

Wife meets Imran in jail
RAWALPINDI (INP): Chairman PTI and former prime minister Imran Khan met with his wife and sisters in Adiala Jail on Tuesday. Former first lady Bushra Bibi, sisters of the former prime minister Aleema Khan, Noreen and Dr Uzma visited Adiala Jail to meet incarcerated PTI chief. After being arrested in cipher case, the 70-year-old PTI chairman is currently in Adiala Jail.

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Nawaz chairs PML-N session
LAHORE (INP): A meeting of the PML-N has been underway at Jati Umra, attending by the party hignups with Nawaz Sharif in chair. "The meeting at Nawaz Sharif's Raiwind residence being attended by Shehbaz Sharif, Maryam Nawaz, Hamza Shehbaz, Ishaq Dar and others," party sources said. PML-N's session considering over political situation, upcoming general elections and other matters on the agenda.

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No perpetual ban: Caretaker PM

— says as Pakistan moves to expel undocumented Afghans

F.P. Report

KARACHI: Prime Minister Anwaar-ul-Haq Kakar said on Tuesday there was no "perpetual ban" on the return to Pakistan of undocumented Afghans ordered to leave the country by Nov. 1 or face forcible expulsion. Pakistan on Oct. 3 gave all illegal migrants in the country around four weeks to leave. Although the government insists the expulsion order does not specifically target Afghans, they form the largest number of undocumented foreigners in the South Asian nation. Pakistan is home to more than 4 million Afghan migrants and refugees, about 1.7 million of them undocumented, according to the government. Many of them have lived in Pakistan their entire lives and never visited Afghanistan. The sudden expulsion threat came after suicide bombings this year that the government said involved Afghans, though without providing evidence. Islamabad has also blamed Afghans for smuggling and other militant attacks as well as petty crimes and says Afghan nationals were found to be involved in attacks against government and the army, including 14 of this year's 24 suicide bombings. The government says those with Proof of Registration (PoR) and Afghan Citizenship Cards (ACC) will not be expelled by the Nov. 1 deadline. "We haven't placed a perpetual ban on them [illegal foreigners], preventing them from returning to Pakistan," Kakar told media on Tuesday. "They should go back to their home countries, obtain travel documents from their states, and acquire visas from our missions, whether for education or business purposes."

"We want a regulated movement, we are against unregulated movement," the PM added, saying immigrants who had legal properties and lawful businesses in Pakistan could claim them through civil courts. "If anyone has such claims, we will protect and facilitate their entitlement under the law. We are not an oppres-

sive state that seizes anyone's property or confiscates their valuables." Sarfaraz Bugti, the federal interior minister, said the government would launch a crackdown against "illegal aliens" from Nov. 2. "From November 2 onwards, they will be sent to our holding centers. We will keep them at the holding centers for two to three days. We will try to provide them with food and health facilities and after that we will deport them through the border of our choice which will be in keeping with our security [requirements] and convenience," Bugti said. "It will be the state's decision whether it wants to send them through Chaman or Torkham or Nushki [border crossings] or the Iranian border, that will be our choice."

Jan Achakzai, information minister in southwestern Balochistan which borders Afghanistan, said a crackdown would be launched in the province from tomorrow, Wednesday, against illegal immigrants who did not leave by the Nov. 1 deadline. "Cases against illegal immigrants will be registered under the Foreign Act. The properties of illegal immigrants will be sealed from tomorrow," Achakzai said at a press conference. According to the UN Refugee Agency (UNHCR), Pakistan is hosting 1.33 million registered Afghan refugees and 840,000 Afghan nationals who possess Afghan Citizen Cards (ACC). Pakistan says these two groups are not being sent back as per its international obligations.

Additionally, the UN agency reports 775,000 undocumented Afghans, 146,240 unregistered members of registered families, and 600,000 new arrivals after the Taliban takeover of Kabul in 2021 are currently living in Pakistan. The government of Pakistan says undocumented illegal Afghan nationals number 1.7 million. Officials in the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and Balochistan provinces, which border Afghanistan, say 130,000 people have voluntarily returned to Afghanistan since the

Nov. 1 deadline was announced earlier this month.

Two holding centers have been set up in Balochistan and three in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa to accommodate immigrants before their deportation, officials in the two provinces said. Speaking to Arab News, Brig. (R) Harris Nawaz, home minister of the southern Sindh province, said four holding centers had been setup in Jacobabad, Nawab Shah, Hyderabad and Karachi, where shelter, food and health facilities would be provided. "They [Afghans] will be taken to camps, verified, and then deported," Nawaz said, adding that illegal immigrants would not be arrested and no cases would be registered against them.

On Tuesday, Western embassies and the United Nations urged Pakistan to incorporate into its plan to deport hundreds of thousands of undocumented migrants a way to identify and protect Afghans who face the risk of persecution at home. "We are asking the government to come up with a comprehensive system and ... mechanism to manage and register people at immediate risk of persecution if forced to return," Qaiser Khan Afridi, the spokesman for the UN refugee agency in Pakistan, told Reuters. "Because they cannot return, they can't go back to Afghanistan because their freedom or their life might be at risk."

US envoy to Pakistan Donald Blome also met Pakistani Foreign Minister Jalil Abbas Jilani on Tuesday, the ambassador's office said, and discussed, among other issues, the "safe and efficient processing of Afghan citizens eligible for relocation or resettlement in the United States." "The [US] Ambassador highlighted the two countries' mutual interest in ensuring the safety and security of refugees and asylum seekers, and the importance of putting in place appropriate screening mechanisms so that individuals with legitimate claims of credible fear are not placed in harm's way."



LAHORE: Caretaker Prime Minister Anwaar-ul-Haq addressing the first convocation of the Institute for Art and Culture.

‘US to support defense of its partners’

WASHINGTON (Reuters): US national security adviser Jake Sullivan on Monday met with Saudi Arabian Defense Minister Prince Khalid bin Salman Al Saud and confirmed President Joe Biden's commitment to support the defense of US partners against threats from state and non-state actors, including those backed by Iran, the White House said.

The two men also affirmed the importance of deterring any expansion of the Israel-Hamas conflict, the White House said. As the situation continues to escalate, with Israel intensifying its assault in Gaza, Saudi Arabia has recently condemned the operation, writing in a statement, "Any ground operation by Israel would threaten the lives of Palestinian civilians and result in inhuman dangers." With uncertainty prevailing in the region, many are left wondering about the possible developments ahead. "I'm not going to predict what the future brings, other than to say that if we are attacked, we will respond," Sullivan said.

Two soldiers embraced Shahadat

F.P. Report

RAWALPINDI: fire exchange took place between security forces and terrorists in general area Khoro, Awaran District of Balochistan.

Own troops effectively engaged the terrorists' location and resultantly two terrorists were sent to hell, while two terrorists got injured. However, during intense exchange of fire, Naib Subedar Asif Irfan (age 37 years, resident of District Okara) and Sepoy Irfan Ali (age 22 years, resident of District Sargodha) having fought gallantly, embraced Shahadat. Sanitization of the area is being carried out to eliminate any terrorists found in the area. Security Forces are determined to eliminate the menace of terrorism and such sacrifices of our brave soldiers further strengthen our resolve.

Govt okays major gas price hike

F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: The interim government on Tuesday gave approval to the hike in gas prices. As per the Petroleum Division, the hike in the gas prices was proposed by the OGRA and the rise would be implemented from Nov 1.

The statement said around 57 percent of the consumers would be dealt as the protected category of the consumers for which the prices were not increased and they would pay Rs400 as the fixed prices of the gas. However, the consumers using above 0.25 to 1.5 hectare cubic meters would be paying Rs1,000 per month and the consumers of two to four HC and above would be paying a fixed charge of Rs2,000 per month.

US does not support ceasefire in Gaza

Jalil Afridi

WASHINGTON DC: The US State Department spokesperson, Matthew Miller disagreed with idea of ceasefire in Gaza.

When asked by *The Frontier Post* that 120 countries recently voted at the United Nations on resolution of holding ceasefire in Gaza and if the United States thought the same, Matthew Miller replied by stating that "no we do not think it's a good idea because Israel has the right, obligation and responsibility to defend itself."

Matthew Miller also said that any country if it was attacked and knew that a terrorist organization was sitting across its border to launch new attacks would do the same what Israel is doing.

A journalist from Al Quds news media network asked Matthew Miller about United States not acknowledging the authenticity of the number of children killed since Israel started its attacks on Gaza. The said journalist informed Miller that Israel has the data of every person in Gaza and that the number of children killed in Gaza can be confirmed from Ministry of Health in Gaza. Miller replied by saying that "every one of them is a tragedy." It is important to mention here that according to reports from Gaza, so far more than three thousand children have been killed.

It is pertinent to mention here that both Matthew Miller at US State Department and John Kirby at the White House started their opening remarks at the



briefings by talking about the flow of humanitarian aid to Gaza. Both the officials highlighted that more than fourth five truck loads of aid entered Gaza and efforts are underway to increase this number.

At the White House, Press Secretary Karine Pierre spoke about rising anti-Semitism and anti Islamophobia in America and said that "we can't stand silent" and assured that the Biden administration will not tolerate such phobias.

Israeli air strike martyred 50 at Gaza refugee camp

Houthis launched ballistic missiles, drones at Israel

DUBAI: Yemen's Houthi rebels claim they launched a "large number" of ballistic missiles and drones towards Israel and warned of more attacks to come. Israel earlier said it destroyed an unidentified "aerial target" over the Red Sea on Tuesday morning. "There was no threat or risk to civilians," the Israeli military said.

The incident triggered air raid sirens in the popular Red Sea tourist resort of Eilat and sent residents running for shelter. Separately, the Israeli military said that it used the "Arrow" aerial defence system for the first time since the October 7 outbreak of the war with Hamas to intercept a surface-to-surface missile in the Red Sea fired towards its territory. Yahya Saree, a spokesperson for the Houthi's military, said the operation was the third targeting Israel and threatened to carry out more strikes "until the Israeli aggression stops."

Earlier, a senior Houthi official told the AFP news agency that the Iran-backed Yemeni group had sent drones towards southern Israel. "These drones belong to the state of Yemen," Abdelaziz bin Habtour, prime minister of the Houthi government, said. The incidents come as regional tensions rise amid the Israel-Hamas war in Gaza. "This is a concern for Israel because it is already engaged in conflict with the Iran-backed Hezbollah on its northern front," Al Jazeera's Sara Khairat said, reporting from occupied East Jerusalem.

