

Fortnightly

The Truth International

Islamabad - Karachi

1st - 15th October 2024

ABC Certified

Genocide in the Making
This Time in Lebanon

IMF's New Loan
Will it be the last bailout program?

Cyber Security
Types of Cyber Threats

Iran Attacks Israel with Ballistic Missiles



Foreign Affairs

Iran Attacks Israel with Ballistic Missiles Following Hezbollah Chief's Assassination By Javed Mahmood – Page 04



An obituary for a combatant: The developments show cracks within the center of resistance By Naqi Akbar – Page 06

Genocide in the making: This time in Lebanon By Javed Mahmood – Page 08



Global Conflicts and the Call for Accountability: A Look at Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif's Bold Stand at the United Nations Security Council By Romana Afsheen – Page 12

Russia changes nuclear doctrine: What happens now? By Romana Afsheen – Page 15

Politics

SC Judge Yahya Afridi supports PTI in the reserves seats case By Mahnoor Saleem – Page 18



Economy

Pakistan's Path to Economic Recovery: The Role of the IMF's \$7 Billion Bailout Package By Kanwal Munir – Page 22

Fortnightly
The Truth International
Islamabad - Karachi
1st - 15th October 2024

Genocide in the Making
This Time in Lebanon
IMF's New Loan
Will it be the last bailout program?
Cyber Security
Types of Cyber Threats

Iran Attacks Israel with Ballistic Missiles

Editor:
Zaheer ud Din Babar Thaheem

Circulation & Marketing / Advertisement:
Aghaz Ullah Raj

Contact: 0340-9850810
Email: admin@tti.org.pk

Letter to Editor:
Feel free to mail us at: editor@tti.org.pk

Postal Address:
Fortnightly "The Truth International"

Head Office:
205-D, 2nd Floor, Evacuee Trust Complex,
Agha Khan Road, F-5/1, Islamabad, Pakistan.
Contact: +92 51 2820180-1

Karachi Office:
Shop No. 08, Mezzanine Salalah Apartments,
Dawood Pota Road, Karachi Cantt.
Contact: +92 21 35221000-1

Email: info@tti.org.pk
Web: www.thetruthinternational.com
Price: Rs. 435

Publisher:
Muhammad Fahad Thaheem

Printer:
Masha Allah Printers
Basement # 9, Ratta Mansion, Fazal e Haq Road, Blue Area, Islamabad.

Design & Layout:
Abdul Qadir

DISCLAIMER: The articles published in this magazine collected from various writers, and sources are disseminated for information only. Therefore, the publisher shall not be responsible for any mistake/error.

Science & Technology

Cybersecurity By Mahnoor Saleem – Page 26



New ways to kill How military technology is evolving – Page 29

2024's Annular Solar Eclipse: Witnessing the 'Ring of Fire' Phenomenon By Romana Afsheen – Page 32



California sues ExxonMobil, accusing the company of a “decades-long campaign of deception” about the recyclability of plastics By Danish Javed – Page 35

Health

Future Pandemic Preparation and Response: A Comprehensive Approach By Ayesha Shaeban – Page 36

Risks of Excessive Screen Time for Toddlers By Ayesha Shaeban – Page 39



Climate Change

A Melting Future: The Role of Glaciers in Global Climate Systems By Romana Afsheen – Page 41

Churna Island: Pakistan's biodiversity hotspot in danger By Amir Latif – Page 43



Islamophobia

Growing Islamophobia and Racism in the Western countries By Harry Javed – Page 44



Business

Marketing and Branding By Mahnoor Saleem – Page 48

Sports

Pakistani boxer Usman Wazeer knocks down Indian rival in 65 seconds - TTI Report – Page 50



Entertainment

Celebrating Excellence: Highlights from the 9th Hum By Kanwal Munir – Page 51

Iran Attacks Israel with Ballistic Missiles Following Hezbollah Chief's Assassination



By Javed Mahmood

The Iranian military has begun launching ballistic missiles at Israel in response to a series of high-profile assassinations inside Iran and Lebanon. So far, Iran has reportedly fired 400 ballistic missiles at Israel, with launches originating from Isfahan, Tabriz, Khoramabad, Karaj, and Arak, according to a Tehran Times' report.

This decision for retaliation was made by Iran's Supreme National Security Council (SNSC). The trigger for the escalation includes Israel's assassination of Palestinian Hamas leader Ismail Haniyeh in Tehran on July 31.

Earlier, in a major airstrike on Beirut, Lebanon, on September 27, Israel also killed Iranian Brigadier General Abbas Nilforoushan, who was serving as a military advisor in Lebanon, and Hezbollah leader Sayyed Hassan Nasrallah.

Meanwhile, Israelis rushed to shelters as alarms blared and explosions echoed in Jerusalem and the Jordan River Valley, following Iran's launch of a barrage of ballistic missiles in retaliation for Israel's operations against Hezbollah in Lebanon. Reports indicate that as many as 100 missiles

were fired, with some intercepted over Jordan. In response to the missile threat, the Israeli military had earlier advised the public to take cover in safe rooms. The escalation comes after Israel conducted ground raids in Lebanon, marking the first significant military action there in 18 years, which has sparked fears of a broader regional conflict.

90% of the missiles hit their targets: IRGC

"Despite the region being heavily protected by advanced defense systems, approximately 90% of our missiles successfully struck their targets, leaving the Zionists fearful of Iran's intelligence and operational abilities," the IRGC stated. Videos shared by Israeli settlers on social media depicted several missiles landing inside the occupied territories. In response, Israeli authorities quickly prohibited the sharing of footage showing the aftermath of the attacks once Iran's operation concluded.

Meanwhile, Iranian President Masoud Pezeshkian, in a post on X, asserted that Iran had exercised its "legitimate

right" to retaliate against Israeli aggression following international law. "Netanyahu must understand that while Iran seeks no war, it will stand firmly against threats. What we've shown is only a fraction of our capabilities. Do not provoke Iran," he warned. Iran's mission to the UN echoed this sentiment, warning that any further Israeli acts of violence would provoke a "subsequent and crushing response."

Celebrations erupted across Iran following the missile strikes. In Tehran's Palestine Square, crowds expressed their gratitude, chanting "Thank you" in praise of the Leader of the Islamic Revolution and military officials. Similar scenes of jubilation unfolded across the Muslim world, with citizens in Yemen, Lebanon, Jordan, Iraq, Syria, and Gaza voicing their support and appreciation for Iran's actions. Resistance groups such as Hamas, Ansarullah, Hezbollah, and Iraq's popular forces issued statements commending Iran for the successful execution of Operation True Promise II.

Meanwhile, in Israel, reports indicated

that senior officials, including Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, sought shelter in underground bunkers shortly after the attacks began. An Israeli military spokesperson revealed that U.S. forces had assisted in intercepting some of the Iranian missiles, though he did not specify the exact number of projectiles intercepted. After the last missile strike, both Tel Aviv and Washington had claimed to have downed “90%” of Iran’s missiles and drones.

Following the strikes, U.S. President Joe Biden abruptly adjusted his schedule to meet with Vice President Kamala Harris in the Situation Room. White House National Security Advisor Jake Sullivan later stated in a press briefing that the U.S. had coordinated with Israel’s air defense systems during the attack, claiming that Iran’s assault “appears to have been repelled.” Sullivan added that the U.S. is in discussions with Israel regarding a potential response. At the same time, Israeli officials signaled their intent to launch heavy retaliatory strikes across West Asia in the coming days.

The Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC) launched a large-scale missile attack on Israeli positions in the occupied territories on Tuesday, in retaliation for a series of attacks by the Israeli regime that killed key figures including Hamas leader Ismail Haniyeh, Hezbollah chief Sayyad Hassan Nasrallah, and IRGC

commander Brigadier General Abbas Nilforooshan.

The IRGC released two statements within a few hours of each other. The first confirmed reports of missile strikes targeting Israeli positions, while the second announced that three military bases near Tel Aviv were hit.

This marked the second instance of Iran launching missiles at the occupied territories from its own soil. The attack, named Operation True Promise II, follows a similar strike during Operation True Promise in mid-April, where Tehran targeted military sites after Israel attacked Iran’s embassy in Damascus.

In its first strike, the IRGC deployed approximately 300 older drones and a few ballistic missiles. However, the second operation involved a more advanced arsenal, including the use of hypersonic missiles, marking their first deployment since Iran publicly announced possessing such technology. Both IRIB news and statements from the Israeli military confirmed the use of these advanced weapons.

IRGC chief issues a stern warning to Israel in case of retaliation

Meanwhile, Iran’s Chief of Staff, Major General Mohammad Bagheri, has issued

a stern warning, stating that Iran will target Israel’s critical infrastructure if its territory comes under attack. This declaration follows a missile barrage launched by Iran, in which approximately 200 rockets were fired at Israel, as reported by AFP. Speaking on state television, Bagheri emphasized that any future strikes against Israel will escalate in both intensity and scale.

“The attack will be repeated with greater force, and all the infrastructure of the regime will be targeted,” he stated during the broadcast, underscoring Tehran’s readiness for further military action if provoked.

The missile attack highlights the deepening tensions between the two regional rivals, who have a long history of hostilities. Iran, a staunch opponent of Israel, has frequently condemned Israel’s policies in the region, while Israel has continuously expressed concerns over Iran’s influence in the Middle East, particularly regarding its support for militant groups like Hezbollah.

As the situation in the region becomes increasingly volatile, both sides appear poised for further confrontation. The escalation of rhetoric from Tehran signals Iran’s willingness to respond aggressively if it perceives any direct threats to its sovereignty.



An obituary for a combatant: The developments show cracks within the center of resistance



By Naqi Akbar

Braving the strikes and the threats from the Zionist entity for 32 years, the secretary general of Lebanese resistance group Syed Hasan Nasrullah, met his creator when the IDF air wing onboard F-35 showered the complex of buildings, where the Israeli intelligence guided the IDF, with bunker buster ammunition totaling about 80 tons. The incident sent shockwaves around the world for the whole one day, until his fate was confirmed by the disaster recovery teams in Beirut. From anchors breaking down, when live on the TV, to the people in the Beirut International airport at the boarding, a general wave of grief was felt.

Around the same time, there were many hateful references, dating back to the days of Syrian Civil war. Like many leaders in the world, who apparently did not controlled the state, but had the profile of a statesman, Syed Hasan Nasrullah killing was not a routine strike mission for the IDF; but the one with serious ramifications for the region, the established world order and the center of resistance; without

mincing words the fate of the Islamic movement spearheaded by Iran.

As the word goes, there are many dissident voices within the Islamic Republic who accuse the clerical establishment in Tehran for inaction. Many argue that if the response to Hamas chief Ismael Hania has been proportionately undertaken, that nightmare possibility; that of losing the Hezbollah chief could have been avoided. The former head of the IRGC Mohsen Rezai in a statement circulating on Twitter argued without any qualms that the governments in Tehran, Damascus and Baghdad have to decide, what they want to do now.

The reasons for the former IRGC chief to take on that stance emanate from the mood and developments taking place in Tehran during the last few months. The somewhat mysterious helicopter crash, which cost the Iranian establishment a radical president of the republic as well as the foreign minister; who did a lot of legwork for Hamas; going unnoticed as a routine crash; the postures by the former foreign minister and now the

second Vice President on Strategic affairs Jawad Zarif, the lack of diplomatic sense shown by the trio from Tehran during the UN General assembly; namely the President, Foreign Minister and Zarif himself, created an impression that Iran after the reformist president ascendancy to the office was a divided house.

The incumbent president naïve statements in New York even prompted the supreme leader to distance himself from the narrative saying that Iran official line was to oppose global arrogance; a reference to unipolar world; and if few within the Islamic republic; a pointed reference to the incumbent president; were not okay with that, the stance was to remain what it has been for decades.

Though the trio tried hard to have a damage control; the damage was done already. The radical faction within the Iranian society had its misgivings about the new reformist administration stances about the foreign policy. The reformist president slogan of “Iran First; not Gaza and

Palestine” which won him the vote centered around the promise that the administration will restart the JCPOA; an arrangement where the Iranians scale back the nuclear program and other defence related R&D and go back to the comity of nations or mend fences with the unipolar world.

That JCPOA; as things are unfolding seems to make reform camp distance itself from the traditional stances of the Islamic Republic. The stance and thrust of the trio during the New York visit for obvious reasons was not to support the Palestinian cause, but to lay the ground for eventual rapprochement with the US lead unipolar world. That was the very reason that the words and stances of the trio did not resonate well with the battlelines drawn post October 7, 2023.

Back home, this disconnect was more obvious; over the way Iranians on the face value pushed beneath the rug the ‘expected response’ on Ismael Hania murder in Tehran. The place of the murder, breaching the diplomatic security firewall was itself an embarrassment for the Iranians. Adding fire to that has been lack of interest and resultant inaction for even a symbolic strike; which in today diplomatic culture means a ‘shut up call’. To refer to the swift retort undertaken by PAF post Pulwama in February 2019; the PAF had 9 IAF jets engaged for fire, but

opted for only two, as intent was not an all-out war. Here in the case of Ismael Hania, Iranian did not want to replicate that much of the PAF response. That inaction, in all objective analysis gave a signal to the IDF that it was free to strike anywhere it wanted to. For obvious reasons, the IDF laying its hands on Syed Hasan was in all probability an outcome of unworried approval given to IDF by the Iranians.

The inaction on Ismael Hania, the hit on Hezbollah HQ by the IDF, all indicate that the Islamic movement which was born in 1979 in Tehran, which helped the rejectionist front across the Middle East from the shores on Mediterranean in Beirut to the Sanaa shores along the Red Sea, seems to be on a reverse gear. The radical Iranian groups fear that the reform camp administrations will precipitate a glasnost like the disintegration of the Soviet Republic seems to be ringing true.

As things stand now and in the coming weeks, even if the IRGC makes a desperate bid to undertake a token strike; regretfully the damage has already been done. Iranian credibility is now under question among the rejectionist circles. The late Syed Hasan was a kingpin of the infrastructure and in the past IDF might have thought many times before striking him. But gathered enough courage, only now, when it had the means to neutral-

ize the Iranians in inaction.

One of the Larijani brothers did not mince words to say that the incident in Beirut was the outcome of infiltration at the highest level with the Hezbollah camp. Given the fact that the group has been the closest to the Iranians throughout the four decades, the Iranian inputs, especially from the ones; who were and are against the Islamic Republic and are willing to join hands with Israel in terms of harming the Nezam, could not be ruled out.

In the coming days, we might hear many things from Tehran aimed at mending fences with the west, but at the same times keeping a sheepish posture with the resistance, however the movement which has been long nurtured by the Islamic Republic aimed at challenging the unipolar world, either seems to take the backfoot and recuperate for the later day and weeks, or it might lose its control.

For all practical purposes, there seems complete chaos in Tehran; even if it denies it. Holding memorial ceremonies is not alternate to hard combat. Few statements and demonstrations are not needed, rather a matching firepower response is needed, if it wants to sincerely reclaim its position. Failing which; it can well be the obituary of the flag and standard of the Islamic movement itself.



Genocide in the making: This time in Lebanon



By Javed Mahmood

Israel continues its aggressive military campaign against Lebanon, which analysts suggest is an attempt to divert attention from its setbacks in the Gaza war and its increasing isolation both domestically and internationally. The Israeli military announced it had launched hundreds of airstrikes in Lebanon. Lebanese Health Minister Firas Abiad reported that the strikes had killed over 550 people, including 35 children and 58 women, and left 1,650 others injured. In a recent attack Israeli army also killed Hezbollah chief Hasan Nasrallah along with his confidants in Lebanon.

Israel has warned of further military action, with army spokesperson Daniel Hagari stating that a ground invasion into Lebanon remains a possibility. "We will do everything necessary to return the residents of the north to their homes safely," Hagari said, reinforcing Israel's goal of halting Hezbollah attacks to facilitate the return of displaced Israelis. Hezbollah, Lebanon's powerful resistance group, is estimated to have over 100,000 fighters and around 150,000 rockets, including precision-guided missiles. Israel has declared that stopping Hezbollah's attacks from northern Lebanon is now a key war objective.

Since October 8, the day after Israel launched its war on Gaza, the exchanges of fire between Israel and Hezbollah have displaced tens of thousands of people in both northern Israel and southern Lebanon. Hezbollah has said it is willing to cease its attacks if a ceasefire is reached in Gaza, but Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu has reportedly undermined negotiations by introducing new conditions.

The recent bombardment marked some of the most intense exchanges between Israel and Hezbollah since the Gaza conflict began, which has already claimed over 41,400 Palestinian lives, including more than 16,000 children.

These airstrikes come after a series of Israeli attacks in Lebanon, including last week's deadly strike in Beirut, where Israeli airstrikes killed nearly four dozen people, including women and children, as well as Hezbollah's top commander, Ibrahim Aqil.

Hezbollah retaliated on Monday by launching long-range rockets at Israel, triggering sirens in several West Bank settlements near Tel Aviv. The group also targeted Israeli military bases in northern Israel and Haifa. Lebanese Prime Minister Najib Mikati condemned the ongoing Israeli

assault, calling it a "war of extermination" aimed at destroying Lebanese towns and villages. He appealed to the United Nations and the international community to intervene and halt the violence. This escalation, including the deaths of nearly 500 Lebanese civilians, mirrors Israel's campaign in Gaza, where it has been accused of genocide and war crimes by international bodies such as the International Court of Justice (ICJ) and the International Criminal Court (ICC). The ICC has requested arrest warrants for both Netanyahu and Israeli Defense Minister Yoav Gallant for war crimes and crimes against humanity.

Iran decides to deploy its troops in Lebanon

Iranian leadership said that they will deploy Iranian troops in Lebanon in the wake of recent bombings that killed Hezbollah chief and scores of the other leaders and fighters of the group.

Meanwhile, President Masoud Pezeshkian accused Israel of deliberately trying to provoke a broader conflict in the Middle East. In remarks to the media, Pezeshkian said that while Israel publicly claims it does

not seek a wider war, its actions tell a different story. He cited last week's deadly explosions of pagars and electronic devices in Lebanon, which he blamed on Israel, and the assassination of Hamas political leader Ismail Haniyeh in Tehran ahead of his inauguration, as examples of Israeli provocations aimed at widening the conflict.

"They are pulling us towards a place we do not wish to go," Pezeshkian said. "In warfare, there is no winner. Believing otherwise is self-deception."

Since October 8, 2023, Hezbollah, backed by Iran, has regularly attacked Israeli military posts and communities along the shared border, with Israel retaliating through airstrikes, according to The Times of Israel. On Monday, Israeli airstrikes in southern Lebanon reportedly killed at least 492 people, including civilians, as Israel warned that its strikes on Hezbollah would intensify. Lebanese civilians were told to evacuate areas where Hezbollah was believed to be hiding weapons. In response, Hezbollah launched volleys of rockets deep into Israel, setting off sirens as far south as settlements near Tel Aviv.

Pezeshkian, speaking from New York, referenced ongoing appeals from the West urging Iran not to escalate the situation further. "We tried not to respond, believing peace was within reach. But Israel continues its atrocities, killing more civilians—men, women, children, even targeting hospitals," he said. When asked if Iran would retaliate directly, Pezeshkian did not provide a clear answer but defended Hezbollah's actions, implying that they had no choice but to defend themselves. "If Hezbollah didn't act, who would?" he asked, pushing back against claims that Iran is the source of instability.

Earlier this year, Iran launched a missile-and-drone attack against Israel following the assassination of several Iranian generals in Syria, but otherwise, it has preferred to engage Israel via proxy groups like Hezbollah. Iran's Foreign Ministry condemned the Israeli airstrikes on Lebanon, warning of "dangerous consequences." Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi shared images of destruction in Lebanon, accusing Israel of crimes enabled by the U.S., and vowed that Iran would not remain indifferent.

UN voices concerns over Lebanon bombings

The United Nations has voiced deep concern over the escalating violence in Lebanon, where Israeli airstrikes have killed at least 274 people, including 21 children. Ravina Shamdasani, spokesperson for the UN Human Rights Office, highlighted that recent attacks on communication infrastructure and the intensifying exchange of rocket fire mark a dangerous escalation. The rising violence has sparked fears of a full-scale war between Israel and Hezbollah, which could spill over into a broader regional conflict. Lebanon's Ministry of Public Health confirmed that the victims included children, women, and medical personnel. This comes after the



Israeli military warned civilians to evacuate areas it said were being used by Hezbollah, which had launched rockets into northern Israel the day before.

"What we have long warned about—the regional spillover of the conflict—is now becoming a reality, driven by both actions and aggressive rhetoric from the involved parties," Shamdasani said.

Following nearly a year of intermittent cross-border clashes between Hezbollah and Israeli forces, these recent strikes represent the most significant escalation since Israel's war on Gaza began. Shamdasani reiterated the international community's calls for de-escalation, warning that the current trajectory is heading toward more violence: "Instead of reducing tensions, we are seeing increased rhetoric and further plans for escalation."

