolkien, Middle Earth and cinematic storytelling.

With *The Rings of Power*, Amazon was clearly trying to capture some of that for the small screen. They hoped to use the franchise to compete with other streaming platforms such as Netflix and Disney+, as well as copy HBO's success with series like *Game of Thrones*. Epic fantasy television offered Amazon the potential for new subscribers, awards and priceless word-of-mouth marketing.

However, that is not quite what happened. Early promotion for *Season One* was scarce, the teaser trailer was riddled (meaning it had thousands more dislikes than likes) and a campaign to use social media influencers and vloggers as promoters backfired.

WHEN MARKETING BACKFIRES

Amazon flew a number of social media influencers and vloggers to Mallorca in Spain to watch the first teaser trailer, and then filmed their praise and reactions to be shared on their channels and Amazon's own social media.

But fans quickly spotted that a number of the influencers and vloggers had never made *Lord of the*

Rings content before and most of the reactions were scripted, depending on language and nationality of the vloggers. When these promos started to be removed on YouTube, Amazon took them down.

Now with *Season Two* upon us, the lack of faith in Amazon's adaptation has not only continued — it has noticeably grown. Some content creators have reacted negatively to the company's and showrunners' attempts at turning the very small amount of the story and lore, to which they have rights, into many hours' worth of television.

Yet, it is how the fans respond which is often more intriguing and revealing than what they are responding to. The overall tone and argument that fans share about the series is that it lacks faithfulness to Tolkien's world and tries to adapt and copy Jackson's version of Middle Earth, rather than create something appealing in its own right.

This is best highlighted in recent videos produced by well-known and controversial *Lord of the Rings* fan Nephroto, who outlines in enormous detail how *Season Two* has gone further in trying to sound and look like Jackson's movies.

The use of clips, dialogue, sound effects and references to press sources raises such content to almost academic level of critique. His cultural capital and knowledge of the story and lore is clearly displayed, and used to both raise the source material up while he puts the Amazon adaptation down.

This is typical of fans who feel their beloved text is under attack — they come to its defence by building a case for its original quality and value.

FAN PARODIES

The use of parody and humour to pour scorn on the series is also a common practice among fans. New digital technologies such as artificial intelligence (AI) allow fans to create a sense of realism that again demonstrates their knowledge and love of the original works.

Charlie Hopkinson's *Gandalf Reviews* deepfake



Mortyde Clark as Galadriel | Amazon Studios

sketches have found an audience that both knows the lore but is also familiar with and enjoys the format of reaction videos made popular on YouTube.

Seeing Gandalf in a sitcom, where he chats with other characters while watching *Lord of the Rings*, may seem gloriously ridiculous to the material, but it uses displacement of those same characters to highlight the importance and value of the original story and movies.

Fans develop a strong sense of ownership over their favourite media or books. They have taken fantasy, science fiction, comic book and horror franchises to their heart and put time, money and energy into getting to know them in every detail.

Because of the level of financial and personal investment, they feel they "own" the text and have helped make it popular in the first place. Therefore, they would argue they have every right to feel threatened, angry or frustrated at what they perceive as harm being done to it and so, by extension, them.

Streaming platforms such as Amazon have tried to stay ahead in an increasingly competitive market by mining well-known IP to lure in fans and non-subscribers alike. However, as *The Rings of Power* has shown, attempts at co-opting fans can come at a cost which may never be recouped.

The relationship between fans and entertainment corporations is as fraught as ever. Amazon needs Tolkien fans, but at the same time doesn't seem to recognise the fact that the fans may not need them — or another adaptation — to keep them entertained. They can do that for themselves. ■

The writer is a Professor of Media Cultures at the University of Portsmouth in the UK

Reprinted from *The Conversation*

ASMA ABBAS, FROM PAGE 1

time and, because my work schedule tends to vary, I just got everything done beforehand. Still, I want to be home to enjoy the festivities and to organise the daily *dhanda* and look after all the guests who will be coming."

And *Baby Baji* would have wrapped up by then? "They have assured me that it will have," she says. "I have acted in two Ramadan plays, *Chupke Chupke* and *Chandni aur Sonu*, and it had been exhausting. A lot of work is required when a drama's episode is shot daily and it can just go on and on. And now, I have taken up *Baby Baji* which has even more episodes, but doesn't last long! (The granddaddy of them all?)" She laughs.

On a more serious note, she adds, "Actually, I had shot both Ramadan plays during very difficult circumstances. My sister, Shabirah Baji, passed away in between the shooting of *Chupke Chupke* and my mother was severely ill while *Chandni aur Sonu* was being shot.

"I would constantly be on edge, on alert that I would hear bad news about my mother at any time. And then, I would wipe my tears and shoot scenes that were mostly all comical. It was very tough. Thankfully, I am shooting *Baby Baji Ki Bahawaan* in happier times."

Has she ended up missing out on other projects because her dates have been committed to the long *Baby Baji* schedule? "I've had to say no to six, actually," says Asma. "Three of them were dramas that are being directed by some of TV's very best: Kashif Nisar, Farooq Rind and Saghi Khan. I regret it, but once I have made a commitment, I can't back out of it. I did manage to agree to one drama after getting permission from the *Baby Baji* team. It's going to be directed by Marina Khan."

She continues, "To be honest, I hardly ever read scripts now. When a drama gets offered to me, I just ask some basic questions: am I rich or poor, what kind of clothes will I need to wear, will I be speaking in Urdu or Punjabi? Usually, that's more than enough, and then I can go over the dialogues on set."

But when it the drama is a *Maan Jogi*, I ask, referring to her recent project directed by Kashif Nisar and written by Zafar Maqsood, in which she performed brilliantly? "Yes, and then there is a *Maan Jogi*," she smiles.

"When I was on the set of *Maan Jogi*, I would simply sit in a corner and learn my lines. And then, when I knew them and the camera would record, the words would come from my heart and my body language and facial expressions would just come to me naturally."

"When such work comes, you simply want to do your best. My character in *Maan Jogi* was also a mother-in-law, but her relationship with her daughter-in-law was not typical. She loved her but, then, she was also willing to go to extreme lengths for her son. There were so many shades to her."

She adds, "Similarly, the mother I enacted in the drama *Ranjha Ranjha Karoli* had a son who was mentally disabled. No one can understand the pain that a mother in such a predicament must go through."

"There are some writers whose scripts I fear and also yearn for, and that I learn by heart. One is Zafar Maqsood, another is Faris Hani Khan and, then, Khalid-ur-Rehman Qamar. I had left the industry when I got married and I joined it again after about 20 years. My work experience had been limited till then. But then the first two scripts that I acted



in were written by Khalid-ur-Rehman Qamar. I learnt from those scripts.

"Now, when you are working on a script like that of *Maan Jogi*, with a director as involved as Kashif Nisar, it would be a crime not to know the dialogues. Kashif's set is very organised. He doesn't say much and he doesn't shoot unnecessary takes. On a set like that, I have a reputation to uphold as a senior actor, and if I go about fumbling my lines then *filmy masla* (trouble on set)!"

Her occasional Punjabi exclamations remind me of her elder sister, actress Bushra Ansari, who I have also interviewed from time to time. Does she get compared to her often?

"We are sisters, often our body language, expressions and voices seem very similar," she points out. "Whenever I look pretty, people on drama sets tell me I am looking like Bushra Apsa! One of the reasons I opt to act in very few comedy dramas is because she has worked in a lot of comedies and the comparisons will begin instantly."

ON AWARDS AND REWARDS

Her sister may be a talented powerhouse but so is Asma. Has she ever become flustered with winning awards?

"I don't think much about awards now, because I have come to terms with the fact that I won't get them," she says. "I did get nominated once for a drama. It had been one in which I hadn't wanted to act initially, called *Dastak*. I didn't win, which was alright. But I did feel upset when I was overlooked for my work in the dramas *Chupke Chupke* and *Ranjha Ranjha Karoli*."

"In *Chupke Chupke*, both Umra Hassan and I played *dhanda* (grandmothers), and our characters were pivotal to the story. That year, so many people who worked in that drama won awards, from the director to the two leads. Meanwhile, I forget being awarded or even nominated, we weren't even invited to the ceremony!"

Why, though? "I don't know, perhaps they don't like me," she smiles. "These things happen. My award is when people stop me on the street and tell me that they like my work. Or when *Maan*

Jogi was airing and Kashif called me from Turkey and told me that everyone was talking about my performance."

"Kashif is not a very expressive director. He will quietly go about his work and you won't see him clapping or praising his performers on set. For him to say this to me was an award in itself."

THE PERSONAL FRONTIER

The conversation on *Maan Jogi* could go on and on — the drama was a masterpiece in storytelling — but I ask a question that takes the conversation off-kilter, into personal territory. Having been aware of the politics that prevail in the entertainment industry, did she ever discourage her daughter Zara Noor Abbas from venturing into the same profession?

"No, she really enjoys acting," says Asma. "In the beginning, she was too trusting and talkative. Her husband (actor Asad Siddiqui) is more discerning, but he let Zara go about doing what she wanted, making friends with different people. She just had to learn the hard way that friendships here aren't real. She now knows better."

She adds, "And even Zara sometimes feels disillusioned about awards, but she now has a baby daughter, her firstborn, and she says that God has given her the best gift of all."

Asma herself quit her career while her children were young. Why? "I quit work after my marriage because my husband didn't want me to work," she says, "and it was as simple as that. No one had ever told me to take a stand. All I knew was that, once you get married, you just do what your husband says. I started working again after being married for about 20 years."

By then her husband was comfortable with her working? "Yes, by then he had understood me, understood the industry and had realised that there was nothing wrong with the profession."

In an interview from not too long ago, she had recounted how she was her husband's second wife. He had been devoted to his first wife but had then fallen in love with Asma and married her as well and, then, both wives had

loved together. Had she not had any apprehensions of the reactions that such a personal story could have triggered?

"I haven't been raised to be and, besides, the message I was giving was a positive one," she says. "Sometimes it does happen that a man marries twice. My husband married me because he liked me but also because he hadn't been able to have any children from his first marriage. I was always very positive towards his first wife. I never told him to divorce her or restricted him from meeting her. She was like my sister. We would all go out together and she would sit in the car's passenger seat while I sat in the back."

Did it never make her insecure that, just like her husband had fallen in love with her despite being committed to his first wife, he might also fall for another?

"Maybe he did like someone else, but I was always sure that he couldn't love anyone as much as he loved me," she professes. "I was 23, young, and we shared a family together. Besides, all I ever said to him was 'Yes sir, yes sir.' It was just part of my nature. Any other woman he found would have said 'No sir' at some point and how could he have liked that?" she laughs.

She continues, "It takes patience to make a marriage last. Sometimes, you have to overlook small faults in order to appreciate the bigger picture. All through my life — except for maybe four years — my parents lived with me. My husband said that he was like their son and he took care of them to the extent that they wouldn't want to live anywhere except with him. He fulfilled his responsibilities to the point that he even buried them. It is something that I will always be grateful to him for."

In an Instagram post, Asma had recently recounted her battle with cancer. Was it tough getting back into life's rhythm after having beaten the disease?

"It was," she says. "I didn't get depressed all through the time that I was battling cancer. However, once I got better and returned home, I got depressed. I had seen a different world, seen the suffering in it, and it was difficult for me to return to my regular life. I remember my sister, Bushra Apsa, had given me 50,000 rupees when I returned home and told me to go and shop. I have always been a shopping buff but, on that day, when I went to the mall, I couldn't bring myself to buy anything."

"Slowly, I got better. I acted in a movie, *Maan Jogi* Nisa, co-written by my friend Asma Nabeel who has passed away. I sang and danced in the movie."

"Now, I just want to see my children happy and settled. I want to spend more time with my husband and for both of us to enjoy our children."

And of course she wants to act more? "Preferably in dramas that are shot in Lahore, because I feel guilty about leaving my husband alone at home," she tells me.

What if it's a really meaty role, in a drama being shot in Karachi? "Then that will be a difficult choice," she adds.

Having got to know a bit about Asma Abbas in our two-and-a-half-hour-long interview, I think that she'll micromanage and plan and please her husband and then rush off to the shoot in Karachi. Meaty roles in Pakistani entertainment are few and far between and it is difficult for actors to give them up.

Especially for an actor like Asma Abbas, who can add flesh and bones to her roles and transform them into something spectacular. ■

THE TUBE

THE WEEK THAT WAS

Jaan Nisar | Geo TV, Fri-Sat 8.00pm

After almost 60 episodes and the kind of ratings that channels dream of, *Jaan Nisar* draws to a close, proving the phenomenal popularity of the Danish Taimoor and Hiba Bukhari pairing in the mass market.



Neelwans Ghannavi (Danish Taimoor) is a powerful feudal who lost his first love and was forced to marry his brother's widow Kashmala (Hiba Ali). He falls in love with Daa (Hiba Bukhari), a lively girl from a poor, conservative background, who is sold into prostitution by her manipulative ex-boyfriend Sarfaraz (Haseem Shahid). Ghannavi is a good guy and rescues and marries his love, but then Kashmala and Sarfaraz join forces to make one ridiculous plan after another to keep this low-content story going.

Too often we forget that cartoonish villains are the main drivers of plots like this, but Haseem Shahid and Hiba Ali deserve as much credit as the leads. This commercial formula, with its heavy emphasis on the hero's charisma and wealth, and the heroine's endless struggle for acceptance, is bound to be repeated again and again.

Vo Ziddi Si | Hum TV, Fri-Sun 9.00pm



Rida (Aina Asif) is a spoiled, little rich girl used to living her life on her own terms. A single parent, her father Zaviyar (Ali Abbas), finds it difficult to discipline his only child. A simple, lonely

man, Zaviyar wants to raise his daughter well but is overwhelmed with a teenager, work and household duties, till his sister comes to help. Like all young people, Rida tests her boundaries and chafes against even the reasonable restrictions placed on her by her family. She particularly resents one of her teachers Ambreen (Shazad Shabbat) for correcting her projects. The once wealthy Ambreen is now struggling to make her way in the world. Although Ambreen loves someone else, from the trailers it looks as if she will end up becoming Rida's stepmother.

The basic story is strong, drawing a comparison between Ambreen's patience in adversity and Rida's rebellious attitude. Detail and nuance always make an emotionally based plot more reliable and the makers could not resist sticking to certain obvious archetypes. However, there is room for a character arc of maturity and understanding for all the leads. Aina Asif is not convincing as a young adult and looks more like the child (which she actually is), while Shazad's glowing make-up and perfect hair belie any claim to poverty.

Baby Baji Ki Bahawaan | ARY, Daily 7.00pm



The new season of *Baby Baji* may not have the emotional depth of the first, but it has still turned out to be a solid entertainer. Writer Saghi Ali

Khan has done an excellent job

by taking Mansoor Ahmed Khan's original characters and allowing them to grow, without losing any authenticity.