On October 27, drones caused explosions in the Egyptian Red Sea towns of Taba and Nuweiba, near the Israeli border. Israel's Ministry of Foreign Affairs said Iran-backed Houthis launched drones and missiles "with the intention of harming Israel". The incidents came two days after Hamas, the group running the Gaza Strip, said it launched a rocket towards Eilat. The Israeli military said the rocket landed in an open field. Also last week, the US military said a navy warship in the northern Red Sea intercepted projectiles launched by Houthis potentially towards Israel. Regional tensions have been on the rise after Hamas launched a surprise attack inside Israel on October 7. Since then, Hezbollah has been involved in increasingly heavy exchanges of cross-border fire with Israel. Iran denies having any role in the Hamas attack. Meanwhile, Israel in recent days has expanded its air and ground attacks on the Gaza Strip, which has been under relentless bombardment for more than three weeks. Officials in Gaza say more than 8,000 Palestinians have been killed in Israel's air attacks, while in Israel, the death toll has topped 1,400, according to Israeli authorities.

— Aljazeera

military statement said. Militants responded with anti-tank missiles and machine gun fire, it said. A number of militants were killed, it said, without specifying a number. Hamas said in a statement its fighters were engaging in fierce battles with Israeli ground forces, who were taking losses. "The occupation is pushing its soldiers into proud Gaza, which will always be the cemetery of invaders," Hamas said.

Israeli forces also bombed the narrow coastal enclave overnight in air, sea and ground attacks, witnesses said on Tuesday. On Monday, Israeli forces targeted Gaza's main north-south road and attacked Gaza City, its northern hub, from two directions. Gaza health authorities say that 8,525 people, including 3,542 children, have been killed in Israeli attacks since Oct. 7.

Govt decides not to increase petrol price

F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: Providing relief to the inflation-hit people a day after dropping a 'gas bomb', the caretaker government Tuesday maintained the price of petrol at Rs283.38.

According to a notification from the Ministry of Finance, the price of petrol is Rs283.38 per litre and Rs303.18 per litre for HSD. The rates will remain in place till November 15.

Sympathies of nation with Palestinians, says Solangi

F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: Caretaker Minister for Information and Broadcasting Murtaza Solangi has said that sympathies of entire Pakistan nation were with their Palestinian brothers and sisters and stand united on the issue.

While taking part in debate on Palestine issue in the Senate on Tuesday, he said: "There is no division on this (Palestine) issue. From Senator Mushtaq Ahmed to Senator Mushahid Hussain Sayed, we all are united. Let me reiterate here that the winding up speech will be made by the foreign minister or any other minister assigned by the prime minister."

Murtaza Solangi said the Upper House of Parliament, with its honourable members including Senator Raza Rabbani who had drafted the landmark 18th Constitutional Amendment, had raised its voice in favour of Palestine and its people. Since the establishment of Pakistan, its every head of state and government – from Quaid-e-Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah to the incumbent Caretaker Prime Minister Anwaar-ul-Haq Kakar – had expressed solidarity with the Palestinian people, he added.

Court commences Imran's trial under Official Secrets Act

F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: A special court formed under the Official Secrets Act on Tuesday commenced the trial of Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) Chairman Imran Khan and Vice-Chairman Shah Mahmood Qureshi.

The duo was indicted in the cipher case on October 23 — despite filing a petition under CrPC 265-D to stop the indictment — after the Federal Investigation Agency (FIA) booked them for violating the secret law by misusing and misplacing the diplomatic cable based on conversations between Pakistan's envoy to Washington and the US diplomat.

The FIA, in its challan, stated that the former prime minister and the vice-chairman were found guilty in the matter and requested the court to conduct their trial and sentence them in the case. The investigation agency

also maintained that Khan had a copy of the cipher but he did not return it.

The controversy first emerged on March 27, 2022, when Imran, while addressing a public rally, waved a letter before the crowd, claiming that it was a cipher from a foreign nation that had conspired with his political rivals to have the PTI government overthrown. During today's hearing, witnesses, of whom nine were present in the court, were unable to record their statements in the cipher case, sources informed media.

Meanwhile, PTI's legal team submitted four applications including the one seeking the provision of the witnesses' names before each hearing. Two applications were filed by Qureshi, one seeking adjournment of the case without a hearing, and another seeking adjournment based on a bail application filed in the

Islamabad High Court (IHC).

Judge Zulqarnain, in response to PTI's application for the provision of the complete challan, allowed the defence team to view challan documents while barring them from taking pictures or making copies.

The case has been adjourned till November 7. The court will formally record the witnesses' statements at the next hearing.

Last week, the PTI chairman's plea seeking a halt in proceedings against him in the cipher case was rejected by the IHC. IHC Chief Justice Aamer Farooq directed the special court to ensure a "fair trial" against the former prime minister. Separately, the IHC also rejected the former prime minister's pleas seeking bail and cancellation of the first information report (FIR) in the cipher case on Friday.

Official must be respectful with undocumented immigrants: Bugti

F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: Caretaker Interior Minister Sarfraz Bugti on Tuesday directed the officials and agencies to be respectful with undocumented immigrants while detaining them in holding centers after the deadline.

Interacting with media in Islamabad, he said that manhandling of immigrants including Afghans while transporting them to the holding centers was not allowed and strict action would be taken against officials found involved. Sarfraz Bugti said that the ministry had established a complaint cell with hotline number to immediately address the complaints of mistreatment or manhandling with any illegal immigrant.

"We have given clear instructions to all agencies and officials to treat women, children and elders

with special care and respect" the minister said, adding that the arrangements for food and medical facilities were made in the holding centers. The deadline for undocumented immigrants including Afghan refugees for voluntary return ended on October 31 after which the government's crackdown against them had started in full swing, he added.

The National Database and Registration Authority (NADRA) has collected entire data of undocumented immigrants in the country through geo-fencing, the minister said, adding that those who still tried to escape government's amnesty would be caught from their hideouts. Bugti also warned of strict action against locals helping the immigrants and providing them shelter. "Any Pakistani who will rent his house to illegal immigrant

will be considered as partner in crime and treated equally according to the law," he added.

The minister said that it was a national duty of Pakistani citizens to inform the government about illegal immigrants and their residences. "Now there are few hours remaining, whoever does not leave Pakistan by the specified time and does not have a valid visa and passport, he will be deported," he said. He said that respect for women and elders was being considered during the evacuation, adding children were being treated with compassion, around two lakh illegal people had gone back during last two months. The minister said that illegal residents could go back to their countries to get legal documents and come back here to do business and meetings with friends.



Police & PSCA arrest 3-member dacoit gang

LAHORE (APP): In a significant collaborative effort between Lahore Police and the Punjab Safe Cities Authority (PSCA), a notorious three-member dacoit gang arrested from Johar Town on Tuesday.

Based on intelligence provided by the vigilant Safe City Team, Johar Town Police swiftly apprehended the gang.

The operation showcased the remarkable effectiveness of the Safe Cities cameras in tracking down the suspects, who were involved in a series of criminal activities, causing distress to the citizens of Lahore. Upon identification, the police were immediately dispatched to apprehend the suspects, who were subsequently taken into custody and charged in accordance with the law.

SP Babar Javaid, leading the operation, emphasized the ongoing commitment to using Safe City cameras as a formidable tool to combat such crimes, reassuring citizens that efforts to maintain safety and security are unwavering. Citizens were encouraged to remain vigilant and report any suspicious individuals or activities by contacting the emergency helpline at 15.

LESCO fires meter reader

LAHORE (APP): The Lahore Electric Supply Company (LESCO) has fired a meter reader after he was proved guilty of conniving in power theft in Gharhi Shahu area of GOR Sub-Division Lahore.

The company's spokesman told media here Tuesday that a few days back, meter reader Adnan Hameed was suspended after founding two consumers, Muhammad Shahzad and Muhammad Asim, stealing electricity by tampering with their power meters allegedly in connivance with the meter reader, and both have caused revenue losses of Rs 800,000 and Rs 1.5 million respectively to the LESCO. Besides taking legal action against both power pilferers, the company had suspended Adnan Hameed and initiated a departmental inquiry against him. After being proved guilty in the inquiry, GOR Sub-Division Assistant Manager (Operations) Usman Qadeer issued dismissal orders for the meter reader.

Large quantity of smuggled betel nuts seized

KARACHI (APP): The district Keamari Police on Tuesday seized a large quantity of smuggled betel nuts and arrested an accused. According to a spokesman for district Keamari Police, the Mochko police station of district Keamari intercepted a passenger coach and during its checking recovered 315kg betel nuts from the hidden cavities of the bus.

The seized betel nuts were being transported to Karachi. Police arrested the involved bus driver and also took the bus into custody. Further legal proceedings were underway.

Siraj calls upon Election Commission to issue schedule of general elections

LAHORE (INP): Ameer Jamaat-e-Islami (JI) Sirajul Haq has called upon the Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) to issue a schedule for the upcoming national vote. Addressing a press conference at Mansoorah on Tuesday, he emphasized the need for a level playing field for all political parties in the election.

Sirajul Haq expressed concerns that certain powerful entities had backed a particular political party in the 2018 general election, and he cautioned against a repeat of such support for some other party or parties. He asserted that allowing such impressions to persist could taint the credibility of the electoral process. He emphasized that it is the constitutional duty of both the Election Commission and the caretaker government to ensure a transparent and fair election. He emphasized that any pre-poll rigging would bring further instability. Earlier, during the central leadership meeting, the JI chief pledged to continue supporting the people of Palestine. During the press conference, he announced that pro-Palestine Gaza Marches would be held in Sialkot and Lahore on November 12 and November 19, respectively.

He also condemned the recent increase in gas prices, stating that the inflation had severely affected the lives of the people. He criticized the caretaker government for raising gas and electricity tariffs, accusing them of complying with the directives of the IMF. He lamented that the caretakers seemed

more interested in other state affairs than in ensuring the smooth conduct of the elections. He emphasized the crucial role of the caretaker government in providing full cooperation to the Election Commission to guarantee a peaceful and transparent electoral process.

Expressing gratitude for the steadfast support of the people for the Palestinian cause, Siraj criticized the current rulers for their failure to fulfill the nation's expectations. He also lamented the inaction of the leaders of the entire Islamic community. He stressed that mere statements would not resolve the issue of Palestine, emphasizing the need for practical steps from the Islamic world to alleviate the suffering of the people in Gaza, who had been enduring Israeli atrocities for more than 20 days. He highlighted that more than 8,000 individuals, including a significant number of children and women, had lost their lives in the Israeli bombings targeting Gaza's hospitals, schools, and homes.