"This must stop," she urged.

How did US President Biden encourage Israel to attack Lebanon?

A week before Israel launched a series of deadly attacks on Lebanon, killing nearly 500 people in a single day, the United States sent a diplomat to Israel to promote de-escalation.

Amos Hochstein, US President Joe Biden's envoy, arrived in the region on September 16, aiming to prevent the daily exchanges of fire at the Israel-Lebanon border between Hezbollah and Israeli forces from escalating into full-scale war.

However, shortly after Hochstein's arrival,

booby-trapped communication devices linked to Hezbollah were detonated across Lebanon, killing and injuring thousands in an attack widely attributed to Israel. More assaults followed in the days after. Khaled Elgindy, a senior fellow at the Middle East Institute, noted that the timing of Hochstein's visit and the subsequent Israeli strikes on Lebanon underscores a recurring pattern where Israeli leaders disregard the Biden administration's warnings.

"This has been happening for the last 12 months. Every warning from the administration has been ignored by Israel, repeatedly and emphatically, without any consequence," Elgindy told Al Jazeera.

On Friday, Israel bombed a building in southern Beirut, killing a senior Hezbollah commander and dozens of others, including children. Cross-border fire between

Israel and Lebanon intensified further. Then, on Monday, Israel unleashed widespread attacks across Lebanon, killing at least 492 people, including many women and children, marking one of the deadliest days in the country's history. Experts, including Elgindy, argue that the United States' unconditional support for Israel, coupled with its failure to secure a ceasefire in Gaza, has encouraged Israel to wage an all-out war in Lebanon, pushing the region to the brink of disaster.

"It's a catastrophic failure of policy," Elgindy stated. "Every aspect of the administration's approach — from the humanitarian to the diplomatic, legal, moral, and political — has failed in every conceivable way."



Biden's dubious diplomacy for ceasefire in Gaza and Lebanon wars

In his concluding speech at the United Nations General Assembly, U.S. President Joe Biden emphasized the urgent need to halt the ongoing conflict in Gaza and cautioned against the potential for a broader war in Lebanon, asserting that such an outcome would not benefit anyone.

Biden addressed world leaders, drawing attention to the dire humanitarian conditions in Gaza, where the civilian population has faced immense suffering. He remarked, "Innocent civilians in Gaza are going through hell," highlighting the devastating death toll that has exceeded 41,000 due to Israeli airstrikes.

He called for a ceasefire and urged Hamas to finalize terms for releasing hostages and

alleviating the humanitarian crisis in Gaza. As the situation deteriorates, with over 550 casualties reported from Israeli assaults in Lebanon, Biden stressed the importance of diplomatic efforts to restore peace in the region. "The situation is grave, but a diplomatic solution remains possible," he asserted, advocating for international cooperation to ensure the safety of civilians on both sides of the border.

Reflecting on his presidency, Biden shared mixed feelings about his potential candidacy for a second term. "Becoming the President of the United States has been the greatest honor of my life," he stated, but he also expressed a desire for a new generation to assume leadership, emphasizing the need

to prioritize the people's needs over personal ambition.

Biden also addressed the ongoing conflict in Ukraine, asserting that Russian President Vladimir Putin's attempts to destabilize the country have failed. "We cannot tire; we cannot look back, and we will not stop supporting Ukraine until it achieves a just and lasting peace," he declared. In his speech, Biden extended his concerns to the humanitarian crisis in Sudan, urging the international community to avoid arming rival factions and to unify efforts to end the conflict. He announced a commitment of 1 million m-pox vaccines to African nations facing health emergencies, underscoring the necessity for swift action against the spread of the virus.

Biden concluded by calling for international collaboration to combat climate change and address the challenges posed by artificial intelligence. He warned that while AI has transformative potential, it also

poses risks, including misinformation and bioweapons. "We must prepare our citizens for the future, which will see more technological change in the next two to ten years than we have seen in the last 50 years," he noted.

Turkish President Erdogan condemns Israeli bombings

In contrast, Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan delivered a sharp critique of the United Nations during his address, condemning its inability to stop the ongoing violence in Gaza and demanding immediate action to protect Palestinian civilians. He questioned how long the world would tolerate witnessing the massacre of Palestinians. Erdoğan characterized the UN as ineffective, serving the interests of a few nations instead of fulfilling its core mission of maintaining global peace and security. "The United Nations has failed in its primary mission, becoming a dysfunctional structure at the mercy of just five countries," he stated. He likened Israel's military operations in Gaza, led by Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, to a "network of massive massacres" and demanded an immediate ceasefire, labeling the ongoing violence as genocide against the Palestinian people. He condemned those supporting the Israeli government as complicit in these acts.

"Today, Gaza stands as the largest graveyard for women and children," Erdoğan lamented, drawing attention to the humanitarian crisis in the region. He emphasized that the treatment of Palestinians, especially in Israeli prisons, reflects a significant moral decline in global values. "Are the people of Gaza and the occupied West Bank not human? Do they not have rights?" he questioned.

Erdogan criticized the U.S. for allegedly undermining ceasefire efforts while simultaneously providing arms to Israel, enabling the continuation of hostilities. He called for the international community to impose coercive measures against Israel and suggested a reassessment of the UN General Assembly's authority to recommend force, similar to past resolutions aimed at maintaining peace.

The Turkish president urged the UN Security Council to take decisive action regarding the Gaza conflict, insisting on the need for an immediate and permanent ceasefire, the exchange of hostages and prisoners, and the unobstructed delivery of humanitarian aid to Gaza.

Highlighting the conflict's severe toll, Erdoğan reported that since October 7, over 41,000 Palestinians, including a significant number of women and children, have died due to Israeli attacks. He condemned the targeting of essential services, noting that 172 journalists and over 500 medical personnel had been killed while attempting to fulfill their duties in hazardous conditions.

Meanwhile, thousands of displaced people have taken refuge in Beirut, with volunteers providing supplies such as water, medicine, and food. However, the dire conditions, particularly for children, are creating significant hardships for the displaced families.

Israeli airstrikes also targeted the coastal town of Jiyeh, 75 km north of the Israeli border, as part of its intensified campaign against Hezbollah. Israeli Defence Minister Yoav Gallant stated that Hezbollah had been significantly weakened by these attacks, which will continue.

In retaliation, Hezbollah launched rockets at Israeli military bases, while suspected Israeli missiles struck Syria's port city of Tartous. Although Syria claimed to have intercepted the missiles, Israel did not comment.

As the Gaza war persists, Israel has escalated its air campaign against Iran-aligned armed groups in Syria, raising the stakes for broader regional instability. Funerals were held in Lebanon on Tuesday for those killed by Israeli strikes, including a young girl whose father vowed defiance against the ongoing bombardment.

Ethnic Cleaning Plan for Northern Gaza

Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu is reportedly considering a plan to forcibly displace 300,000 Palestinian civilians from northern Gaza, including Gaza City, according to a former Israeli military official cited by CNN.

The proposal involves creating a buffer zone aimed at surrounding up to 5,000 Hamas fighters in the northern part of Gaza, which is already under siege and cut off from humanitarian aid.

The plan would designate the northern Gaza Strip as a closed military zone, meaning that anyone who refuses to evacuate could be killed by Israeli forces. A group of retired Israeli generals formulated the idea, and reports suggest that Reserve Major General Giora Eiland, previously criticized for advocating harmful measures against Gaza's civilian population, is promoting the strategy. According to CNN, the proposal has already been presented to the Israeli cabinet and a key parliamentary committee.



However, it remains uncertain how many Palestinians still reside in northern Gaza or if, when, and how they might be allowed to return. Eiland has reportedly stated, "Those who leave will receive food and water."

This plan emerges amid claims by Israeli officials that Hamas has been largely defeated, with only several thousand fighters remaining, mostly in the south. However, by Israel's admission, at least 5,000 Hamas fighters are still operating in northern Gaza, an area that has faced repeated airstrikes and ground invasions over the past year.

Analysts suggest that Israel's military campaign in northern Gaza is struggling, with experts increasingly indicating that the Israeli forces have been unable to achieve a decisive victory over Hamas. This latest proposal to forcibly remove civilians has raised concerns about the potential for further violations of international law.

What are you waiting for to stop the Gaza genocide?

Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan has called on world leaders to recognize Palestine as an independent state.

"I urge all nations that have not yet recognized Palestine to take a stand on the right side of history during this crucial period and swiftly acknowledge the Palestinian state," Erdogan said during his address at the UN General Assembly in New York on Tuesday.

Erdogan stressed that the creation of a fully independent and sovereign Palestinian state, with East Jerusalem as its capital and maintaining its territorial integrity, must not be delayed any further. He also expressed frustration with the United Nations' inability to resolve global conflicts, arguing that the organization has grown ineffective over time.

"In recent years, the UN has failed to fulfill its core mission, gradually turning into a sluggish, inefficient, and inactive institution," Erdogan said, emphasizing the urgent need for reform.

Addressing the situation in Gaza, Erdogan condemned Israel's actions.

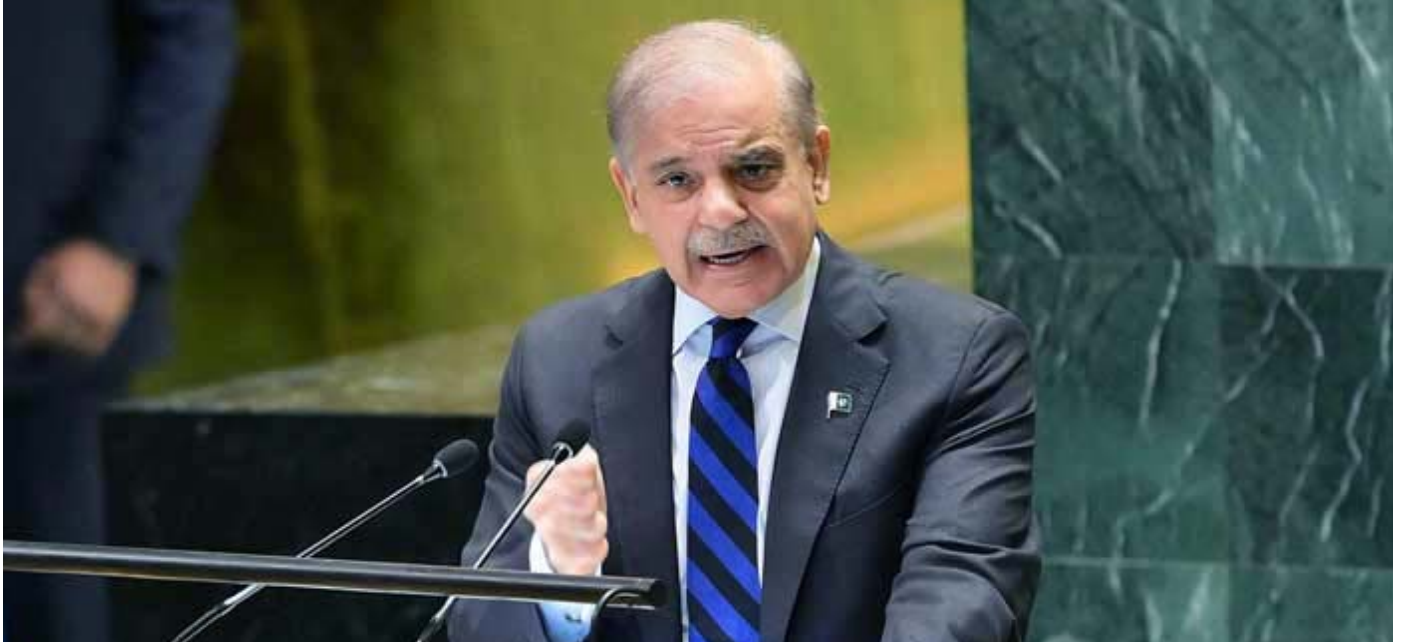
"Due to Israel's attacks, Gaza has become the largest graveyard for children and women in the world," he stated, highlighting the severe human cost for civilians. Erdogan also criticized international media for their silence on the killing of journalists by Israeli forces.

"To the international media, I ask: Aren't the journalists murdered on air and whose offices were raided by Israel your colleagues?"

He went on to accuse Israel of committing "open genocide" and occupying Palestinian land.

"The Israeli government, in blatant violation of basic human rights, is conducting a slow genocide against a people while occupying their land step by step. Palestinians are exercising their legitimate right to resist this occupation," Erdogan added.

Global Conflicts and the Call for Accountability: A Look at Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif's Bold Stand at the United Nations Security Council



By Romana Afsheen

In a world increasingly engulfed by complex geopolitical struggles and rising tensions, Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif of Pakistan made a resounding call for justice and accountability during the high-level open debate of the United Nations Security Council (UNSC). His address, delivered on the sidelines of the 79th United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) session, drew attention to various global conflicts, with a particular focus on Israel's military actions in Gaza and Lebanon, the war in Ukraine, the long-standing Kashmir dispute, and the resurgence of terrorism in Afghanistan. Sharif's speech was both a passionate plea for peace and a sharp critique of the international community's inaction on these pressing issues. This article delves into the key themes of his address and their broader implications for global security and peace.

Sanctions on Israel: A Call to Halt Genocide

One of the most striking aspects of Prime Minister Sharif's speech was his call for the UNSC to impose sanctions on Israel, including an arms and trade embargo. He

unequivocally described Israel's military operations in Gaza as genocidal, urging the international community to hold Israel accountable for its actions against Palestinians and Lebanese civilians. "We must compel Israel to halt its genocidal war in Gaza and prevent its attempts to provoke a wider conflict in the Middle East," Sharif said, highlighting the broader implications of continued inaction by the global community.

Sharif's use of the term "genocide" was not merely rhetorical; it reflected the scale of destruction and loss of life in Gaza due to Israeli bombings. Human rights organizations and some member states have echoed similar concerns, arguing that Israel's military tactics have gone beyond self-defense and into the realm of systematic ethnic cleansing. By calling for an arms embargo, Sharif aligned himself with a growing movement of international actors demanding accountability for Israel's alleged war crimes.

Sharif's condemnation of Israel's bombing in Lebanon further demonstrated his holistic approach to regional stability. His remarks underscored the need for Israel to

be held responsible for the wider impact of its military actions across the Middle East. "It is time to hold Israel's leadership accountable for its crimes against the Palestinians and the Lebanese people," he declared, signaling Pakistan's strong stance on the issue as it prepares to assume a seat in the UNSC next year.

The Broader Conflict in Gaza and Lebanon

The war in Gaza has exacerbated the already precarious situation in the Middle East, with neighboring Lebanon also bearing the brunt of Israeli military aggression. Sharif's remarks regarding Israel's bombing of Lebanon were timely, as the region continues to suffer from widespread devastation and political instability. The economic toll of the conflict is particularly stark in Lebanon, where the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development (EBRD) recently downgraded its economic forecast for 2024, predicting a contraction of one percent due to the geopolitical turmoil.

Lebanon, already grappling with one of the

world's worst economic crises, has seen its GDP shrink by more than 40 percent since 2018. The ongoing conflict in Gaza has further destabilized the country, with the EBRD warning that any further escalation will significantly hamper recovery efforts. Sharif's emphasis on the need for accountability in Lebanon was a call for the international community to recognize the far-reaching consequences of the Gaza conflict on the broader Middle East.

Ukraine: A Call for Peace and Ceasefire

Beyond the Middle East, Prime Minister Sharif also turned his attention to the ongoing war in Ukraine, urging the UNSC to develop an impartial plan for a ceasefire and a peaceful solution. As the war in Ukraine continues to escalate, with no clear end in sight, Sharif's call for peace reflects the global concern over the prolonged conflict's devastating humanitarian and economic impacts.

Sharif's remarks come at a critical juncture in the Ukraine crisis, as diplomatic efforts to broker a ceasefire have repeatedly failed. The war has not only caused untold suffering for millions of Ukrainians but has also disrupted global supply chains and contributed to rising food and energy prices worldwide. The prime minister's plea for a peaceful resolution underscores the need for the international community to prioritize diplomacy over military escalation in order to bring an end to the conflict.

The Kashmir Dispute: A Long-standing Threat to Global Peace

While addressing the UNSC, Prime Minister Sharif also seized the opportunity to spotlight the unresolved Kashmir dispute, which he described as a "great threat to international peace and security." He called on the council to implement its own resolutions that demand a plebiscite for self-determination in the Kashmir Valley, and to address the massive violations of the fundamental rights of the Kashmiri people.

The Kashmir conflict, which has been simmering for decades, remains one of the most volatile issues in South Asia. India and Pakistan, both nuclear-armed nations,

have fought multiple wars over the disputed region, and tensions continue to flare along the Line of Control (LoC). Sharif's call for action reflects Pakistan's long-held position that the international community must play a more active role in resolving the conflict, which has the potential to trigger a wider regional war if left unaddressed.

Sharif's appeal to the UNSC to take action on Kashmir highlights Pakistan's commitment to seeking a peaceful resolution to the dispute through diplomatic means. However, the Indian government has consistently rejected any external involvement in what it considers a bilateral issue. The continued deadlock over Kashmir poses significant challenges to regional peace and security, with both sides accusing each other of human rights abuses and violations of ceasefire agreements.



The Resurgence of Terrorism in Afghanistan and Africa

Another critical issue raised by Prime Minister Sharif was the resurgence of terrorism, particularly from Afghanistan and the extremist ideology of "Fitna al-Khawarij." He expressed deep concerns over the growing threat posed by Daesh (ISIS) and other terrorist organizations operating in Afghanistan, warning that the deteriorating security situation in the region could have far-reaching consequences for global peace.

Sharif's call for the UNSC to address the renewed threat of terrorism in Afghanistan reflects Pakistan's apprehensions about the rise of extremist groups in the aftermath of

the U.S. withdrawal. The resurgence of terrorist activities in Afghanistan has not only destabilized the region but also posed a direct threat to neighboring countries, including Pakistan, which has been grappling with cross-border terrorism for years.

In addition to Afghanistan, Sharif also urged the UNSC to extend its support to African countries and the African Union in their fight against terrorism and foreign interventions. He called for more robust and effective UN peacekeeping efforts to address the growing threat of violent extremism across the continent. African nations such as Mali, Somalia, and Nigeria have been particularly affected by insurgencies and terrorist movements, which have further exacerbated the continent's socio-economic challenges.

Preventing War Between Major Powers and Arms Control

One of the most significant themes of Prime Minister Sharif's speech was his appeal for measures to prevent the escalation of conflict between major global powers. He warned that rising tensions, particularly in Asia, could spiral into a catastrophic war unless immediate steps are taken to de-escalate hostilities. Sharif's call for arms control, particularly in the realm of nuclear and conventional weapons, resonates with ongoing concerns about the growing militarization of global politics.

Sharif's emphasis on arms control also extended to the regulation of emerging technologies, including Artificial Intelli-

gence (AI), which he argued is making war more likely and more lethal. As warfare becomes increasingly automated and technology-driven, there is a growing need for international frameworks to govern the use of AI in military applications. Sharif's call for the UNSC to address this issue highlights the pressing need for global cooperation in managing the risks associated with emerging technologies in warfare.

The United States, Israel, and Calls for Blinken's Resignation

Prime Minister Sharif's speech also came against the backdrop of growing controversy surrounding U.S. Secretary of State Antony Blinken's handling of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. Recent reports revealed that Blinken had provided inaccurate information to U.S. lawmakers regarding Israel's obstruction of humanitarian aid to Gaza, sparking calls for his resignation from various groups, including pro-Palestinian organizations and some Republican lawmakers.

The U.S. continues to be the largest arms supplier to Israel, despite its laws prohibiting military assistance to countries that violate human rights. Blinken's perceived

complicity in covering up Israeli war crimes has reignited debates over Washington's role in perpetuating the conflict in Gaza. Critics have accused Blinken of downplaying Israel's actions to shield it from international scrutiny, further straining U.S. credibility on the global stage.

Russia's Economic Resilience Amid Western Sanctions

While much of Sharif's speech focused on conflict and geopolitical tensions, he also touched on broader economic trends, particularly in relation to Russia's economy. Despite facing stringent Western sanctions over its invasion of Ukraine, Russia's economy has shown surprising resilience, growing by 4.7 percent in the first half of 2024. The rise in oil prices and strong trade relations with non-sanctioning countries, particularly China, have helped offset the impact of sanctions.

However, economists have warned that Russia's economy is beginning to show signs of overheating, with inflationary pressures mounting. The EBRD has revised its growth forecast for Russia, predicting a significant slowdown in 2025. These developments highlight the complex

interplay between economic sanctions, global trade dynamics, and the resilience of authoritarian regimes in the face of international pressure.