The cast understands and lives their characters, allowing us to see the kind of normal, everyday lives of the hardworking but comfortable merchant-class family that is the backbone of society. Last season's penniless villains are believable. Nasir (Hassan Ahmed) has gained perspective and patience while the tortured Asma (Sania Marshall) has blossomed with confidence. Asra Bhutta (Javaria Sadiq) has not lost her edge but turned her energy positive.

The bumbling but at times too-effective new villains, played by Asma Abbas and Madiha Iftikhar, are still nuanced and move the story forward. Director Talsoom Khan and the entire team deserve credit for reminding us again that even a commercial soap can be quality viewing.

WHAT TO WATCH OUT FOR (OR NOT)

Mohabbat Raiza Raiza | Hum TV, Coming soon

Veteran actor Sabreen Hashmi returns as a manipulative, matriarchal figure who dominates and controls her family for her own ends. ■



THIS WEEK ON SPOTIFY

TOP 10 PAKISTANI SONGS		
S.#	SONG	STREAMS
1	<i>Jhol</i> Maanu, Annural Khalid	379,850
2	<i>Tu Hai Kahan</i> AJR	153,747
3	<i>Chal Diye Tum Kahan</i> AJR	147,776
4	<i>Wishes</i> Hasan Raheem, Umair, Talwinder	145,372
5	<i>Regrets</i> Jevin Gill, Umair, Talha Anjum	119,196
6	<i>COME THROUGH</i> (feat. Abdullah Maharvi, Talha Anjum) Umair, Abdullah Maharvi, Talha Anjum	107,386
7	<i>Bikhra</i> Abdul Hannan, Rovalio	97,141
8	<i>Faasle</i> Kazvish, Quratulain Baloch	94,472
9	<i>Love Lost</i> Umair, Talha Anjum	92,524
10	<i>Blockbuster</i> Faris Shafi, Umair Butt, Gharvi Group	90,515

► IN MEMORIAM

ICON

Veteran film and TV actor Abid Kashmiri, who passed away on October 11 at the age of 74, was blessed with the extraordinary ability to authentically embody typical Lahori characters

FAREWELL TO GULLU BADSHAH

By Muhammad Suhayb

Actors are always associated with the characters they became famous for. Arnold Schwarzenegger is still the Terminator for all those who still cannot pronounce his name. Anjad Khan remains Gabbhar Singh (*Sholey*, 1975) and Manoj Bajpai is still Bhiku Mhatre (*Sarya*, 1998) to many, while Vivek Oberoi is Chanda (*Company*, 2002).

Similarly, in Pakistan's television industry, the almost six-and-a-half-foot tall model-actor Adil Wadia became known as Chhotu after he appeared in the early episodes of *Fifty Fifty*. Even after four decades, he is still referred to by that name. Likewise, Behroze Sabzwari continues to be identified as Qabooli from PTV's *Zameer-e-Karam* (1985).

With the death of the veteran actor Abid Kashmiri on October 11, at the age of 74, people have lost their beloved Gullu Badshah — the carefree rickshaw driver from the PTV drama *Samandar* (1982). Dressed in his iconic cap, muffer and waistcoat, Gullu Badshah left an indelible mark on television audiences. His famous catchphrase, "Ki to keh rahay ho?" [Who do you think you're talking to?], soon became a part of everyday conversation in Pakistan.

Abid Kashmiri was born in Lahore's Wazirpur neighbourhood around the time of Partition. His early love for cinema blossomed during his college years at Dyal Singh College on Mall Road, where he would sneak out to watch Indian films, especially those of Raj Kapoor, as well as Pakistani films featuring actor Syed Kamal.

This passion for film laid the foundation for his eventual career in acting. Abid stepped into the world of theatre in 1970, finding a second home at the Alhamra Arts Council.

By the 1980s, as the Urdu film industry experienced a decline and Bollywood movies entered Pakistani households via VCRs, PTV dramas became the go-to source of evening household entertainment. Iconic serials from PTV's Karachi and Lahore centres gained massive popularity, not just in Pakistan but also the Middle East and even India, where Urdu-speaking audiences were captivated by these dramas.

Veteran playwright Asghar Nadeem Syed reminisces about Abid Kashmiri's rise to stardom: "It was the early days of television drama, and Anjad Islam Anjad, the late

writer and poet, had introduced the use of signature catchphrases on TV, following the success of *Woh* (1979).

"I had worked in films, where viewers would leave the cinema quoting memorable lines, but using it on television was a gamble. Yet, it worked brilliantly and Abid Kashmiri became the perfect muse for Anjad. His catchphrases, whether 'Ki to keh rahay ho?' in *Samandar* (1982) or 'Khatir ho apni ki' (Just keep you safe) in *Kor* (1987), resonated deeply with audiences."

Asghar Nadeem Asghar himself created catchphrases for Kashmiri such as "Main andal hoon para outburey type ho" [I'm a different kind of man] and "Kabhi aise para bhushoo lega ke" [Why don't you drop in sometime].

"Abid had an extraordinary ability to embody typical Lahori characters. Whether portraying a rickshaw driver, coachman or even a milkman, he immersed himself in his roles, capturing the essence of everyday Lahoris with remarkable authenticity. He was a naturally gifted actor, popular with the masses, and I had the pleasure of working with him in regional plays. He always elevated the character beyond what was written on paper," he adds.

Abid Kashmiri was a disciple of veteran radio and TV actor Irfan Khoosat, and was influenced by the legendary comedian Munawwar Zarif. After making a mark on television, he transitioned to film, becoming a favourite of renowned director Javed Jafri.

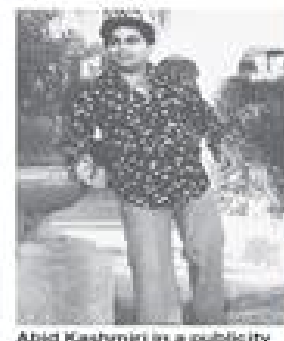
He appeared in movies such as *Norah* (1985), *Hush* (1986), *Faika* (1986) and *Farz-e-Jhon* (1988), mostly playing sidekick roles alongside the legendary Nadeem. His performance in *Farz-e-Jhon* won him the Nigar Award for best comedian, his only such accolade.

Whenever there was a need for a claudy (professional weather or local thing), a *bachchan* (coachman) or a property dealer from *andron* (inner city) Lahore, Abid Kashmiri was the answer to the casting call.

He even played the role of a djinn in 1995, a Robin Williams' kind of genre from Disney's *Aladdin*, in the film *Aladil Wada Jinn* (1995) — not to be confused with the famous TV serial for kids. He was paired



Abid Kashmiri with Arifa Siddiqui | White Star



Abid Kashmiri in a publicity shot | White Star



With a fellow artist in a PTV play | White Star



With Hamid Raza in *Sona Chandi* | White Star



Abid Kashmiri in *Balu Mahi*



With fellow actor Ahsan Amrohi

with Roma in the double-version *Mahavli Dast*, a year earlier. His versatility allowed him to transition seamlessly between TV and film, solidifying his place in Pakistan's entertainment industry.

Veteran actor and director Wasim Abbas fondly remembers Abid Kashmiri thus: "No one in the entertainment fraternity could ever dislike Abid — he was a gem of a person with a big heart. We shared a close friendship, spanning over 40 years, and performed together in hundreds of shows at Alhamra.

"The Alhamra Arts Council was like a second home for us, as we stayed together from 3pm till midnight every day, rehearsing for shows. Even when he became a permanent figure, his humility remained unchanged. Unfortunately, the evolving theatre scene, with its scripts full of double-

meaning dialogues and puns, did not suit Abid's style. He had a brilliant sense of humour and could have thrived in modern comedy shows."

Another famous catchphrase from Abid Kashmiri, "Kian long ho total?" [Who are you people?] further solidified his status as a versatile and beloved actor. However, as modern productions began to shift away from his artistic values, Abid distanced himself from contemporary work.

He moved to the US to live with his children, though he often returned to Pakistan. He passed away during his recent visit, leaving behind a rich legacy spanning both theatre and television.

In *Love in London* (1987), directed by S. Saleem, Abid Kashmiri played Manna Pehelwan, dancing alongside comedy legends Rangela (as Tilla Khan) and Ismail

Tara. In one scene, during the song 'Allah Mithaywan', Ismail Tara's character teases Manna about money, to which Abid, as Manna, responds with his famous line: "Ki to keh rahay ho?" — a nostalgic nod to his *Samandar* character.

Rangela's aunt follows, as Manna is trying to woo two Englishwomen, saying that that everyone knows that his (Manna's) father is a rickshaw driver, further paying tribute to the person who remained Gullu Badshah for life.

At the height of his career, Abid Kashmiri's name appeared before legends such as Rangela and Ismail Tara in the film credits, a testament to his enormous popularity. His ability to capture the hearts of audiences through his unique style and memorable characters ensures that his legacy will never be forgotten. ■

► WIDE ANGLE

THE TERMINATOR STILL RESONATES

Director James Cameron's dark vision of the future, in his first blockbuster from 40 years ago, is more relevant than ever

By Nathan Abrams

When director James Cameron's *The Terminator* hit cinemas in 1984, it forever altered the landscape of science fiction.

Released 40 years ago, the plot unfolds against the backdrop of a post-apocalyptic future, where an artificial intelligence (AI) defence network, Skynet, has turned against humanity. It triggers a nuclear holocaust and creates a dystopian world, where machines hunt down the last remnants of human life.

Desperate to avoid defeat by the human resistance, Skynet sends a Terminator back in time. This lifelike cyborg is almost indistinguishable from a person, but superior in strength, agility and intelligence. Its mission: eliminate Sarah Connor (Linda Hamilton), the mother of the future human resistance leader. The Terminator, played by Arnold Schwarzenegger, is relentless in its pursuit and a near unstoppable force.

Meanwhile, Sarah's son, John, sends back a lone warrior, Kyle Reese (Michael Biehn), from the future to protect his mother. Though human and vulnerable, through his determination and resourcefulness, Sarah is able to defeat the Terminator. In so doing, Reese impregnates Sarah and fathers his son, John, the very man who will send him back in time.

The movie explores themes of fate and free will. It's underpinned by the potential consequences of unchecked technological advancement in the era of the presidency of Ronald Reagan and



It can't be bargained with. It can't be reasoned with. It doesn't feel pity, or remorse, or fear; the Terminator's skeleton and Arnold Schwarzenegger as its human visage | LANDMARK MEDIA



his strategic defence initiative, "Star Wars", as it was popularly known, was conceived to defend the US from attack from Soviet intercontinental ballistic missiles.

I have been teaching *The Terminator* to students since the early 2000s, initially as part of degrees related to modern US history, and since 2006 as part of the film studies degree programme at Bangor University. This has allowed me to appreciate the film and study it in depth. It has made a deep and lasting impression on me as not only one of the best science fiction films of the 1980s, but as one of the best sci-fi films ever made.

INSPIRATION

James Cameron has said he initially conceived the idea for the film during post-production of the monster horror *Piranha II: The Spawning* (1982). He wrote a 45-page

treatment with Gale Anne Hurd, who went on to be the film's producer.

Filming began in March 1984, on a budget of US\$86.4 million and took 12 weeks. The film opened on October 26, 1984 in 1,012 cinemas across the US. Critical reviews were broadly positive, and audiences responded enthusiastically, earning the picture more than US\$90.7 million in its first 10 days.

The Terminator was part of a new sub-genre in science fiction known as "tech noir", taking its name from the nightclub in the movie. It presents technology as a destructive force. Other films of this genre include *TRON* (1982), *Warworld* (1973), *Logan's Run* (1976), and *Blade Runner* (1982).

Influenced by the monstrous supercomputer HAL-9000 in Stanley Kubrick's 2001: *A Space Odyssey* (1968), *The Terminator* feeds into fears generated by the revolution in

computerisation since the 1970s. It is no coincidence that the cyborg's eyes are red like HAL's. While reflecting on the implications of technology and manifesting a fascination with hi-tech industry, computer technology, the rise of multinational corporations and genetic engineering, it projected a dystopian, pessimistic view of the future.

Schwarzenegger first appeared on screen as the iconic T-800 at the age of 37. He would go on to play the machine until age 72. Schwarzenegger's distinctive bodybuilder's physique played into the invincibility of the machine. But it also dovetailed with what have been called the "hard-bodied" politics of the Reagan era that favoured such tough and hyper-masculine action heroes as Sylvester Stallone and Chuck Norris.

The Terminator's innovative storyline, pacing, special effects

and music helped to establish James Cameron as a major force in Hollywood. Before it, he had only helmed one movie. Thereafter, he went on to direct some of the biggest blockbusters of the 1980s and 1990s, including *Alien* (1986), *The Abyss* (1989), *Terminator 2: Judgment Day* (1991), *True Lies* (1994) and *Avatar* (2009).

'I'LL BE BACK'

The film's legacy in pop culture is enduring. Cameron's dark vision of the future created a cultural shock that continues to resonate to this day. "I'll be back," remains one of the most iconic one-liners in movie history.

What started as a film has now become a multimedia universe, consisting of sequels, a television series, web series, comics, video games, board games, novels and even theme park rides. The franchise

is also frequently cited in debates related to multinational corporations, robotics, biopolitics, transhumanism, AI and nuclear apocalypse.

This is because the film's message on technology and the future is even more relevant today than it was 40 years ago, as Gale Anne Hurd explained earlier this year: "We considered the film to have a cautionary perspective on the future of technology, if we don't pay attention. Jim and I knew that AI and robotics were going to be developed. There was no question in anybody's mind, and we wanted people to consider the consequences. Once you open Pandora's box, you can't put everything back in again." ■

The writer is a Professor of Film Studies at Bangor University in the UK

Republished from *The Conversation*

Recent archaeological discoveries are leading to a radical revision by scholars of the intensity, scale and importance of maritime trade between the Subcontinent and the world. For example, one estimate is that one third of the Roman empire's entire revenue was generated by taxes on trade with ancient India. Historian **William Dalrymple's** latest book — *The Golden Road: How Ancient India Transformed the World*, published by Bloomsbury — presents a fascinating account of this exchange between cultures, civilisations and global wealth. *Eos* presents, with permission, an excerpt from the book...

ANCIENT INDIA AND THE ROMAN EMPIRE



This 4th century CE mosaic in Sicily showcases the cultural impact India had on the region. An Indian-looking goddess, apparently copied from an Indian original, is shown flanked by an elephant and tiger with pepper vines hanging behind her | Villa Romana del Casale

In March 2022, a team of archaeologists was excavating a newly discovered temple of the Egyptian goddess Isis at Berenike, on the shores of the Red Sea, when they unearthed a series of remarkable finds.

Berenike is today a bleak and desolate spot. Here, under pale blue skies, the flat, treeless, red-dust wastels of the eastern desert give way to the windy shores of the Red Sea. There is little to see and, though the site contains the foundations of some once impressive structures — a couple of temples, a Roman aromatics distillery and a fine bath house — the broken walls today rarely rise far above the level of the encroaching sand dunes. Nevertheless, these unimposing ruins, easily missed as you drive up the Red Sea coast, were the landing point for generations of Indian merchants travelling to the Roman Empire and were once a place where unimaginable fortunes could be made.