The JI chief mentioned the historic march led by JI in Islamabad at Embassy Road, despite the authorities' attempts to suppress it through the torture and arrest of JI workers, driven by their fear of the United States. He urged an immediate ceasefire in Gaza and demanded that Washington withdraw its support for the aggressor.

Siraj while highlighting the active role of the JI charity, al-Khidmat Foundation, in collecting aid for Gaza, appealed to the public to generously support their efforts.

90% of strokes can be avoided through preventive measures

ISLAMABAD (APP): Caretaker Federal Minister for Health Dr. Nadeem Jan on Tuesday said that 90 percent of strokes can be avoided by taking preventive measures.

He was addressing the event held in connection with World Stroke Day at the Ministry of National Health Services in collaboration with the World Stroke Society. The minister said, "We should ensure coordinated measures to promote public awareness."

He added the Ministry of Health will ensure all necessary steps in this regard.

The minister said measures will be taken at primary and secondary levels for prevention of stroke.

Paramedical staff and doctors will also

be trained in various hospitals to combat stroke disease.

The Minister said, "We are implementing a reform agenda in the health sector during the short tenure of the incumbent government."

He said practical steps are being taken to strengthen the primary health care system. He said 460 primary health centers will be revamped across the country with WHO support and no expense from government exchequer would be used.

The Minister said the government was promoting the referral mechanism to reduce the burden on big hospitals. "We all have to play our role for the improvement of the health sector," he added.

FBR makes historic seizure of non-duty paid/counterfeit cigarettes in a single day



F.P. Report

KARACHI: In an unprecedented drive to get to grips with the menace of Non-Duty paid/Counterfeit cigarettes, the designated teams of Federal Board of Revenue (FBR) have successfully conducted 429 raids, on Saturday the 28th October, throughout the

length & breadth of the country. This day long effort has culminated into the seizure of about 16 million Non-Duty paid/Counterfeit cigarette sticks.

Member Inland Revenue Operations, Mir Badshah Khan Wazir supervised the whole exercise. According to him, the success of this

exercise would convey an unequivocal message to the duty evaders to forthwith halt their illicit practices. He also reiterated to continually fight the issue till its logical conclusion. It was further resolved that in the next phase of the drive, criminal proceedings would be initiated against such culprits.



LAHORE: Passengers alighting from electricity pole which is most dangerous mode to come out from railway track, after leaving slow moving train only few yards away railway station from the site at Do Moria Bridge, may cause any mishap and needs attention of the concern authorities.

66 connections disconnected in Punjab, KP and Islamabad

F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: During the ongoing crackdown against gas pilferers, SNGPL continued raids in Punjab, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and Islamabad, disconnecting another 66 connections while imposing fine of Rs. 2.69 million and 512 under billing cases processed.

In Lahore, the regional team disconnected 5 connections on illegal use of gas and another 3 on use of compressor, 177 Under billing cases have been processed and amount of Rs 0.96 booked against gas thieves and under billing cases. In Bahawalpur, the regional team disconnected four connections on use of compressor while another two on illegal use of gas and 9 Under billing cases have been

processed. The company disconnected 5 connections on illegal use of gas and another two on use of the compressor, 80 Under billing cases have been processed and fine of Rs 0.21 Million imposed against gas pilferers in Multan.

In Peshawar, the company disconnected 28 connections on account of direct use of gas and illegal connections. The regional team also lodged 1 FIRs against gas thieves and also imposed fine of Rs 0.78 against gas thieves. In Rawalpindi the regional team disconnected two gas connection on illegal use. In Mardan Four connections were disconnected against illegal use of gas while imposing fine of Rs 0.11 million.

In Sialkot, the team imposed fine of Rs 0.05 against gas pilferers. The

regional team in Gujranwala 11 under billing cases have been processed and 2 connections were disconnected on illegal use of gas. The region also imposed fine of Rs. 0.25 million on gas theft and under billing cases.

In Sahiwal, three connections were disconnected on illegal use of gas. In Faisalabad 13 under billing cases processed and One connection was disconnected on illegal use of gas. Fine of Rs. 0.16 million was also imposed against gas pilferers. The team in Gujrat booked an amount of Rs 0.03 against gas theft and under billing cases.

In Sargodha, the company booked 222 Under billing cases and 5 connections were disconnected on direct use of gas. The team imposed fine of Rs0.14 million against under billing cases.

2393 smoky vehicles impounded, 7000 challaned in last week

LAHORE (APP): City Traffic Police impounded another 2,393 vehicles and issued more than 7,000 traffic violation challans in its ongoing extensive operation targeting vehicles emitting smoke during last seven days.

According to a spokesman of the traffic police, in response to the directive from Chief Traffic Officer Capt (R) Mustansar Feroze, the crackdown didn't stop at just smoke-emitting vehicles; it also extended to trucks, trailers, and loader vehicles lacking tarpaulin covers and mud flaps. Challans were being issued to vehicles that spread dust, dirt, and other pollutants on the city's roads.

Lahore Traffic Police, in collaboration with environmental agencies and allied departments, was at the forefront of these efforts. Special check posts have been set up at the city's entry and exit points, particularly during night time hours. Chief Traffic Officer Capt (R) Mustansar Feroze said that strict inspections were being carried out on heavy traffic entering the city before the designated times to combat environmental pollution and smog in the city.

DSPs along with enforcement teams and allied departments were overseeing the operations at Harbanspura, Manawan, Shahdra, Ravi Bridge, Thokar Niaz Baig and Mughalpur, he added.

Ex Auditor General Riyaz H Bokhari laid to rest in Lahore

LAHORE (INP): Former Auditor General of Pakistan and former Federal Secretary, Riyaz H Bokhari who passed away the other day at the age of 98 years, was laid to rest in Lahore on Tuesday.

Mr. Riyaz Bokhari had an illustrious career as a Bureaucrat for almost four decades. Besides being the Auditor General of Pakistan, he held several important positions in the Federal Government which included the portfolios of Secretary Industries, Secretary Defence Production, Chairman National Fertilizer Corporation of Pakistan, Chairman Pakistan Railways and Member Finance Railway Board.

His Namaz e Janaza was held at 4 pm after Asar Prayers at T Block Mosque, Phase 2 DHA, Lahore. A large number of people including family members, relatives and public officials attended the funeral of the deceased.

ANF recovers narcotics in Lahore, Sargodha

RAWALPINDI (NNI): Anti-Narcotics Force (ANF) in two intelligence-based operations conducted simultaneously in Sargodha and Lahore managed to recover over 109 kg drugs and arrested two accused, said an ANF Headquarters spokesman here on Tuesday. He informed that in an operation conducted near Salam Motorway Interchange, Sargodha, ANF recovered 48 kg hashish from a car.

He said that an accused was signaled to stop the car near Kala Shah Kaku Motorway Toll Plaza, but he managed to flee. ANF team chased the accused and

caught him near Salam Interchange. A barrier was installed near Salam Interchange, Sargodha to arrest another member of the gang. When the drug smuggler saw the ANF barrier, he tried to go back towards the motorway. When chased, he threw the packets of drugs from the vehicle on the roadside green area. On checking, 30 kg hashish and 6 kg opium were recovered from the packets.

The accused later left the vehicle near Babu Sabu Motorway Interchange Lahore and managed to escape. The spokesman informed that ANF adopting an effective strategy,

chased the accused and managed to net him later.

During the search, another 25.2 kg hashish was recovered from the vehicle. During the investigation, the arrested accused confessed to working for the drug trafficking group and also confessed to smuggling drugs from Khyber Pakhtunkhwa to Punjab in the past.

During the operations, a total of 103.2 kg hashish and 6 kg opium were seized. Cases have been registered against the accused under the Anti-Narcotics Act and further investigations are under process.

22 outlaws including five professional beggars held

ISLAMABAD (NNI): Islamabad Capital Police apprehended 22 outlaws including five professional beggars from different areas of the city during the last 24 hours and recovered liquor, drugs and weapons with ammunition from their possession, a public relations officer said.

He said that, following the special directions of Islamabad Capital City Police Officer (ICCP) Dr. Akbar Nasir Khan, the Islamabad Capital Police has intensified crackdown against the criminal elements in order to eliminate the crime from the city.

Following these directions, the Aabpara police team arrested two accused namely Abdul Ul Rehman and recovered 1070 gram hashish from their possession. Secretariat police team arrested an accused namely Dani Ahil and recovered six wine bottles from his possession. Kohsar police arrested an accused namely Mehmood Masih and recovered one 12 bore gun from his possession.

Likewise, the Karachi company police team arrested two accused namely Farooq and Sulman and recovered

one 30 bore pistol and one dagger from their possession. Sumbal police arrested an accused namely Waseem Khan and recovered one 30 bore pistol from his possession. Sangiani police arrested two accused namely Muhammad Amjad and Muhammad Rizwan and recovered 52 wine bottles from their possession. Khanna police arrested two accused namely Adil Zameer and Abu Bakar and recovered two 30 bore pistols from their possession. The Sihala police team arrested two accused namely Abdullah and Asif Ullah and recovered 250 gram heroin and 150 gram hashish from their possession.

Similarly, the Humak police team arrested two accused namely Asif Khan and Sajjan Masih and recovered one Kalashnikov and 165 gram heroin from their possession. Bhara Kahu police arrested an accused namely Shahzad Ali and recovered 1125 gram hashish from his possession. Bani Gala police arrested an accused namely Fakhar Abbas and recovered one 30 bore pistol from his possession.

KU announces entry test-based online admissions

KARACHI (APP): University of Karachi has announced the entry test-based online admissions for the academic year 2024 for the morning session in BS, B.Ed (H), and B.E., programs as well as in Doctor of Pharmacy (morning and evening program), Doctor of Physical Therapy, and Department of Visual Studies in the morning shift.

The in-charge KU Directorate of Admissions Dr Saima Akhtar advised students to visit the official web portal (www.uokad-

mission.edu.pk) to access information regarding admissions including eligibility requirements, online admission form, prospectus, and admission-related guidelines. She mentioned that applicants should fill in and submit their admission form along with scanned copies of the required documents through the online admission portal by November 08, 2023. She shared that for the first time, the University of Karachi has launched a four-year BS degree program in Sports Business Management.