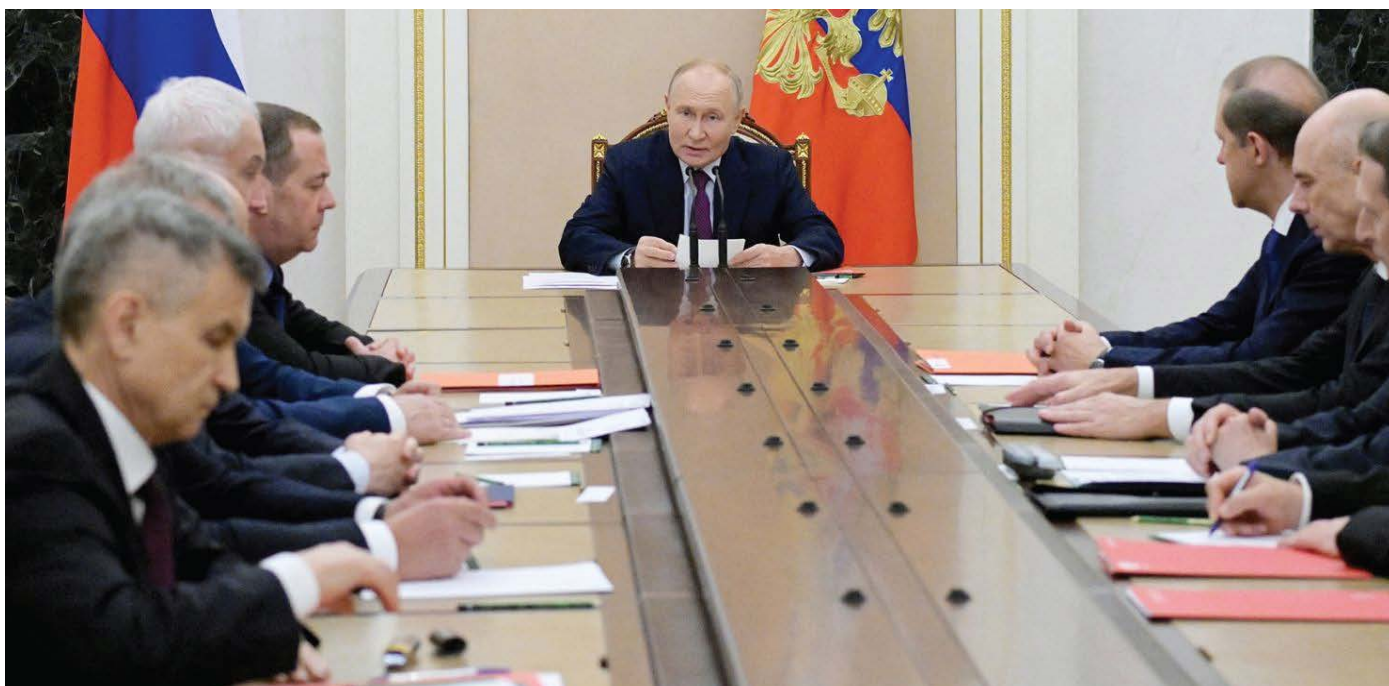
Conclusion: The Imperative for Global Leadership

Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif's address to the United Nations Security Council was a powerful call for greater global leadership in addressing some of the most pressing challenges facing the world today. From the genocide in Gaza to the war in Ukraine, the Kashmir dispute, and the resurgence of terrorism, Sharif outlined a comprehensive vision for peace that requires concerted international efforts.

As Pakistan prepares to take its seat in the UNSC next year, Sharif's speech signals the country's intent to play a more active role in shaping the global agenda on issues of peace, security, and human rights. His call for accountability, arms control, and a renewed focus on diplomacy offers a blueprint for a more just and peaceful world. However, whether the international community will heed his call and take meaningful action remains to be seen.



Russia changes nuclear doctrine: What happens now?



By Romana Afsheen

Russia's nuclear doctrine revisions are being seen as an attempt to deter countries from supplying Ukraine with long-range weapons

Russia is 'equalizing conditions with the US,' ex-Putin adviser Sergey Markov tells Anadolu

Revised doctrine does not exclude the possibility of Moscow responding with nuclear weapons if Ukraine strikes Russia with long-range missiles provided by West, says defense analyst Igor Korotchenko

MOSCOW

Just last week, Russian President Vladimir Putin directed members of his Security Council to consider possible amendments to the country's nuclear doctrine.

In his address at the biannual standing conference on nuclear deterrence on Sept. 25, Putin emphasized the urgency of revising the document, which currently designates the use of nuclear forces as a "last resort" to safeguard the nation's sovereignty.

He pointed to the "rapidly changing

military-political landscape" and the "emergence of new military threats and risks" as primary reasons for the reassessment.

Putin outlined several key areas he believes should be adjusted, including broadening the list of states and military alliances subject to Russia's nuclear deterrence and expanding the scope of military threats that could be countered by nuclear measures.

Among his suggestions was a recommendation to consider any attack on Russia by a non-nuclear state, if supported by a nuclear power, as a joint assault.

Additionally, he proposed that the revised doctrine should allow the use of nuclear weapons if confirmed intelligence reveals a large-scale launch of air- or space-based attack systems, including hypersonic aircraft, cruise missiles or drones crossing into Russian territory.

"We reserve the right to use nuclear weapons in response to aggression against Russia and Belarus, as part of the Union State, especially in cases where conventional weapons pose a critical threat to our

sovereignty," he concluded, adding that the position has been coordinated with Belarus.

West's reaction to possible changes

The West's reaction to Putin's comments has been largely critical, with the announcement perceived as a direct attempt to dissuade countries from supplying Ukraine with longer-range weapons, which could potentially hit deeper into Russian territory.

US Secretary of State Antony Blinken condemned the statements as "totally irresponsible," especially in light of discussions about disarmament and non-proliferation at the UN General Assembly.

Blinken emphasized that such rhetoric plays poorly internationally, particularly while global leaders are gathered to discuss peace initiatives.

The EU also criticized the move, describing it as another instance of Putin's irresponsible behavior, warning of the danger of continuously using nuclear threats as a political tool.

From the Western perspective, the proposed changes in Russia's doctrine, particularly the potential for a nuclear response to non-nuclear attacks if they involve nuclear-armed allies, are seen as lowering the threshold for nuclear use, which escalates global tensions.

'A lowering of Russia's nuclear threshold'

Igor Korotchenko, the General Director of the Caspian Institute for Strategic Studies, said the most important change is the stance on responding to attacks with conventional weapons using either a tactical or strategic nuclear strike.

"This is a fundamental change, and it primarily concerns the countries of the Western coalition, including both NATO members and non-members," he told Anadolu.

He said several non-NATO countries fall under the scope of this revised doctrine, including South Korea, Australia, Japan and New Zealand, which Russia views as non-nuclear states relying on the support of nuclear-armed allies.

Korotchenko emphasized that Putin's remarks were primarily of a "military-political nature," noting that the precise operational details will be formulated by the Russian General Staff.

He characterized the changes as "very serious," emphasizing that for the first time,

the doctrine includes provisions for a nuclear response to a conventional strike.

"The US has developed a concept of a 'rapid global strike,' which entails a non-nuclear large-scale assault on Russia using cruise missiles, primarily sea- and air-launched Tomahawks," he said.

"Similar cruise missiles -- Storm Shadow / SCALP-EG и TAURUS -- are also in service in countries like France, Britain and Germany. Additionally, several other NATO countries have access to British, American or French long-range cruise missiles. This means a potentially unlimited number of countries could target Russia."

If the new nuclear doctrine is adopted, said Korotchenko, "the status of tactical nuclear weapons will be elevated."

"Currently, tactical nuclear warheads are stored in the Defense Ministry's special warehouses, but with the approval of this new policy, part of the tactical arsenal could be deployed on delivery systems," he explained.

"This indicates a lowering of the threshold for employing nuclear weapons in response to perceived threats or strikes against Russia."

He said that tactical nuclear weapons are designed for use on the battlefield, "but if tactical nuclear weapons are used, which theoretically should not lead to an exchange of global nuclear strikes, it is still

a prelude to World War III, which is very dangerous."

"Russia finds itself in a situation where the West's actions, heightening tensions and disregarding Russia's established red lines, have effectively compelled the Kremlin to revise its military doctrine," Korotchenko asserted.

The revised doctrine does not exclude the possibility of Moscow using nuclear weapons if Ukraine strikes targets deep in Russia with long-range missiles provided by the West, according to Korotchenko.

"Theoretically speaking, if we follow the provisions of the new edition of the military doctrine, this is not excluded. Roughly speaking, the doctrine allows it. Whether this will be done in practice will be decided by President Putin as the supreme commander-in-chief in each particular case," he explained.

Russia 'equalizing conditions' with US

Sergey Markov, a former adviser to President Putin, told Anadolu that Russia's nuclear doctrine has "fairly high" requirements when it comes to the use of these weapons.

"The threshold for the use of nuclear weapons in Western countries is lower than in Russia," Markov, director of the Moscow-based Russian Institute of Political Studies, told Anadolu.





“The most classic example is related to the fact that the US nuclear doctrine allows the use of nuclear weapons to protect allies, while Russia has not yet said anything in the nuclear doctrine about protecting allies.”

While both Russia and the US have said they would not use nuclear weapons first, Moscow has gone a step further by pledging to not use nuclear weapons against non-nuclear signatories to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, while there is no such provision in the US nuclear doctrine, he said.

“It turns out that the US can use nuclear weapons against non-nuclear states, but Russia cannot. Now these voluntary restrictions are going to be adjusted, and Russia is equalizing conditions with the US,” said Markov.

Political analyst Viktor Kozyrev believes the changes are a result of a situation where the West is ramping up pressure on Russia in all spheres.

“Modern challenges require a more flexible and adaptive approach to the use of nuclear weapons. Russia must be ready for an asymmetric and decisive response to any attempts by the West to cause unacceptable damage to the vital interests of the country,” Kozyrev told Anadolu.

“Expanding the possibilities of using nuclear potential is a necessary measure aimed at strengthening strategic stability and preventing the escalation of conflict,” he said.

However, he added, Russia remains interested in working closely with Türkiye and other regional players to reduce the risks of escalation.

“We are open to dialogue and ready to take into account the concerns of our partners in the field of nuclear non-proliferation,” he said.

History of Russia’s nuclear doctrine changes

Russian authorities amended the nation’s nuclear doctrine several times after the first formal document following the dissolution of the Soviet Union was adopted in 1993.

The first version was highly reliant on nuclear weapons, viewing them as a critical tool to compensate for the weakening of its conventional military forces. The doctrine allowed for the use of nuclear weapons in response to a nuclear attack or to a large-scale conventional attack.

In 2000, in response to NATO’s expansion

and new security threats, Russia’s doctrine was updated to allow for first-use of nuclear weapons in extreme situations when Russia’s sovereignty is under threat, including large-scale conventional warfare. The doctrine emphasized nuclear weapons as a deterrent.

In 2010, Russian authorities slightly shifted emphasis, stressing the role of nuclear weapons as a deterrent and a “last resort” but still allowed for their use in response to both nuclear and non-nuclear aggression that threatens Russia’s existence.

The doctrine also introduced the concept of using “de-escalatory” nuclear strikes, a tactic where nuclear weapons could be used in a limited capacity to de-escalate a conventional conflict.

The most recent changes were made in a document called Basic Principles of State Policy of the Russian Federation on Nuclear Deterrence in 2020, which designated four scenarios when Russia could use nuclear weapons – an attack with nuclear or weapons of mass destruction on Russia or its allies; a conventional attack that threatens the state’s existence; a detection of a ballistic missile attack targeting Russia; and an attack on critical government or military sites that undermine Russia’s nuclear capabilities.

SC Judge Yahya Afridi supports PTI in the reserves seats case



By Mahnoor Saleem

Supreme Court Justice Yahya Afridi stated on Monday that the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) qualifies for reserved seats as a legitimate political party. At the same time, the Sunni Ittehad Council (SIC) does not meet the constitutional requirements.

In a dissenting opinion on the Supreme Court's ruling regarding reserved seats, Justice Afridi urged the Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) to reevaluate its notification. He noted that PTI was not part of the initial court proceedings, having not submitted a formal application then.

Justice Afridi explained that PTI only sought to join the case on June 26, with Barrister Gohar expressing interest in contributing. However, PTI did not specifically ask for any declarations in their favor, leading him to emphasize the need for the ECP to reconsider the notification about reserved seats.

Additionally, he remarked on the Sunni Ittehad Council's involvement, stating that the Council does not meet the constitutional criteria for reserved seats, which resulted in the rejection of their applications. In contrast, he reaffirmed PTI's status as a legitimate

political party eligible for reserved seats, highlighting that it fulfills all requirements.

SC's detailed judgment in the reserved seat case

The Supreme Court of Pakistan released a detailed 70-page judgment on the reserved seats case on Monday, authored by Justice Mansoor Ali Shah. The court underscored that this case is of significant public importance, relying on concrete evidence rather than assumptions, particularly concerning the weight of votes from millions of citizens.

The court stated: "It is essential to resolve this critical issue—directly linked to the rights and value of voters—using concrete evidence, including (i) the candidate's written declaration and (ii) PTI's official confirmation in writing, rather than on mere assumptions or verbal statements."

Furthermore, the judgment highlighted the necessity for the Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) to ensure transparency in the electoral process to

uphold public confidence. The court remarked, "The Commission, as a constitutional body responsible for managing elections, plays a vital role in safeguarding democratic processes and has a constitutional status akin to a 'fourth branch of government.'"

The ruling also asserted that the ECP, in its quasi-judicial capacity, cannot be deemed an "aggrieved party" and therefore lacks the standing to challenge court decisions. The judgment stated: "A body performing quasi-judicial functions in disputes between rival parties cannot be classified as aggrieved if a higher court modifies its decision."

The final verdict on the reserved seats was delivered by a full bench on July 12, with the majority of eight judge's ruling in favor of awarding the seats to the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI). This decision undermined the ruling coalition's attempt to secure a two-thirds majority in the National Assembly. In response, coalition members criticized the ruling, labeling it a "reinterpretation" of the Constitution, which prompted the government to amend the Election Act shortly thereafter.



The top judge have raised questions

Chief Justice Qazi Faez Isa is seeking clarification on several aspects of an order concerning reserved seats, particularly regarding who will verify the political affiliation of elected candidates. On Saturday, he submitted nine questions to the Supreme Court registrar to address ambiguities in a recent short order related to reserved seats for women and minorities in national and provincial assemblies.

This administrative order was issued to clarify uncertainties arising from a ruling made by eight Supreme Court judges on September 14, following a petition from the Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP). The Chief Justice emphasized the need to verify the political affiliations of candidates (MPAs and MNAs) who have submitted statements as per the July 12, 2024 Supreme Court ruling, especially since the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) currently lacks a valid organizational structure.

The eight judges—Justice Syed Mansoor Ali Shah, Justice Munib Akhtar, Justice Muhammad Ali Mazhar, Justice Ayesha A Malik, Justice Athar Minallah, Justice Syed Hasan Azhar Rizvi, Justice Shahid Waheed, and Justice Irfan Saadat Khan—had directed the ECP to fully implement the July 12 judgment, warning that noncompliance could result in serious consequences.

CJP receives a response from the registrar of SC

Chief Justice of Pakistan Qazi Faez Isa has sought clarification from the Supreme Court registrar regarding an "order" issued on September 14 in response to a petition from the Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP). The ECP's petition aimed to clarify the Supreme Court's July 12 decision, which allocated additional parliamentary seats to Imran Khan's party. The eight-member bench dismissed the ECP's request, labeling it a "delaying tactic," and cautioned that the ECP's noncompliance with previous court orders could lead to serious consequences.

This order coincided with the ruling coalition's efforts to secure votes for a

critical constitutional amendment, referred to as the "constitutional package," which proposed extending the retirement age by three years, among other changes.

On September 17, the deputy registrar submitted a note to the SC registrar regarding the "clarification issued by eight judges" concerning the ECP's request. The note, dated September 14, mentioned that media reports suggested a clarification had been issued regarding the July 12 ruling.



In his letter to the registrar, CJP Isa raised several questions about the case's handling, including:

1. When were the applications filed?
2. Why were the applications not referred to the Committee established under the (Practice and Procedure) Act, 2023?
3. How were the applications scheduled for a hearing without a cause list?
4. Were notices sent to the relevant parties and the Attorney General of Pakistan?
5. In which courtroom or chamber were the applications heard, and by whom?
6. Why was no cause list issued for the announcement of the order?
7. Why the order was not officially scheduled for the announcement?
8. How was the order uploaded to the Supreme Court's website without the original file being deposited in the court's office first?
9. Who authorized the uploading of the order on the website?

PTI seeks clarification on NA speakers' letter to ECP

The Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) approached the Supreme Court of Pakistan on Saturday, seeking clarification regarding letters sent by National Assembly Speaker Ayaz Sadiq and Punjab Assembly Speaker Malik Muhammad Ahmad Khan to the Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP).

These letters addressed the issue of reserved seats in light of recent amendments to the Election Act 2017.

The petition, filed on behalf of PTI Chairman Barrister Gohar Ali Khan by lawyer Uzair Karamat Bhandari, requests that the apex court clarify that the "Elections (Second Amendment) Act, 2024" does not affect the binding nature of the Supreme Court's short order issued on July 12, 2024. PTI argues that the implementation of the court's decision should not be impeded by recent legislative changes.

Central to the case is a letter from NA Speaker Ayaz Sadiq to the ECP, in which he claimed that the Supreme Court's earlier ruling—declaring PTI eligible for reserved seats—was "incapable of implementation" due to the amendments made to the Election Act 2017. A similar letter from the Punjab Assembly Speaker also raised concerns about the impact of these amendments on reserved seat allocations.

PTI's plea emphasizes that the Supreme Court's ruling cannot be overturned or diminished by ordinary legislation. The ruling coalition, led by the Pakistan



People's Party (PPP), passed the Elections (Second Amendment) Act, 2024 in both houses of parliament on August 6, 2024, with President Asif Ali Zardari granting assent on August 9, 2024.

The amendments introduced significant changes to the Elections Act, particularly Sections 66 and 104-A, which were highlighted by NA Speaker Ayaz Sadiq. The amendment to Section 66 states that candidates who do not declare their party affiliation before receiving an election symbol will be deemed independent candidates. Additionally, Section 104-A was amended to stipulate that once an independent candidate joins a political party, their affiliation is irrevocable.

Notably, the amendment included a provision stating that these changes would apply retroactively, effective from 2017, when the Election Act 2017 was originally enacted.

PTI's petition references a clarification order issued by eight Supreme Court judges following the ECP's request for guidance on the July 12 short order, which determined that the returned candidates belonged to

PTI. The party contends that the amendments introduced by the NA and PA speakers do not accurately reflect the constitutional or legal standing and should be disregarded by the ECP.

PTI asserts that the ECP is legally bound to implement the Supreme Court's July 12 short order and should not allocate reserved seats to any other political party until the issue is resolved. The petition urges the ECP to refrain from any actions contrary to the court's original ruling.

Through this petition, PTI aims to ensure that its position regarding reserved seats remains secure and that the Supreme Court's ruling is upheld without being undermined by legislative changes or parliamentary actions.

ECP statement regarding reserved seats

In a letter to the Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP), National Assembly Speaker Ayaz Sadiq asserted that independent candidates cannot switch parties under the new law. He emphasized that, following the Supreme Court's clarification on

reserved seats, the court's July 12 ruling is now "incapable of implementation" due to amendments made to the Election Act 2017. On July 12, a 13-member full bench of the Supreme Court ruled in favor of the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI), granting the party reserved seats for women and non-Muslims in the national and provincial assemblies. Justice Mansoor Ali Shah announced the 8-5 majority decision, overturning a previous ruling by the Peshawar High Court that had upheld the ECP's denial of reserved seats to the Sunni Ittehad Council (SIC).

PTI candidates contested the February 8 general elections as independents after the Supreme Court supported the ECP's decision to revoke their electoral symbol—the bat—due to "unlawful" intra-party elections. Consequently, these candidates sought to align with the SIC to claim reserved seats, but the ECP denied their request due to late submissions.

In his letter, Sadiq referenced the Supreme Court's directive allowing independent candidates to join a political party but noted that this was overridden by the Elections (Second Amendment) Act, 2024, which





received President Asif Zardari's assent on August 7 and was published on August 9. He highlighted two key amendments:

1. Section 66 now states that candidates who do not declare their political affiliation before seeking an election symbol will be considered independents.
2. Section 104-A establishes that once an independent candidate joins a political party, their affiliation is irrevocable.

Sadiq pointed out that these amendments have retrospective effect from the passage of the 2017 Election Act.

Supreme Court orders immediate implementation of reserved seats verdict

On Saturday, the Supreme Court dismissed the Election Commission of Pakistan's (ECP) request for clarification regarding its ruling on reserved seats, calling the request "misconceived." The Court ordered the immediate implementation of its original verdict.

The Supreme Court's July 12 decision granted the opposition party, Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI), reserved seats for women and non-Muslims in both the national and provincial assemblies. This ruling was a significant blow to Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif's ruling coalition and had the potential to position PTI as the largest party in both houses of Parliament.