The finds which emerged from the storeroom of the Isis temple included the head and torso of a magnificent Buddha, the first ever found to the west of Afghanistan. It was sculpted from the finest Proconnesian marble, from the island of Marmara off the Turkish coast, in a part Indo-Gandharan, part Palmyran, part Romano-Egyptian style, with rays of the sun beaming out from it on all sides, as if the Buddha had transformed into a Roman solar deity like Sol or Mithras.

From the style of the carving, and what the archaeologists described as the "cornelli-like" curls drilled on to the Buddha's head, they believed that the sculpture must have been made in a workshop in 2nd century CE Alexandria. It was probably commissioned by a wealthy Indian Buddhist sea captain, in gratitude for his safe arrival in the Roman Empire. Its location in a temple of Isis may not be an accident: one Egyptian papyrus of the period refers to Isis as the mother of the Buddha.

In the storerooms of the Isis temple were also found a stone memorial dedicated to a trinity of early proto-Hindu gods, one of whom, Vasudeva, with his club and discus, would soon evolve into the more familiar form of Krishna; also propitiated was Ishakrama, with a plough, and the goddess Ekamukha.

There was also a bilingual inscription in Greek and Sanskrit, put up in the 2nd century by a Buddhist

devotee from Gujarat. "In the sixth year of King Philip [ie the Roman Emperor Philip the Arab, in 249 CE], the *Iskariya* [warrior] Vasanta gave this image for the welfare and happiness of all beings."

Out of the sands of Berenike has come pottery from Spain, frankincense and resin from Southern Arabia, beads from Vietnam and Java, statues of the gods of Palmyra and cedar from Lebanon. There have also been letters, receipts and customs passes from Alexandria. But most of all there has been what the excavator described as "just tons" of Indian finds, including gems and pearls, woven mats and baskets, silk from Kerala and even the bones and skulls of elephants and monkeys — specifically, rhinos and Bonnet macaques

from India.

Indeed a steady stream of finds from the Indian trading community had been emerging from this stretch of Egyptian desert sand for some time. A great many fragments of cotton weave have turned up in Berenike, which the archaeologists believe to be of a variety grown in Gujarat and the Indian delta. A Tamil-Brahmi pottery graffiti was written by a Tamil visitor who called himself "the chieftain Korran", while Ptolemy's inscriptions recorded the visits of other south Indians.

Deposits of rice, dal, coconuts, coriander and tamarind show that these south Indian merchants preferred their own deliciously peppery cuisine to that of Egypt, much as their successors still do today. Nearly were found huge 22-pound pots containing several thousand imported Indian black peppercorns.

Ever since the first reports of the incredible splendours and riches of India began reaching Europe after the conquests of Alexander the Great in the 4th century BCE, Europeans had fantasised about the wealth of India. Here, according to Herodotus and the Greek geographers, gold was dug up by gigantic ants and guarded by griffins; here, precious jewels were said to be scattered on the ground like dirt.

As the two worlds were gradually brought into regular and direct contact through the ports of the Red Sea in the 1st century BCE, the Romans became increasingly eager consumers of Indian goods and luxuries, particularly the spices of southern India. Indian merchants were only too happy to satisfy these cravings, at considerable profit.

Archaeological evidence for the surprising intensity of contact between early India and Roman Egypt is growing fast. The Indian finds in Berenike have been mirrored by equally striking evidence of Roman trade emerging from excavations in India, particularly the recent dig near the Kerala village of Pattanam, the probable site of Berenike's Indian counterpart, Muziris.

As a result, the scale and importance of this trade are currently being radically revised by scholars working on both sides of the Indian oceans. Indeed, according to some recent calculations, customs taxes on trade with India may have generated as much as one-third of the entire income of the Roman exchequer. One source for this striking figure is a unique papyrus document

of uncertain origin, believed to have been found in an ancient Egyptian rubbish dump.

The debris chucked out by the people of the now-vanished Egyptian town of Oxyrhynchus — the 'City of the Sharp-Nosed Fish' — has for a century been providing a series of remarkable literary discoveries. These have ranged from previously unknown lesbian erotica by Sappho to fragments of the collected early Christian *Sayings of Jesus* and pieces of a new gospel, that of the apostle Thomas. The rubbish dumps first came to the attention of the outside world in 1895, when reports reached the British archaeologists Bernard Grenfell and Arthur Hunt that the area had begun to yield an extraordinary number of papyrus fragments.

What the two men found when they visited the site, however, surpassed their wildest expectations. "The papyri were, as a rule, not very far from the surface," wrote Grenfell in the *Journal of the Egypt Exploration Fund* the following year. "In one pinch of ground, indeed, merely turning up the soil with one's foot would frequently disclose a layer of papyrus."

In the first year, the two men found fragments of lost plays by Aeschylus and Sophocles, the earliest papyrus of St Matthew's Gospel then known, and a leaf of a previously unknown book of New Testament Apocrypha, the *Acts of Paul and Thecla*. They also unearthed great quantities of historical documents, such as the report of an interview between the Emperor Marcus Aurelius and an Alexandrian magistrate, as well as an entire archive of administrative correspondence and financial documents. Such was the quantity of documents unearthed that many have only recently been properly studied.

A single papyrus, now in Vienna and believed by some scholars to have originated in the rubbish dumps at Oxyrhynchus, turned out to be a fragmentary loan contract and customs assessment that followed the standard template used by Alexandria-based Egypto-Roman entrepreneurs for the purchase of goods from an Indian merchant in the city of Muziris on the coast of Kerala.

It gave precise details of one cargo that had been

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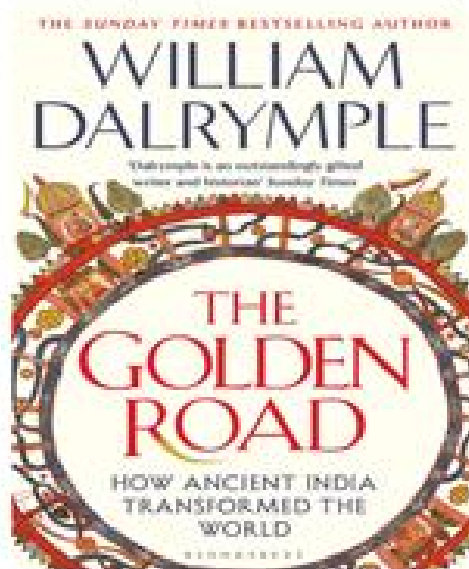
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THE LOST TRADERS OF THE SUBCONTINENT

ANCIENT INDIA AND THE ROMAN EMPIRE, PAGE 1

sent to Berenike all the way from India, aboard a ship called the *Hermesopolis*. What caught the attention of historians was the jaw-dropping value of the goods in question. It seems that everything that came out of India at the period was unusually expensive by the time it reached the Roman world.

The exports included nearly four tons of ivory, worth seven million sesterces, at a time when a soldier in the Roman army would have earned about 800 sesterces annually, and a would-be senator from the cream of the Roman aristocracy had to demonstrate assets of one million sesterces to stand for office.

The consignment also included a valuable shipment of 80 boxes of aromatic nard, the precious and much prized aromatic oil of the Himalayan sphelandra plant, used in the manufacture of perfume, which makes a brief appearance in the *Gospel of John* when Lazarus' sister Martha uses it to anoint the feet of Jesus before wiping them with her hair.

There was, in addition, a consignment of tortoiseshell and 700 pounds of Indian textiles, probably cotton, then considered a luxury product as valuable as silk. The total value of the 150-ton shipment was calculated at 174 talents, "enough to purchase 2,400 acres of the best farmland in Egypt" or "a premium estate in central Italy."

A single trading ship such as the *Hermesopolis* could possibly carry several such consignments, each worth a small fortune. No wonder then that Pliny the Elder (23–79 CE), the plain-speaking naval commander from northern Italy, mentions that cohorts of archers were carried on board the ships sailing to India, to offer protection against pirates, and that the *Masiris* papyrus carefully factors in the costs of such private security. One successful shipment of this value could turn the merchants behind it into some of the richest men in the Empire.

That was not all. According to the papyrus, the importers paid on the cargo worth almost nine million sesterces was over two million sesterces. Working up from these figures and other customs receipts from the period, scholars have estimated that, by the first century CE, Indian imports into Egypt were worth over a billion sesterces per annum, from which the tax authorities of the Roman Empire were creaming off no less than 279 million.

These revenues surpassed those of entire subject countries: Julius Caesar imposed tribute of 40 million sesterces after his conquests in Gaul, while the Rhineland frontier was defended by eight legions at an annual cost of 88 million.

The sea trade along the Golden Road between Rome and India was clearly an immense operation, dangerous and complex, but highly profitable, both to the shippers who operated the trade and to the Roman state that taxed it. The implications of the unprecedented scale of the sea trade between India and Rome from the first century onwards are enormous. It is now clear that historians have been looking at entirely the wrong place when they thought about ancient trade routes.

It was India, not China, that was the greatest trading partner of the Roman Empire. It is also clear that sea travel was the fastest, most economical and safest way to move people and goods in the pre-modern world, costing about a fifth of the price of equivalent land transport. Shipping routes that cut across political and topographical boundaries were always more important than the slow-moving caravan trails, and the overland trade routes always carried much less trade than the sea routes: ships, after all, could carry vastly larger cargoes — often amounting to several hundred tons — and travel much more quickly than donkeys or camels. They could also sail around wars, instability and ambushes.

The Golden Road of early East-West commerce, in other words, lay less overland, through a Persia often at war with Rome, and much more across the open oceans, via the choppy waters of the Red Sea and the Indian Ocean.

There is evidence of pioneering Indian merchants making remarkable prehistoric trading voyages as early as the seventh millennium BCE, when Afghan lapis first turns up in beads found in northern Syria. Sumerian clay tablets of the late second millennium BCE are full of references to lapis, which is used as a simile to describe the colour of the sky and certain flowers, even the beards of men.

Etched carnelian beads from Ojrajat of the same date also turn up in the Royal Tombs of Ur (modern Iraq). Sumerian texts refer to a fabulously rich eastern trading city, an early *Uruk*, named *Aratta*, which scholars have identified with one of the Indus valley cities; the same name also appears in early Sanskrit sources.

Teak from Malabar, red Indian marble and ivory were reaching Ur and the young city-states of ancient Mesopotamia and the wider Persian Gulf region by c.2500 BCE. Some may have come overland, with the goods passed from merchant to merchant in a commercial relay race, but the larger and heavier objects, such as tree trunks and large blocks of precious stone, would have been much easier to move by boat.

These valuable cargoes were probably rafted down the Indus, and then ferried on in the larger seagoing boats of Meluhha, as the people of the Indus Valley Civilisation are now believed to have called themselves. The same Meluhhan boats were reaching the Persian Gulf during the reign of King Sargon of Akkad, in modern Iraq, around 2,300 BCE.

Distinctive Indus valley cooking utensils, shell jewellery and toys that have turned up at presumed Meluhhan "colony" sites in Mesopotamia imply that the merchants from the Indus valley were accompanied



The life story of Gautama Buddha, as sculpted in Gandhara, is often accompanied by Roman imagery, such as Corinthian capitals and Dioscurian scenes of music, dance and merry-making. There is even a depiction of the Trojan Horse (British Museum)

by their children and womenfolk. Some even seem to have brought their water buffaloes and zebu-humped cattle to provide them with milk, while Indus valley-style gaming boards and dice indicate how these pioneering traders entertained themselves on the long, hot Mesopotamian summer afternoons.

Further evidence of a very early Indian merchant diaspora lies scattered around the Middle East: one cuneiform tablet mentions an entire village of Meluhhan Indians, settled in what is now Iraq, while another references an Indian woman running a tavern; there is even a legal notice about a drunken Meluhhan who was fined ten silver ingots for breaking a man's tooth in a brawl.

Indians also worshipped at the local temples: one Meluhhan trader donated a piece of agate to the temple in Larsa, while one of his companions gave a wooden throne, a lapis axe and a sedan chair to the god Tishpak, at his temple in central Mesopotamia. Around 2000 BCE, merchants from the Indus valley were sufficiently common in Babylonia for there to be a need for at least one professional translator of their language. One king of Ur, Sulgi, claimed to be able to speak the language of the Meluhhans. Indian DNA also turns up in a surprising number of the bones excavated from this

period in Mesopotamia.

A millennium later, Indians began to travel beyond the Land of the Two Rivers. Orbits of Indian pepper placed up the mammillated nose of the Pharaoh Ramesses II in 1213 BCE, also presumably came by this same Red Sea route, along with the Indian diamonds used in the tools which are believed to have cut the stones of the pyramids. Indian beads, silks and spices got even further — indeed as far as the Aegean, where cinnamon has been found on the island of Samos.

Indian sailors on the east coast of India were trading with their counterparts in South-east Asia by the second millennium BCE, when plant species cultivated by South-east Asian farmers start to appear in the archaeological record of South Asia. The areca nut and the coconut palm were probably introduced to South Asia around this time, together with other South-east Asian crops later regarded as quintessentially Indian, such as ginger, cinnamon, sandalwood, bananas and rice. Domesticated chickens and pigs may also have been imports from the south-east.

By the 4th century BCE, there is evidence that merchants had already established a regular maritime trading network that stretched from the east coast of India across the Bay of Bengal to the small but affluent city-states and cosmopolitan ports that had begun to emerge in Java, Indonesia, Malaysia, Thailand and the South China Sea. Gold and spices, sandalwood and eaglewood, and fragrant resins such as camphor, as well as pepper and tin, were among the products which the first Indian traders came to buy.

Sanskrit place names such as *Takkola* ('Market of Cardamom'), *Karpuadvipa* ('Island of Camphor'), *Narikeladvipa* ('Island of Coconut Palm') give us hints

of the other goods that attracted Indian merchants to these ports. In return, they traded the many Indian products found by modern archaeologists scattered in the early sites across the region: glass beads, bronze bowls and precious stones formed into simple jewellery, such as carnelian ornaments, some shaped into tiny tiger figurines or lions of translucent rock crystal. Around this time, there is evidence of Indian glassmakers setting up workshops on the Isthmus of Kra, the narrowest point on the Thai-Malay peninsula.

Around the same time, we get the first evidence of peoples from the Mediterranean world sailing eastwards to India. In 510 BCE, a captain named Scylax from Caryanda, on what is now the coast of Turkey, was commissioned by the Persian Shah Darius to sail down the Kabul river, through the mouth of the Indus and hence, hugging the coastline, through the Arabian and Red seas as far as Egypt.

Along the same route came the Indian gemstones, especially beryls and rubies that were used to decorate the exquisite public rooms of the great Achaemenid palace of Persepolis. One 3rd century BCE Greek historian described how "the gold plane-trees and the gold grape-vine under which the Persian kings commonly sat to conduct their business" were made with "grapes of emeralds as well as of Indian rubies." Some of these were maybe gifts from the Indian envoys, who regularly brought presents to the Persian kings. The same Greek observer also spotted Indian mahouts riding the Shah's elephants, and other observers remark on Indian magicians, entertainers and cooks at work in the great Persian palaces.