She said that admissions in four-year degree programs in BS, B. Ed (H), and B.E., are available in the departments of Applied Chemistry and Chemical Technology, Applied Physics, Biotechnology, Business Administration (BBA), B.E. Chemical Engineering, Commerce, Computer Science — (BSCS) and (BSSE) — Split 2 +2 Chinese, Criminology, Education, Environmental Studies, Food Science and Technology, Human Nutrition and Dietetics.



KARACHI: A group photo IGP Sindh Riffat Mukhtar along with Additional IGP Karachi Khadim Hussain Rind giving CC-1 certificates and reward to SSP Korangi Hassan Sardar Khan, SHO Saudabad Muhammad Ali and team for better performance against the crime.

Danish parliamentarians calls on KP Governor

— discusses matters of mutual interest

PESHAWAR (APP): A five-member delegation of Danish parliamentarians and Deputy Head Mission Embassy of Denmark here Tuesday called on Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Governor, Haji Ghulam Ali.

Governor welcomed the delegation and discussed matters of mutual interests with delegation members. He informed the delegation about the constitutional position of the governor and its ambit of responsibilities.

Matters relating to mineral deposits of the province, tourism, education, resources, agriculture and hydro power potential of KP was also discussed in the meeting.

Speaking on the occasion, governor highlighted the investment opportunities in these sectors and vast potential of mineral sector. He said that Danish entrepreneurs can start joint ventures of investment in the province.

He also urged Danish government to provide scholarships to Pakistani students that would strengthen relations between two countries.

The delegation expressed gratitude to governor for his hospitality and said that proposal to start joint ventures would be forwarded to Danish authorities for consideration.

Delegation members also informed governor about power of mayor in Denmark and appreciated the historic grandeur off Governor House Peshawar.



PESHAWAR: PPP's City president Zulfiqar Afghani addressing a party meeting regarding Bilawal Bhutto's visit to Peshawar. — F.P. photo

CGPA and GERD organized workshop

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: In an effort to enhance local governance and improve service delivery for the citizens of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, a landmark Consultative Workshop on the Selection of Local Services and Development of Regulations for Municipal Services took place in Peshawar on Tuesday.

The workshop was organized jointly by the Centre for Governance and Public Accountability (CGPA) and the Local Government Elections and Rural Development Department (LGERD), with support from the Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ). Sub-National Governance Programme (SNG) also participated in the event.

Secretary LGERD Department in his keynote address highlighted that effective and efficient service delivery at the local level is pivotal for the development and well-being of communities in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. The participants observed that the local governments in the province face various challenges, including the absence of comprehensive and standardized processes for identifying, planning, implementing, and monitoring public services, as well as the lack of clear

guidelines when it comes to addressing grievance of citizens related to delivery of various services. These challenges have led to inefficiencies and disparities in service provision.

The Consultative Workshop aimed to address these challenges and contribute to the development of regulations and standard operating procedures (SOPs) for selected municipal services in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. The objectives of the workshop included the identification of priority municipal services, knowledge sharing, the identification of the existing regulatory framework, and the development of structures for new or revised regulations.

The Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) is leading the Participatory Local Governance (PLG) project, which aims to strengthen local governance systems in Punjab and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa to improve service delivery. The PLG project focuses on local revenue generation, participatory development planning, and digitalization for better service delivery.

The Centre for Governance and Public Accountability (CGPA) and the Sub-National Governance Programme (SNG) played crucial roles in the workshop. CGPA was responsible for arranging and mod-

erating the event, as well as documenting the proceedings and sharing the reports with stakeholders. SNG shared its expertise and experiences in establishing a solid waste collection and dumping mechanism in TMA Bahrain, emphasizing best practices, challenges faced, and the impact of the implemented procedures.

The workshop followed a structured agenda, including group discussions, presentations of local services, and plenary discussions on identified services. It encouraged collaboration among various stakeholders and provided a platform for sharing experiences and lessons learned. The event was a significant step toward improving local service delivery and fostering public accountability in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa.

The outcomes of this workshop will contribute to the development of regulations and SOPs, ultimately enhancing the quality and sustainability of municipal services for the benefit of the local population.

Key development as a result of session was that the representatives from 8 TMAs (Pistakhara, Takhthai, Laachi, Matta, Manshara, Swabi, Jamrud and Upper Mohmand) has demanded replication of Bahrain Solid Waste Management Model piloted by Sub-National Governance Programme, FCDO funded.



PESHAWAR: Provincial Ameer Jamiat Ulma-e-Islam (S) Abdul Wahid addressing a press conference. F.P. photo by Ghulam Murtaza

Minister stresses for linkage between technical institutes, industries

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Caretaker Minister for Technical Education, Industry, Commerce and Newly Merged Districts Affairs, Dr. Aamer Abdullah on Tuesday, visited Government College of Technology (GCT) Peshawar, and reviewed the curricular activities and practical training of technical education, imparting there.

On this occasion, the caretaker minister briefed regarding various departmental activities of degree courses and practical training being provided in the college.

During the briefing, the caretaker minister directed that the institution should take steps to get the International Standardization Organization (ISO) certification so that to recognize its high quality at the global level while in this regard, he instructed to fulfill all the process formalities for getting this accreditation within one month time.

The caretaker minister also directed to link the college library with the HEC digital library for the students of the college to make use of the HEC digital facility for academic and research activities.

On this occasion, he emphasized the importance of effective coordination between technical training institutions and industries and directed that the college, being the main technical institution of the province, should monitor the training activities of the students in the industries to get practical training in the final period of the degree courses.

In this regard he directed that the institution should develop an app which could help in monitoring the training activities of students sent to industries through mobile and central dashboard. He also directed to activate practically this project in the next two months.

Declaring the auto lab and other modern mechanical laboratories very useful

HIA rejects increase in gas prices

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: Hayatabad Industrialist Association (HIA) rejected hike gas prices and claimed that it will emerge another wave of inflation in the country, on Tuesday.

The joint statement was issued after meeting of HIA chaired by Bakhtyar Khan Afridi while former president Sarhad Chamber Commerce and Industries Muhammad Ishaq briefed the participants on the impacts of hike in gas prices.

Ishaq claimed that increase in gas prices will impact every segment of society especially production sector which is providing employment opportunities to the youth.

The participants rejected increase in price hike of gas and claimed that the locals individual and industries had first right on gas as per constitution of Pakistan. They argued competent authorities to withdraw the decision otherwise they will be compel to knock every door in favor of their demands.

Dry, partly cloudy weather predicted

PESHAWAR (APP): The Provincial Meteorological Center Peshawar on Tuesday predicted that mainly dry and partly cloudy weather is expected over most districts of the province, while cold in hilly areas during morning and night.

It said that isolated rain is expected in Upper Dir, Chitral and Swat districts during evening and night hours. Fog in isolated pockets was also expected over Charsadda, Nowshera, Mardan and Peshawar. While dense fog in isolated places of Rashakai to Swabi as well as over highway from Swabi to Jahangira in late night and early morning.

During the last 24 hours, mainly dry weather prevailed over most districts of the province.

Rainfall recorded (in mm) during the last 24 hours at different stations of KPK was nil.



PESHAWAR: Caretaker Minister of Information and Public Relations Barrister Feroze Jamal Shah Kakakhel addressing a press conference at Home Department.

Strict implementation of single document policy commenced

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: Barrister Feroze Jamal Shah Kakakhel, the Caretaker Minister of Information and Public Relations in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, has announced a comprehensive strategy to address the issue of illegal foreign residents within the province.

In a press conference held at the Home Department in Peshawar, Minister Kakakhel highlighted the government's commitment to managing this situation effectively.

Under this plan, the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Provincial Government is committed to facilitating the voluntary departure of illegal foreigners. Those who willingly leave Pakistan will receive facilitation and easy access to the border. Simultaneously, individuals who do not depart voluntarily will be relocated to designated processing zones and subsequently deported, commencing from today (Wednesday).

Over 82,000 illegal residents have already voluntarily left the country, with an impressive figure of 11,000 individuals returning to their respective nations just yesterday. Additionally, 52,000 illegal residents have been identified and mapped in various districts across the province he said.

The Caretaker Minister Information has said that to oversee this significant operation, a Central Control Room has been established within the Home Department, employing integrated procedures to monitor and coordinate efforts. This Control Room serves as a crucial liaison between provinces, districts, and government departments, ensuring that illegal residents are repa-

triated in an orderly manner. He expressed these views during a press conference at Home Department, Peshawar on Tuesday. During the press conference, key officials including Additional Chief Secretary Home Abid Majeed and other senior authorities were present.

Minister Kakakhel emphasized that the repatriation of illegal immigrants will be conducted in three phases. These individuals will be temporarily housed in designated processing zones from where they will be deported to their home countries. The plan designates Sunday, Monday, and Tuesday for Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Friday and Saturday for Punjab, and Wednesday and Thursday for Islamabad, Gilgit-

Baltistan, and Azad Kashmir.

He said that starting from November 1, the Federal Government has initiated a single-document policy, welcoming those entering Pakistan only on a passport and visa. In reply to various questions the Minister Kakakhel highlighted that the primary objective of the Caretaker Provincial Government is the safety of citizens' lives and property, and strict measures have been implemented to foster a peaceful environment and economic stability. This initiative includes efforts to curb smuggling, controlling extortion, illegal SIM card usage, and profiteering, all of which have yielded positive results and have contributed to enhanced economic stability in the country.



PESHAWAR: Businessmen of Namak Mandi Bazaar meeting with SP Traffic. F.P. photo

Corruption scandal rocks DEO office in Hangu, sparking public outrage

Syed Adnan

PESHAWAR: In a shocking revelation, corruption within the District Education Office (DEO) in Hangu has reached unprecedented levels, causing widespread anger among teachers and the general public. Reports indicate that DEO Hangu, along with his staff, is allegedly involved in corrupt practices, demanding bribes from teachers for transfers and extorting money to process applicants' files.

Teachers in Hangu District are allegedly forced to pay bribes in order to secure transfers, a process that should be based on merit and fair administrative decisions. Additionally, applicants seeking essential services from the DEO Office find their files mysteriously stuck, with DEO staff demanding illicit payments to expedite the process. This rampant corruption has left teachers and the local community furious and disheartened.

What is particularly alarming is the alleged inaction of higher authorities. Both the Secretary of Education and the Minister for Education have been accused of turning a blind eye to these malpractices, despite mounting evidence and public outcry. Their silence in the face of such corruption has only fueled the frustration and disillusionment of the people of Hangu.