The Court recognized PTI as a parliamentary party, noting that out of 80 MNAs listed by the ECP as PTI candidates, 39 were indeed PTI members. The remaining 41 independents were required to submit notarized statements within 15 days confirming their affiliation with a political party.

After the verdict, the ECP agreed to implement the Court's ruling but raised concerns about verifying PTI's leadership and candidate certifications due to internal disputes and unrecognized elections. In its written order, the Supreme Court dismissed the ECP's request as a deliberate attempt to delay the implementation of the decision. The Court emphasized that the ECP's

actions were "misconceived" and constituted delaying tactics. It reinforced that PTI's leadership, as identified by the ECP, could not be questioned, as Barrister Gohar Ali Khan had already been recognized as PTI's chairman.

The Court reiterated that PTI's certifications were valid, and the ECP's continued refusal to accept them was unconstitutional and legally incorrect. It ordered the ECP to fulfill its duty to implement the Court's verdict immediately. This order comes amid ongoing legislative changes and political maneuvering, including a proposed "Constitutional Package" aimed at fixing the tenure of the Chief Justice of Pakistan and addressing other constitutional issues. The package is expected to be introduced in Parliament soon, although the government is still working to secure the necessary votes.

Legal experts anticipate that the conflict over reserved seats and the ongoing political and legal battles could significantly reshape the balance of power among the legislature, executive, and judiciary.

Pakistan's Path to Economic Recovery: The Role of the IMF's \$7 Billion Bailout Package



By Kanwal Munir

Introduction

Pakistan has long been embroiled in economic challenges, facing a myriad of structural issues that have hampered its growth potential. Over the past few years, the situation has been exacerbated by global shocks such as the COVID-19 pandemic, rising inflation due to the Ukraine war, and devastating floods in 2022. However, recent developments, particularly the approval of a \$7 billion Extended Fund Facility (EFF) by the International Monetary Fund (IMF), have instilled a renewed sense of hope for economic stability.

IMF Managing Director Kristalina Georgieva recently emphasized that Pakistan's economy is "on a sound path" thanks to the reforms implemented by the government. The extended loan program offers Pakistan both financial assistance and an opportunity to implement long-overdue reforms to steer the economy back toward sustainable growth.

In this article, we explore the implications of the IMF's bailout package, the progress Pakistan has made so far, and the challenges that still remain.

The IMF's Bailout: A Lifeline for Pakistan's Economy

On July 12, 2024, Pakistan reached a staff-level agreement with the IMF for a \$7 billion bailout package under a 37-month Extended Fund Facility (EFF). This package is aimed at providing financial support to address Pakistan's macroeconomic challenges, including improving fiscal responsibility, rebuilding foreign exchange reserves, and bolstering investor confidence.

The Executive Board's approval on September 25, 2024, marked a critical turning point for Pakistan's economic future. The first tranche of \$1 billion was immediately disbursed, and the remaining funds will follow in line with

Pakistan's adherence to reform measures outlined in the agreement.

The IMF has noted that the country has made significant strides toward macroeconomic stability, but also acknowledged that the road ahead is fraught with challenges. The approval of the loan signals the IMF's confidence in Pakistan's ability to meet its reform commitments.

Key Components of the IMF Agreement

The IMF's \$7 billion loan package is not just a financial lifeline; it is conditional upon the Pakistani government implementing a series of structural reforms. The key components of the agreement include:

1. **Broader Tax Base:** Pakistan's tax system has long been criticized for being narrow, with a disproportionate burden placed on the salaried class while large sections

of the economy, particularly the wealthy, remain outside the tax net. The IMF has emphasized the need to broaden the tax base to ensure tax fairness, and fiscal sustainability, and to meet the country's large social and development needs. The proposed tax reforms aim to bring more people into the tax net, ensuring that those who can afford to contribute do so, which will ultimately result in more revenue for essential social services.

2. **Reforming State-Owned Enterprises (SOEs):** Pakistan's state-owned enterprises, including entities in the energy sector, have long been a drain on the national economy. Inefficient management and a lack of competition have resulted in continuous losses. The IMF's program demands reforms that would enhance SOE governance, improve service provision, and make these enterprises more competitive. SOEs like Pakistan International Airlines (PIA) and Pakistan Steel Mills have consistently failed to turn a profit, requiring bailouts year after year, which places a significant burden on public finances. Reforms are designed to increase transparency and accountability in their management.

3. **Strengthening Monetary Policy:** The IMF highlighted the importance of monetary policy in controlling inflation and ensuring macroeconomic stability. The State Bank of Pakistan has implemented tight monetary measures, reducing inflation to single digits and creating a more stable foreign exchange market. This has helped to restore confidence in the country's currency and financial markets, attracting investors back into the fold. Reducing inflation also protects consumers' purchasing power, ensuring that basic necessities remain affordable.

4. **Building Climate Resilience:** Pakistan's vulnerability to climate change, as seen with the floods in 2022 that affected a third of the country, has been a significant concern. The IMF's program includes measures aimed at building climate resilience through better infrastructure investment and sustainable development initiatives. Investments in climate-smart infrastructure, such as flood defenses and sustainable agriculture, will protect against future disasters and enhance the country's long-term economic prospects by securing its agricultural and energy sectors.

5. **Fiscal Responsibility:** The government is tasked with maintaining tight fiscal policies to control public debt and ensure long-term economic sustainability. Pakistan's fiscal mismanagement has been one of the primary reasons it has had to rely on repeated IMF bailouts over the years. The IMF's fiscal recommendations include cuts to non-essential expenditures and improvements in revenue collection, which should allow the government to allocate more funds to critical areas like education, health, and social services.

Economic Reforms: Positive Results but More to Be Done

The IMF and Pakistan's government have been optimistic about the progress made so far, but they acknowledge that more work is needed to achieve sustainable growth. The reforms implemented under the 2023-24 Stand-By Arrangement (SBA) have already begun to bear fruit.

Growth Rebounds and Inflation Falls

The IMF reports that growth in Pakistan



has rebounded to 2.4% in FY24, thanks in large part to strong agricultural performance. After years of stagnation and contraction, this growth represents a positive turnaround for the economy. It shows that the IMF's measures, particularly those aimed at boosting productivity in key sectors, are starting to work.

Moreover, inflation has decreased significantly, falling to single digits after reaching alarming levels in previous years. This drop in inflation is attributed to the tight fiscal and monetary policies implemented by the State Bank of Pakistan, which has managed to stabilize the currency and reduce inflationary pressures. With inflation now under control, the purchasing power of the average Pakistani has improved, and businesses are finding it easier to plan for the future.

Reserves and Foreign Exchange Stability

Pakistan's foreign exchange reserves, which had dwindled to alarming levels, have started to recover. With a contained current account deficit and a more stable foreign exchange market, the government has been able to rebuild reserve buffers, which is crucial for maintaining financial stability and investor confidence. This stability is critical for industries that rely on

imports for raw materials and production. The increased reserves provide a cushion that can help the country manage external shocks, ensuring that Pakistan can maintain its import levels even in times of global volatility.

Monetary Easing

Given the progress made in restoring macroeconomic stability, the State Bank of Pakistan has been able to reduce its policy rate by 450 basis points since June 2024. This has provided much-needed relief to the private sector, making borrowing more affordable and stimulating investment in key industries such as manufacturing and services. Lower interest rates mean businesses can access credit more easily, which encourages expansion, job creation, and increased production capacity.

Challenges: Vulnerabilities and Structural Problems Persist

Despite the positive developments, the IMF and independent observers agree that Pakistan's vulnerabilities and structural challenges remain formidable. In particular, the IMF has highlighted three main areas of concern:

Narrow Tax Base

While the government has made progress in broadening the tax base, much work remains. Pakistan's tax system is still skewed in favor of the wealthy, with large sections of the population and economy remaining untaxed. The IMF has warned that unless significant progress is made in tax reform, Pakistan's fiscal sustainability and ability to meet its social and development spending needs will remain in jeopardy. Without a larger tax base, Pakistan will struggle to fund vital infrastructure projects and social services, leaving large portions of the population underserved.

Weak Governance and Business Environment

Pakistan's weak governance and an unfriendly business environment have hindered foreign and domestic investment. The outsized role of the state in the economy has created inefficiencies, and corruption remains a significant issue. Without a concerted effort to improve governance, increase transparency, and reduce bureaucratic red tape, Pakistan will continue to struggle to attract the level of investment needed to fuel sustained economic growth. The government's efforts to reduce corruption and streamline business regulations will play a critical role in determining





whether these reforms can deliver long-term benefits.

Inadequate Social Spending

Despite progress in stabilizing the economy, spending on critical sectors like health and education remains insufficient. Pakistan's persistent poverty, high illiteracy rates, and inadequate healthcare infrastructure are significant barriers to long-term growth. The IMF has warned that without increased investment in human capital, Pakistan risks falling further behind its peers. Social spending is critical to reducing poverty and inequality, both of which are necessary for sustainable economic growth. Improving access to quality education and healthcare will ensure that all Pakistanis have the opportunity to contribute to the economy.

The Role of the Benazir Income Support Program (BISP)

One of the IMF's conditions is to ensure that the government continues to strengthen social protection measures for the most vulnerable segments of the population. The Benazir Income Support Program (BISP), which provides direct cash transfers to low-income families, is a cornerstone of

these efforts. IMF Managing Director Kristalina Georgieva commended Pakistan's focus on collecting taxes from the wealthy while providing social assistance to the poor, noting that this has had a tangible positive impact on reducing inequality.

Expanding BISP's coverage and increasing its funding will allow the program to reach more vulnerable families. While the program currently benefits millions of households, many families are still not covered. By enhancing BISP's reach, the government can ensure that more Pakistanis are lifted out of poverty and have access to essential services, such as healthcare and education.

Trickle-Down Effect of Reforms

There is evidence to suggest that the reforms being implemented are beginning to have a trickle-down effect, benefiting Pakistan's poorer populations. However, more needs to be done to ensure that economic growth is inclusive and that the benefits of these reforms reach all segments of society. Strengthening programs like BISP and increasing public spending on health and education will be crucial to achieving this goal. Inclusive growth will not only reduce poverty but also create a more robust domestic consumer market,

which will be essential for long-term economic growth.

Conclusion: A Long Road Ahead

The IMF's \$7 billion bailout package represents a critical opportunity for Pakistan to stabilize its economy, rebuild investor confidence, and lay the groundwork for sustainable growth. The government has made commendable progress, particularly in reducing inflation, improving production, and strengthening the financial sector. However, the road to long-term economic stability is still fraught with challenges.

Structural issues such as a narrow tax base, weak governance, and inadequate social spending continue to hold the country back. The success of the IMF program will ultimately depend on Pakistan's ability to implement deep and lasting reforms that address these challenges head-on.

With consistent policy implementation, increased investment in infrastructure, and a focus on improving the business environment, Pakistan can build a more resilient and inclusive economy. While the journey will not be easy, the IMF's support and the government's commitment to reform offer a glimmer of hope for a brighter economic future.

Cybersecurity



By Mahnoor Saleem

What is cyber security?

Cybersecurity involves safeguarding systems, networks, and programs from digital threats.

These cyberattacks typically seek to access, alter, or destroy sensitive information, extort money through ransomware, or disrupt normal business operations.

Today, implementing effective cybersecurity measures is particularly challenging due to the sheer number of devices outnumbering people, along with increasingly sophisticated attackers.

A robust cybersecurity strategy requires multiple layers of protection across the computers, networks, programs, and data that need safeguarding. In an organization, a unified threat management gateway can streamline product integration and enhance critical security operations such as detection, investigation, and remediation. A successful defense against cyberattacks relies on the collaboration of people, processes, and technology.

Types of cyber security:

Malware: Malware is harmful software created to damage or gain unauthorized access to computer systems. It encompasses viruses, worms, and Trojans.

Phishing: Phishing is a social engineering tactic where cybercriminals deceive individuals into revealing sensitive information like usernames, passwords, and credit card numbers.

Ransomware: Ransomware is a type of malware that encrypts a victim's data and demands payment for the decryption key.

Denial of Service (DoS) Attacks: A DoS attack seeks to overwhelm a network or website with excessive traffic, rendering it inoperable or unavailable.

Insider Threats: Insider threats arise when an employee or contractor with legitimate access to sensitive information either intentionally or unintentionally harms the organization.

Advanced Persistent Threats (APTs): APTs are sophisticated, targeted

attacks aimed at infiltrating a network or system and remaining undetected over a prolonged period.

How to prevent cyber-attacks?

Preventing cyber-attacks requires a blend of technical, administrative, and educational strategies. Here are some of the most effective methods:

Use of Antivirus and Anti-Malware Software:

Antivirus and anti-malware programs are crucial for protecting your computer from threats like viruses, spyware, and ransomware. Keep these tools updated and regularly run scans to identify potential threats.

Regular Software Updates:

Software updates often include important security patches that address known vulnerabilities. Make sure to update all software, including your operating system, web browsers, and applications, on a regular basis.

Strong Passwords and Multi-Factor Authentication:

Implementing strong passwords and multi-factor authentication can significantly reduce the risk of unauthorized access. Use a mix of uppercase and lowercase letters, numbers, and symbols in your passwords, and enable multi-factor authentication wherever possible.

Education and Awareness:

Providing cybersecurity education and raising awareness can empower individuals and organizations to recognize potential threats and take proactive measures. Ensure that you and your employees participate in regular cybersecurity training to stay informed about the latest threats and best practices.

The scale of cyber threats:

The global cyber threat landscape is evolving rapidly, with data breaches becoming increasingly common. A report by RiskBased Security revealed that an alarming 7.9 billion records were exposed due to data breaches in just the first nine months of 2019—more than double the number from the same period in 2018. The sectors most affected include medical services, retail, and public entities, with most incidents caused by malicious actors. These industries are particularly attractive to cybercriminals due to the sensitive financial and medical information they handle.

However, any organization that uses networks can be targeted for customer data theft, corporate espionage, or other attacks. As the scale of cyber threats continues to rise, global spending on cybersecurity solutions is also increasing. Gartner predicts that cybersecurity spending will reach \$188.3 billion in 2023 and exceed \$260 billion by 2026. In response to this growing threat, governments worldwide are providing guidance to help organizations adopt effective cybersecurity practices.

Types of Cyber Threats

Cybersecurity addresses three main types of threats:

1. **Cybercrime:** This involves individuals or groups targeting systems for financial gain or to create disruption.
2. **Cyber Attacks:** These are often politically motivated efforts aimed at gathering sensitive information.
3. **Cyberterrorism:** This seeks to compromise electronic systems to instill panic or fear.



How to protect yourself against cybercrime?

- **Update Your Software and Operating System:** Regular updates ensure you have the latest security patches.
- **Use Antivirus Software:** Solutions like Kaspersky Total Security can detect and remove threats. Keep your software updated for optimal protection.
- **Create Strong Passwords:** Make sure your passwords are complex and not easily guessable.
- **Avoid Opening Email Attachments from Unknown Senders:** These attachments may contain malware.
- **Don't Click on Links from Unknown Senders or Unfamiliar Websites:** This is a common method for spreading malware.
- **Steer Clear of Unsecured WiFi Networks in Public Places:** These networks can expose you to man-in-the-middle attacks.

Challenges of cyber security:

In the digital age, cybersecurity has become a crucial concern for individuals, businesses, and governments alike. As technology and digital devices become more prevalent, the need to protect electronic systems, networks, and data from unauthorized access, theft, and damage is greater than ever. However, as technology evolves, the task of safeguarding organizations, employees, and critical assets from cyber threats presents numerous challenges. This article

will explore the hurdles faced by the cybersecurity industry and outline potential future directions to effectively address these issues.

Top 10 challenges of cyber security:

1. Cloud Attacks

Cloud computing is increasingly popular for both personal and professional use, allowing many of us to store vast amounts of data online. However, the rise of cloud services also presents significant cybersecurity challenges, particularly regarding hacking incidents. For instance, a notable cloud breach exposed private photos of celebrities, highlighting the potential risks. If such an attack were to target enterprise data, it could result in catastrophic losses for organizations.

2. IoT (Internet of Things) Attacks

Research indicates that by 2022, there will be over 11 billion IoT medical devices in

use. IoT devices—such as mobile phones, smart security systems, and computers—transmit data over networks. As their usage grows, so do the associated cybersecurity risks, making IoT security one of the biggest challenges that can lead to malicious attacks.

3. Hardware Attacks

Not all cyber threats stem from software; hardware vulnerabilities can also pose significant risks. Software updates are essential, but if they are incompatible with older hardware, this can leave devices exposed. Outdated hardware may lack the necessary protections to defend against modern cyber threats, increasing susceptibility to attacks.



4. Software or Programming Vulnerabilities

No software is entirely secure, and vulnerabilities can arise even in advanced systems. Many individuals and organizations neglect regular updates, mistakenly believing they are unnecessary. However, outdated software significantly increases exposure to cyber threats, making the protection of legacy systems a critical cybersecurity challenge.

5. Ransomware Attacks

Ransomware has emerged as a major cybersecurity threat in recent years, affecting over 80% of organizations. This type of attack locks users out of their data until a ransom is paid, which can create severe operational issues. In some cases, attackers may not release the data even after

payment, making ransomware prevention a top priority for businesses.

6. Phishing Attacks

Phishing attacks, often confused with ransomware, focus on stealing sensitive user information rather than blocking access. Hackers exploit data such as credit card numbers and login credentials for their own gain, making phishing a significant challenge in cybersecurity. These attacks can go unnoticed for long periods, leading to severe consequences for victims.

7. Cryptocurrency and Blockchain Attacks

As cryptocurrency and blockchain

technology become more prominent, they also attract a variety of cyber threats. High-tech companies dealing with these technologies face attacks such as Sybil, DDoS, and Eclipse. Organizations in this space must remain vigilant and address potential vulnerabilities to safeguard their data.

8. Insider Attacks

While many cybersecurity threats come from external sources, insider threats can also be damaging. Employees with malicious intent can leak sensitive information or sell data to competitors, leading to significant financial and reputational harm. Monitoring internal activities and controlling access based on job roles are crucial but challenging steps to mitigate these risks.

9. BYOD Policies

Many organizations adopt Bring Your

Device (BYOD) policies, allowing employees to use personal devices for work. However, this practice can increase vulnerability to cyberattacks, especially if these devices are outdated or lack proper security measures.

Organizations should consider providing secure devices to employees to minimize these risks.

10. Artificial Intelligence and Machine Learning Attacks

While artificial intelligence and machine learning offer numerous benefits, they can also be exploited for cyber threats. Hackers may use these technologies to identify high-value targets from large datasets, posing significant challenges for businesses. Organizations must remain aware of these risks and implement robust defenses.

Conclusion:

Cybersecurity involves protecting computer systems, networks, and data from cyber threats that compromise the confidentiality, integrity, and availability of information. It is crucial to safeguard the safety of individuals and organizations that rely heavily on digital technologies. Cybersecurity applies across various sectors, including healthcare, finance, smart cities, energy grids, government, education, and the military.

The cybersecurity landscape faces numerous challenges from diverse sources, including hackers, cybercriminals, state-sponsored actors, terrorists, and insider threats. Key challenges include the rise of defensive AI and machine learning technologies, sophisticated cyber-attacks, reinforcement learning-based attacks, AI-enabled malware, vulnerabilities in IoT devices, cloud security concerns, and cryptographic issues.

Looking ahead, advancements such as quantum computing (for quantum-secure encryption), biometric authentication, and enhanced AI and machine learning may help mitigate these challenges. To protect digital devices, networks, and data from cyber-attacks, individuals, businesses, and governments must continually invest in robust cybersecurity measures.

New ways to kill

How military technology is evolving



Changing warfare

In an age where conflict is no longer confined to traditional battlefields, the wars of tomorrow promise to be more terrifying than ever before. The chaos in Ukraine, the escalating tensions in the South China Sea, and the specter of cyberattacks threatening critical infrastructure have shown us that the nature of warfare is rapidly shifting. But what lies ahead is even more chilling: weapons that think for themselves, missiles too fast to be stopped, and digital assaults that can cripple nations without a single shot being fired. Imagine a world where swarms of autonomous drones darken the skies, hunting targets with lethal precision, while hypersonic missiles, invisible to current defense systems, hurtle toward cities in minutes. Behind closed doors, military powers are racing to develop these nightmare technologies, driven by an arms race that the public barely understands. We stand on the brink of a new age of warfare, one where the line between machine and human, cyber and physical, reality and nightmare, is terrifyingly blurred. The future of conflict is not just about destruction.....it's about control.