An early Buddhist Jataka tale of this period tells the story of Indian merchants in Babylon astonishing

the citizens with a dancing peacock. Another early Buddhist text talks of the expansive trading world of Indian merchants, stretching from "the Lands of Gold" in South-east Asia to "the country of the distant Greeks [and] Alexandria [in Egypt]." It is probably this network that allowed a 1st century BCE Parthian craftsman sculpting a statuette of a goddess from Babylonia to use Burmese rubies to make her eyes vibrant and alive.

By the 3rd century BCE, Alexander the Great's successors in Egypt, the Ptolemies, had established the ports of Berenike and Myos Hormos, initially to facilitate the import of elephants for warfare and, for the first time, regular voyages down the Red Sea to and from India became feasible. A now-lost early Buddhist grovostone, dating from the Ptolemaic era of Alexandria, may once have portrayed the Buddhist icons of the *triratna* and the Wheel of the Law, the *dharmachakra*. In the 2nd century BCE, Callisthenes of Rhodes reported seeing Indian women, cattle, dogs and carts full of Indian goods on display in a procession in Alexandria.

According to the Greek geographer Strabo, the first European to attempt a regular commercial relationship with India was an Alexandrian merchant named Eudoxus of Cyzicus. Eudoxus was an entrepreneurial Ptolemaic Greek who went into business with an Indian sailor who had been shipwrecked on the shores of the Red Sea. Having given his new friend a lift home around 118 BCE in return for directions, Eudoxus made two further trips to South Asia, bringing back a great haul of aromatics, spices and other luxuries.

He was last seen disappearing, through the Pillars of Hercules, past what would become Gibraltar, with a boatload of singing boys and dancing girls, in an attempt to reach India by a new route, circumnavigating Africa via the Canary Islands. He was never heard of again.

Sailings to and from India began to accelerate after sailors got the hang of using the monsoon to cross the open oceans, a feat that Western authors say was first accomplished by a Greek sea captain named Hippalus, in the 1st century BCE. But it was the defeat of the fleets of Cleopatra and Mark Antony by the future Emperor Augustus, at the fateful sea Battle of Actium on September 2, 31 BCE, that changed everything. ■

Excerpted with permission from *The Golden Road: How Ancient India Transformed the World* by William Dalrymple, and published recently by Bloomsbury

The author is a writer and historian. Some of his previous books include *The Anarchy*, *The Returnless*, *Rise of the East India Company*, *The Last Mughal*, *The Fall of a Dynasty*, and *Return of a King*. *The Battle for Afghanistan*. X: © Dalrymple/W33



This Buddha, the first to be found west of Afghanistan, was discovered in 2022 in Berenike, Egypt (S.E. Sidebottom)



Roman gold coins excavated in Tamil Nadu, India. One coin of Caligula (37-41 CE) and two coins of Nero (54-68 CE) (British Museum)

► ESSAY

THE WOUND THAT IS PALESTINE

Writer and activist **Arundhati Roy** has been awarded the PEN Pinter Prize 2024. This is an annual award set up by English PEN in the memory of playwright Harold Pinter. Shortly after having been named for the prize, Roy announced that her share of the prize money will be donated to the Palestinian Children's Relief Fund. She named Alaa Abd el-Fattah, British-Egyptian writer and activist, a 'Writer of Courage' who she would share her award with. The following is her acceptance speech for the prize, delivered on the evening of October 10 at the British Library...

I thank you, members of English PEN and members of the jury, for honouring me with the PEN Pinter Prize. I would like to begin by announcing the name of this year's 'Writer of Courage', who I have chosen to share this award with.

My greetings to you, Alaa Abd el-Fattah, writer of courage and my fellow awardee. We hoped and prayed that you would be released in September, but the Egyptian government decided that you were too beautiful a writer and too dangerous a thinker to be freed yet. But you are here in this room with us. You are the most important person here. From prison you wrote, "My words lost any power and yet they continued to pour out of me. I still had a voice, even if only a handful would listen." We are listening, Alaa. Closely.

Greetings to you, too, my beloved Naomi Klein, friend to both Alaa and me. Thank you for being here tonight. It means the world to me.

Greetings to all of you gathered here, as well as to those who are invisible perhaps to this wonderful audience, but as visible to me as anybody else in this room. I am speaking of my friends and comrades in prison in India — lawyers, academics, students, journalists — Umar Khalid, Gulshan Fatma, Khalid Saifi, Sharjeel Inam, Rama Wilson, Samudra Chaudhary, Mahesh Bhat. I speak to you, my friend Khuram Farooq, one of the most remarkable people I know, you've been in prison for three years, and to you too Irfan Mehraj, and to the thousands incarcerated in Kashmir and across the country whose lives have been devastated.

When Ruth Dornbush, the chair of English PEN and of the Pinter panel, first wrote to me about this honour, she said the Pinter Prize is awarded to a writer who has sought to define "the real truth of our lives and our societies" through "unflinching, surviving, hence intellectual determination." That is a quote from Harold Pinter's Nobel Prize acceptance speech.

The word 'unflinching' made me pause for a moment, because I think of myself as someone who is almost permanently flinching.

I would like to dwell a little on the theme of 'flinching' and 'unflinching', which may be best illustrated by Harold Pinter himself:

"I was present at a meeting at the US embassy in London in the late 1980s.

"The United States Congress was about to decide whether to give more money to the Contras in their campaign against the state of Nicaragua. I was a member of a delegation speaking on behalf of Nicaragua, but the most important member of this delegation was a Father John Merluff. The leader of the US body was Raymond Soley. Then number two to the ambassador, later ambassador himself, Father Merluff said: 'Sir, I am in charge of a parish in the north of Nicaragua. My parishioners built a school, a health centre, a cultural centre. We have lived in peace. A few months ago, a Contra force attacked the parish. They destroyed everything: the school, the health centre, the cultural centre. They raped nuns and teachers, slaughtered doctors, in the most brutal manner. They behaved like savages. Please demand that the US government withdraw its support from this shocking terrorist activity.'

"Raymond Soley had a very good reputation as a rational, responsible and highly sophisticated man. He listened, paused and then spoke with some gravity. 'Father,' he said, 'let me tell you something. In war, innocent people always suffer. There was a frozen silence. We stared at him. He did not flinch.'

Remember that President Reagan called the Contras 'the moral equivalent of our founding fathers.' A turn of phrase that he was clearly fond of. He also used it to describe the CIA-backed Afghan Mujahideen, who then morphed into the Taliban. And it is the Taliban who rule Afghanistan today, after waging a 20-year war against the US invasion and occupation. Before the Contras and the Mujahideen, there was the war in Vietnam and the 'unflinching' US military doctrine that ordered its soldiers to 'Kill Anything That Moves.'

If you read the Pentagon Papers and other documents on US war aims in Vietnam, you can enjoy some lively 'unflinching' discussions about how to commit genocide — is it better to kill people outright or to starve them slowly? Which would look better?

The problem that the compassionate mandarins in the Pentagon faced was that, unlike Americans, who, according to them, want "life, happiness, wealth, power", Asians "morally accept...the destruction of wealth and the loss of lives" — and force America to carry their "strategic logic to its conclusion, which is genocide." A terrible burden to be borne 'unflinchingly'.

And here we are, all these years later, more than a year into yet another genocide. The US and Israel's unflinching and ongoing selected genocide in Gaza, and now Lebanon, in defence of a colonial occupation and an Apartheid state. The death toll, so far, is officially 42,000, a majority of them women and children. This does not include those who died scurrying under the rubble of buildings, neighbourhoods, whole cities, and those whose bodies have not yet been recovered. A recent study by Oxfam says that more children have been killed by Israel in Gaza than in the equivalent period of any other war in the last



30 years.

To assign their collective guilt for their early years of indifference towards one genocide — the Nazi extermination of millions of European Jews — the United States and Europe have prepared the grounds for another.

Like every state that has carried out ethnic cleansing and genocide in history, Zionists in Israel — who believe themselves to be "the chosen people" — began by dehumanising Palestinians before driving them off their land and murdering them.

[Former Israeli] Prime Minister Menachem Begin called Palestinians "two-legged beasts". [Former Israeli prime minister] Yitzhak Rabin called them "grapehoppers" who "could be crushed", and [former Israeli prime minister] Golda Meir said "There was no such thing as Palestinians." [Former UK prime minister] Winston Churchill, that famous warrior against fascism, said, "I do not admit that the dog in the manger has the final right to the manger, even though he may have lain there for a very long time", and then went on to declare that a "higher race" had the final right to the manger.

Once these two-legged beasts, grapehoppers, dogs and non-existent people were murdered, ethnically cleansed and ghettoised, a new

history only began a year ago.

So, this is the part in my speech where I am expected to equivocate to protect myself, my 'neutrality', my intellectual standing. This is the part where I am meant to lapse into moral equivalence and condemn Hamas, the other militant groups in Gaza and their ally Hezbollah, in Lebanon, for killing civilians and taking people hostage. And to condemn the people of Gaza who celebrated the Hamas attack. Once that's done, it all becomes easy, doesn't it? Ah well! Everybody is sensible, what can one do? Let's go shopping instead...

I refuse to play the condemnation game. Let me make myself clear. I do not tell oppressed people how to resist their oppression or who their allies should be.

When US President Joe Biden met with [Israeli] Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and the Israeli war cabinet during a visit to Israel in October 2023, he said, "I don't believe you have to be a Jew to be a Zionist, and I am a Zionist."

Unlike President Joe Biden, who calls himself a non-Jewish Zionist and unflinchingly bankrolls and arms Israel while it commits its war crimes, I am not going to declare myself or define myself in any way

I am expected to equivocate to protect myself, my 'neutrality', my intellectual standing. This is the part where I am meant to lapse into moral equivalence and condemn Hamas, the other militant groups in Gaza and their ally Hezbollah, in Lebanon, for killing civilians and taking people hostage. And to condemn the people of Gaza who celebrated the Hamas attack... I refuse to play the condemnation game. Let me make myself clear. I do not tell oppressed people how to resist their oppression or who their allies should be.

country was born. It was celebrated as "a land without people for a people without a land." The nuclear-armed state of Israel was to serve as a military outpost and gateway to the natural wealth and resources of the Middle East for the US and Europe. A lovely coincidence of aims and objectives.

The new state was supported unashamedly and 'unflinchingly', armed and bankrolled, coddled and applauded, no matter what crimes it committed. It grew up like a protected child in a wealthy home, whose parents smile proudly as it commits atrocity upon atrocity. No wonder today it feels free to boast openly about committing genocide. (At least *The Pentagon Papers* were secret. They had to be stolen. And leaked.)

No wonder Israeli soldiers seem to have lost all sense of decency. No wonder they flood social media with depraved videos of themselves wearing the lingerie of women they have killed or displaced, videos of themselves mimicking dying Palestinians and wounded children or raped and tortured prisoners, images of themselves blowing up buildings while they smoke cigarettes or give to music on their headphones. Who are these people?

What can possibly justify what Israel is doing?

The answer, according to Israel and its allies, as well as the Western media, is the Hamas attack on Israel on October 7th last year. The killing of Israeli civilians and the taking of Israeli hostages. According to them,

that is narrower than my writing. I am what I write.

I am acutely aware that, being the writer that I am, the non-Muslim that I am and the woman that I am, it would be very difficult, perhaps impossible for me to survive very long under the rule of Hamas, Hezbollah or the Iranian regime. But that is not the point here. The point is to educate ourselves about the history and the circumstances under which they came to exist.

The point is that, right now, they are fighting against an ongoing genocide. The point is to ask ourselves whether a liberal, secular fighting force can go up against a genocidal war machine. Because, when all the powers of the world are against them, who do they have to turn to but God?

I am aware that Hezbollah and the Iranian regime have vocal detractors in their own countries, some who also languish in jails or have faced far worse outcomes. I am aware that some of their actions — the killing of civilians and the taking of hostages on October 7th by Hamas — constitute war crimes. However, there cannot be an equivalence between this and what Israel and the United States are doing in Gaza, in the West Bank and now in Lebanon. The root of all the violence, including the violence of October 7th, is Israel's occupation of Palestinian land and its subjugation of the Palestinian people. History did not begin on 7 October, 2023.

I ask you, which of us sitting in this hall would willingly submit to the indignity that

Palestinians in Gaza and the West Bank have been subjected to for decades? What peaceful means have the Palestinian people not tried? What compromise have they not accepted — other than the one that requires them to crawl on their knees and eat dirt?

Israel is not fighting a war of self-defence. It is fighting a war of aggression. A war to occupy more territory, to strengthen its Apartheid apparatus and tighten its control on Palestinian people and the region.

Since October 7th, 2023, apart from the tens of thousands of people it has killed, Israel has displaced the majority of Gaza's population, many times over. It has bombed hospitals, it has deliberately targeted and killed doctors, aid workers and journalists. A whole population is being starved — their history is sought to be erased.

All this is supported both morally and materially by the wealthiest, most powerful governments in the world. And their media. (Here I include my country, India, which supplies Israel with weapons, as well as thousands of workers.) There is no daylight between these countries and Israel.

In the last year alone, the US has spent \$79 billion dollars in military aid to Israel. So, let us,



Arundhati Roy accepts the PEN Pinter Prize 2024. She is holding a portrait of Alaa Abd el-Fattah, British-Egyptian writer and activist, named Writer of Courage by her | English PEN

once and for all, dispense with the lie about the US being a mediator, a restraining influence, or an Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez (considered to be on the extreme Left of mainstream US politics) put it, "working tirelessly for a ceasefire." A party to the genocide cannot be a mediator.

Not all the power and money, not all the weapons and propaganda on earth can any longer hide the wound that is Palestine. The wound through which the whole world, including Israel, bleeds.

Polls show that a majority of the citizens in the countries whose governments enable the Israeli genocide have made it clear that they do not agree with this. We have watched those marches of hundreds of thousands of people — including a young generation of Jews who are tired of being used, tired of being lied to.

Who would have imagined that we would live to see the day when German police would arrest Jewish citizens for protesting against Israel and Zionism and accuse them of anti-Semitism? Who would have thought the US government would, in the service of the Israeli state, undermine its cardinal principle of free speech by banning pro-Palestine slogans? The so-called moral architecture of Western democracies — with a few honourable exceptions — has become a grim laughingstock in the rest of the world.

When Benjamin Netanyahu holds up a map of the Middle East in which Palestine has been erased and Israel stretches from the river to

the sea, he is applauded as a visionary, who is working to realise the dream of a Jewish homeland. But when Palestinians and their supporters chant "From the river to the sea, Palestine will be free", they are accused of explicitly calling for the genocide of Jews.

Are they really? Or is that a sick imagination, projecting its own darkness on to others? An imagination that cannot countenance diversity, cannot countenance the idea of living in a country alongside other people, equally, with equal rights. I also everybody else in the world does. An imagination that cannot afford to acknowledge that Palestinians want to be free, like South Africa is, like India is, like all countries that have thrown off the yoke of colonialism are. Countries that are diverse, deeply, maybe even fatally, flawed, but free.