Local residents and teachers' associations have expressed their deep concern over the situation, emphasizing the need for immediate and decisive action to root out corruption from the DEO Office. Demands for a thorough investigation and stringent legal action against those involved have intensified, with many calling for transparency and accountability in the educational system.

The community in Hangu is no longer willing to tolerate this blatant abuse of power and exploitation of their hardworking teachers. As the outrage grows, there is a collective call for justice, integrity, and fairness to be restored in the DEO Office. The authorities are now under immense pressure to address these allegations promptly and effectively, demonstrating their commitment to eradicating corruption and upholding the principles of honesty and justice in the educational sector.

Provincial Caretaker Minister to address delayed Sports Complex issues

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: Khyber Pakhtunkhwa's caretaker Minister for Sports, Youth Affairs, Science, and Information Technology, Dr. Najibullah Marwat, held a meeting with a delegation led by former MPA Yasin Khalil, representing Tehkal Payan and Palosai. The delegation provided a comprehensive update to the caretaker provincial sports minister, including details on land demarcation for sports complexes in Tehkal Payan and Palosai, funds disbursement to landowners, and other related issues.

The delegation, consisting of leaders from both regions, expressed their concern that there had been a lack of progress in the provincial government's development efforts for the past two years in establishing sports complexes in Tehkal Payan and Palosai, resulting in significant delays.

They urged the caretaker provincial sports minister to take immediate action to overcome obstacles and initiate work on both sports complexes.

In response to the delegation's concerns, the caretaker Minister Dr. Najibullah Marwat instructed the relevant officials in the sports department to dispatch a committee to inspect the Palosai and Tehkal Payan Sports Complex sites on Friday.

He also called upon the leaders of the two regions to collaborate with the sports committee in resolving issues through mutual consultation. He emphasized the caretaker government's commitment to the public's welfare and the importance of ensuring that justice prevails.

Furthermore, he directed the sports committee members to submit a comprehensive report on Wednesday after visiting the sites of the Palosai and Tehkal Payan Sports Complexes.

ics and animation and suggested to use the services of expert teachers of Air University for free to introduce it in the college to increase the capacity of the teachers.

The caretaker minister highlighted the bright opportunities available for skilled people in the province and said that there is a dire need of skilled people in the province at this time, which includes skilled people of all kinds.

He said that 9 new industrial zones are being established in the province, including 3 special economic zones.

Among these zones, 18 industrial units are currently being established in

Rashkai Special Zone only, in which a unit for electric vehicles will also be set up, while a unit for making the latest technology will also be established in Hattar Special Economic Zone.

He clarified that our local people will be able to get employment in these industries only when they have the required skills and training, so our training institutions must train the youth to take advantage of these opportunities.

Meanwhile, the caretaker minister also visited various training workshops of the college and interacted with the students there and appreciated their training activities.



In brief

Four barracks of prison shifted on solar energy F.P. Report

KOHAT: With the assistance of OGDCL and efforts made by the Superintendent Kohat Jail, Abdul Bari, four barracks of the prison have been shifted on solar energy that would address the issue of electricity outages for prisoners on a regular basis. Superintendent Kohat Jail, Abdul Bari here on Tuesday formally inaugurated the solar system for barracks specified for juvenile and aged prisoners. The solar system consisted of 9 solar panels of 550 watt, an inventor of 7.2 watt, four batteries and a DP breaker that has the capacity to run up to 45 fans at a time. The solar system was initially installed for juvenile and aged prisoners' barracks. The Regional Information Office said that the OGDCL has also conducted a survey of the rest of the jail and pledged to convert the remaining parts of the prison to solar energy very soon.

Temporary camp established F.P. Report

MARDAN: Around 2,000 illegal Afghan refugees have been identified in Mardan. The district administration has set up a temporary camp in Chamar Bus Terminal for the migration of refugees to their country. According to the details, lists of Afghan refugees residing illegally in Mardan have been prepared. For those who do not have legal documents, Additional Deputy Commissioner and Focal Person Sami-ur-Rehman told that today is the last day for illegal immigrants without documents to return to their homeland to avoid any inconvenience, otherwise they will be forced from today. He said that for this purpose a temporary camp has been set up in Chamar Bus Terminal from where all the refugees will be shifted to Torkham Border.

Man sets wife on fire, accused held

GUJRANWALA (INP): A pitiless man along with his second wife set his wife on fire. The woman was hospitalized in critical condition and police arrested the accused. According to details, the incident took place in Kot Ladhra area of Gujranwala where accused Nasir along with second wife set his first wife Shumaila on fire by sprinkling petrol. The scorched lady was referred to Lahore due to critical condition. The police arrested accused Nasir who in preliminary investigation told that his first wife attempted the suicide but the scorched woman in her stated alleged husband and his second wife of setting her on fire. The police registered a case into the incident and started an investigation.

Cleanliness drive continues F.P. Report

ABBOTTABAD: The Tehsil Municipal Office (TMO) of Abbottabad Shakeel Khan Tuesday has reaffirmed its dedication to keeping the city clean and ensuring timely waste management. In line with these efforts, early morning a team of dedicated sanitation staff is actively providing their services. According to the details, a comprehensive cleanliness and sanitation campaign is in full swing throughout the Abbottabad district without any interruptions. The Abbottabad Municipal Committee officials have received clear instructions emphasizing that cleanliness is an integral part of our faith, and there should be no compromise when it comes to maintaining cleanliness and hygiene in the area.

Deadline for illegal Afghans expired

F.P. Report

LANDI KOTAL: Hundreds of illegal Afghan families residing in various cities of the country approached the entry point, Landi Kotal on Tuesday, the last day to go to their country before expiring of deadline on 31 October, 2023.

It is to be mentioned here that keeping in view the security threats and related problems, the government in a high-level meeting of the National Security Committee, chaired by Prime Minister Anwar-ul-Haq held in Islamabad had decided under the National Action Plan to repatriate all illegal foreign residents. A month deadline was given for their willing return and after it they would be forcibly expelled of the country. According to the official sources on Monday 487 Afghan families, comprising 11553 persons (male-female and children) crossed the Torkham border to Afghanistan.

Since 17 September, 2023, approximately 82500 Afghan citizens returned back to their country, sources informed. On the other hand, arrangements have been finalized at the entry point, Charwazgai, Landi Kotal to facilitate repatriated Afghan families. Twelve National Database and Registration Authority (NADRA) mobile vans have been supplied for speedy registration of the Afghans besides a medical team has been deployed at the point to treat the ailing persons.

In addition with Rescue 1122 officials have also kicked off their relief activities and as per reports so far more than hundred ailing Afghan nationals have been shifted to nearest health center after providing first aid to them. Deputy Commissioner, Khyber Abdunasir paid a visit to the entry point and observed the preparations set up for the repatriated Afghan families. He urged the officials to leave no stone unturned to facilitate the home return families.

Caretaker Interior Federal Minister Saifraz Bugti has warned that upon the expiration of the deadline, illegal foreign immigrants would be detained, dispossessed of their properties in Pakistan and would be forcibly expelled from the country.

Drivers exemption from visa to ends: Besides pedestrians', Pakistan bound truckers will also not be permitted to cross- in via Torkham border without visa and passport after October 31, 2023. It is to be mentioned here that earlier driver's community had been exempted from visa formality and they could only produce passport while crossing into Pakistan the restriction

Sharing information Assistant Director,

Federal Investigative Agency (FIA) Torkham Yasar Arafat said that as per the government policy all kinds of entries including pedestrians and truck drivers through Torkham crossing would be restricted without proper travelling documents. The drivers who lacked visa and passport will not be let to cross the Torkham border into Pakistan, he added.

It is to be mentioned here that after Army Public School, Peshawar mishap, passport and visa policy was adopted at Torkham border however, the drivers were exempted from proper visa but producing passport at the border was made compulsory for them. As per border security and custom officials approximately 800 trucks daily cross the Torkham border in the form of carrying export or import goods.

When President Transport Association, Torkham Haji Azeemullah was contacted on the matter he said that the new policy of visa for drivers would bring movement of the truckers at the border to halt. Instead of loading and unloading trading goods, the driver would stand in long queues outside embassies and consulates and would wait for days to get a visa, he observed. He urged the government to establish a separate disk for drivers in embassies and conciliates to issue visas easily to them or arrange a token system at the border.

Gul Muhammad, an Afghan driver of a Kabul bound truck said that thousands of drivers lacked visas and it was impossible for embassies and conciliates to issue them visas in a short period. He went on that the uploaded consentment will be ready to transport it to Kabul or vice versa but the drivers who lack proper visa will not be permitted to cross the Torkham border to or for to deliver the merchandise commodities. He urged to revise the restricted scheme for transporters at the border and facilitate them to deliver the merchandise commodities on time in either country without tension. The business community also expressed their concern over the visa, made compulsory for the truckers and besides the transport community; it would certainly suffer bilateral trade between Pakistan and Afghanistan.

Former President Clearance Agent Association, Torkham Riaz Shinwari flayed the interim government for announcing such kind of anti-traders policy and said it would certainly influence export and import activities at the crossing. The decision would restrain transportation of trading goods i.e. export and import because maximum numbers of drivers would be short of visa and other travelling documents, he remarked.

Over 16k women, children screened for malaria

F.P. Report

ZHOB: In order to ensure the prevention, timely diagnosis and treatment of malaria, the Malaria Control Program held the monthly surveillance meeting here in Zhob. The meeting was presided over by District Health Officer Dr Muzaffar Shah.

District Coordinator Malaria Control Program Dr Ubaid Hariphail and stakeholders attended the meeting. During the meeting, different initiatives taken by the Malaria Control Program were reviewed and the participants expressed satisfaction over the hectic efforts to control the vector-borne disease in the district.

Talking on the occasion, DHO Dr Muzaffar Shah said that malaria is caused by a parasite in the Plasmodium species, which is transmitted to humans through the bites of an infected female Anopheles mosquito. Balochistan in general, while Zhob in particular has a diverse climate. Zhob falls in the monsoon range and seasonal rains, which can create ideal breeding conditions for mosquitoes. Timely diagnosis and treatment of



malaria cases are crucial in preventing the spread of the disease,' he emphasized.