Speed is life or death

The weapons of the future will be terrifying not only in their power but also in their speed, leaving no time for defense or countermeasures. One of the most alarming developments is hypersonic missiles, missiles that can travel at speeds greater than five times the speed of sound (Mach 5). These weapons can cover thousands of miles in minutes. A missile launched from one side of the world could strike its target on the other side faster than anyone can react. These missiles are designed to evade current defense systems, making them nearly impossible to intercept. By the time they're detected, it's already too late. Entire cities or military bases could be wiped out before the warning sirens even go off. In this future, wars could be decided in a matter of minutes or hours, leaving entire countries devastated before they even have a chance to defend themselves. The terrifying speed of these weapons will create an atmosphere of constant fear and tension, where no nation feels safe, and the threat of overwhelming attack looms at all times. The old rules of warfare—where battles took days, weeks, or even months to

unfold—will be obsolete. If it feels like fiction open your eyes as the powers of the world have these monsters in their arsenal. These include:

Russian Avangard

This is a hypersonic glide vehicle (HGV) that can reach speeds up to Mach 27 and is reportedly capable of carrying nuclear warheads. It is launched atop an intercontinental ballistic missile (ICBM) and glides toward its target, making it highly maneuverable and extremely difficult to intercept with existing missile defense systems.

Russian Kinzhal

Russia's Kinzhal is an air-launched hypersonic missile that can travel at speeds up to Mach 10 and has a range of over 1,200 miles. It has been tested on MiG-31 fighter jets and is capable of both nuclear and conventional strikes. In 2022, Russia claimed to have used the Kinzhal in Ukraine, marking the first reported use of a hypersonic missile in combat.

Chinese Starry Sky-2

This is an experimental hypersonic vehicle that China has tested as a potential future weapon system. The Starry Sky-2 utilizes a "wave rider" design, which allows it to glide on shockwaves produced by its own high-speed flight, potentially enabling it to reach speeds of Mach 6 and higher.

U.S. Conventional Prompt Strike (CPS)

The CPS program is aimed at delivering a hypersonic weapon system capable of striking global targets with conventional (non-nuclear) payloads within minutes. The U.S. Navy is looking to deploy this system on its Zumwalt-class destroyers and Virginia-class submarines, giving it a versatile launch platform.

Don't get swarmed

Swarm drones are a nightmare for everyone or everything that is in its range. Each drone is small, agile, and fast, and able to outmaneuver traditional defenses. Like a swarm of locusts or killer bees, they move as a collective, communicating with each other to identify targets, change formations, and execute attacks all without a human guiding them. Controlled by artificial intelligence, these drones can learn and adapt in real-time. If one approach doesn't work, they'll quickly try another. They don't tire, they don't hesitate, and they don't fear. They can swarm a military convoy, disable power grids, or even hunt down individual soldiers or civilians in a way that feels almost personal. These swarms can be deployed anywhere: over cities, across battlefields, even inside buildings. Once they lock onto a target, they won't stop until their mission is complete. Equipped with cameras, explosives, and even weapons, each drone is like a mini-assassin. They can drop bombs, ram into vehicles, or explode on impact. And because they're small and lightweight, they can slip through defenses undetected, sneaking through windows or narrow streets to strike where you least expect it. Once the drones are unleashed, they will execute their mission with cold, mechanical precision, leaving only devastation behind. The worst part? You might not even see them coming.

Developed swarm drones include:

Turkey's Kargu-2 Loitering Munition

The Kargu-2, developed by Turkish defense company STM, is a quadcopter drone designed for kamikaze-style attacks. It has already been deployed in real-world conflicts, such as in Libya, where reports suggest that autonomous Kargu-2 drones may have been used to hunt down retreating forces without direct human oversight. This would be one of the first instances of autonomous drones being deployed in a combat scenario, marking a dangerous milestone in warfare.

U.S. Perdix Drones

The U.S. Department of Defense has been testing swarm drone systems for several years. One notable example is the Perdix drone swarm, which was tested in 2017. In this test, 103 Perdix micro-drones were released from F/A-18 Super Hornet fighter jets. These small, inexpensive drones demonstrated the ability to work together as a coordinated swarm, flying in formation and carrying out simulated missions like reconnaissance. The system is designed to overwhelm enemy defenses by sheer numbers and adaptability, with each drone acting as part of a collective brain.

Russia's Ochotnik and Uran-9

Though the Ochotnik itself is not a swarm drone, it is part of Russia's broader strategy to integrate drones with AI and autonomous systems. Russia field-tested the Uran-9, an unmanned ground vehicle capable of carrying drones to operate in a swarm-like fashion. Though the Uran-9 did not perform well in its initial deployment in Syria, the concept of combining ground vehicles with airborne drone swarms is an area of continued development for Russian forces.

Israel's Harpy and Harop Drones

Israel, a pioneer in drone technology, has developed loitering munitions like the Harpy and Harop drones, which can operate as part of a swarm. These drones

are designed to loiter over an area for extended periods, identify enemy targets using AI, and then dive down to destroy them in kamikaze-style attacks. Israel has used these drones in conflicts with Hamas and Hezbollah, though they have not been deployed in large-scale swarms yet. The concept, however, remains part of future military plans.

India's Offensive Swarm Drone Program

India has been developing its own swarm drone technology as part of its military modernization efforts. In January 2021, during Army Day, India demonstrated a swarm of 75 drones that successfully carried out simulated tasks like precision strikes and supply drops. The swarm was able to autonomously identify targets and destroy them, showcasing India's growing capability in drone warfare. India is expected to continue expanding its drone swarms for both offensive and defensive roles.

Don't get killed on the invisible battlefield

In the dim glow of your computer screen, you might feel safe and secure, but lurking in the shadows of cyberspace is a chilling reality of the true weapons. A well-coordinated cyber assault can and has critically devastated infrastructure, power grids, water supplies and hospitals, plunging cities into chaos. The malicious software spreads like a digital virus, infecting everything in its path. An unseen enemy has breached national security, and it's a race against time to regain control. The worst part? You can't see them. They operate from dark corners of the internet, hiding behind anonymous screens, making them nearly impossible to trace. The chilly reality of this is that it has happened before and it will happen again:

Stuxnet (2010)

One of the most well-known cyber-attacks, Stuxnet was a sophisticated computer worm discovered in 2010. It was designed to target Iran's nuclear program by sabotaging centrifuges at the Natanz facility. The worm was believed to be a joint effort by the United States and Israel and demonstrated the potential for cyber warfare to

cause physical damage to critical infrastructure. Stuxnet was able to manipulate industrial control systems, effectively setting back Iran's nuclear ambitions.

Russia-Georgia War (2008)

During the brief war between Russia and Georgia in 2008, Georgia experienced a series of cyber-attacks aimed at its government and media outlets. Websites were defaced, and government communications were disrupted, hindering Georgia's ability to coordinate its response. The attacks demonstrated how cyber warfare could be employed alongside traditional military tactics.

Operation Ababil (2012-2013)

In this campaign, Iranian hackers targeted U.S. financial institutions, including major banks like Bank of America and JPMorgan Chase, with Distributed Denial of Service (DDoS) attacks. These attacks disrupted online banking services, causing significant operational and financial impact. The campaign was reportedly in response to U.S. sanctions and actions against Iran and highlighted the potential for cyber-attacks to target civilian infrastructure as part of broader geopolitical conflicts.

Russia-Ukraine Conflict (2014-Present)

The conflict in Ukraine has seen extensive cyber operations from both sides. In 2015, a

cyber-attack on Ukraine's power grid resulted in widespread blackouts for hundreds of thousands of people, attributed to Russian hackers. Additionally, in 2017, the Not Petya malware attack, which initially targeted Ukrainian organizations, spread globally and caused billions in damages, showcasing the potential for cyber warfare to have far-reaching effects beyond the immediate conflict.

Israeli Cyber Attacks on Hamas and Hezbollah

Israel has conducted various cyber operations against Hamas, particularly during conflicts in Gaza. For instance, during the 2014 Gaza War, Israel launched cyber-attacks aimed at disrupting Hamas's communications and intelligence networks. These attacks included efforts to hack into Hamas's communication systems, allowing Israel to intercept messages and gain insights into their operations. Recently, Israel's cyber warfare unit, Unit 8200, was implicated in a series of deadly cyber-attacks against Hezbollah. On September 17 and 18, 2024, thousands of handheld pagers and walkie-talkies used by Hezbollah operatives exploded simultaneously across Lebanon and Syria, resulting in significant casualties, including at least 42 deaths and thousands injured. Israeli officials have refrained from officially claiming responsibility, but the attacks represent a chilling evolution in modern warfare, highlighting vulnerabilities in technology that can be exploited in ways previously unimagined. As tensions escalate in the region, this event

underscores the increasing integration of cyber capabilities in military strategies.

Conclusion

In conclusion, the evolution of modern weapons, particularly in the realm of cyber capabilities, hypersonic technology, and swarm drones, has fundamentally transformed the landscape of warfare. These advancements not only enhance the offensive and defensive capabilities of nations but also raise significant ethical, strategic, and security concerns. Cyber warfare, as demonstrated by recent events, underscores the vulnerability of both military and civilian infrastructures to digital threats, where attacks can lead to real-world chaos without traditional combat. Hypersonic weapons pose a new challenge in missile defense systems, making them difficult to intercept and creating a sense of urgency among nations to develop countermeasures. Meanwhile, the use of swarm drones showcases a shift toward autonomous and coordinated military operations, capable of overwhelming adversaries through sheer numbers and strategic deployment. As these technologies continue to develop, it becomes increasingly important for policymakers and military leaders to address the implications of their use, including the potential for escalation, collateral damage, and the need for international regulations. The future of warfare is not just about traditional combat but also about how nations navigate the complex and often dangerous terrain of advanced weaponry in a rapidly changing world.



2024's Annular Solar Eclipse: Witnessing the 'Ring of Fire' Phenomenon



By Romana Afsheen

On October 2, 2024, the sky over parts of the South Pacific Ocean, southern South America, and the South Atlantic Ocean will host an extraordinary astronomical event—a "ring of fire" solar eclipse, otherwise known as an annular solar eclipse. This phenomenon occurs when the moon, passing between the Earth and the Sun, is unable to fully block the solar disk, leaving a glowing ring around its edges. It differs from the more commonly discussed total solar eclipse, such as the one slated to occur earlier in the year across North America on April 8, 2024. While both events will captivate skywatchers, the October 2 eclipse offers a unique visual spectacle due to the incomplete coverage of the Sun.

A Primer on Solar Eclipses: Total vs. Annular

To appreciate the significance of the October 2, 2024 eclipse, it is crucial to understand the different types of solar eclipses. Solar eclipses occur when the moon moves between the Earth and the Sun, temporarily blocking the Sun's light

and casting a shadow on Earth. However, not all solar eclipses are identical, and the primary difference lies in the moon's distance from Earth and its ability to cover the Sun's disk completely.

Total Solar Eclipse: Darkness in Daylight

A total solar eclipse is the more famous of the two main types of eclipses. It happens when the moon is at the right distance from Earth to completely cover the Sun, creating a brief but striking experience where daylight turns into night. The totality—the moment when the Sun is entirely obscured—lasts only a few minutes, but during this time, the corona of the Sun, its outer atmosphere, becomes visible. The corona is a delicate, wispy halo of plasma, observable only during a total eclipse. For those lucky enough to be within the narrow path of totality, the experience is often described as otherworldly, with birds ceasing to sing and the stars becoming visible in the midday sky.

Annular Solar Eclipse: The 'Ring of Fire'

In contrast, an annular solar eclipse occurs when the moon is farther from Earth in its elliptical orbit. This means that, from our perspective, the moon appears slightly smaller in the sky and cannot fully cover the Sun's disk. Instead, the outer edges of the Sun remain visible, forming a striking ring of fire around the moon's silhouette. This glowing ring of sunlight is visible for several minutes, depending on your location within the path of annularity.

The October 2, 2024 eclipse falls into this category, and while it may not result in the dramatic drop in brightness experienced during a total eclipse, it still promises a stunning celestial display. Unlike during a total eclipse, where viewers can remove their protective glasses during totality, observers of an annular eclipse must wear solar eclipse glasses for the entire duration, as some sunlight remains visible and can cause serious eye damage if viewed without protection.

Where to View the October 2, 2024 Annular Solar Eclipse

The path of the October 2, 2024 annular solar eclipse will stretch over 8,800 miles (14,163 kilometers), primarily across remote parts of the South Pacific Ocean, southern Chile, Argentina, and the South Atlantic Ocean. This path, known as the path of annularity, is approximately 165 miles (267 kilometers) wide. Within this path, the moon will block all but the outer edges of the Sun, allowing observers to witness the full ring of fire.

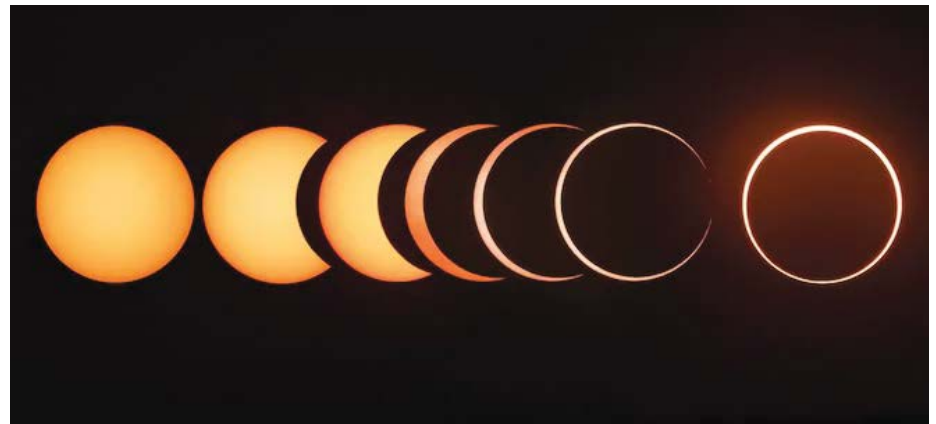
Here are some of the best locations to view the event:

Top Locations for Viewing the Annular Eclipse

1. Rapa Nui/Easter Island, Chile: Known for its mysterious Moai statues, Easter Island will be a prime location to view the annular eclipse. The ring of fire will be visible for 6 minutes and 12 seconds at 2:03 p.m. EAST (Easter Island Standard Time). Easter Island's remote location and rich cultural history make it an enticing destination for eclipse chasers, offering not only an exceptional viewing experience but also a chance to explore one of the most enigmatic places on Earth.
2. Cochrane, Chile: Situated in southern Chile's Patagonia region, the town of Cochrane will experience 5 minutes and 40 seconds of the ring of fire at 5:21 p.m. CLST (Chile Standard Time). Cochrane's proximity to stunning natural landscapes, including mountains and glaciers, could make this a picturesque location for eclipse viewing.
3. Perito Moreno National Park, Argentina: In Argentina, one of the most scenic places to view the eclipse will be Perito Moreno National Park. The park, known for its glaciers and diverse wildlife, will witness the ring of fire for 6 minutes and 17 seconds at 5:21 p.m. ART (Argentina Time). Combining the eclipse with a visit to one of South America's premier natural attractions makes this a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity.
4. Puerto Deseado, Argentina: Coastal Argentina also offers viewing opportunities, including the town of Puerto Deseado, where the eclipse will be visible for 3 minutes and 22 seconds at 5:27 p.m. ART.
5. Puerto San Julian, Argentina: In Puerto San Julian, observers will be treated to 5 minutes and 12 seconds of the ring of fire at 5:24 p.m. ART.

Partial Eclipse Visibility Beyond the Path of Annularity

While the full annular eclipse will be visible only within the narrow path of annularity, people outside this region will still be able to observe a partial solar eclipse. A partial eclipse occurs when the moon covers only part of the Sun, creating a crescent shape as



the moon's shadow moves across the solar disk. The closer you are to the path of annularity, the more substantial the partial eclipse will appear.

Some locations outside the path of annularity where the partial eclipse will be visible include:

- Auckland, New Zealand: In Auckland, the partial eclipse will begin at 6:57 a.m. NZDT on October 3, with just 0.3% of the Sun covered.
- Suva, Fiji: The Fijian capital will see 12% of the Sun obscured at 5:48 a.m. FJT on October 3.
- Honolulu, Hawaii: Hawaii will have a better view of the partial eclipse, with 47% of the Sun covered at 6:45 a.m. HST on October 2.
- La Serena, Chile: Residents of this coastal Chilean city will witness 33% of the Sun obscured at 4:23 p.m. CLST.
- Buenos Aires, Argentina: Argentina's capital city will see a partial eclipse with 42% of the Sun covered at 5:37 p.m. ART.

The Science Behind Eclipses: Why Do They Occur?

Solar eclipses occur due to the unique alignment of the Sun, Earth, and Moon. When the moon passes directly between the Earth and the Sun, its shadow falls on Earth, either partially or entirely blocking the Sun's light. The type of eclipse—whether total, annular, or partial—depends on the moon's distance from Earth at the time of alignment.

The moon orbits the Earth in an elliptical path, meaning that its distance from Earth varies throughout the month. When the moon is closer to Earth, it appears larger in the sky, making a total solar eclipse possible. However, when the moon is farther away, as in the case of an annular eclipse, it appears smaller and cannot completely cover the Sun.

An eclipse can only occur during a new moon, when the Sun and Moon are aligned in such a way that the side of the moon facing Earth is in shadow. Additionally, the Sun, Moon, and Earth must be precisely aligned along the ecliptic plane, which is why eclipses do not happen every month.

Historical and Cultural Significance of Eclipses

Throughout history, solar eclipses have been viewed with a mix of wonder, fear,

and reverence. Ancient civilizations often attributed supernatural or divine significance to eclipses, and many cultures developed elaborate myths and rituals surrounding these celestial events.

Eclipses in Ancient Cultures

- **Ancient China:** In ancient China, solar eclipses were thought to be warnings from the heavens. Chinese emperors often interpreted eclipses as omens of impending disaster or change. The Chinese word for eclipse, *shih*, means "to eat," as they believed a celestial dragon or dog was devouring the Sun. As a result, people would bang drums, shout, and make loud noises to scare away the dragon and restore the Sun.
- **The Maya Civilization:** The Maya were renowned for their advanced understanding of astronomy, and they were able to predict solar eclipses with impressive accuracy. For the Maya, eclipses were connected to the cycles of time and the gods, and they viewed these events as significant, though not always ominous.
- **The Inca Civilization:** The Inca believed that solar eclipses occurred when a jaguar was attacking and eating the Sun. To prevent this, they would make loud noises and offer sacrifices to the gods to restore balance.

Modern Eclipse Chasing: A Cultural Phenomenon

In contemporary times, solar eclipses have become major cultural events, with eclipse chasers traveling across the globe to witness these rare phenomena. The experience of watching a total or annular solar eclipse is so awe-inspiring that many enthusiasts plan vacations or expeditions specifically to coincide with an eclipse. Some even refer to themselves as "umbraphiles"—lovers of shadow—dedicating their lives to witnessing as many eclipses as possible.

Safety Tips for Viewing the Eclipse

While solar eclipses are spectacular to behold, they also present significant risks to your eyes if viewed improperly. It's critical to follow safety guidelines to avoid permanent eye damage:

- **Wear Solar Eclipse Glasses:** Ordinary sunglasses are not sufficient to protect your eyes during an eclipse. Instead, you should wear specialized solar eclipse glasses that meet ISO 12312-2 safety standards. These glasses are designed to block harmful UV and infrared light that can damage your retina.
- **Do Not Look Directly at the Sun:** Even

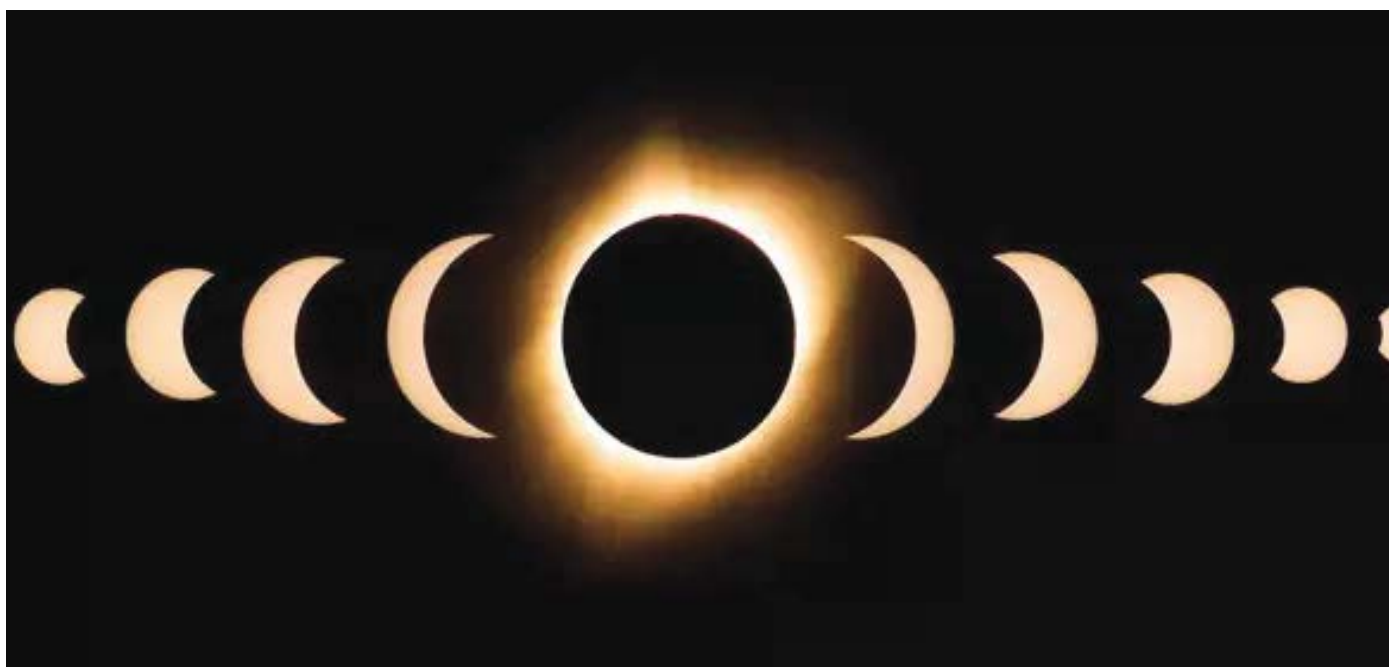
during a partial or annular eclipse, the Sun's rays can cause solar retinopathy, a condition that results in permanent damage to your vision. Always use solar eclipse glasses or indirect viewing methods, such as a pinhole projector, to safely observe the event.