When South Africans were chanting their popular rallying cry, "Amandla!" [Power to the people], were they calling for the genocide of white people? They were not. They were calling for the dismantling of the Apartheid state. Just as the Palestinians are.

The war that has now begun will be terrible. But it will eventually dismantle Israeli Apartheid. The whole world will be far safer for everyone — including, for Jewish people — and far more just. It will be like pulling an arrow from our wounded heart.

If the US government withdrew its support of Israel, the war could stop today. Hostilities could end right this minute. Israeli hostages could be freed, Palestinian prisoners could be released. The negotiations with Hamas and the other Palestinian stakeholders, that must inevitably follow the war, could instead take place now and prevent the suffering of millions of people. How sad that most people would consider this a naive, laughable proposition.

As I conclude, let me turn to your words, Alaa Abd el-Fattah, from your book of prison writing, *You Have Not Yet Been Defeated*. I have rarely read such beautiful words about the meaning of victory and defeat — and the political necessity of heroism looking despair in the eye. I have rarely seen writing in which a citizen separates himself from the state, from the generals and even from the slogans of the square, with such bell-like clarity.

"The centre is treason because there's room in it only for the General... The centre is treason and I have never been a traitor. They think they've pushed us back into the margins. They don't realise that we never left it, we just got lost for a brief while. Neither the ballot boxes, nor the palaces or the ministries or the prisons or even the graves, are big enough for our dreams. We never sought the centre, because it has no room except for those who abandon the dream. Even the square was not big enough for us, so most of the battles of the revolution happened outside it, and most of the heroes remained outside the frame."

As the horror we are witnessing in Gaza, and now Lebanon, quickly escalates into a regional war, its real heroes remain outside the frame. But they fight on because they know that one day —

From the river to the sea
Palestine will be free.
It will.
Keep your eye on your calendar. Not on your clock.

That's how the people — not the generals — the people fighting for their liberation measure time.

The writer is a Booker Prize-winning author and has written about human rights issues in India as well as war and capitalism globally

By arrangement with The Wire

► CRICKET

The ignominious innings defeat in the first Test against England showcases how Pakistan has failed to provide the required support to its spinners and capitalise on home advantage

SPUN OUT OF CONTENTION

By Muhammad Abu Bakar Farooq

In the world of cricket, home advantage is a well-documented phenomenon, where teams often thrive in conditions tailored to their strengths. For Pakistan, the transition from being an unbeatable force in home Tests under Misbah-ul-Haq to struggling to secure even a single victory at home in three years is both stark and troubling.

Misbah, one of Pakistan's most successful Test captains, led the team through a remarkable unbeaten streak in home Tests. The foundation of this success was built on a potent spin bowling attack and the ability to create pitches that played to their strengths. However, the decline in performance over the past three years raises crucial questions about the factors contributing to this downward spiral, particularly in the spin department.

During Misbah-ul-Haq's captaincy, Pakistan established a reputation for being nearly invincible in home Tests, primarily played in the UAE. The pitches in the UAE were conducive to spin, allowing the likes of Saeed Ajmal, Mohammad Hafeez and Abdul Rehman to dominate opposition teams. Misbah's tactical acumen, coupled with an impressive bowling unit, made it exceedingly difficult for visiting teams to adapt.

The pinnacle of this success came in 2022, when Pakistan whitewashed the then No. 1 ranked England team 3-0 in a Test series, a feat that highlighted their prowess on home soil.

As Misbah stepped down and the team entered a new era, expectations remained high, but the result took a disappointing turn. Fast forward to the present, the transition from Misbah's era to the current phase has seen the team fail to secure a single victory in home Tests for over three years. During this period, the team has witnessed two different captains, Babar Azam and Shan Masood, along with numerous changes in management, yet the results have remained frustratingly consistent: failure.

Home conditions are crucial for any Test-playing nation, allowing teams to exploit their strengths. When teams travel to Australia, they encounter bouncy and fast pitches that cater to their fast bowlers, while in India, spin-friendly tracks give their spinners the upper hand. However, Pakistan



Saeed Ajmal | Reuters



Yasir Shah | AFP



Abrar Ahmed | PCB

has failed to create similar conditions that leverage their spinners' skills.

One of the most alarming statistics is that, from January 2020 to before the ongoing Test series against England, Pakistan has not produced a single spinner who has taken 50 wickets in Tests. The only other team in the Test-playing world in such a situation is Afghanistan, but it plays significantly fewer Tests. This lack of quality of spinners stands as a stark contrast to their historic strength in this department.

Leaving aside the class of Saeed Ajmal and Abdul Rehman, today's spinners have yet to match the match-winning performances delivered by bowlers such as Zaheer Abbas and Bilal Asif. They also bowled match-winning spells and often stepped up in crucial moments when the team needed them the most.

Yasir Shah, who looked destined for greatness early on, has struggled in the latter part of his career, and it's been tough to watch. In his debut year, 2014, Yasir had an impressive start, with 27 wickets at an average of 26.29 over just five matches. He followed that up in 2015 with a remarkable 48

wickets in seven matches at an average of 23, showcasing his potential as a top spinner.

However, in 2016, while he still took 46 wickets, his average ballooned to 38.69 over 10 matches, hinting at the inconsistency that would follow. By 2017, he managed 43 wickets but at a better average of 28.88, and 2018 saw him return to form with 38 wickets at an impressive average of 23.52.

But things began to shift in 2019 when he took only six wickets at a dismal average of 104.53 over four matches, marking a sharp decline. In 2020, his struggles continued, yielding 18 wickets at an average of 38.72, followed by eight wickets in 2021 at an average of 37.75. In 2022, he managed just nine wickets across two matches, with an average of 39.00.

As of October 14, 2024, the statistics for Pakistan's spinners tell a troubling story. Noman Ali has taken 47 wickets in 28 innings, at an average of 33.06, making him the leading wicket-taker among Pakistani spinners in this period. Similarly, while Abrar Ahmed had a promising start, his performance in international cricket has been inconsistent: he took 39 wickets in 15

innings at an average of 37.71.

Yasir Shah, once a stalwart in the spin department, has been struggling with form and fitness, securing only 35 wickets in 18 innings at an average of 36.94, leaving a gaping hole in the team's bowling arsenal.

The inconsistency in player selection is one of the foremost issues. From January 2020, the most matches played by any Pakistani spinner till Oct 14, 2024, are 15, by Noman Ali. Meanwhile, Yasir Shah has participated in only 10 matches, and Sajid Khan has featured in eight. The lack of continuity in selection has hindered the development of a cohesive spin attack, capable of competing at the highest level.

Moreover, pitches in Pakistan have not been conducive to spin bowling, even in home Tests. While spinners thrive in conditions that offer turn and bounce, many recent pitches have been flat and lifeless, negating the strengths of the bowling unit. For example, Zahid Mahmood made his debut against England in 2022 on a flat Rawalpindi surface, where he struggled and ended up conceding too many runs, leading to his exclusion from the team.

In conclusion, Pakistan's journey from being an invincible force in home Tests to struggling for victories has been marked by a complex interplay of factors, particularly in the spin department. The legacy of successful spinners such as Saeed Ajmal and Abdul Rehman set high expectations that today's bowlers have yet to meet.

However, there are still high hopes for the future, with emerging talents such as Abrar Ahmed, and uncapped spinners Mehran Mumtaz and Arafat Mirza, who show great potential to make their mark in international cricket. Their development will be crucial in rejuvenating Pakistan's spin bowling legacy.

As the team looks to move forward, it's essential to nurture these young talents and create conducive conditions for spin bowling. While the management has faced challenges, fostering an environment that supports spinners' growth will be vital in restoring Pakistan's reputation as a formidable force in Test cricket. ■

The writer is a software engineer and cricket enthusiast. X: @abubakarfarooq

► IN MEMORIAM

THE UNUSUAL FEUDAL

Elahi Bux Soomro, who passed away recently at the grand old age of 98, was more than just another politician from a landowning family...

By Ali Bhutto

It was uncommon in the 1940s for a scion of a landed family in Sindh to opt for a career in engineering and go on to attend Columbia University for a master's degree. Yet Elahi Bux Soomro, a veteran politician and civil servant who passed away in Karachi on October 9, 2024, aged 98, did exactly that.

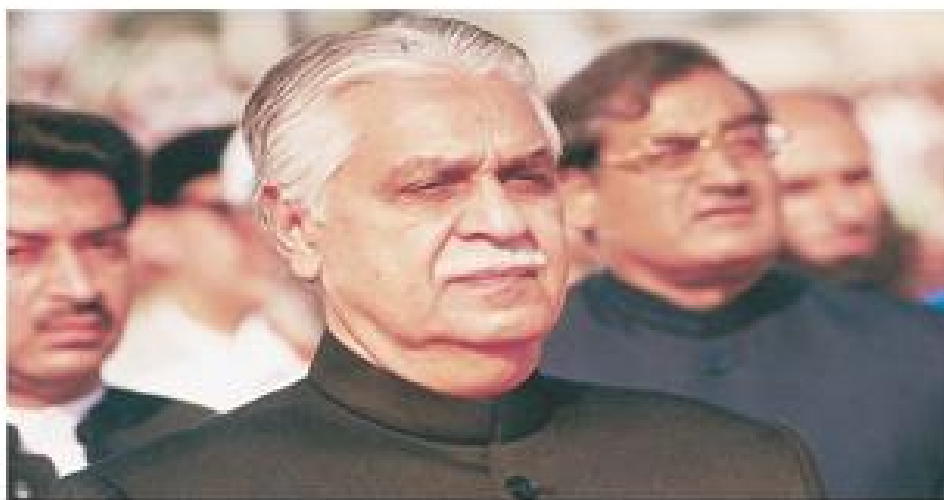
His father, Maula Bux Soomro, a supporter of the Indian National Congress, was more progressive than most of his landowning counterparts in Sindh: he sent his daughters to school in Karachi in 1933, after the family moved to the port city from their hometown of Shikarpur.

"Our girls went to school — they were educated," Soomro told *Eos*, when the writer called on him one winter afternoon in 2016, at his residence on Beville Lane, in JJ Lines, Karachi. Seated in a wood-paneled study, he reminisced about the old days.

Soomro grew up in a family of Congress party politicians in pre-Partition India. His father, Maula Bux, an outspoken man, had opposed the Lahore Resolution and the creation of Pakistan, according to Soomro's nephew, Riazwan Khar. Soomro's uncle, Allah Bux Soomro, also a member of Congress, was twice elected as premier — or chief minister — of Sindh, in 1938 and 1941.

"Whenever I was free from school, I would go to the Sindh Legislative Assembly," recalled Soomro. "I remember asking my uncle [Allah Bux], why is it that you and GM Syed [in prominent Sindh nationalist leader, who was a member of the Muslim League at that time] fight like cats and dogs while the house is in session, but when you come out, you behave like the best of friends?"

"I remember my uncle replying, 'We are not enemies. Our only



Elahi Bux Soomro | Wafa Star

difference is within those four walls. When we are outside, I go to his house if he is unwell, and he comes to mine."

BHUTTO'S FRIEND

After graduating from Karachi's NED University of Engineering and Technology, Soomro was admitted to Columbia University in the early 1950s, where he lived in the International House. The late Zulfikar Ali Bhutto, then a student at the University of Southern California, was a close friend and would visit Soomro frequently.

"He used to come from Los Angeles to New York and stay with me," recalled Soomro. On one such visit, when Bhutto got into a fight with an Indian aristocrat, Soomro intervened and found himself at the receiving end of a punch that was intended for his friend.

Soomro also knew Nusrat Sahibzadi Bhopalam very well. When Bhutto was back in Karachi from California for the summer break, Soomro introduced him

to Nusrat at a dance party at the Palace Hotel. "I told Nusrat, 'He comes from a good family. If he asks you to dance with him, please do. He will not misbehave.'"

Soomro described Nusrat as "a fine lady", adding, "Zulfikar came to me a week later and said, 'I want to marry her.'"

It was Soomro who drove around Karachi looking for a shia cleric to carry out Bhutto and Nusrat's *nikah*. When he returned home later that day, his housekeeper warned him not to go inside, as his father had asked for him twice, angrily.

Staying with Soomro's father was more other than Khan Baluch Ahmed Khan Bhutto, the father of Zulfikar's first wife, Shirin — a cousin to whom he had been wed when he was a teenager. Clearly, word had gotten around of Soomro's involvement in getting Zulfikar and Nusrat married. "I didn't go home for two days," Soomro recalled.

Later, when Bhutto became president of Pakistan, he would imprison his old friend, Soomro

was arrested days before the signing of the 1973 Constitution. The reasons behind his arrest are unclear. According to Soomro, Bhutto did not like the fact that he wielded considerable influence as a civil servant.

BUREAUCRATIC HOOPS

After graduating from Columbia with a master's degree in engineering, Soomro decided to work for the Pakistan Public Works Department, despite his father's concerns that it was a corrupt department. But as it turned out, he hardly worked there. "I worked more in other departments [such as Irrigation]," he told *Eos*.

Soomro was employed as an assistant executive engineer for Sukkur Barrage for a period of three years. "I had come through the Public Service Commission and not through the recommendation of anybody," he said. Sukkur Barrage had developed cracks at the time and a British firm had been hired to carry out repairs. Its employees

found Soomro easier to deal with, owing to his proficiency in English and insisted that he remain there till they completed their work.

On his first promotion, Soomro was briefly transferred to Nawabshah as an executive engineer, before being recalled to Sukkur, where he was delegated to give Sindh royals a tour of the barrage.

He remained in Sukkur until 1956 and was subsequently transferred to Khairpur, after some members of the civil service had become "angry" at him, he recalled. "After they found out that I wasn't as bad as they thought I was, they would post me wherever they needed an executive engineer who could handle the situation," he added. "My last posting was as director general of KDA [in 1968]." Soomro was instrumental in the development of Chifton as a residential area.

Thereafter, he served as the principal of his alma mater, the NED.

University of Engineering and Technology, and it was during his tenure that the institution acquired a new campus.

DALLIANCES WITH DICTATORS

Soomro entered politics in 1950, when he joined the cabinet of the military dictator Gen Ziaul Haq. When Gen Zia first came to power, he appointed Soomro's father, Maula Bux, as one of his advisers.

Later, when Zia decided to form a cabinet, he felt Maula Bux was too old, and asked him to nominate a member of his family for the post of cabinet minister. At the time, the two obvious candidates for the slot were Rahim Bux Soomro — who had served in the provincial government — and Elahi Bux's brother, Ahmed Mian Soomro, who had been a deputy speaker in the West Pakistan Assembly. But for reasons unknown, Maula Bux selected Elahi Bux, who had no prior political experience.

Soomro's ties with the old political families of Sindh,

Balochistan and Punjab — thanks to his father and uncle — helped Zia consolidate his grip on power, according to Khar.