The health official said, the tireless efforts of the teams bear fruit, as they are leaving no stone unturned. The teams not only screen the patients, but also provide them with free medicines in the remote parts of the district. He added, District Coordinator Dr Ubaid Hariphail said on the occasion that screening camps have been set up in different far-off areas by Balochistan Rural Support Program (BRSP) Malaria Control Program in collaboration with the Indus Hospital and Health Network (IHNN). Forty-eight BCC sessions have been held, where free screening of sixteen thousand people including women and children has been conducted during

September, out of them four thousand one hundred and sixty people have been diagnosed with falciparum and vivax malaria.

'Mass screening of eighteen hundred people has also been done in different areas, out of the total number, over three hundred people have been found infected with the parasitic disease malaria. All the infected patients have been treated and given free medicines,' he maintained. The official said, BRSP and IHNN in 21 districts of Balochistan including Zhob have provided modern resources and facilities to 26 government health centers and 44 private laboratories for diagnosis, screening, treatment and prevention of malaria, where thousands of poor people benefit from the programme.

Call for allowing PTI to hold rallies

QUETTA (PPI): Syed Iqbal Shah Advocate, former Vice President, Supreme Court Bar Association and President, Insaf Lawyers Forum (ILF), has demanded permission for Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) and its affiliated bodies to hold public meetings and take out processions.

Addressing a press conference at Quetta Press Club here on Tuesday, he said that Provincial Election Commission had announced to conduct the election of local bodies in Quetta, adding that election election was also expected to be held during the month of January, but Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf had been forbidden to convey its objectives to the masses through rallies, processions and public meetings.

He said that banning PTI from political activity was the violation of Article 199 of the constitution of Islamic Republic of Pakistan. He demanded to allow Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) and its affiliated bodies to hold public meetings and take out processions so as to convey the objectives of PTI to the masses.

Jamil Ahmed Bostan Advocate, Shams-ur-Rehman Rind Advocate, Muhammad Imran Alwi Advocate, General Secretary, ILF, Balochistan, Muhibullah Kakar Advocate, Regional President, Abdul Hakeem Zareen Advocate, Provincial Joint Secretary, Jamil Agha Advocate, Additional General Secretary and Provincial Focal Person, Nisar Ahmed Kakar

Advocate, Muhammad Riaz Tarin Advocate and others were also present.

Youth killed

MUZAFFARGARH (INP): A youth was killed by the shooting of a close relative at the suburban part of Daera Din Panah town.

Police said the accused identified as Bilal Khand alias Billa shot and killed his cousin Abdul Rashid before escaping the scene. The reason for the Murder was stated to be an old enmity. Police crime scene unit with forensic teams collected evidence to carry out investigation, it was said. DSP along with security officials reached out the the spot after the murder.



CHARSADDA: KP Caretaker Minister for Prisons and Social Welfare Justice (retd) Irshad Qaisar inspecting meal during her visit to sub-jail.

Community risk assessment training for locals held Shafi Ullah

MINGORA: Community Resilience Activity North organized special training workshops on community risk assessment for the people of Madyan's four villages Damlai, Dama'na, Kilagram and Aryana.

Participants of the Training Program were from different fields of life such as shopkeepers, farmers, teachers, students and councilors. A separate five-day training workshop for Women of these villages was organized at Qandeel. These training workshops were comprised of different kinds of activities.

The participants were told about risks, hazards and emergencies and participants were given hands-on demonstrations in this regard. They were trained on how to utilize their abilities and how to rescue vulnerable people from the potential effects of natural disasters through awareness.

Tehsil Officer Infrastructure Khurshid Anwar participated as a special guest in the final sessions of training workshops. He called the training programs an important need of time. He added that it is not possible to stop any disaster but precautionary measures can be taken to reduce the damages to some extent caused by calamities. The participants appreciated the Community Resilience Activity North for organizing such activities to aware them pre, during and post-disaster.

Manager held for electricity theft F.P. Report

CHARSADDA: Federal Investigation Agency (FIA) Anti-Corruption Circle Peshawar, in collaboration with the SDO of Peshawar Electric Supply Company (PESCO) in Tangi, successfully thwarted electricity theft at the Crusher Factory in Tangi, Charsadda.

A meticulously assembled raiding team, led by SI Haseeb Jamal and comprised of dedicated officers including ASI Akbar, ASI Shahbaz Khan, HC Sajid, HC Shoaib, FC Adnan, FC Zaka, and FC Sabi Ullah, executed the mission under the able supervision of SI Philemon, Deputy Director of FIA ACC Peshawar.

In the culmination of their efforts, the raid revealed a startling discovery, as the factory manager was caught red-handed engaging in electricity theft through a direct connection from the transformer on the premises. Swiftly taking action, the PESCO team disconnected the illicit connections and confiscated the transformer and cables, meticulously documenting their actions in a seizure memo.

Policeman succumbs to injures after suicide

F.P. Report

LARKANA: A policeman named Muhammad Yaqoob succumbed to injuries after suicide attempt against misbehavior of clerk at Senior Superintendent of Police Office Larkana and laid to rest at his ancestral village.

According to details, few days ago in Larkana, due to the misbehavior of the sheet clerk branch staff in the SSP office, Muhammad Yaqoob Dayo, a resident of Taluk Ratodero, attempted suicide by spraying petrol on himself, causing 90 percent of his body to be affected. He was kept under treatment in a private hospital in Karachi for treatment, where he succumbed to death, whose funeral prayer offered.

DSP Ratodero Javed Iqbal Sheikh, SHO Ratodero Imamuddin Chandio, and other close friends and relatives and police officers present in the funeral prayer. Muhammad Yaqoob Dayo should not have taken such a step when some employee of sheet branch demanded bribe in the office of SSP Larkana and the deceased should have complained to the higher officers but

despite this SSP Larkana.

Serious notice has been taken of the matter and legal action will be taken against the employees found involved in it. It should be noted that Muhammad Yaqoob Dayo attempted suicide by spraying petrol on himself in the bathroom of the jail while on duty at the Allahabad Jail in the suburbs of Larkana. was kept under treatment in a private hospital, who fought for his life, in this regard, it is further learned that the deceased had released a video during the treatment that he wanted to retire due to illness.

Contacted the sheet branch staff in SP Larkana office who demanded a huge bribe from them to prepare the retirement papers due to which the deceased was forced to commit suicide due to heart-break, while the relatives of the deceased said. It is not a suicide, it is a murder. The bribe seekers of the office will approach the Supreme Court for justice against the involved staff.

Residents demand action against influential land-lord: According to

the details of the residents' protest against the alleged occupation of agricultural land in Larkana, Haji Gulab Brohi, a resident of village Khamisu Khan Brohi of Taluk Bagrani, along with his relatives protested in front of the press club.

He said that my agricultural land is seven acres, which is in the name of my grandfather Khamisu Khan, out of which two and a half acres of land has been allotted to me, while last day, the influential cousin Umar Brohi. They have occupied my agricultural land with armed associates, while in the month of August this year, they threatened me and injured me by firing on me that the influential cousin Umar Brohi has taken possession of my land ready rice crop and is threatening to kill me and my family, he demanded from IG Police Sindh and caretaker Chief Minister Sindh and said that God bless me. The above-mentioned influential Umar Brohi should be freed from the cruelty and legal action should be taken against the people involved in the incident.

Shortage of fertilizers with start of wheat season

F.P. Report

HAFIZABAD: With starting of wheat sowing season, fertilizer have vanished from open market in the whole district and fertilizer dealers are selling fertilizers in black market on arbitrary prices instead of government prices.

Farmers of the district protested against artificial shortage of fertilizer led by Vice President Kisan Board Pakistan, Imanullah Chatha. Farmers said that official price of DAP fertilizer is Rs. 12600/= per bag but the dealers are selling at the rate of Rs. 13000/= per bag while official price of Urea fertilizer is Rs. 3700/= per bag and dealers are extorting Rs.4200/=. They demanded the Deputy Commissioner to take effective measures for provision of fertilizers on official prices and acceding to needs of farmers, otherwise, wheat sowing would be suffered.

IG inspects district jail: Inspector General Prisons, Punjab, Mian Farooq Nazir visited District Jail and inspected different barks, hospital, store, kitchen and

other parts of the district to review security and other arrangements made for welfare of prisoners in the jail. He also visited Vocational Training School setup for imparting training in different trades so that prisoners could enable to earn their livelihood in respectable manners after releasing from the jail. He also inaugurated new utility store established in the jail.

Superintendent Jail Furrakh Rasheed informed the IG that telephone facility for prisoners was available and prisoners could talk with their families according to jail manual and procedure. He also told that sports facilities were also being provided to prisoners particularly children.

IG also apprised that CCTV cameras were also installed for security purpose and foolproof security arrangements were made. IG Prisoners expressed his satisfaction over performance of the Superintendent and other staff and announced Rs. 1 lakh cash prize for jail staff.

Indiscriminate anti-encroachment operation to

ensured: Deputy Commissioner Hafizabad Sundas Irshad has warned that strict legal action will be taken against those people who will attempt to create hurdle in operation against encroachments whereas crackdown on encroachment would continue till removing all encroachments in the district. He issued this warning while inspecting ongoing operation against encroachment in different areas of the city, on Monday. ADCR/Administrator Municipal Committee Imtiaz Ali Baig, President District Bar Malik Waqas Raza Awan, General Secretary Bar Muzzamal Aziz Gujjar, AC Munawar Hussain and Chief Officer MC Ansar Sahi were also accompanied by her.

DC said that no shopkeeper would be allowed to grabbed on road and to create hurdle in smooth flow of traffic She directed the MC Officers to remove all handcars from market and bazaars and stop shopkeepers from displaying their articles outside the shops.

8 wild boars for attacking school children

F.P. Report

BARA: The enraged People on Tuesday shot dead eight wild boars after its herd attacked school going children in village council 46, Shalobar, Bara tehsil of Khyber district.

The wild bores entered th-

eir area from the adjacent Hayatabad locality and attacked school going children. One of the children was badly injured and taken to hospital. He said in retaliation, the area people shot dead eight wild boars.

He said a couple of days ago, a leopard was also spotted

in the area adding that these wild animals were posing a threat to the lives of people living here. He appealed to the wildlife authorities to take steps for blocking the entry of wild animals into the human population to avert occurrence of mishaps.