- **Avoid Telescopes and Binoculars:** Unless equipped with a special solar filter, telescopes, binoculars, and cameras can intensify the Sun's rays, increasing the risk of eye damage. If you wish to photograph the eclipse, use a camera with a proper solar filter.

Conclusion: A Celestial Event to Remember

The October 2, 2024 annular solar eclipse offers a unique opportunity to witness one of nature's most mesmerizing phenomena—the ring of fire. Whether you're watching the full ring of fire from the path of annularity in Chile or Argentina or observing a partial eclipse from another part of the world, this event is sure to leave a lasting impression.

As we prepare for this celestial show, it's important to remember the scientific marvels behind solar eclipses and the shared cultural significance that has spanned human history. With the right preparations and safety measures in place, you'll be ready to experience the wonder of the 2024 solar eclipse firsthand.



California sues ExxonMobil, accusing the company of a “decades-long campaign of deception” about the recyclability of plastics



By Danish Javed

California initiated legal action against ExxonMobil on Monday, accusing the company of a “decades-long campaign of deception” about the recyclability of plastics, contributing to the global pollution crisis.

In a lawsuit filed in San Francisco, Attorney General Rob Bonta claimed ExxonMobil employed “slick marketing” to mislead consumers into believing single-use plastics could be recycled, even though most pollute the environment.

The lawsuit seeks to hold ExxonMobil accountable for its role in producing plastics, demanding the company pay for the cleanup of millions of tons of plastic waste and fund consumer education on the environmental harm caused by these products. Bonta indicated that ExxonMobil could face a bill worth billions of dollars.

“Plastic contaminates our drinking water, strangles wildlife, and ruins our landscapes,” Bonta said. “Microplastics have been found in our lungs, placental tissue, breast milk, and blood.”

“What solution does ExxonMobil offer? Plastic recycling: a farce, a lie, a deceit,” he added.

Bonta emphasized that ExxonMobil has been aware of the realities of plastic

pollution and recycling since the 1970s but continued to promote the idea that recycling could address the problem. He argued the company knows that most plastic products are not, and likely cannot be, recycled.

The lawsuit is part of a broader wave of legal claims targeting oil and gas companies for their role in exacerbating environmental crises, particularly through the widespread use of carbon-based fuels. California, alongside over 20 other states and local governments, has sought to hold these corporations accountable for contributing to pollution and global warming.

Last year, California also sued ExxonMobil and other oil giants, accusing them of misleading the public about the climate damage caused by fossil fuels.

According to the lawsuit, ExxonMobil has long known that most plastics it produces cannot be recycled due to either technological or economic limitations. Despite this, the company promoted the use of the “chasing arrows” recycling symbol, leading consumers to believe the plastics they purchased were being reprocessed, when in reality, the majority were sent to landfills.

“Only about five percent of U.S. plastic waste is recycled, and the recycling rate has never exceeded nine percent,” a press

release from California’s Department of Justice stated.

The lawsuit also addresses ExxonMobil’s recent promotion of “advanced recycling,” a term used to describe processes like heat or solvent-based technologies that can, in theory, convert some plastic waste into feedstock for new plastic production. However, the suit alleges that 92 percent of the plastic treated in this way is turned into fuel, not new plastic products.

“ExxonMobil has spent millions on marketing the illusion of advanced recycling instead of meaningfully investing in actual solutions,” Bonta said. “This so-called ‘advanced recycling’ is neither new nor advanced, and it’s not true recycling.”

In response, ExxonMobil defended its practices, arguing that California’s ineffective recycling system is to blame. The company insisted its “advanced recycling” efforts were making a difference, claiming to have processed over 60 million pounds of plastic waste into usable materials. However, environmental group The Sierra Club pointed out that ExxonMobil produces around six million tons of plastic annually, meaning the company’s recycling efforts account for just 0.5 percent of its yearly plastic output.

Future Pandemic Preparation and Response: A Comprehensive Approach



By Ayesha Shaeab

The COVID-19 pandemic has served as a wake-up call for the global community, highlighting the vulnerabilities in our healthcare systems, economies, and social structures. As we look ahead, it is crucial to develop a comprehensive strategy for pandemic preparation and response to mitigate the impact of future infectious disease outbreaks. This article delves into various aspects of pandemic preparedness, including surveillance, research and development, healthcare infrastructure, public health policies, international cooperation, and community engagement.

1. Understanding Pandemic Threats

Before delving into preparation strategies, it's essential to understand the nature of pandemic threats. Pandemics can arise from various sources, including novel viruses, bacteria, and zoonotic diseases—those transmitted from animals to humans. Factors contributing to the emergence of pandemics include:

Increased Human-Animal Interaction: Urbanization and agricultural expansion have increased human encounters

with wildlife, leading to a higher risk of zoonotic transmission.

Globalization: Enhanced travel and trade facilitate the rapid spread of pathogens across borders.

Climate Change: Altered ecosystems can create favorable conditions for disease-carrying vectors, such as mosquitoes, to thrive.

Recognizing these threats is the first step toward effective pandemic preparedness.

2. Surveillance and Early Detection

Effective surveillance systems are fundamental to pandemic preparedness. Early detection of infectious diseases can significantly reduce the spread and impact of an outbreak.

Countries should prioritize investment in integrated health information systems that consolidate data from hospitals, laboratories, and epidemiological studies. This integration enables real-time data sharing and analysis, facilitating quicker responses to emerging health threats.

Additionally, establishing sentinel surveillance sites in high-risk areas is essential for monitoring diseases in both humans and animals, allowing for the early detection of outbreaks, especially zoonotic diseases.

Moreover, advancements in genomic sequencing technology enhance our ability to identify pathogens at a molecular level, enabling effective genomic surveillance. This approach aids in tracking mutations in viruses, thereby informing vaccine development and shaping public health responses. Together, these strategies create a robust framework for improving disease surveillance and response capabilities.

3. Research and Development

Research and development (R&D) play a critical role in pandemic preparedness. Investing in R&D for vaccines, therapeutics, and diagnostics can reduce the time it takes to respond to emerging infectious diseases.

a. Vaccine Development

Rapid vaccine development is essential

for controlling pandemics. Investments in platforms like mRNA technology have shown promise, allowing for faster vaccine production. Governments and private sectors must collaborate to fund vaccine research and ensure equitable distribution during a pandemic.

b. Therapeutics

Identifying effective treatments for infectious diseases can help reduce morbidity and mortality rates. This requires sustained investment in pharmaceutical research, including repurposing existing drugs and discovering new compounds.

c. Diagnostics

Rapid and accurate diagnostic tests are crucial for early detection and isolation of infected individuals. Continuous innovation in diagnostic technologies can enhance our ability to respond to outbreaks swiftly.

4. Strengthening Healthcare Infrastructure

A resilient healthcare system is vital for managing pandemics. Investments in healthcare infrastructure should focus on several key areas:

Capacity Building

Health systems must be equipped to handle surges in patient numbers during pandemics. This includes increasing hospital bed capacity, ensuring adequate supplies of personal protective equipment (PPE), and training healthcare workers in infection control protocols.

Telemedicine

The pandemic has accelerated the adoption of telemedicine, which can play a significant role in reducing the burden on healthcare facilities. Expanding telehealth services can improve access to care, particularly in underserved areas.

Community Health Programs

Investing in community health programs can enhance the public's health literacy and preparedness. Local healthcare initiatives can empower communities to respond effectively to health threats.

5. Public Health Policies and Governance

Strong public health policies are essential for an effective pandemic response, necessitating that governments adopt evidence-based approaches that prioritize public health while considering economic implications.

Transparent communication strategies are crucial; clear messaging from health authorities can combat misinformation, build public confidence, and promote adherence to health guidelines. Additionally, establishing legal frameworks is vital for the swift implementation of emergency measures, such as quarantine, travel restrictions, and resource allocation, ensuring that these laws balance public health needs with individual rights.

Furthermore, pandemic preparedness must address health equity, as vulnerable communities often bear the brunt of outbreaks. Policies should be designed to guarantee equitable access to healthcare, vaccines, and treatments, ultimately fostering resilience in all segments of the population during health crises.

6. International Cooperation

Pandemics do not respect national borders, making international cooperation vital. Collaborative efforts can enhance global preparedness and response capabilities.

Global Health Organizations

Strengthening organizations like the World Health Organization (WHO) is essential for coordinating global responses. Increased funding and political support can enhance WHO's ability to manage pandemics effectively.

Information Sharing

Establishing platforms for real-time data sharing among countries can facilitate early detection and response to outbreaks. This collaboration can enhance understanding of disease dynamics and inform public health strategies.

Global Research Initiatives

Encouraging international research collaborations can lead to breakthroughs in

vaccine and therapeutic development. Sharing resources and knowledge can accelerate the pace of innovation.

7. Community Engagement and Public Awareness

Engaging communities in pandemic preparedness is crucial for successful response efforts, as empowering individuals and fostering public awareness significantly enhance resilience. Local health authorities should implement community training programs that educate residents on infection prevention and control measures, equipping them with the knowledge to take proactive steps during outbreaks. Additionally, establishing volunteer networks can strengthen community response capabilities; trained volunteers can assist with contact tracing, education, and support services, making a tangible difference during pandemics. Moreover, public awareness campaigns play a vital role in promoting vaccination, hygiene practices, and social distancing measures. Effective messaging can inspire community participation in preparedness efforts, ensuring that everyone is informed and ready to act when needed.

8. Addressing Mental Health Impacts

The psychological impact of pandemics is often overlooked, yet it is a critical aspect of preparedness. Addressing mental health concerns can enhance community resilience.

Mental Health Support Services

Governments should ensure the availability of mental health resources during pandemics. This includes counseling services, helplines, and community support groups.

Stigma Reduction Campaigns

Public campaigns to reduce the stigma associated with mental health can encourage individuals to seek help during crises. Raising awareness about mental health issues can foster a more supportive community environment.

9. The Role of Technology

Technological advancements can play a pivotal role in enhancing pandemic preparedness and response capabilities, offering innovative solutions to effectively manage public health crises. One of the most impactful tools is digital contact tracing. By implementing applications that track the spread of infectious diseases, health authorities can provide timely notifications to individuals who may have been exposed to a virus. These technologies not only enable quicker isolation of cases but also foster community awareness and compliance with health guidelines, thereby mitigating the spread of infection.

In addition to contact tracing, leveraging big data and advanced analytics significantly enhances surveillance and predictive modeling. By analyzing trends and patterns in health data, public health officials can make informed decisions regarding resource allocation, testing strategies, and vaccination campaigns. For example, data analytics can identify hotspots of infection and predict potential outbreaks, allowing for targeted interventions in high-risk areas. This proactive approach not only optimizes the use of limited resources but also ensures that communities receive timely support. Furthermore, integrating these technologies into existing public health frameworks can streamline communication and coordi-

nation among health agencies, fostering a more unified response. The real-time insights gained from data analytics can facilitate a rapid response to emerging threats, enabling health systems to adapt quickly to changing circumstances. Overall, the combination of digital contact tracing and data analytics empowers public health officials to respond more effectively to pandemics, enhancing overall preparedness and resilience. By embracing these technological innovations, communities can better protect public health and mitigate the impacts of future outbreaks, ultimately saving lives and reducing the burden on healthcare systems.

10. Preparing for the Next Pandemic: A Call to Action

As we reflect on the lessons learned from COVID-19, it is imperative to take proactive steps toward future pandemic preparedness. This requires a multi-faceted approach that involves collaboration among governments, international organizations, the private sector, and communities.

Commitment to Funding

Governments must prioritize funding for public health initiatives, research, and infrastructure. Sustainable investments can ensure that healthcare systems are better

equipped to handle future outbreaks.

Policy Reforms

Reforming public health policies to enhance responsiveness and equity is crucial. Policymakers must create frameworks that facilitate rapid action during emergencies while protecting individual rights.

Global Unity

The world must come together to confront the challenges posed by infectious diseases. Strengthening international cooperation and solidarity can enhance our collective ability to respond to future pandemics.

Conclusion

The COVID-19 pandemic has underscored the importance of preparedness and response strategies in mitigating the impact of infectious diseases. By investing in surveillance, research and development, healthcare infrastructure, public health policies, international cooperation, and community engagement, we can build a resilient framework to address future pandemics. As we look ahead, our collective responsibility is to ensure that we are better prepared for the next pandemic—because, in an interconnected world, the health of one is the health of all.



Risks of Excessive Screen Time for Toddlers

Screens are an integral part of modern life, excessive screen time poses significant risks to toddlers' physical and mental health. Understanding these dangers and implementing effective strategies to manage and limit screen use can help promote healthier development in young children



By Ayesha Shaeban

In today's digital age, screens are ubiquitous in daily life. Smartphones, tablets, and televisions have become integral parts of many households, offering entertainment and educational content. However, for toddlers, the use of screens poses significant risks that can impact their physical and mental health. Understanding these dangers and implementing strategies to limit screen time is crucial for ensuring healthy development in young children.

Disadvantages of Excessive Screen Time

Physical Health Issues: Prolonged screen time has been linked to various physical health problems in toddlers. The most immediate concern is the effect on vision. Staring at screens for extended periods can lead to eye strain and discomfort, potentially contributing to vision problems over time. Additionally, excessive screen time is associated with a sedentary lifestyle, which can contribute to obesity. Toddlers who spend more time in front of screens are less

likely to engage in physical activities, leading to reduced muscle development and poor motor skills.

Sleep Disruption: The blue light emitted by screens interferes with the production of melatonin, a hormone that regulates sleep. This can disrupt a toddler's sleep patterns, leading to difficulties falling asleep and poor-quality sleep. Inadequate sleep can affect mood, cognitive function, and overall health, making it harder for toddlers to concentrate and learn effectively.

Developmental Delays: Excessive screen time can negatively impact a toddler's developmental milestones. Engaging with screens often displaces time that could be spent on interactive play and learning activities that are crucial for cognitive and language development. For instance, screen time can reduce opportunities for toddlers to practice social skills and problem-solving abilities, which are typically developed through hands-on experiences and face-to-face interactions.

Behavioral Issues: There is evidence to suggest that high levels of screen time can contribute to behavioral problems in toddlers. Excessive screen use has been linked to increased aggression, reduced attention span, and difficulties in social interactions. The content of the screen media can also influence behavior, as exposure to violent or inappropriate content can negatively affect a child's emotional development and behavior.

Impact on Physical and Mental Health

Physical Health: The physical health implications of excessive screen time are significant. As mentioned, one of the primary concerns is its impact on vision. The close and extended viewing of screens can cause digital eye strain, characterized by symptoms such as dry eyes, blurred vision, and headaches. Additionally, the sedentary nature of screen use contributes to poor physical health. Toddlers who spend excessive time on screens are at a

higher risk of developing obesity due to reduced physical activity and unhealthy eating habits associated with screen time, such as snacking while watching TV.

Mental Health: The mental health effects of screen time are equally concerning. Excessive screen exposure, especially to content that is not age-appropriate, can lead to increased anxiety and fear. The rapid, ever-changing nature of screen media can overstimulate toddlers' developing brains, contributing to difficulties in maintaining attention and regulating emotions. Moreover, the lack of real-life interactions and emotional connections during screen time can impact social skills, making it harder for toddlers to develop empathy and effective communication skills.

Preventing and Managing Screen Time

To mitigate the risks associated with excessive screen time, parents play a crucial role in setting and enforcing appropriate limits. Here are several strategies parents can use to manage screen time effectively:

Set Clear Limits: Establishing clear rules about screen time is essential. The Ameri-

can Academy of Pediatrics recommends that children aged 18 months to 2 years should have no more than one hour of high-quality screen time per day. For children older than 2 years, consistent limits should be set to ensure that screen time does not interfere with sleep, physical activity, and face-to-face interactions.

Encourage Alternative Activities: Providing toddlers with alternative activities is key to reducing screen time. Engaging in physical play, reading books, and participating in interactive activities such as puzzles or arts and crafts can be beneficial. These activities not only limit screen exposure but also support the development of motor skills, cognitive abilities, and social interaction.

Model Healthy Screen Habits: Children often mimic the behavior of adults. By demonstrating healthy screen habits, such as limiting personal screen use and engaging in non-screen-based activities, parents can set a positive example for their toddlers. This modeling can help instill good habits and demonstrate the importance of balance in screen use.

Monitor Content: When screens are used, it is important for parents to monitor the

content to ensure it is age-appropriate and educational. Choosing high-quality programming and interactive apps that promote learning and development can help make screen time more beneficial. Parents should also be involved in screen activities, using them as opportunities for interaction and discussion with their child.

Create Screen-Free Zones: Designating specific areas of the home as screen-free zones can help reduce the temptation to use screens excessively. For example, keeping screens out of the bedroom and dining areas encourages healthier habits and promotes better sleep and family interaction.

In conclusion, while screens are an integral part of modern life, excessive screen time poses significant risks to toddlers' physical and mental health. Understanding these dangers and implementing effective strategies to manage and limit screen use can help promote healthier development in young children. By setting clear limits, encouraging alternative activities, modeling healthy habits, monitoring content, and creating screen-free zones, parents can support their toddlers' well-being and ensure a balanced approach to screen time.



A Melting Future: The Role of Glaciers in Global Climate Systems

By Romana Afsheen

Glaciers, the massive rivers of ice that span across mountain ranges and polar regions, are not just relics of ancient ice ages, but critical components of the Earth's climate system. As the planet heats up due to anthropogenic activities, glaciers are melting at unprecedented rates, setting off a chain reaction that affects ecosystems, sea levels, weather patterns, and human populations worldwide. This article explores the integral role glaciers play in global climate systems, the causes and consequences of their rapid decline, and the broader implications for life on Earth.

The Formation and Function of Glaciers

Glaciers are formed over millennia when snow accumulates in cold regions and gradually compresses into dense ice. These ice bodies flow slowly under the force of gravity, carving landscapes and providing fresh water to rivers and lakes. Glaciers act as natural freshwater reservoirs, storing around 69% of the planet's freshwater supply. From the towering peaks of the Himalayas to the expansive ice sheets of Greenland and Antarctica, glaciers are vital to both regional hydrology and the global water cycle.

However, the importance of glaciers extends far beyond their role in freshwater systems. Glaciers contribute to the albedo effect, which is the reflection of solar radiation by the Earth's surface. The bright white ice reflects a significant portion of sunlight, helping to regulate the planet's temperature. As glaciers shrink, this reflective surface area is reduced, and darker land or ocean surfaces absorb more heat, accelerating global warming—a phenomenon known as the ice-albedo feedback loop.

The Role of Glaciers in Climate Regulation

Glaciers are essential for regulating global climate patterns through their



impact on ocean circulation, atmospheric temperatures, and precipitation systems. One of the most profound ways glaciers influence the climate is through their interactions with ocean currents. The melting of polar ice sheets, especially in Greenland and Antarctica, releases vast quantities of freshwater into the oceans, which can disrupt global thermohaline circulation, also known as the "global conveyor belt."

This system of currents is driven by differences in water temperature and salinity, which help to transport heat around the planet. Freshwater from melting glaciers dilutes the salt content of the oceans, slowing down these currents and altering climate patterns. For example, the Gulf Stream, which brings warm water from the Gulf of Mexico up to Europe, could weaken, potentially leading to cooler temperatures in parts of Europe despite global warming.