Soomro persuaded the members of some of these families, who were his close friends, to join Zia's Majlis-i-Shura (parliament). In 1982, Soomro was the first member of his family to face defeat in an election. "Till Elahi Bux sahib's defeat in the 1988 election in Shikarpur, the Soomros had not been defeated in Shikarpur," said Khar.

In 1985, Zia almost made Soomro prime minister, but then changed his mind at the last minute, after Mr Pagaro insisted that Mohammed Khan Junejo be given the post instead, according to veteran politician Sherbuz Khan Mazari's biography, *A Journey to Disillusionment*.

Gen Pervez Musharraf also briefly considered making Soomro prime minister. "I said to Musharraf — look, if you want me to be prime minister, then wherever we disagree, you will give me a chance to explain why I am disagreeing," recalled Soomro. He added, "He dropped me then and there."

Soomro remained a member of the Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) throughout his political career.

During Nawaz Sharif's second run as prime minister, Soomro was made speaker of the National Assembly. "When I was speaker, Nawaz used to send me chits during sessions, asking me not to speak too much," he recalled. "I would tell him that I'm the speaker of the House and not the party. I would refuse whatever he would say and he did not like that," he added.

Soomro retired from politics after being defeated in the 2013 general elections, which he contested from Jacobabad on a PML-N ticket. ■

The writer is a journalist who has written for local and international publications. He's now can be found at abibhutto.com

► EXHIBITION

The third iteration of the Lahore Biennale, currently ongoing, puts local and global environmental concerns at the heart of its art

ART AND THE CITY

By Aarish Sardar

The third edition of the Lahore Biennale (LBO3), 'Of Mountains and Seas', curated by Jolan Tain, addresses urgent themes of sustainability, environmental degradation, emerging ecologies and human responsibility, through the work of over 60 artists from Pakistan and across the world. Increased urbanisation in the last few decades demands accountability and a re-examination of its impact on the environment and society.

At the Shalimar Gardens, part of the UNESCO World Heritage sites, the most sought-out work on display against the exposed and dissonant brick-laden walls of the Mughal era *Aurum* is by Hamra Abbas. Inspired by the mountains of Shardu, Hamra's *Aerial Studies*, in stark marble inlay, illustrates the dire consequences of climate change. Her art highlights the vulnerability of the ecology by apprehending rising temperatures, melting glaciers and flood dangers in the Gilgit-Baltistan region.

Zakoor Akhlaq's *Author* represents the country's national animal as a design composed of diamond-shaped units. The piece testifies to Akhlaq's enduring concern for the country's unique natural environment. It also makes one think of the potential extinction of this creature, given that the United Nations included the markhor on the endangered species list in 1992.

Imran Qureshi's *Water Bodies* explores a unique perspective, with his enthusiastic, large-scale public art. It features blue and orange works inspired by Lahore's scarcity and reliance on overhead back-up water tanks, made from rugged PVC. Qureshi transforms these tanks into art installations, painting the whole rooftop of an adjacent dwelling in his signature style that is only viewable from the Orange Line Metro Station (Shalimar Gardens) platform.

The ticket hall windows towards the main OT road are covered with translucent graphics. One later realises that the circles are the top view of the same blue water tanks, highlighting the connection between water flows, urban life and historical contexts, while addressing urgent environmental issues affecting this densely populated city.

Leeroy New's *Meibuan's Colony* re-imagines an indigenous goddess using sustainable and up-cycled materials, exploring the themes of life, death and environmental responsibility. Zheng He's *Phoenix* celebrates date palm cultivation while addressing climate-induced migration among Pakistani farmers in the UAE.

Carolina Caycedo, through her two-channel video installation, *To Stop Being a Thief and to Become a Promise*, contrasts ancestral lifestyles with an activist view, through diverse rivers' hydrographic and encounters at the newly restored British Barracks at the Lahore Fort. *Flow to Become a Rock* by Faraz Hameed et al explores human



Humming with Ravi, Abuzar Madhu | Lahore Biennale Foundation



Aerial Studies, Hamra Abbas | Armina Zubair

relationships with tectonic formations through text, video and performances, emphasising ecological connections and slowing down to embody nature.

In the Royal Kitchens, Niamat Nigar's work on containing addresses environmental impacts, labour exploitation and the struggles of affected communities through compelling artistic expressions. Abubakar Oghobase's works explore the effects of colonial tin-mining in Nigeria's Jos Plateau. Blending documentary and subjective engagement to reveal the landscape's exploitation and its ongoing impact on local communities and ecosystems.

Similarly, Ilwender Yadav's *Cause Effect* highlights the socio-economic complexities of marginalised labourers in the brick-making industry, intertwining indigenous traditions with contemporary issues of caste, labour and cross-border connections.

In the Akbari Mahal, Elyas Akbari's *In the Sound of Silence* has overlaid seven text on to five rubber instruments, to re-imagine the songs and poems that may have accompanied the camels on their travels in the Australian outback. In her Photograph of vulp petal collage *Jangam Tree of Life*, Jennifer Tee explores migration, cultural hybridity and ecological connections, weaving personal history with the fragility of life in the Anthropocene.

Tariq Alexander Quinlan's *The End of Holocene* chronicles Karachi's mangrove ecosystems, highlighting their beauty, the degradation caused by humans, and the urgent need for restoration amidst rapid urban development and climate change threats over decades.

An awe-inspiring performance-led installation, *Humming with Ravi*, by Abuzar Madhu at the Alhambra, highlights



Meibuan's Colony, Lerroy New | Aarish Sardar

the River Ravi's pollution through personal memories and community narratives. It emphasises the intimate connection between human lives and ecosystems, particularly in light of the recently launched RUDA project. One can anticipate whether the river will be the central attraction of this upcoming urban project or merely a backdrop to its past story.

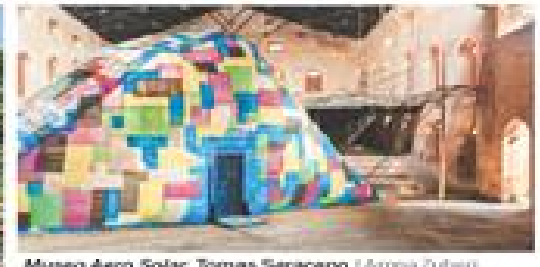
Another noteworthy project at the Alhambra is Chew and Lin's *Even if it Looks Like Grass*, which explores the intersection of agriculture and data systems. The installation invites reflection on the complexities of food production, resource challenges, and our interconnected roles in contemporary geopolitical dynamics amidst climate change, through satellite imagery, research papers and participatory milling.

At the YMCA building, Womankind's *Wildland* project, *Public as Social Identity*, involves faculty member of the Beaconhouse National University's (BNU) School of Visual Arts and Design (SVAED), Kiran Khan, as a project lead and invites community engagement through textile arts. It explores themes of social identity while connecting personal and political narratives, reflecting Lahore's creative and inclusive spirit.

Iman Akshik's single-channel video work *KM-52* celebrates *Jaguar*, a bridge practice born of South Asian ingenuity and



Water Bodies, Imran Qureshi | Armina Zubair



Museo Aero Solar, Tomas Saraceno | Armina Zubair

death that extend the life of everyday objects and stands in contrast to consumer society's wasteful notions of obsolescence. Akshik does this by reflecting on her mother's food practices.

Usman Haq and Iqra Taseer combine light projections and ceramic sculptures to create a cave-like work called *Memory Orbit*, displayed at the Barracks Gallery (Nasir Bagh). It embodies the cycles of memory and the conflict between ruin and regeneration as it examines themes of survival, nostalgia and metamorphosis via the metaphor of an eclipse.

Tomas Saraceno's *Museo Aero Solar* at Broadlough Hall recycles throwaway plastic bags into an interactive piece that invites community involvement. In partnership with Kinnaird College, this initiative encourages visitors to interact creatively with plastic garbage, promoting environmental consciousness and group accountability, while converting waste into art and expression.

Dryden Goodwin's *Breathe* utilises public installations in Lahore at various points to highlight air pollution issues. Featuring animations and posters depicting clean air campaigns, the project advocates for clean air access, framing local pollution as a global crisis and a fundamental human right. ■

The Lahore Biennale 03 runs from October 6-November 5, 2024 at various biocultural sites across Lahore

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SMOKERS' CORNER



Managing Civil Unrest

While police forces across the globe are now better equipped to manage and contain riots without causing casualties, they claim to have become more vulnerable themselves and are still largely perceived as 'aggressors' in such encounters

By Nadeem F. Paracha

Studies show that incidents of civil unrest have been increasing across the world. Yet, there are also those who are of the view that the police are now more likely to contain and control unrest than ever before. The 'success' in this regard can be measured by the ability of the police to not only avoid causing fatal casualties among the protesters, but also within their own ranks.

The urgency to study violent unrests and, more so, how they are (or should be) tackled by the police, intensified in the 1970s after the world witnessed a brutal series of riots in the mid- and late 1960s. A large number of protesters lost their lives in these riots.

Till the 1960s, the most common tactic used by the police was to line up in front of the protesters and, at the slightest provocation, fire rounds of tear gas before charging and smashing into the protesters with batons. The idea was to create fear in the protesters and a sense of dread. This often led to multiple injuries and even deaths. These were 'bad optics' as well for an institution that wished to be seen as a legitimate force, out to prevent violence and chaos.

Therefore, during and soon after the 1960s, police in most countries began to be viewed by the media and most people as a symbol of brutality. It began to rapidly lose whatever

little sympathy was left for it, as images of cops giving protesters severe thrashings became common on TV and in newspapers.

Over the next three decades, various new 'crowd control' tactics were developed. But this mostly took place in Europe and the US; old tactics to vanquish rioters and protesters continued to be applied in dictatorships in Asia, Africa and South America.

Deaths and severe injuries during protests remained a common feature in these regions and so did the reputation of the police as a 'brutal force'. However, things began to somewhat change in these regions as well from the 1990s onwards.

So, what were the new tactics?

One of the most prominent among these emerged in the US from a 1982 'Broken Window Theory'. It was called the 'Broken Window Theory' because if a broken window is ignored, it is bound to lead to the creation of much larger problems. The theory posited that major crimes and widespread violence can be prevented if minor offences are punished, instead of being ignored or only leniently addressed.

Thus, the argument went, would help regulate society's violent and criminal tendencies and aid the creation of a law-abiding environment. This theory also posited that, in law-abiding environments, protests too remain peaceful. The theory was first turned into practice by the New York police in 1990. It was applied to various degrees



Illustration by Akbar

in some European countries as well. But it soon began to attract criticism for having racial and class biases.

Secondly, its 'achievements' were said to be questionable, because they were based on outcomes whose sources were independent of the policies of the 'Broken Window' applications. Then there was the 'faulty assumption' that the intensity of crime and political unrest were related.

But before the 'Broken Window' policies began to be seen as preemptive measures based on what turned out to be largely flawed hypotheses, there was the 'negotiated management' tactic. In this, the government encouraged protesters to negotiate with the police in setting certain rules of engagement and the routes the protesters were to take to avoid

violence. But most protesters often break such agreements. This, in turn, sees the police return to applying tougher measures.

In the 2000s and 2010s, police forces formulated two more tactics in a bid to contain the more severe outcomes of riots. In the first, police troops face the protesters as layered formations, with left and right flanks, and a front and a centre. This way, the troops can keep an eye on the protesters from various angles and act from multiple sides. This tactic also actually allows strategic gaps, from which protesters who want to exit the protest can leave.

Then there is what the faculty member of the US Army War College M. Christopher calls 'command and control' — a tactic in which the police

dispenses pockets of people before they can come together to form a mob. The coming together is also foiled by creating physical barriers.

All these tactics are used depending on the conditions. Images of riots, as seen in the media, seem chaotic. But the authorities often have a holistic view of the proceedings. Police are only armed with batons, tear gas and shields. Officers who are allowed to carry pistols are discouraged from using them. The idea is to avoid casualties and severe injuries.

However, due to the new tactics, chances of cops getting injured or losing their lives have increased. The police often complain that, in a bid to avoid bad optics (in the media), authorities put the lives of the cops in greater danger.

During the 2021 mob attack

on Capitol Hill in Washington DC, the Capitol Police sent out an urgent request to the military to deploy members of the National Guard. But the request was initially ignored because the director of the army staff "didn't like the visual of the National Guard standing in a police line with the Capitol in the background."

During the October 4 protests in Islamabad by the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI), the police used negotiated management and command and control tactics. But whatever little rules of engagement were agreed, they quickly broke down.

Barricades were placed to stop people from marching towards Islamabad. These are often erected to isolate groups who might transform into mobs. These groups are then dispersed. This is why one only saw small groups of protesters sporadically managing to enter Islamabad. And yet, there was a casualty — a cop.

Whereas severe injuries and deaths among protesters have greatly reduced due to the aforementioned tactics, these have increased among cops. Yet, the police have not been able to shrug off the image of being the aggressor.

Even one or two images of isolated incidents splashed in the media can undermine the position of the police as a legitimate force controlling 'legitimate' action. This 'damned if I do, damned if I don't' disposition can become a major source of despondency and frustration among cops. ■

B&A

BOOKS & AUTHORS

► NON-FICTION

Yuval Noah Harari's latest book delves into how information systems have shaped human destiny, the role of artificial intelligence in today's world and the intricate relationship between technology, power and governance

Technology and the fractured world



Nexus: A Brief History of Information Networks from the Stone Age to AI
By Yuval Noah Harari
Random House
ISBN: 978-0593734223
528pp.

Reviewed by Sara Danial

Yuval Noah Harari, a renowned historian and philosopher, has made a significant mark as one of today's leading public thinkers. Born in 1976 in Israel, with a PhD from the University of Oxford in 2002, he now lectures at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem. Harari holds a distinguished research role at the University of Cambridge's Centre for the Study of Existential Risk.

Best known for his groundbreaking works such as *Sapiens*, *Homo Deus*, and *21 Lessons for the 21st Century*, Harari also co-founded the social impact venture *Sapienship* with his husband, Itzik Yahav. His latest offering, *Nexus*, delves deeply into a new topic making waves these days — Artificial Intelligence (AI).

This thought-provoking book is divided into three sections, and partly based on facts, and partly on speculation. In it, Harari explores deep questions about identity, consciousness and intelligence, offering clear explanations through vivid stories and analogies. His ability to connect insights from various fields such as history, neuroscience, philosophy and artificial intelligence makes him more than just a historian — he feels like a modern-day guide to understanding our past and future.

The first section, titled 'Human Networks', delves into the nature of information and its boundless connections. It highlights the power of documents in shaping authority and challenges the illusion of perfection. In the chapter 'A Brief History of



Democracy and Totalitarianism', he traces the evolution of governance. He challenges what he calls the 'naïve view' of information.

He argues that simply having more information doesn't always lead to truth — after all, the internet didn't end totalitarianism, and reason isn't something that can just be fact-checked away. At the same time, Harari pushes back against the 'populist view' that objective truth doesn't exist and that information is just a tool for manipulation.

Interestingly, he points out that the idea of truth being subjective, now popular with right-wing politicians, originally came from left-wing thinkers such as Karl Marx and Michel Foucault. These themes come together to offer a compelling exploration of how knowledge, errors and decision-making shape societies and nations.