‘Never seen such atrocities’: Palestinian reporters recount war horrors

GAZA (Agencies): At least 30 journalists have been killed in the latest Palestinian-Israeli round of violence that began on October 7, the Committee to Protect Journalists has said. These journalists include 25 Palestinians, four Israelis, and one Lebanese. In response to Hamas's attack on Israel, in which more than 1,400 people died, Israel has been staging almost-continuous raids on Gaza that have so far claimed the lives of over 8,000 people, more than 3,000 of whom are children. Those reporting from Gaza continue to carry out their jobs while facing what Amnesty International describes as "war crimes" of collective punishment and indiscriminate attacks. But in the West Bank, Gaza and beyond, Palestinian journalists speak of unprecedented physical, emotional and mental strains. They are navigating the tricky grounds of professional reporting while facing intensified censorship, and what they say is deliberate Israeli gunfire. Al Jazeera spoke to a number of Palestinian journalists in Gaza, the West Bank and beyond. "I'm one of the journalists who covered the Al-Aqsa Intifada (the second Intifada from 2000-2005). It was cruel and difficult back then, but it's nothing like what we're witnessing now. The level of oppression we experience both as citizens and journalists is unmatched - oppressed because of the feelings of helplessness on all fronts, politically, on the ground and on the human level. We are unable to offer anything to our people in Gaza. It's true that I vent when I speak on air, but the amount of destruction, killing, and displacement is nothing we have ever experienced before. I witnessed the first Intifada and was a journalist covering the sec-

ond Intifada, but never have I seen such atrocities. And the rest of the world is in lockstep in its opposition to the Palestinian cause - the governments are opposed to Palestine politically. There is popular sympathy for the Palestinian cause, but the people seemingly have no impact on their governments. Only God knows which direction their schemes will take us." "These are exceptionally difficult times for Palestinian journalists in the West Bank. The loss of their colleagues has hampered their creativity, but they are still determined to expose the crimes of the occupation. Seeing a colleague lose a family member who is martyred has made journalists fearful because this situation will go on for a long time. I saw hard things in the field. How does a mother bury her martyred son with a smile? Where does she get that strength? In these moments, I break into tears. I am conflicted because I am supposed to be strong, but at that moment I am the one who needs to be consoled. Interviewing the families of martyrs after their burial is more difficult than the funeral itself. This is when his family remembers all the good things about him. Some wish they had died in their place, while others remain steadfast. You can never forget what a mother or father say about their martyred son. Journalists are also victims of the crimes of the occupation, like Shireen Abu Akleh and many Palestinian colleagues. The exhaustion, despair, frustration, panic, and grief that journalists experience every day makes them set limits on all their plans. Everyone has a family they worry about. But for how long? How does a journalist live in Palestine? He is dejected, suffering from the horrors of the

scene. He cannot rebel to protect his family, whose movement may be paralysed by the occupation. He could die in an instant while covering the violence. How long can we endure this? Can we continue on this path? I think the majority would say no." "Since October 7, it's been even more difficult for journalists to get around the occupied territories. Reporting on some developments has become very challenging as a result of police deployment and settlers riled up against the Arab press. In all my 15 years of reporting, never did I feel this much helplessness and fear. We watched along with the world, as mothers mourned their children who were murdered, their dreams cut short - way too short." "I am scared the most at my helplessness to protect my family. Where do we go? There is no place that we did not escape to. We moved so many times already. I have my family split between three different homes, so we don't die together. Surviving this would enable us to speak of the injustice that has befallen us. What I see in my tours of hospitals is beyond my ability to describe. I take photos because they can convey what my words fail at doing when it comes to what is happening in Gaza. It's a massacre. Children burned, pregnant women targeted. Even when the Israeli army warned people to evacuate, they still bombed the road they designated as safe." "I left for Cairo six months ago in search of career advancement, but what I'm experiencing now are pangs of guilt, remorse, and helplessness over what is happening in Gaza. I call colleagues and friends there and they think they're the next victim. I'm also unable to help spread the word and report properly from here because communication channels are being targeted.

Shoigu claims US fuelling tension

MOSCOW (Agencies): Russian Defence Minister Sergei Shoigu has accused the United States of fuelling geopolitical tensions to uphold its "global dominance by any means" and warned of the growing risk of confrontation between nuclear-armed countries. Addressing the Xiangshan Forum, China's biggest military diplomacy conference, Shoigu also claimed the NATO alliance was trying to expand its footprint in the Asia Pacific under the pretence of seeking dialogue and collaboration with regional countries. "Washington for years has deliberately undermined and destroyed the foundations of international security and strategic stability, including the system of arms control agreements," Shoigu said at the start of the three-day event. "Having provoked an acute crisis in Europe, the West is trying to expand the crisis potential in the Asia Pacific," he told delegates from about 90 countries. "Direct involvement of countries with nuclear arsenals multiplies the strategic risks. The West's line towards escalation with Russia poses a risk of direct conflict between nuclear powers, which will result in

catastrophic consequences," Shoigu added. Shoigu's gloomy assessment was echoed by China, whose defence minister Li Shangfu was sacked without explanation last week after disappearing from public view at the end of August. China has refused to condemn Russia's invasion of Ukraine and has deepened economic, diplomatic and military cooperation with Moscow since the start of the war in February 2022. Russian President Vladimir Putin this month paid a two-day visit to China, his first outside the former Soviet Union this year and part of the Kremlin's drive to strengthen its economic partnerships across Asia. Zhang Youxia, China's second most senior military official, painted a grim picture of the international situation, blaming countries he did not name for the turmoil. "As we look across the world today, hotspot issues are arising one after another. The pain of war, chaos and turmoil, and loss of life are constantly playing out," Zhang said. "Some countries, for fear that the world may stabilise, deliberately create turmoil, interfere in regional issues, interfere in other countries' internal affairs,

and instigate colour revolutions," he said. "Behind the scenes, they hand out knives and think nothing of provoking people into wars, ensuring that they're the ones who benefit from the chaos," he added. Zhang - who embraced Shoigu on the sidelines of the forum - said that Beijing was "willing to develop military ties with the US on the basis of mutual respect, peaceful coexistence and win-win cooperation." China suspended military communication with the US, which was represented at the forum by a delegation led by Xanthi Carras, the leading official on China at the Pentagon, in August 2022. In recent years, the US has deepened its relationships with countries across the Asia Pacific, with initiatives such as the Quad that includes Australia, India and Japan, as well as the AUKUS project with Australia and the United Kingdom, which involves the sharing of nuclear-powered submarine technology and the development of advanced weaponry. The US has also furthered security cooperation with Japan and South Korea, as well as with the Philippines, where it has secured access to military bases.

8 missiles downed over Crimea, says Russia

MOSCOW (Agencies): The Russian Defense Ministry claimed on Oct. 30 that its forces shot down eight Storm Shadow missiles allegedly launched by Ukraine at Russian-occupied Crimea. Kyiv hasn't commented on the incident. Mikhail Razvozhaev, the head of Sevastopol's illegal Russian occupation government, said air defenses shot down two aerial targets over the city, and that debris injured a 57-year-old man near a local railway. Razvozhaev claimed that the debris fell in multiple places in Sevastopol, including on households and beaches, but there were no serious damages to buildings and infrastructure. He didn't specify what weapons were purportedly downed over the city. Local pro-Ukrainian Telegram channel Crimean Wind reported several explosions in Sevastopol at around 12 p.m. local time. Residents confirmed the information on the explosions to the Ukrainian media outlet Suspilne. Russian forces reportedly deployed a smoke screen over Sevastopol Bay at the time of the attack. After it disappeared, pillars of smoke appeared over a local sea port and the Gollandiya district, which hosts many military facilities, according to Crimean Wind. The Kyiv Independent couldn't immediately verify these claims. Explosions also occurred in Saky on Crimea's western coast, followed by electricity cut-offs in the city, Suspilne Crimea wrote, citing residents.

Earlier in the day, the Ukrainian military's Center for Strategic Communications confirmed that Ukrainian forces had struck a strategic air defense facility on the western coast of Crimea overnight on Oct. 30. Starting in the summer of 2023, there have been a series of increasingly destructive attacks on Russian military facilities on the occupied peninsula. President Volodymyr Zelensky said on Oct. 24 that recent Ukrainian attacks have denied the Russian fleet safe haven and secure maritime corridors in the western part of the Black Sea as Kyiv's troops look to squeeze Russian-installed forces out of Crimea.

Philippines says its ships have 'every right'

MANILA (Agencies): The Philippines has said its vessels have "every right" to operate around Scarborough Shoal in the South China Sea after Beijing claimed the ships entered the area illegally. "Under international law, the Philippines has the right to patrol the length and breadth of the West Philippines Sea which necessarily includes Bajo de Masinloc," National Security Adviser Eduardo Ano said in a statement on Tuesday, referring to the South China Sea and using the Philippine name for Scarborough Shoal.

Ano was responding to a Chinese statement that a Philippine military ship had "illegally entered" the waters near Scarborough Shoal, which Beijing seized from Manila in 2012 after a months-long standoff. The islands lie about 220km (137 miles) off the coast of the Philippines and fall within its exclusive economic zone (EEZ), according to international maritime law. The Philippine ship was on a routine patrol, the statement said. "It did not illegally enter any space under Chinese sovereignty because Bajo de Masinloc is part of the PH archipelago and EEZ," it added. China and the Philippines have been involved in a number of incidents this year, with Manila accusing Beijing of making aggressive efforts to assert its claim to almost the entire South China Sea under its so-called nine-dash line. Earlier this month, the two countries' ships were involved in near collisions close to Second Thomas Shoal, which also lies within Manila's EEZ. Under the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS), that zone extends 200 nautical miles (about 370km) from a country's coast.

Cyprus braces for refugee arrivals amid Lebanon war fears

BEIRUT (Agencies): Cyprus has received 458 Syrian refugees from Lebanon in a week, Cypriot authorities have said, as the Israel-Hamas war threatens to spread into a wider regional conflict. Authorities in Cyprus said that they are bracing for a larger influx of asylum seekers, as clashes on the Lebanese border with Israel continue to escalate.

Several boats came to Cyprus in batches. The first boat from Lebanon had 110 people, and the second a further 52. Both had been heading for Cyprus's southeastern coastal resort of Ayia Napa. Later, two more vessels were intercepted with a combined 32 people on board and taken to the southern port of Larnaca. Then, 194 Syrians arrived aboard four boats from Lebanon and were taken to the Pournara reception centre outside Nicosia.