In addition, glaciers contribute to the regulation of atmospheric temperatures. As they melt, they absorb heat from the atmosphere, slowing down the rise in air temperatures. However, as glaciers continue to shrink, this natural cooling mechanism is diminishing, leading to more rapid warming, particularly in polar regions.

Causes of Glacier Melting

The rapid melting of glaciers is primarily driven by anthropogenic climate change, caused by the emission of greenhouse gases such as carbon dioxide, methane, and nitrous oxide. Human activities, particularly the burning of fossil fuels, deforestation, and industrial agriculture, have drastically increased the concentration of these gases in the atmosphere. This leads to the trapping of heat and the warming of the planet, which in turn causes glaciers to melt.

Rising global temperatures have a particularly profound effect on glaciers in polar regions and high-altitude mountain ranges. Arctic regions are warming at twice the rate of the global average, a phenomenon known as Arctic amplification. As a result, glaciers and ice sheets in the Arctic are experiencing significant ice loss. According to the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), the Greenland Ice Sheet is losing ice at an accelerating rate, contributing to rising sea levels.

Furthermore, the increased frequency of heatwaves and higher temperatures are also causing glaciers in mountain ranges such as the Himalayas, Alps, Andes, and Rockies to retreat. Glacial

meltwater, which once sustained rivers and ecosystems during dry seasons, is now diminishing as glaciers shrink, posing threats to both biodiversity and human populations that rely on this water.

Consequences of Glacier Melting

The melting of glaciers has far-reaching consequences for global climate systems and human society. One of the most immediate and visible impacts is sea level rise. As glaciers and ice sheets melt, they contribute directly to the rising levels of the world's oceans. According to NASA, since 1880, global sea levels have risen by about 8 inches (20 centimeters), and the rate of rise has increased in recent decades. Melting glaciers in Greenland and Antarctica are the largest contributors to this rise, with consequences for coastal communities worldwide.

Higher sea levels increase the risk of coastal flooding, particularly during storms and high tides. Low-lying areas, such as small island nations in the Pacific and Indian Oceans, are particularly vulnerable. These regions face the threat of being submerged, displacing millions of people and causing the loss of homes, infrastructure, and arable land.

In addition to sea level rise, the melting of glaciers disrupts freshwater systems. Glaciers act as natural water towers, releasing meltwater during the warmer months to feed rivers and reservoirs. In many regions, such as South Asia, the Andes, and the American West, glacial meltwater provides a critical source of drinking water, irrigation, and hydroelectric power. As glaciers shrink, this source of water diminishes, exacerbating water scarcity and threatening food and energy security.

Furthermore, the retreat of glaciers has implications for global weather patterns. The influx of freshwater from melting glaciers into the oceans affects ocean currents and, in turn, atmospheric circulation. This can lead to changes in the frequency and intensity of extreme weather events such as heatwaves, storms, and droughts. For example, the weakening of the jet stream, a fast-moving air current in the Northern Hemisphere, has been

linked to the melting of Arctic ice. This weakening can cause prolonged weather patterns, such as extended heatwaves or cold spells, with severe consequences for agriculture, human health, and infrastructure.

Ecological Impacts

Glacier melting also poses significant threats to ecosystems and biodiversity. Many species, particularly in alpine and polar regions, are adapted to cold environments and depend on glaciers for their survival. As glaciers retreat, these ecosystems are altered, leading to habitat loss and changes in species distribution. For instance, cold-water fish species, such as trout and salmon, rely on glacial meltwater to regulate the temperature of rivers. As glaciers shrink and river temperatures rise, these species are forced to migrate to cooler waters or face extinction.

In polar regions, the loss of sea ice due to glacier melt has dramatic effects on marine ecosystems. Sea ice provides a habitat for species such as polar bears, seals, and penguins, as well as for microscopic algae that form the base of the marine food web. As sea ice disappears, these ecosystems are disrupted, threatening the survival of many species and the livelihoods of indigenous communities that depend on marine resources.

The Human Dimension

The human impact of glacier melting is profound. In addition to the physical threats posed by sea level rise and water scarcity, glacier retreat has social, economic, and cultural implications. In many parts of the world, glaciers are not only a source of water and energy but also hold cultural and spiritual significance. Indigenous communities in the Andes, Himalayas, and other mountain regions view glaciers as sacred entities, integral to their cultural identity and way of life. The loss of these glaciers represents not only an environmental disaster but also a cultural one.

Moreover, the economic costs of glacier melting are significant. Coastal flooding and extreme weather events cause billions of dollars in damage to infrastructure,

agriculture, and property. In regions dependent on glacial meltwater for hydroelectric power, energy shortages could lead to economic instability. In addition, the loss of glaciers impacts tourism, as many regions rely on the scenic beauty and recreational opportunities provided by glaciers to attract visitors.

Global Efforts to Address Glacier Melting

Addressing the issue of glacier melting requires urgent and coordinated global action to mitigate climate change. The Paris Agreement, adopted in 2015, is a landmark international treaty that aims to limit global warming to well below 2°C above pre-industrial levels, with efforts to limit the increase to 1.5°C. Achieving this goal will require significant reductions in greenhouse gas emissions, a transition to renewable energy sources, and the adoption of sustainable land-use practices.

In addition to mitigation efforts, adaptation strategies are necessary to cope with the consequences of glacier melting. This includes investing in resilient infrastructure, developing early warning systems for extreme weather events, and implementing water management strategies in regions dependent on glacial meltwater. Protecting vulnerable communities from the impacts of sea level rise and extreme weather will also require international cooperation and financial support.

Glaciers play a critical role in regulating the Earth's climate, and their rapid melting poses one of the greatest challenges of our time. The consequences of glacier loss are far-reaching, affecting sea levels, freshwater supplies, weather patterns, ecosystems, and human societies. While the future of glaciers may seem bleak, there is still time to take action to mitigate climate change and protect these vital ice bodies. The global community must come together to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, invest in renewable energy, and develop strategies to adapt to a rapidly changing world. Only through collective action can we hope to preserve the glaciers that have shaped our planet for millennia.

Churna Island: Pakistan's biodiversity hotspot in danger

Arabian Sea island has been designated as Pakistan's second-ever marine protected area

By Amir Latif

Environmentalists warn 'declaration alone is not enough' and must lead to swift protection measures K ARACHI, Pakistan.

In early September, Churna Island was designated as Pakistan's second-ever marine protected area in a bid to preserve its unique but eroding biodiversity. Environmentalists view the island, located in the Arabian Sea some 40 kilometers (25 miles) from the commercial hub of Karachi, as a biodiversity hotspot with many rare marine species and coral formations.

They are warning of grave dangers to the island and its biodiversity, including increasing industrial activities, marine pollution and illegal fishing. "The island's marine ecosystem and diverse wildlife are facing serious threats due to a string of anthropogenic activities, including the development of power plants, single-point mooring, an oil refinery in the immediate vicinity, and recreational activities in the area," Muhammad Moazzam Khan, a technical adviser at WWF-Pakistan, told Anadolu.

He said the island is one of Pakistan's most unique natural ecosystems, with a big coral habitat and serves as a basking and feeding ground for whales, whale sharks, mobulid rays, sunfish and various other large fish. The waters around the island are vital for thousands of fishermen from the southern Sindh and southwestern Balochistan provinces, who are also at risk of losing their livelihoods, he said.

Just a few hundred meters away from the island, there is a single-point mooring that delivers oil to a refinery, he added. "This is too risky. If there's a spill someday, it could destroy the island," said Khan.

Then there are two power plants, one of them a coal-fired facility, that give off dangerous emissions that have already started to affect the habitat, he said. In 2022, he continued, the area saw coral bleaching for the first time in its history, presumably due to temperature anomalies caused by industrial activities.

Need for strict controls and protection

Syed Khizar Sharif, an environmentalist based in Karachi, highlighted growing marine pollution, illegal fishing and unchecked tourism as the other major threats. There is a serious lack of awareness about just how dangerous illegal fishing practices and marine pollution could prove for the island, he said.

On the tourism front, Churna is a popular destination for scuba diving, snorkeling, cliff jumping, jet skiing and other such activities. Sharif pointed out that there is no sort of monitoring when it comes to tourism, which is "very alarming" and should be addressed on an



urgent basis. "The delicate ecosystem and the coral reefs need proper protection, not just a declaration," he told Anadolu.

Before Churna, the government of Balochistan declared Astola Island as Pakistan's first marine protected area in 2017. Sharifuddin Baloch, chief conservator at Balochistan's Wildlife and Forest Department, told Anadolu that the provincial government aims to hold consultations with multiple stakeholders for preservation efforts. "Provincial officials will negotiate with local and international companies to minimize the damage being caused by industrial activities around the island," he said.

International firms have to fulfill certain obligations regarding environmental protection, and the Balochistan government will push for serious measures to mitigate the hazards, he said. Baloch also cited "unmanaged" tourism as a key issue, along with a lack of monitoring of coral harvesting.

Churna has around 55 coral species, and local fishermen and tourists are both involved in illegally selling coral to private aquariums, mainly in Karachi, he said.

'Declaration alone is not enough'

Designating Churna Island as a protected site is a vital step, but it is up to authorities to ensure that it leads to concrete measures, according to Sharif.

"The declaration alone is not enough to protect the habitat. There has to be a clear vision and a meticulous approach that includes strict enforcement of rules and regulations," he said.

He cited the case of Astola, saying that "there were never any major steps taken to protect the area." A reason for optimism, said Sharif, is the geographical location of Churna, as it is much closer to Karachi than Astola.

"That should make it easier for the government agencies concerned to implement their monitoring mechanisms and take swift actions," he added.

Growing Islamophobia and Racism in the Western countries



By Harry Javed

The Bosnian Mosque in Norrköping, Sweden, was the target of a "hate crime" attack, where windows were shattered and neo-Nazi slogans were spray-painted on the walls, according to media reports. In a recent statement, the Board of Directors of the Bosnian Islamic Assembly in Norrköping and the Bosnian Islamic Society in Sweden expressed their condemnation: "With great shame and deep sadness, we denounce the disgusting attack on our mosque under construction in Norrköping, where windows were broken, and offensive messages were written on the walls."

The statement also reflected on the trauma the attack evoked: "This action brings back painful memories for many of our members who fled to Sweden during the Bosnian war as refugees." The groups appealed directly to the government, urging more robust measures to safeguard religious freedom in Sweden. "Polarisation and growing hate campaigns like this require the government to take more decisive action to ensure the security of religious communities," the statement read.

The attack was seen not just as a strike against the mosque and its community but as an assault on the core values of

respect, tolerance, and diversity that underpin Swedish society. Despite the hateful act, the two groups emphasized that it would not weaken their resolve but rather strengthen their determination to continue building the mosque and keeping it open for all residents of Norrköping.

They also expressed deep gratitude to those who offered support and solidarity during this difficult time, noting, "Your touching words and actions remind us that we are not alone in the fight against hatred and intolerance."

Hate Crimes on the Rise

The mosque has been subjected to repeated vandalism and graffiti since the launch of an expansion project. This follows a pattern of Islamophobic attacks, including an incident earlier this year in Skövde where a wild boar was thrown at a mosque.

This latest attack marks the second major hate crime against the Bosnian community's mosques in a short period, amid what the statement described as a "general increase in Islamophobic sentiment" across Sweden. In recent years, mosques across Sweden, including in Stock-

holm, have been the targets of arson and other Islamophobic attacks. The Islamic Association of Stockholm recently urged political leaders to prioritize the safety of the Muslim community, citing rising threats and asserting that anti-Muslim racism is deeply rooted in media and political discourse. The Association called on the government to take more proactive measures against hate crimes to protect the religious freedom and safety of Muslims in Sweden.

Meanwhile, Britain's wrongful detention and deportation of Caribbean migrants, known as the Windrush scandal, was the result of decades of racist immigration policies aimed at reducing the country's non-white population, according to a long-suppressed official report released on Thursday.

The scandal, which came to light in 2018, exposed the mistreatment of thousands of Caribbean migrants, damaging the reputation of former British Prime Minister Theresa May, who had overseen the crackdown on illegal immigration as head of the Home Office.

Between 1948 and 1971, hundreds of thousands of Caribbean immigrants,

including those who arrived on ships like the Empire Windrush, were invited to Britain to help address labor shortages in the aftermath of World War II. However, in 2018, the UK was forced to apologize for denying basic rights to the "Windrush generation" after immigration laws were tightened, leaving many long-term residents without legal status, and wrongly deporting dozens.

A report titled *The Historical Roots of the Windrush Scandal*, which was blocked from publication by the previous Conservative government in 2022, has now been made public by the newly elected Labour government. It reveals that between 1950 and 1981, "every single piece" of immigration and citizenship legislation was at least partially designed to limit the number of Black people living and working in Britain.

"Major immigration legislation in 1962, 1968, and 1971 was intended to reduce the proportion of non-white residents in the UK," the report states, calling the Windrush scandal an example of "deep-rooted racism."

Commissioned by the Home Office in response to a 2020 government review, the report draws on extensive research from the National Archives, oral history interviews, and discussions with Home Office staff. It does not offer recommendations but concludes that the lives of Black people and other ethnic minorities in Britain were "profoundly shaped" by the legacy of the British Empire.

In 2018, the UK government promised to compensate Caribbean immigrants affected by the scandal. The report highlights the enduring connection between race and immigration policies in Britain, noting, "Even after slavery was abolished in 1833, the belief persisted that Black people were either undeserving of, or incapable of, equal status with white people within the British Empire."

How to Overcome Islamophobia and Racism?

Overcoming Islamophobia in Western countries requires a multi-faceted approach that addresses social, political, cultural, and

educational aspects. Here are some key strategies:

1. Education and Awareness Campaigns

- **Promote understanding of Islam:** Offering educational programs in schools, workplaces, and communities to dispel myths and misconceptions about Islam can help reduce fear and prejudice.
- **Cultural exchange programs:** Encouraging dialogue between Muslim and non-Muslim communities fosters understanding and breaks down stereotypes.
- **Media literacy:** Equip people to critically assess how media portrays Muslims and challenge biased narratives that contribute to Islamophobia.

2. Legislation and Policy Changes

- **Strengthening anti-discrimination laws:** Governments should enhance laws that protect against religious discrimination and hate crimes.
- **Support for hate crime reporting:** Establishing clear pathways for victims of Islamophobic hate crimes to report incidents and receive support is crucial.
- **Political leadership:** Politicians and leaders must publicly condemn Islamophobia and avoid rhetoric that fuels fear or division.

3. Challenging Media Narratives

- **Fair representation:** Encourage the media to represent Muslims and Islam more fairly and inclusively, moving beyond stereotypes of terrorism or extremism.
- **Muslim voices in the media:** Promote diverse Muslim voices in public discourse, media, and entertainment to provide authentic perspectives.
- **Campaign against misinformation:** Combat fake news and Islamophobic conspiracy theories through fact-check-

ing initiatives and responsible journalism.

4. Interfaith and Community Dialogues

- **Building alliances:** Engage in interfaith dialogues to foster mutual understanding and unity between different religious groups. Collaboration between faith leaders can create solidarity.
- **Community initiatives:** Encourage community events that bring together people from diverse backgrounds to interact in positive settings and address misconceptions directly.

5. Support for Muslim Communities

- **Strengthen civil rights organizations:** Support groups that advocate for the rights of Muslims, ensuring they have the resources to combat Islamophobia legally and politically.
- **Empowering Muslim voices:** Encourage Muslim leaders and communities to engage in political and civic life, increasing their visibility and involvement in decision-making processes.
- **Community resilience programs:** Provide resources and support networks for Muslim communities to cope with Islamophobic incidents and strengthen community ties.

6. Public Campaigns and Social Movements

- **Promote inclusivity:** Launch public campaigns that celebrate diversity and emphasize the shared values of all citizens, regardless of faith.
- **Counter hate speech:** Social media platforms should be held accountable for addressing hate speech, ensuring they take action against Islamophobic content while promoting positive stories about Muslim contributions.

7. Educational Reform

- **Curriculum inclusivity:** Ensure that national curriculums include accurate

teachings about Islam, its history, and its contributions to global culture and science.

- **Teacher training:** Provide educators with the resources to teach about religious tolerance and combat Islamophobic attitudes in classrooms.

8. Empathy and Humanizing Efforts

- **Personal stories:** Sharing personal stories of Muslims through books, films, and public platforms helps humanize the community and break down barriers.
- **Role models and success stories:** Highlight the achievements of Muslim individuals in various fields to shift the narrative toward positivity and inclusivity.

9. Political and Diplomatic Action

- **Diplomatic engagement:** Western governments should engage with Muslim-majority countries in respectful dialogue to foster understanding and cooperation, promoting messages of peace rather than conflict.
- **Global partnerships:** Work with

international bodies like the United Nations to combat religious discrimination and promote tolerance globally.

10. Long-term Social Change

- **Address root causes of prejudice:** Combat underlying issues such as economic inequality, political alienation, and societal divisions that fuel Islamophobia.
- **Youth engagement:** Promote tolerance and inclusivity through programs aimed at young people, ensuring that the next generation grows up with fewer prejudices.

Conclusion:

Overcoming Islamophobia requires sustained effort across all levels of society, from grassroots initiatives to government action. By fostering understanding, promoting inclusivity, and taking strong action against discrimination, Western countries can build societies that respect and embrace diversity.

Risks Associated with Racism

Racism in the West poses significant risks

to individuals, communities, and societies as a whole. These risks span social, economic, political, and psychological domains, and can have both immediate and long-term consequences. Here are the key risks associated with racism in Western societies:

1. Social Fragmentation

- **Increased division and polarization:** Racism deepens societal divisions, creating tensions between different racial and ethnic groups. This can lead to social fragmentation, mistrust, and isolation between communities.
- **Erosion of community cohesion:** Racial prejudice prevents the development of inclusive and diverse communities, undermining mutual respect and shared values.
- **Violence and unrest:** Racism can escalate into hate crimes, racial violence, and even large-scale civil unrest, as seen in various historical and contemporary contexts.

2. Economic Inequality

- **Job discrimination:** Racism in hiring practices limits employment opportunities for people of color, contributing to higher unemployment rates, lower



wages, and limited career progression.

- **Wealth gap:** Persistent racism exacerbates economic inequality, with people of color often having less access to wealth-building opportunities such as homeownership, high-paying jobs, and education.
- **Lost economic potential:** Discriminatory practices limit the full participation of marginalized groups in the economy, leading to wasted human capital and reduced economic growth.

3. Mental and Physical Health Impacts

- **Psychological stress and trauma:** Racism can cause significant emotional and mental health challenges, including anxiety, depression, and feelings of hopelessness among those affected.
- **Chronic health conditions:** The stress from racial discrimination has been linked to higher rates of chronic health conditions like heart disease, hypertension, and diabetes among marginalized groups.
- **Reduced access to healthcare:** Systemic racism in healthcare can lead to unequal treatment and poorer health outcomes for racial minorities, exacerbating health disparities.

4. Erosion of Democratic Values

- **Undermining equality and justice:** Racism violates the principles of equality, fairness, and justice that are foundational to democratic societies. Discriminatory policies and practices undermine trust in institutions meant to protect these values.
- **Marginalization of minority groups:** Racist policies often exclude minorities from political representation and decision-making, weakening the democratic process.
- **Growth of extremist movements:** Racially motivated hate groups and far-right extremist movements can gain traction, threatening political stability

and democratic governance.

5. Cultural and Educational Damage

- **Cultural erasure and marginalization:** Racism can lead to the marginalization or erasure of minority cultures, languages, and histories, limiting societal exposure to diverse perspectives.
- **Educational disparities:** Racist policies in education result in unequal access to quality education for marginalized communities, creating long-term disadvantages and perpetuating cycles of poverty.

6. Loss of Global Standing and Reputation

- **International criticism:** Countries with persistent racial discrimination may face international criticism, damaging their global reputation and hindering diplomatic relationships.
- **Negative impacts on tourism and business:** Perceptions of racism can deter international tourism, investment, and business opportunities, as companies and tourists may avoid places seen as hostile to diversity.

7. Workplace Conflict and Reduced Productivity

- **Hostile work environments:** Racism in the workplace can lead to conflict, lower employee morale, and higher turnover rates. This, in turn, affects productivity and the overall performance of organizations.
- **Decreased innovation:** Racism stifles diversity in thought and experience, which is essential for creativity and innovation. A lack of diverse voices limits problem-solving and innovation in businesses and industries.

8. Legal and Judicial Inequality

- **Bias in law enforcement and the justice**

system: Racism leads to discriminatory practices in policing, prosecution, and sentencing. People of color are more likely to be stopped, arrested, and given harsher sentences than their white counterparts for similar offenses.

- **Mistrust in the justice system:** Racial discrimination erodes trust in the legal system, making it harder for minority communities to seek justice and feel protected by the law.