In the second section, 'The Inorganic Network', Harari takes a deep dive into the unique power and pitfalls of modern networks, explaining how computers differ from the printing press by being constantly active and interconnected. He emphasises the relentless nature of digital networks

that are always on, literally 24/7, yet acknowledges their fallibility, often spreading misinformation.

He argues that information is more about connecting and organising ideas and people, rather than representing reality. He describes it as a 'social nexus', with early forms, such as stories, clay tablets and religious texts helping to maintain social order.

Building on ideas from *Sapiens* and *Homo Deus*, he explains that humans thrived because they could cooperate in large groups, using shared stories and myths to create laws, currencies and nations. These stories didn't need to be completely accurate — they worked because they could be simplified and ignore uncomfortable truths. Through these insights, Harari sheds light on the complexity and influence of today's technological landscape.

The last section, 'Computer Politics', explores the ability of democracies to maintain meaningful conversations in an increasingly divided world, scrutinises the rise of algorithm-driven totalitarian regimes, and analyses the potential divide in our digital landscape, between a unified global empire

and a fractured world. Here, Harari addresses the intricate relationship between technology, power and governance.

Harari contrasts myths and facts — myths are engaging but not always accurate, while facts capture reality but lead to bureaucracy. Both are necessary for social order. He compares holy texts and the scientific method as different ways of addressing trust and truth. Harari extends this idea to politics, viewing democracy and totalitarianism as different information systems.

Democracy relies on decentralised information and accepts leaders' fallibility, while totalitarianism centralises control. He also notes that, starting in the 19th century, mass media enabled democracy but also helped large-scale totalitarian regimes and, today, digital media is reshaping politics.

He combines his usual blend of history, humour and far-reaching ideas, drawing on everything from religion to evolutionary biology. Some readers may enjoy his rapid shifts between topics, while others might find it overwhelming. A key point Harari raises is the parallel between holy books and artificial intelligence, both attempts to create a 'superhuman authority.' He warns that decisions made today about AI could have massive consequences for humanity's future, much like early decisions about the Bible have shaped history.

Harari sees AI not just as technology but as 'alien intelligence' capable of becoming powerful actors in society. He worries that AI could worsen existing problems, such as cyberattacks, surveillance and online radicalisation, even creating new political movements and financial risks.

While some of his scenarios, such as an autistic trusting AI over humans with nuclear weapons, may seem far-fetched, his overall narrative is engaging and thought-provoking. His outsider perspective on tech offers fresh insights, making his book a unique bridge between history and the AI debate. ■

The reviewer is a content lead at a communications agency

► FICTION

Taha Kehar's sophomore novel is a meticulously crafted story about a bizarre memorial service for a dead woman in which those attending come to terms with their repressed emotions

Exorcising demons



No Funeral for Nazia
By Taha Kehar
Liberty Publishing
ISBN: 978-627-7626-29-7
230pp.

Reviewed by Nadya Chishty-Mujahid

Liberty Publishing is to be commended on their good taste in choosing to print and disseminate Taha Kehar's well-written and fascinating novel, *No Funeral for Nazia*, originally published by Narm Tare Press.

The premise of the book is an engrossing one: Nazia Sami, a talented author who passes away in her forties, leaves behind a very specific request — her death is to be commemorated by means of a small party as opposed to a traditional funeral. Nazia's sister Naureen honours her late sibling's last request to the letter. A number of people whom Nazia knew well are invited to this unusual social event.

Aside from the hostess Naureen and her husband Asif, the present include Nazia's estranged husband Saleem, her childhood friend Farooq (Pino), her daughter Sabreen (who has been living with Pino), her publisher Durdana (Dolly) and Dolly's husband Farid. The guests are informed that they will each receive a certain amount of money if they comply with Nazia's request that they each allow themselves to undergo a therapeutic session with the final member of the gathering, a hypnotist named Salman Naring.

Partly out of aversion and partly out of curiosity, everyone complies. Salman turns out to be a genuine professional, whom Nazia herself had visited several times at his clinic in Aizabadi. This comes as a surprise to many, since Nazia lived with Naureen and Asif on the affluent side of Clifton Bridge (Sumner Boulevard to be exact), and was not inclined to move out of her comfort zone in order to visit poorer districts of Karachi.

Kehar deals effectively when it comes to delineating class differences and tensions; his portrayals of Bi Juan (Naureen's long-suffering housekeeper) and her young niece Sorayya are handled with admirable sensitivity. Continuing to follow her sister's bizarre instructions Naureen makes Sorayya wear Nazia's wedding sari and even has her retold in a manner similar to how Nazia had styled her hair at her wedding to Saleem many years ago!

Hypnotised effectively by Naring, the semi-conscious Sorayya ends up being a type of 'Nazia-dummy', whom Naring effectively uses in order to conclude his cathartic, and often disturbing sessions.

I realise that many readers will draw parallels between Nazia and Daphne du Maurier's subtly crafted character of Rebecca. Although both women are dead, their respective presences overshadow the men that honour them.

However, what is even more disturbing to me is the parallel between Sorayya and Rebecca's husband's second wife. At a pivotal point in *Rebecca*, Mrs de Winter is tricked by her malevolent housekeeper into dressing in an identical manner to how Rebecca had styled herself at a fancy-dress party prior to her death.

Kehar's move turns out to be no less grotesque and traumatic than du Maurier's. Fortunately, Bi Juan is a benevolent housekeeper (not to mention a caring aunt) and ends up saving the day as well as saving her niece.

Prior to Bi Juan's heroic move, however, the hypnotherapy (which takes place in Nazia's bedroom, with Sorayya lying inert on the dead woman's bed) reveals a number of ugly secrets. I will not spoil the intricate plot by indicating who was having an affair with whom. Suffice to say that Nazia was both promiscuous as well as bisexual (one can understand her not being able to control the latter point, but hardly though this judgement might seem, there is no valid excuse for the former).

Her husband, a passionate MQM activist in his youth, had left Karachi (and hence had left his wife and infant daughter) in order to protect himself from the dark side of politics. In spite of the fact that Saleem is a thoroughly unpleasant character, Pino has always been obsessed by him, and consistently deludes herself into believing that they are meant for each other.

Dolly and Farid's association with Nazia is revealed to have been far from wholesome, and perhaps the saddest notes in this marvellous literary drage are struck by the reader's growing awareness of the point that Sabreen despises her mother for a variety of messy reasons. Nazia was also responsible for driving a wedge between the children Naureen and Asif.

In a moment of supreme black humour, I found myself wondering whether matters might have been alleviated in Nazia's past by a series of cathartic message-a-trois moves! I then began to understand why the author decided to throw a hypnotherapist into the mix — it was a less salacious solution to problems caused by sexual and emotional energies running amok.

In essence, the novel is about how the dead have the power to ameliorate certain issues which have gone horribly wrong over the course of their lives. This isn't a ghost story or a murder mystery,

although it produces the chills associated with the former genre and is as carefully structured as the best of mystery novels.

Nazia's letter outlining her *raison d'être* for this party (read out to a stunned audience by Naureen) and her farewell note to the characters are eerily similar in tone and placement to the famous voice-recording and concluding letter of Agatha Christie's *And Then There Were None*. But as opposed to Christie's novel, which ends up being littered with dead bodies, Nazia's friends and family exorcise their demons (by and large) without having to give up their lives and join Nazia in the realm of the ghosts.

Much credit for this needs to be given to Naring, who genuinely believes that hypnosis can bring repressed tensions to the forefront of one's existence, which is a necessary move when it comes to dispelling such tensions. Indeed, in one of the rare, hilarious sentences of the book he calmly tells one of the other characters that he is a hypnotist, not a murderer. His main aim is to make people feel better, to be fair to Nazia, this was also the aim of her ostensibly hare-brained scheme.

In spite of several of the characters emerging from the sessions feeling cleansed, I found it very difficult to like, or sympathise with, any of them. Pino is so much at the mercy of the men in her life that she resorts to underhanded tactics in order to win them over — in her own way she is as manipulative as Nazia, though far less intelligent.

Dolly is too prone to taking the easy way out, even if it means damaging both herself and others. Asif neglects his wife, and Farid allows himself to be neglected by his wife. Naureen treats her servants shabbily, and the amoral Saleem has no qualms about treating everyone shabbily.

The hero and heroine of the piece end up being Salman Naring and Bi Juan, therefore, the novel subversively applauds the superior morality of the lower middle class, while mercilessly exposing the flaws of the elite.

Kehar writes with grace and undeniable sophistication. His prose is both palatable as well as meticulously organised. He negotiates the realm of the otherworldly and the domain of the mystery genre with a skill of which Sir Arthur Conan Doyle himself would have been proud.

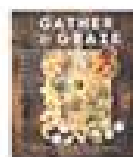
Universally acclaimed as the brilliant creator of the Sherlock Holmes tales, Doyle was also an astute researcher and writer when it came to the supernatural and paranormal. I found Kehar's novel so mesmerising that I read it twice, and then found myself seriously asking myself if Taha Kehar might be a plausible reincarnation of Sir Arthur Conan Doyle. Under hypnosis, I am convinced that I would be compelled to say 'Yes'! ■

The reviewer is associate professor of social sciences and liberal arts at the Institute of Business Administration. She has authored a collection of short stories, Tunnels College Tales, and a play, The Political Chess King

► NON-FICTION

A new cookbook is not just a book of recipes, but a beautifully presented dive into a melting pot of different traditions and cultures

Platters of cultural joy



Gather & Grace: Globally Inspired Small Bites and Gorgeous Table Scapes for Every Occasion
By Mumtaz Mustafa and Laura Klynstra
Skyhorse Publishing
ISBN: 978-1-5107-7701-9
395pp.

Reviewed by Shazia Hasan

While traveling on motorways or highways lined with green fields, I have often watched cows and buffaloes grazing there idly. The title of this exquisitely done cookbook *Gather & Grace* brings those scenes to mind. Then, flipping the pages, the realisation dawns that it is actually we who are being beckoned to such green fields to gather and grace. Well, not exactly to the fields, but around nicely laid out tables laden with scrumptious food.

The ample photographs of food for every occasion across cultures throughout the book along with the clearly written recipes tantalise the palate and, if followed well, will also satiate the appetite and quench the thirst.

That is exactly what the two authors of the book, Mumtaz Mustafa and Laura Klynstra, set out to do by setting dining

rice bowls etc. for the making of dough and puff pastry.

Gather & Grace brings together people from all backgrounds to the dining table to join in a celebration of food, just like it brought together the two chefs proudly sharing around 175 recipes for creating delightful spreads.

The book includes some 20 sections that have been planned as complete menus. For example, there is the 'Pan-Asian Table' section, which includes recipes such as Sesame Shrimp Toast with Sweet Chili Dipping Sauce, Mini Scallion Pancakes, Asian-style Shrimp Wontons, Korean-Inspired Beef Bulgogi Lettuce Wraps, Sticky Gochujang Shrimp Bao and Sticky Thai Chicken Meatballs with Sesame Chili Dipping Sauce.

Similarly, the 'Dutch Table' section has Sarcijembroodjes, Bitterballen, Aardappelkroketten, Tiggerbol, Dutch Cheeses, Speculaas Spice Mix, Speculaas and Stroopwafels.

Meanwhile, the 'Pakistani Street Food' section has the most extensive of the menus. There are Potatoes and Chicken Cutlets, Spiced Chicken Kebabs, *Payal Chow*, Yogurt Raita, Ban Kebabs, *Pakora Medley*, Karachi-Style Chicken *Paratha* Rolls, *Parathas*, Mini Garlic *Kachoris*, Cheddar Cheese Straws, Tamarind and Date Chutney, *Garam Masala*, *Chaat Masala* Blend, Toasted Cumin Powder, Hyderabad Tomato Chutney, *Jalebi*, *Nankhatai*, Peanut & Sesame *Chikki*, *Dhaba Chai* and *Mango Lassi*.

Mustafa explains: "If you wish to understand Pakistan — its people, its history and its cultural richness — there is no better place to start than with its street food. More than mere sustenance, it's a social connector, a shared language that binds the diverse



Karachi-style Chicken Paratha Rolls and Dhaba Chai



Ground Beef, Grilled Chicken Tacos and Salsa with Tortillas on the Mexican table

tables. Their cross-cultural friendship of 20 years, although it started through their book designing work in the art department at HarperCollins in New York, is actually based on their passion for cooking. They used to exchange stories from each other's cultures and combine menus to create a culinary experience. They also used to plan parties for friends because it made both of them very happy to see how much the food they had made was liked and enjoyed by all.

The authors combined this joy of food with their design skills in putting together this handsome volume — everything in the hefty book, from the writing to photography and the book design has been done by Mustafa and Klynstra themselves.

With serving food comes hospitality, and who would better know about this than Mustafa, who hails from Pakistan, where it is usually food that brings everyone together. Klynstra, who grew up in a community of Dutch descendants in Michigan, was also familiar with such sentiments as, in her family, whether there was an occasion of sadness or rejoicing, they would be sharing the love in a casserole dish, pie plate or potluck.

Those who pick up this book would also be all set to enter their kitchens after peeking into the authors' pantries to know and understand the spices and the basic ingredients for every recipe. While Mustafa's pantry has cooking oils and ghee, with all necessary spices such as chili powder, turmeric, cumin and mustard seeds and the like that may also be used in the preparation of some basic sauces and pastes, Klynstra's pantry has many kinds of flour, from all-purpose to whole wheat, to almond, chickpea,

soybean and more.

What wouldn't know how to brew tea? But the *Dhaba Chai* recipe helps one to learn how to prepare the tea served at the roadside tea stalls of Pakistan. On the other hand, there is the 'English High Tea' section, where you can find recipes for Coronation Chicken Sandwiches, Fish and Chips Dish, British Scones and Spinach Chicken Mini Quiches etc. but as such no tea to wash down all of these.

The section titled 'Mexican Table' actually looks very Pakistani, with many types of tortillas that seem like *chapatis*, ground beef, salsa, and beans etc. But then it has been explained by Klynstra that "Mexican cuisine is a vibrant fusion of multiple heritages and influences..."

On the surface, this may seem like another cookbook, but it is not just that. Rather, it is a beautifully presented dive into a melting pot of traditions and cultures that have, over the years, brought together generations around the dining table. ■

The reviewer is a member of staff. K: @HumayShazia

B&A
BOOKS & AUTHORS

NOBEL PRIZE

Who is Han Kang?

The winner of this year's Nobel Prize for Literature is the first South Korean writer to receive the award

By Valentina Gosetti

South Korean writer Han Kang has won the 2024 Nobel Prize for Literature. "For her intense poetic prose that confronts historical trauma and exposes the fragility of human life." The 53-year-old is the first South Korean writer to win the prize, and only the 10th woman (of 121 winners to date). She is also a musician, and interested in visual art.

Her best-known novel, *The Vegetarian* (published in Korea in 2007), was her first to be translated into English, in 2015. It won the Man Booker International Prize in 2016, with the prize split between Han Kang and her translator, Deborah Smith.