9. Intergenerational Trauma

- **Passing down trauma:** Racism creates psychological and emotional trauma that can be passed down through generations, perpetuating cycles of mental health issues, distrust in institutions, and social alienation.
- **Structural barriers to progress:** Long-standing racist policies create structural barriers that hinder economic, educational, and social advancement for future generations.

10. Undermining Social Progress and Innovation

- **Slow societal progress:** Racism hinders social progress by obstructing equality, justice, and inclusion. It prevents the full participation of all citizens in societal development, weakening the potential for growth and innovation.
- **Limiting diversity of thought:** Societies that fail to embrace diversity miss out on the creative solutions and ideas that come from different perspectives and backgrounds.

Conclusion:

Racism poses serious risks that affect not only the marginalized communities targeted but also the broader society. It fosters division, perpetuates inequality, undermines democratic principles, and stifles social and economic progress. Addressing racism is essential for building healthier, more inclusive, and prosperous societies in the West.

Marketing and Branding



By Mahnoor Saleem

What is marketing and branding?

Marketing involves strategically delivering the right message, at the right place and time, to turn an audience into customers. In essence, that's the core of marketing. On the other hand, branding plays a key role in shaping that message, but its focus is on creating connections and building trust. By fostering relationships with new or existing customers, branding helps cultivate a loyal customer base over time.

Although branding and marketing are often intertwined, they are distinct disciplines. It's also common to see them compared in terms of importance, but the reality is that both are crucial for a business's success and must work together for growth.

In simple terms, branding defines a company's identity, while marketing encompasses the strategies and tactics used to communicate that identity.

As a business expands, both branding and marketing become more intricate. This growth typically leads to the development of distinct strategies and tactics in each area to achieve different objectives.

In branding, these efforts are focused on reinforcing the company's story and identity. In marketing, the focus is on promoting products, engaging customers, and driving sales through various initiatives.

Importance of branding:

- Influencing Purchasing Decisions

branding shapes how consumers perceive your product or service.

A strong brand image fosters positive associations with quality, value, or a specific lifestyle, directly influencing buying choices.

62% of consumers report that a brand's values significantly impact their purchasing decisions.

- creating a Business Identity

Your brand goes beyond just the products or services you offer. It gives your business an identity that consumers can relate to and connect with on a deeper level, beyond what they're buying.

- Helping Customers Remember you

branding makes your business memo-

table. It's the face of your company, enabling consumers to recognize and differentiate your business across various platforms and channels.

- Enhancing Marketing and Advertising

Strong branding amplifies your marketing and advertising efforts. It adds recognition and credibility, making your promotional activities more impactful.

- Building Employee Pride and Support

Branding not only gives your business identity, but it also creates a positive reputation that attracts strong employees. A well-regarded brand instills pride in your workforce, helping them feel more connected to the company.

Key elements of marketing:

- Branding

For long-term and consistent success, branding is the foundational step. Start by understanding your long-term goals, identifying your organization's strengths and weaknesses, and

highlighting what makes your business unique. Use this information to build a distinctive brand identity, incorporating elements like a unique logo, carefully chosen colors, fonts, messaging, a consistent tone of voice, and clear brand values. Implementing this branding across all marketing channels helps boost recognition, build credibility, and establish trust with your target audience.

• Target Market

Next, identifying and understanding your target market is essential for effective marketing. A well-defined target market allows businesses to focus their efforts on customers who are most likely to make purchases. Begin by researching and analyzing the demographics, psychographics, and behaviors of your ideal customers. By clearly defining your target market, you can tailor your marketing strategies to meet their needs, preferences, and pain points.

• Clear Value Proposition

To stand out from competitors, develop a strong value proposition. This should answer the question: "Why should customers choose your product or service?" Clearly explain how your offering addresses specific needs, its unique benefits, and why it surpasses competing products or services.

• Multichannel Marketing Plan

A multichannel marketing strategy is a powerful way to reach a broader audience. This approach leverages various channels, such as social media, advertising, direct mail, email, and text messaging. By offering customers multiple ways to engage, you increase brand visibility and allow for interaction at different stages of their journey. A multichannel strategy also broadens your reach, ensuring that your message connects with a wider audience through diverse platforms.

Brand and marketing strategy:

Company profile templates:

This resource will help you craft the story of your company's origins and define how

you plan to position yourself in the market, making it easier to refine your brand identity and strategy.

Company Culture Code Template:

Your company's culture and brand should be closely aligned. This template is a valuable tool for your team to clarify the core elements of your unique culture, enabling you to seamlessly integrate those values into your brand.

Value Statement Templates:

These templates assist in refining the value your company delivers to customers. With over 30 pages of helpful prompts and visual aids, they guide you in sharpening your messaging to effectively communicate your offerings.

How to create a brand?

Building a brand involves these 10 key steps:

1. Identify your target audience
2. Research your competitors
3. Define your brand's purpose and positioning
4. Develop a brand personality and voice
5. Craft your brand story
6. Choose a brand name
7. Write a memorable slogan
8. Design your brand's visual identity and logo
9. Integrate your brand into every aspect of your business
10. Be open to rebranding when necessary

Marketing strategy:

The four Ps—product, price, place, and promotion—are a core "marketing mix" used to market products or services effectively. Successful marketers and businesses typically consider these four key elements when developing marketing plans and strategies to reach their target audience.

While other marketing mixes exist, the four Ps are the most common and form the foundation of a successful marketing strategy.

Connecting Branding and Marketing

A company aiming to boost sales and revenue could rely solely on standalone marketing tactics, such as SEO or paid ads. However, to truly increase awareness, engagement, and conversions, strong branding is essential.

If customers don't feel connected to your brand, they're less likely to remain loyal, resulting in lower conversion rates.

Branding is what creates a deep, lasting relationship with customers. In a competitive market, where many businesses offer similar products or services, the key differentiator is often not the product or price—it's the brand.

While a business can succeed without strong branding, its success will be far greater with it. Like any structure, a solid foundation is crucial. By understanding the difference between branding and marketing and excelling at both, you can build a powerful brand and amplify your business success through effective marketing.

Conclusion:

Branding encompasses your organization's name, logo, color palette, voice, and imagery, but it goes beyond these tangible elements. It includes the intangible feelings your customers experience when they interact with your brand—essentially, the overall experience we mentioned earlier.

This is what sets powerful brands apart from the competition. While tangible components like a stunning logo, a catchy tagline, an authentic manifesto, and a consistent brand voice are important, truly successful brands excel by keeping the bigger picture in focus.

By connecting with the heart and soul of both your target audience and your organization, you can create a brand that resonates and thrives.

Pakistani boxer Usman Wazeer knocks down Indian rival in 65 seconds



TTI Report

Pakistan's Usman Wazeer delivered a stunning knockout victory over Indian boxer Thehlak Selvam in just 65 seconds during their highly anticipated professional boxing match.

The boxing match was scheduled for six rounds and held in a Thai boxing arena was cut short early in the first round when Wazeer landed a powerful punch that floored Selvam. Struggling to get back on his feet, the Indian boxer was hit with another devastating blow, leaving him unable to continue.

Seeing Selvam unable to respond, the referee stepped in and declared Wazeer the winner by technical knockout (TKO).

This triumph marks Wazeer's 14th consecutive win in professional boxing, further cementing his status as a rising star. He has already claimed several prestigious titles, including the World Youth Title, Asian Title, and Middle East Title, bringing pride to Pakistan and Gilgit-Baltistan.

Following his victory, Wazeer took to X (formerly Twitter) to call on the prime ministers of Pakistan and India to work towards peace between the two nations, writing, "We all want

peace. Share this message and show some love."

Army's Havaladar wins medal in International Bodybuilding and Fitness Challenge Championship held in Iran

Meanwhile, Iran recently hosted the 78th International Bodybuilding and Fitness Challenge Championship, featuring athletes from 128 countries. The event kicked off with a weightlifting competition, showcasing the athletes' strength and commitment.

Representing Pakistan, Army Havaladar Maqbool Ahmad earned a bronze medal in the championship. Ahmad, a Pakistani National Champion with several major accolades to his name, displayed his exceptional skills on the international stage.

The tournament offered a platform for athletes worldwide to demonstrate their strength and physique. Ahmad's achievement further enhances his impressive career and brings pride to Pakistan in the bodybuilding arena.

This global event highlights the increasing popularity of bodybuilding and fitness competitions, with Iran

playing host to this prestigious international championship.

Meanwhile, Pakistan's Usman Wazeer delivered a stunning knockout victory over Indian boxer Thehlak Selvam in 65 seconds during their highly anticipated professional boxing match.

The boxing match was scheduled for six rounds and held in a Thai boxing arena was cut short early in the first round when Wazeer landed a powerful punch that floored Selvam. Struggling to get back on his feet, the Indian boxer was hit with another devastating blow, leaving him unable to continue.

Seeing Selvam unable to respond, the referee stepped in and declared Wazeer the winner by technical knockout (TKO).

This triumph marks Wazeer's 14th consecutive win in professional boxing, further cementing his status as a rising star. He has already claimed several prestigious titles, including the World Youth Title, Asian Title, and Middle East Title, bringing pride to Pakistan and Gilgit-Baltistan.

Celebrating Excellence: Highlights from the 9th Hum



By Kanwal Munir

Introduction

The 9th Hum Awards, one of Pakistan's most prestigious entertainment events, took place on September 28, 2024, at the renowned OVO Arena Wembley in London. The awards ceremony is not only a celebration of talent within the Pakistani entertainment industry but also an opportunity to showcase the richness of Pakistani culture on a global platform. This year's event brought together a dazzling array of stars, heartfelt performances, and memorable moments, creating an unforgettable night for everyone involved.

A Star-Studded Affair

The glitz and glam of the Hum Awards drew an impressive lineup of prominent figures from the entertainment world. The audience was treated to the sparkling presence of beloved celebrities, including acclaimed singer Atif Aslam, actresses Mahira Khan, Yumna Zaidi, and Mawra Hocane, along with actors Ahad Raza Mir, Hamza Sohail, Ramsha Khan, and Hiba Bukhari. The sheer number of individuals gracing the event emphasized the importance of the Hum Awards in celebrating excellence in Pakistani cinema and television.

As the stars arrived at the venue, the red carpet became a canvas for fashion statements. Each celebrity brought their unique style, reflecting the vibrant and diverse fashion culture of Pakistan. The red-carpet moments were filled with excitement as fans eagerly awaited glimpses of their favorite stars, capturing the event's spirit of celebration and glamour.

The Hosts of the Evening

This year's awards were hosted by the dynamic duo Ahad Raza Mir and Ramsha Khan, who have previously charmed audiences with their on-screen chemistry in the popular drama series Hum Tum. Their charismatic presence and engaging banter set the perfect tone for the evening, drawing laughter and applause from the audience. The hosts presented awards and entertained the crowd with humorous anecdotes, creating a warm and inviting atmosphere that resonated with attendees.

Their rapport was palpable, and as they shared the stage, their playful interactions provided a delightful contrast to the formal nature of the event. The audience enjoyed the light-hearted moments, reinforcing the sense of

camaraderie within the Pakistani entertainment industry. The hosts' enthusiasm and energy helped keep the momentum throughout the night.

Major Winners of the Night

The awards ceremony culminated in the celebration of remarkable talent, with several artists and productions receiving accolades for their outstanding work over the past year. Here's a detailed list of the Hum Awards 2024 winners:

Hum Awards 2024 Winners List

Best Actor Male (2023): Hamza Sohail for Fairy Tale 2

Best Actor Female (2023): Mawra Hocane for Neem

Best Director Drama Serial (2023): Shahid Shafaat for Mohabbat Ghumshuda Meri

Best Actor in a Negative Role (2022 & 2023): Syed Jibran for Neem

Most Impactful Character (2022 & 2023): Sania Saeed for Sang-e-Mah

Best Supporting Actor Male (2022 &

2023): Asif Raza Mir for Jhok Sarkar

Best Supporting Actor Female (2022 & 2023): Samiya Mumtaz for Sang-e-Mah

Best Television Debut Female: Mamya Shajaffar

Best Original Soundtrack: Sang-e-Mah

Best On-Screen Couple (2022): Ramsha Khan & Ahad Raza Mir for Hum Tum

Best On-Screen Couple (2023): Sehar Khan & Hamza Sohail for Fairy Tale 2

in guiding the narrative and ensuring that each character's arc resonated with the audience. His vision and direction have played a significant role in shaping contemporary Pakistani dramas.

The Most Impactful Character award went to Sania Saeed for her role in Sang-e-Mah, highlighting her ability to portray deep and complex characters that leave a lasting impression on viewers.

These achievements exemplify the breadth of talent within the industry, highlighting

it an unforgettable experience.

Celebrating the Winning Couples

The recognition of on-screen couples is one of the most anticipated segments of the Hum Awards. This year, Sehar Khan and Hamza Sohail won the award for Best On-Screen Couple (2023) for their remarkable chemistry in Fairy Tale 2. Their performances captivated audiences, and their on-screen connection resonated deeply with viewers, making their victory a celebrated moment of the night.

In a similar vein, Ramsha Khan and Ahad Raza Mir received the award for Best On-Screen Couple (2022) for their roles in Hum Tum. Their portrayal of the characters Neha and Adam not only won them acclaim but also made them fan favorites. The chemistry they displayed on screen translated beautifully to the stage, as they accepted their award with charm and elegance.

The moments shared between these couples' sparked discussions on social media, with fans reminiscing about previous award shows and the dynamics of celebrity relationships. The allure of on-screen romances often bleeds into real life, leading to speculation and interest in the personal lives of these stars.

The Fashion Statements

The red carpet at the Hum Awards is always a spectacle, and this year was no exception. The event provided a grand stage for celebrities to showcase their fashion choices, reflecting the latest trends and styles in the Pakistani fashion industry.

Sara Bharwana, wife of Atif Aslam, turned heads in a breathtaking blue gown featuring a sparkling cape, designed by renowned fashion designer Zuhair Murad. Her elegant look perfectly complemented Atif's stylish three-piece suit, also by the same designer. The couple's coordinated outfits not only made them one of the standout pairs of the night but also highlighted the glamour associated with the awards.

Hiba Bukhari made a stunning appearance, proudly flaunting her baby bump in a green shimmery maxi dress that accentuated her



These awards exemplify the dedication and talent of the recipients, reflecting the hard work and creativity that drive the Pakistani entertainment industry. Each winner's journey is marked by passion and perseverance, showcasing the diverse storytelling and character portrayals that resonate with audiences.

A Closer Look at the Winners

Hamza Sohail took home the award for Best Actor Male (2023) for his performance in Fairy Tale 2, a role that showcased his versatility as an actor. His ability to connect with the audience through his character's emotional depth was a key factor in his win.

Mawra Hocane awarded Best Actor Female (2023) for Neem, impressed critics and fans alike with her portrayal of complex emotions and relationships. Her performance added a layer of authenticity to the drama, making it relatable to viewers.

Shahid Shafaat, recognized as Best Director Drama Serial (2023) for Mohabbat Ghumshuda Meri, demonstrated exceptional skill

the efforts of writers, directors, and actors in creating compelling narratives that capture the essence of human experiences.

A Night of Glamor and Performances

The Hum Awards 2024 were not only about recognizing talent but also about providing a platform for exhilarating performances. Throughout the night, the audience was treated to captivating acts that showcased the rich cultural heritage of Pakistan. Hania Aamir electrified the crowd with her vibrant dance performance, embodying the spirit of celebration and joy that permeated the event.

The musical segment featured performances by some of the industry's top artists, including Atif Aslam, whose melodious voice filled the venue, enchanting the audience. His ability to connect with the crowd through his music created a memorable atmosphere, allowing fans to sing along to his hit songs. The integration of live music and dance performances added a dynamic element to the ceremony, making

natural beauty. Her confident demeanor and radiant smile resonated with the audience, demonstrating that she could embrace her pregnancy while still shining on one of the industry's biggest nights. The visual representation of beauty and strength was particularly celebrated by fans and media alike.

The Announcement of Joy

In one of the evening's most heartwarming moments, Hiba Bukhari and her husband Arez Ahmed announced their pregnancy during the ceremony. The couple, currently in London for the awards, shared their joyous news with fans through a heartfelt video on their YouTube channel. The announcement quickly gained traction on social media, with fans expressing their excitement and sending well-wishes.

The couple's decision to share this significant milestone with their fans was met with overwhelming support. In the video, Hiba revealed that they had initially planned to announce their pregnancy through an Instagram shoot. However, due to unforeseen circumstances, they chose to create a more personal and engaging YouTube video. Hiba emphasized that she wanted to complete her ongoing projects before revealing the news, showcasing her dedication to her craft.

Her appearance at the awards, proudly displaying her baby bump, added a touch of warmth to the event. Many attendees and viewers praised Hiba for her grace and

beauty, celebrating her journey into motherhood. The announcement served as a reminder of the joys and blessings that come with life changes, creating a sense of unity among fans who rallied around the couple.

Social Media Reactions

As expected, social media erupted with excitement following the event, with fans sharing their favorite moments, congratulating winners, and expressing their thoughts on various performances. The discussions surrounding the event highlighted the strong connection between celebrities and their supporters, showcasing the impact of the Hum Awards on popular culture.

Fans particularly buzzed about the chemistry between Ahad Raza Mir and Ramsha Khan, drawing comparisons to Ahad's previous award-winning moments with Sajal Aly in earlier years. The social media discourse reflected nostalgia while simultaneously celebrating the new dynamics present in the industry. This engagement not only deepened the connection between stars and their fans but also created a sense of community among viewers who shared their excitement online.

The announcement of Hiba and Arez's pregnancy was another major talking point. The couple received a flood of congratulations from fans, many expressing their joy and admiration for their openness. The unity and love expressed by fans on various social media platforms highlighted the

strong bond between celebrities and their audience, demonstrating the far-reaching impact of events like the Hum Awards.

Conclusion

The 9th Hum Awards 2024 was more than just an awards ceremony; it was a grand celebration of Pakistani culture, talent, and the entertainment industry as a whole. The event showcased the dedication and hard work of artists who continue to inspire audiences locally and internationally. With memorable performances, heartfelt announcements, and a display of glamour, this year's Hum Awards reinforced the importance of recognizing talent in the entertainment industry. As fans eagerly await the telecast of the event on Hum TV, they will surely cherish the memories created during this magnificent evening.

Looking ahead, the future of Pakistani entertainment appears bright, with emerging talents and established stars paving the way for innovative storytelling and artistic expression. The Hum Awards serve as a reminder of the vibrant talent within Pakistan and the significant impact it has on the cultural landscape.

In conclusion, the 9th Hum Awards not only celebrated excellence but also reminded everyone of the power of storytelling and performance in bridging gaps, creating connections, and uplifting spirits. The night was a testament to the resilience and creativity of the Pakistani entertainment industry, inspiring hope for an even more remarkable future.



PAKISTANI SUFI SINGER SANAM MARVI ENCHANTS AUDIENCES AT MYSTIC MUSIC FESTIVAL IN KONYA



Renowned Pakistani Sufi singer Sanam Marvi delivered a mesmerizing performance at the International Mystic Music Festival held in the historic city of Konya, captivating audiences with her soulful voice and profound connection to Sufi traditions. The festival, which celebrates rich cultural heritage of Sufism, provided the perfect backdrop for Marvi's enchanting melodies, resonating deeply with the spirit of Rumi, the most celebrated poet and mystic worldwide.

Mr. Shaiq Ahmed Bhutto, Charge d'affaires Pakistan Embassy in Türkiye, and Mr. Ercan Uslu, General Secretary Konya Municipality, appreciated the soulful performance of Sanam Marvi. In his speech, Mr. Bhutto stated that the fraternal relations between Pakistan and Türkiye go back centuries and are embedded in the common religious, cultural, linguistic and spiritual heritage. He stated that in collaboration with Konya Municipality, Pakistan Embassy will continue to hold cultural events, reflecting the shared heritage of Pakistan and Türkiye.

Singer Marvi expressed her gratitude for the opportunity to perform in such a significant location. "To sing in Konya, the city of Rumi, is a profound honour. I hope my music inspires others to explore the beauty of Sufi teachings and the universal message of love and unity", she added

Singer Marvi's performance featured a blend of traditional Sufi qawwalis and contemporary interpretations, showcasing her unique talent to bridge the past with the present. Her powerful vocals, combined with the rhythmic beats of live musicians, drew enthusiastic applause and heartfelt appreciation from the audience. Held annually, the Mystic Music Festival, is known for its commitment to promoting cultural exchange and understanding through music.







الخدمت فاؤنڈیشن پاکستان
ALKHIDMAT FOUNDATION PAKISTAN

PALESTINE

EMERGENCY APPEAL

SEND AID TO GAZA &
SAVE LIVES TODAY



Medical Aid



Shelter



Food Packs

Donate Now

alkhidmat.org/donate

MEEZAN BANK: 0214-0100861151

IBAN: PK35MEZN0002140100861151 Swift code: MEZNPCCA

 **0800 44 448**