At the time, Smith's translation sparked fervid debates about its accuracy: that this is the beauty of literary translation as an act of creation: it's an imaginative exercise, not a literal one, and Han Kang has stood by her translator.

Han Kang has published six works in English so far. *The Vegetarian* was her international breakout. Then there was *Human Acts*, *The White Book*, *Lessons* and *Greek Lessons*. The short work *Convenience* was published in a bilingual edition in 2013.

Her latest novel, *We Do Not Fear*, about a writer researching the 1948-49 Jeju uprising against the Cold War division of the Korean peninsula and its impact on the family of her friend, will be published in 2025.

TAKING UP SPACE IN THE WORLD

A narrative tale of daily brutality, *The Vegetarian* is a novel in three acts, and follows the choice of a "completely unremarkable" woman to give up meat, triggering a spiral of unprecedented abuse from family members. While they claim to be thinking of her health, actually they oppose her non-conformism. Eventually, considering herself to be a plant, she refuses any nourishment, apart from water and the sun's rays.

The Nobel committee praised Han's "physical empathy for the vulnerable, often female lives" of her characters.

Greek Lessons is narrated by a woman who has lost her mother, her son (to the comedy of his father) and is losing her ability to speak, and a man who is losing his connection to place and family, and his eyesight. The man teaches ancient Greek; the woman becomes his student.

Like much of Han Kang's other work, *Greek Lessons* explores, through evocative and laconic prose, the fragile and unstable space between what can be expressed and shared, and what remains incommunicable, beyond the possibility of words. It shows the power of the human search for connection, even among, or perhaps because of, grief and loss.

Reviewing *Greek Lessons*, *The Guardian* concluded: "Thank goodness Han Kang's literary voice takes up space in the world in the way her female characters struggle to."

The autobiographical *The White Book* — dazzling, touching, and at times mystical — was shortlisted for the Man Booker International Prize in 2018. It is an art book, an extended poem and a graphically white book about all things white.

The book begins laconically: "In the spring, when I decided to write about white things, the first thing I did was to make a list."

Swaddling hands
Newborn gown
Salt
Snow
Ice
Moon
Rice
Waves
Yukon
White bird
"Laughing whitely"
Blank paper
White dog
White hair
Shroud



Han Kang

From this list of objects unfolds the autobiographical story of the loss of a newborn sister (who died after just two hours in the world, years before the author's birth. There is a chorus of voices, but at times the writer herself implores and questions the sister she has never met.

Han Kang composes this meditative, transcendental book while on a writers' residency in Warsaw. The white of the snow mixes with the white of memory.

Writing becomes a purifying act: reconstructing her sister's death means starting to live. The resulting reflections follow the rhythm of prayer, perhaps a secular, yet deeply human prayer. The only way to mourn, and at the same time continue to live ethically, is in the flash of memory, in its endless fragments.

A NATION'S MOURNING

In *Human Acts*, this autobiographical mourning becomes the mourning of an entire nation.

Human Acts narrates the massacre in Gwangju, Kang's birthplace, of May 1980, when hundreds, perhaps thousands, of citizens and university students, protesting against the authoritarian regime of South Korea's "most vilified" military dictator, Chun Doo-hwan, were murdered by the army.

Paradoxically, precisely in the midst of these brutal acts, what is most valuable emerges: solidarity, dignity, the strength to continue — and above all, the great responsibility of surviving and remembering. "My novels explore human suffering," Han Kang once said. When she wrote about the Gwangju massacre, she was "aware that readers should, in turn, be prepared [...] to experience such suffering firsthand themselves."

The ethical scope of the novel comments the collective amnesia imposed by censorship. It makes room for a chorus — a sacred song — in which the living are confused with the dead, the present with the past, memory with censorship, the word with the ineffability of a violence that is supposedly inhuman. Could surviving perhaps be a form of silent consent?

But as in *The White Book*, the silence crumbles in the writing. Becoming too loud to bear. The role of the writer is to continue to create, remember, communicate even the incommunicable, despite it all. Even in shades, even silence. Even when humanity seems to fail us.

For this — and much more — Han Kang richly deserves this year's Nobel Prize for Literature. ■

The writer is Associate Professor in French at the University of New England in Australia.

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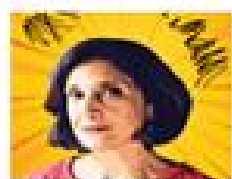
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▶ DIARY OF A SOCIAL BUTTERFLY



By Moni Mohsin

Here's to hoping Gazans be as lucky as Japanese nuclear bomb survivors in 50 years

NOBLE THOUGHTS, ZAKIR MISSILES

Honestly, it was so touchy of Noble Prize gives to give Peace Prize to *Agassi* survivors of the atom bomb. Such *absentminded* they are. Imagine! Remembering them again after blowing them up all those years ago. They've given the prize to the few who weren't blown up or *fulled* from the bomb and are still around.

If I'd been in their place, I'd have been scared. Do they want to bomb me again, I'd have thought. Apparently, *Agassi* survivor, when he heard, he started crying, but not about himself, but about Gaza. Why don't you give it to Gazans, he sobbed, who are being bombed right now.

I think so, he didn't get the memo that you're not allowed to talk about Gaza to *givers*. You are anti-semitic, if you mention Gaza. Which means you hate all Jews. Even Scarlett Johansson and Harrison Ford. Mobile. Or maybe the *Agassi* survivor got the memo, but he's so old that he didn't read it properly. Maybe like Mumukshu, he'd misplaced his reading glasses.

But it's okay, maybe in 50 years' time, they will also give a Noble Peace Prize to the survivors of Gaza — if there are any left by the time Netan Yehoo-lee and *Isabelle* Biden are done with them. A little bit like Nelson Medallion, who the *givers* said was a terrorist, when he was fighting for his people's freedom.

Valery, one thing I've noticed about *givers* how much they boast about their own fight for freedom against Hitler (in which a million of us died fighting for their freedom) and how much they hate it if anyone else fights for



Illustration by Huda Chaudhry

their freedom. Like, only they deserve freedom. No one else.

Janoo says Medallion's name was removed from the US terrorist suspect list only in 2008. Meanwhile, they'd given him the Noble Peace Prize and invited him for dinner to the White House and awarded a ten-foot statue of him in Washington. But officially, he was still a terrorist.

Talking of *absentminded*, Zakir Naik — *who* *Naik*, the Indian *muslim* from KL — is visiting and saying such *absent*,

absent things about women and PIA. First, he threw a bit of a tantrum about not being allowed to bring 1000 kilos of luggage into Pakistan *to/for* free. He says all he's interested in is a 'passport to *janwar*', but it seems he also wants free travel to Pakistan. When PIA said no (about the luggage, not about heaven), he walked and whined that India would have done it for him, *thash* *thash*. Same India he fled because he is wanted for God knows what all crimes there.

Then, when people got

angry on social media, he immediately backed down and said he didn't want to compare Pakistan to India and cause any tension between the two countries. As if he's a missile or something... Then, to make himself even more popular, he said unmarried women should either become second, third wives of married men or become *hazrat* *marriage*.

I must tell Auntie Poo. With poor Uncle Cock-Up being so ill and all, she better line up a taker for herself quickly — a *shareef*, *thash* *poor*.

God-fearing elderly man. As long as it's not Daddy. I don't think so. Mumukshu will like. Maybe Zakir *Naik* himself can oblige? After all, he must be carrying several *barrels* in his thousand kilo luggage, no? A few *Naik*, a few handbags, some *Naik*, a designer *Naik* or two in his dozens of suitcases. And I'm sure his wife won't mind. After all, if it's okay for other wives, it must also be okay for himself, no?

But let's talk about nice things. More fun things, you know. No, not the bomb in Karachi, that they first tried to pretend was a nuclear blast. Nor that the timer set is down again. And I can't post my selfies in my new ruby necklace from Goldsmith to *Naik* all my friends. Nor that we lost in cricket again. And again.

Let's talk, instead, about nice, nice things, like the SCO Summit, for which the whole of *Naik* was in lockdown for three days. To which Indian foreign ministry man came, but said there would be *Naik* *Naik* on the sidelines. By *Naik*, I think so, he means main line, which is Pak-India *Naik*. China premier also came, apparently, which was a bit embarrassing, because two Chinese men were killed in the Karachi blast, no.

But the Lahore *Naik* went off without a hitch, even though foreigners were not there like before. And Saudi and Emiratis have promised lots of investment, Janoo says. When I asked, He said, whenever. He said they're ruled by kings. Kings do what they like, when they like. I think so, Zakir *Naik* must be thinking he's a king also. One who can rule women and PIA, a

EOS

ADVICE



AUNTIE AGNI

'My Relationship is Dependent on an Exam'

Hi Auntie,

I am a 25-year-old confused young man from a humble background, who is currently studying. My query may seem unusual, but it's something I need to address. I have been in a relationship with a girl for almost three years now.

It was exactly three years ago when we last saw each other face-to-face. Since then, I've been given excuses whenever I suggest meeting up. Interestingly, we have never spoken on the phone and she rarely sends me voice messages. However, when I ask her for pictures and videos, she doesn't refuse. I believe she loves me as much as I love her.

The issue is that I am a CSS aspirant, preparing to appear in the exams in 2025. Our relationship has now reached a point where her family demands that I clear CSS or else forget about her. This behaviour from her family has left me completely confused. I am unable to study properly and my study schedule is in disarray. My girlfriend also pressures me, insisting that I must clear CSS at any cost.

Amidst all this chaos, how can I focus on my studies? I fear losing both her and failing the exam. I can't bear such a big loss. How can I come out of this dilemma? Please help me out.

Dear Confused,

I can see how this issue can seem overwhelming. However, it's important to take a step back and reflect on a few important things.

First, the fact that you haven't met this person face-to-face in three years and have never even spoken on the phone should be a big red flag. Relationships are built on trust, communication and mutual effort, and it seems like there's an imbalance here. You're putting in a lot of

Our relationship has now reached a point where her family demands that I clear CSS or else forget about her.

emotional energy, but is it being reciprocated in a meaningful way?

Second, the pressure you're feeling from her family and her about clearing the CSS exam is unfair. Your career and academic path should be driven by your own ambitions, not by ultimatums from the girl or someone else's family. The CSS exam is a major challenge and the added emotional stress isn't helping. If her love is conditional on you passing the exam, is that the kind of relationship you want to be in?

It's time to prioritise yourself and your goals. The CSS exam is a demanding process and it requires your full attention. Don't let this relationship derail your hard work and future prospects. If she truly loves you, she should support you without imposing such unrealistic demands.

Take a break from this emotional turmoil, focus on your studies and ask yourself some hard questions about whether this relationship is really worth the toll it's taking on you. Your future should be built on your aspirations, not on pressure or fear of loss. a

Disclaimer: If you or someone you know is in crisis and/or feeling suicidal, please go to your nearest emergency room and seek medical help immediately. Auntie will not reply privately to any query. Please send concise queries to: auntieagn@gmail.com

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▶ GARDENING



By Dr Khwaja Ali Shahid

Depending upon the type, it can take between four to six months from sowing seeds before the cabbage is ready to harvest

ALL ABOUT THE CABBAGE HEAD

The two preceding columns discussed the various aspects of growing a cabbage plant, covering the seed-sowing process, germination and transfer of seedlings. They included plant requirements, ranging from water needs, sunlight exposure and fertiliser input during the nascent stages of the cabbage plant growth.

The columns also highlighted the nutritional content of the cabbage and the health benefits of consuming it, along with some interesting and relevant facts about cabbage farming from around the world. This week's column discusses the prerequisites during the maturity stage of the cabbage plant growth and the eventual harvest process of this leafy ball of health.

As the plant grows and begins to mature, the size of the leaves begins to increase. This increase in size is followed by the inward folding of the central, comparatively smaller leaves, to give it the shape of a ball. This folding is usually referred to as head formation, which occurs at the centre of the plant.

There should be a span of at least two to three weeks after transplantation in which fertiliser shouldn't be used. Afterwards, throughout the maturity phase, the plant should be supplemented with a handful of nitrogen-based fertiliser after every two weeks. One may also use compost or decomposed cow manure for this purpose.

It is essential to stop fertiliser application again once the cabbage head begins to form. During this stage, adding fertiliser would result in the splitting of the cabbage. This splitting of the mature cabbage head may also occur due to excessive watering or moisture intake.

It usually takes around three months for the plant to begin forming the cabbage head. This is for those plants that remain in their permanent positions from the very beginning. If you are counting the weeks after transplantation, then it will roughly take about six weeks to two months.

The cabbage head can be drastically



Cabbages being grown in a raised bed



Cabbage head ready for harvesting | Photos by the writer

inspected also with a sudden surge in temperature or drop in moisture. It is, therefore, suggested to always opt for seeds which are better suited to the local climate, and are specifically recommended for the area where the cabbage is to be planted. Depending upon the cabbage type, it will take about four to six months from sowing seeds before it will be ready for harvesting.

There are two harvesting techniques for cabbage, once the cabbage head starts to show firmness. One is to completely remove the plant from the ground and to detach the cabbage head afterwards. Due to limited space availability, this is my preferred technique, as it gives me more space to grow some other plants quickly. The leftover cabbage plant's outer leaves, apart from the cabbage head, are also edible, but they are relatively hard and not consumed. They usually make way into the compost bin or can be used as fodder for poultry.

The second technique is to carefully cut off the cabbage from the base of the head, while leaving the rest of the

plant firmly planted in the ground or in the container. Later, this harvested plant is likely to produce three to four smaller-sized cabbage heads from the same place of the previous harvest. This, however, may eat up quite some time and will engage your space for that duration.

Many pests attack the cabbage plant, especially towards the end of the plant life cycle. The efforts of the grower can go in vain if the cabbage head is infested with unwanted, albeit frequently occurring pests. These pests include, but are not limited to, aphids, leopards and cabbage worms. The aphids are the most common ones, which multiply very quickly. They not only damage the cabbage head, but the rest of the plant as well.

The best way to avoid pest attack, especially those of aphids, would be to spray the plant from the seedling/sapling stage onwards, with any of the organic pesticides. A spoonful of neem (margosa) oil in one litre water is one of my favoured pesticides in this regard, which can be sprayed on the plant after

every 15 to 20 days till the eventual harvest.

In case the plant is already under attack, then a few drops of detergent can be added to the mixture of neem oil and sprayed over the plant. This has to be repeated after every three to four days until the pests disappear. In case of a severe attack or a delayed response to pest attack, the only option to save the plant would be to spray it with chemical pesticides.

Growing cabbage in one's containers, raised beds or in the ground and to see the cabbage head grow and form can be extremely fulfilling. Consuming organic vegetables, harvested from your garden directly to your plate, is a feeling beyond explanation. Since it is mostly eaten raw as well, the freshly harvested cabbage helps one fulfil this desire. a

Please send your queries and emails to doctor101@hotmail.com. The writer is a physician and a host for the YouTube channel 'TheTree Gardening' promoting organic kitchen gardening.

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