Interior Ministry official Loizos Hadjivasilou told the Cyprus News Agency that the Pournara centre was now full, and an emergency plan had been activated to handle an increase in arrivals. The arrivals come a week after 264 Syrian refugees arrived on three boats from Lebanon. Interior Minister Constantinos Ioannou accused Beirut of not regulating migrant movements across the Mediterranean Sea. He said that Lebanon's possible involvement in Israel's war in Gaza and the generally worsening situation in the Middle Eastern country had weakened Beirut's efforts to monitor its territorial waters and prevent departures. Lebanon hosts some 805,000 United Nations-registered Syrian refugees, but officials estimate the actual number is far higher, ranging between 1.5 and 2 million.

About 90 percent of Syrian



refugees in Lebanon live below the extreme poverty line, according to the UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR). But since Lebanon's economy fell into a crisis four years back, an increasing number of would-be migrants - both refugees and Lebanese - have attempted to leave Lebanon by sea. Cyprus argues that it has now become a "front-line country" on the Mediterranean migrant route, with asylum seekers comprising 6 percent of the 915,000 population in the republic - a record figure across the European Union bloc. In turn, the government has been trying to manage migration and said it has reduced arrivals of irregular migrants by 50 percent since last year. But in August, the UNHCR pointed out that Cyprus has been sending back Syrian asylum seekers to Lebanon and said it was "extremely concerned". Lisa Abou Khaled, a spokesperson for the UNHCR office in Lebanon, told the Associated Press news agency that

most of the 109 Syrian people who were returned from Cyprus were deported to Syria after being investigated by the Lebanese army.

The UNHCR office in Cyprus added that deportations and transfers between states "without legal and procedural safeguards for persons who may be in need of international protection" are against international and European law. But the Cyprus government has said that such returns are being lawfully carried out in line with a bilateral agreement the island nation and neighbouring Lebanon signed in 2004. Cyprus has in recent years also sought EU help to cope with a large influx of migrants including from sub-Saharan Africa that have taxed the small country's limited resources. The EU is co-financing the construction of a new reception centre for migrants, with capacity for 1,000 people, while their asylum claims are being processed or initially turned down.

China's censors warn against 'effusive comments'

BEIJING (Agencies): China's government censors have ordered media and government WeChat accounts to be on the lookout for "overly effusive" comments about former Premier Li Keqiang as the country prepares for his cremation on Thursday. The instructions were leaked to the China Digital Times along with details on how to report information about Li's death, such as exclusively using content from state-run Xinhua, CCTV, or the People's Daily and instructions to monitor the comments section.

The warning about "effusive comments" reflects fear that such phrases might "offer exaggerated praise on the surface of what is actually an act of criticism", the Digital Times said, in this case against Chinese President Xi Jinping. Chinese censorship of the internet is such that many users will often speak in code to criticise the government, making use of homo-

phones, "typos", or slang to stay one step ahead of censors. Deaths of political leaders are considered particularly sensitive in China as they have been linked to political upheaval in the past, most famously in the 1989 Tiananmen Square democracy protests that followed the death of reformist leader Hu Yaobang. The Digital Times said similar restrictions were posted by government censors last year following the death of former President Jiang Zemin. The advice came as China said Li, who died from a heart attack at the age of 68, would be cremated on Thursday, with flags flown at half-mast. Describing the former premier as an "outstanding" leader, the Xinhua news agency said Li's remains had been transferred from Shanghai to Beijing on a special flight on Friday. "He was extolled as an excellent CPC member, a time-tested and loyal communist soldier and an outstanding pro-

letarian revolutionist, statesman and leader of the Party and the state," the state news agency said. Known for his pro-reform agenda, Li's political legacy stands in contrast to Xi, who has consolidated personal power since taking office more than a decade ago and reversed many aspects of China's economic opening. By the time he stepped down in 2023 at the end of his second term as premier, Li had been effectively sidelined as a political force and did not continue into an unprecedented third term like Xi. Comments from internet users have reportedly included the phrase "the Yangtze and the Yellow River won't flow backwards", a famous saying of Li promising that reforms would continue in China, which has been seen as a tacit criticism of Xi's agenda. Other comments appeared to imply that the internet user wished Xi and not Li had passed away,

often sharing the song "Too Bad It Wasn't You" by Malaysian singer Fish Leong, according to China Digital Times.

Li's sudden death also comes at a time of economic difficulty for China as its real estate market, worth about 30 percent of the gross domestic product (GDP), continues to spiral downwards. Property is also one of the few vehicles for common people to acquire wealth, and millions have watched as their investments in new builds have stalled amid an industry-wide credit crunch. "The mass mourning of Li Keqiang is the mourning of a China that could have been. It is not only to show sympathy for a leader who had tried but failed to make China better, but also to express discontent with Xi and a sense of despair about China's future," Yaqiu Wang, the research director for China, Taiwan, and Hong Kong at Freedom House, posted on X.

Montenegro, an EU hopeful, to vote on a new government

PODGORICA, Montenegro (AP): After months of political bickering, the parliament in NATO member and EU candidate Montenegro is set to vote on a proposed new government that will hinge on support from pro-Russian and anti-Western groups. A recently formed centrist "Europe Now" coalition that advocates the small Balkan country joining the European Union won early parliamentary elections in June, but without enough support to form a government on its own. Following months of negotiations, the winning coalition received backing from staunchly anti-Western groups under the condition that one of their leaders, Andrija Mandic, was elected as the speaker of parliament - an influential politi-

cal position. The coalition agreement also includes the condition that the pro-Serbian groups will join the government within a year with their government ministries. Mandic had called for close ties with Russia rather than the EU, criticized Montenegro's NATO membership and was against splitting from much bigger Serbia in a referendum in 2006. Mandic, who was elected, said that he is ready to "send some new messages," forget what he has advocated in the past and focus on the future of the country. "My mission is to reconcile the divisions in Montenegro, and that's how I'll behave," he said.

Opposition officials claimed that this was a "black day" for Montenegro and its hopes

of joining the EU anytime soon. Hundreds of opposition supporters waving Montenegrin flags staged a protest in front of the parliament building in the capital against the new government. The 81-seat parliament also planned to hold a vote on a new cabinet led by Prime Minister Milojko Spajic of the "Europe Now" movement and his proposed cabinet ministers, a formality after Mandic was elected. US and EU officials have suggested that Montenegro, once considered the Balkan frontrunner for EU membership, should avoid introducing an anti-NATO and anti-Western political party into its coalition if it wants to join the bloc. European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen is scheduled to hold talks with

the new Montenegrin prime minister on Tuesday in the capital, Podgorica, as a part of her tour of the Western Balkan states seeking EU membership. The election in June was Montenegro's first in more than 30 years that did not feature Milo Djukanovic, who had served almost continuously as either prime minister or president since 2001. Djukanovic, who led Montenegro into NATO in 2017, lost a presidential election in April and has taken a back seat in national politics. The Democratic Party of Socialists, the pro-Western party formerly led by Djukanovic, has experienced a decline in popularity after three decades of dominance and has new leadership that was looking for a chance to make a comeback.

Pacific Islands the world's most aid-reliant region

SYDNEY (Agencies): The Pacific Islands are the world's most aid-reliant region, according to a new survey, as geopolitical competition for influence fuels record levels of development assistance. Between 2008 and 2021, the Lowy Institute Pacific Aid Map found that the Pacific Islands received more than \$40bn in development assistance, with development finance playing a more significant role in these economies than any other part of the world. Australia is the largest donor to the islands, providing about 40 percent of total development finance or \$17bn between 2008 and 2021. China is the next largest donor country, pro-

viding about \$3.9bn. Direct budget support to Pacific Island governments surged in 2021 to 40 percent of all development finance. In 2021, the most significant transaction recorded by the Pacific Aid Map was Australia's \$466 million Australian-dollar (\$297m) loan to Papua New Guinea. "Pacific Island countries are home to some of the smallest, most remote, and internally dispersed populations in the world, posing significant challenges to realising more traditional development pathways," said Alexandre Dayant, Deputy Director of the Lowy Institute's Indo-Pacific Development Centre. Economies among the Pacific Islands draw on a

range of income, from tourism, fishing licences, commodity exports and overseas labour mobility, and climate change impacts - including rising sea levels and extreme weather events - threaten livelihoods, Dayant said. The report released found that about 39 percent of all aid pledged to the region in 2021 was climate-related, but said climate financing is still below the levels needed. While Australia and Japan significantly increased development support in 2021 after the COVID-19 pandemic, China shifted to "downsized, more politically targeted" aid, directing \$241m to countries it had recently formed ties with, the report said.

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ICC's role in Palestine crisis

THE International Criminal Court's Chief prosecutor has recently warned that blocking humanitarian aid from entering Gaza could constitute a crime within the court jurisdiction as provided by the Geneva Conventions. During his visit to Rafah Crossing, Egypt, ICC Chief Prosecutor Karim Khan said that trucks full of desperately needed goods remained stuck and unable to cross into Gaza. These dearly needed supplies must get to the civilians of Gaza without delay. The ICC Chief Prosecutor called for the immediate release of all hostages taken from Israel and for their safe return to their families. Khan noted that Israel has clear obligations about its war with Hamas, not just moral obligations but legal obligations to comply with the laws of conflict.

The humanitarian situation in war-torn Gaza is deteriorating with every passing moment, after the weeks-long war, continued Israeli siege and relentless bombardment shook each and everything. Hamas's unnecessary jingoism has prompted Israel's ceaseless air strikes killing more than 8,000 people, half of them children. Gaza's residents are in dire need of essential commodities including food, water, fuel, kitchen heating and lifesaving drugs their nonavailability has turned the territory into a hell. Presently, Rafah is the only entry point through which international aid is currently able to trickle into the Hamas-run Palestinian territory, which is facing a near-total siege and blockade. Before the siege, some 500 trucks carrying aid and other goods entered Gaza every day. The Israeli government not only turned off the tab of supplies coming through Israeli soil but destroyed the Rafah crossing through airstrikes and bombing which halted the provision of humanitarian aid, medicines and food supplies.

Historically, the United Nations and the global community failed to uphold their obligations regarding the ongoing war between Hamas and Israel which has caused a grave humanitarian crisis in the West Bank and Gaza. The situation was growing more desperate by the hour as casualty numbers increased and essential supplies of food, water, medicine and shelter dwindled due to persistent non-cooperation from Tel Aviv and its Western allies. Recently, UN Chief Antonio Guterres expressed fear about a breakdown of public order after looting at food aid centres in Gaza run by its agency for Palestinian refugees as the public has left nothing to feed their children.

Amid such an alarming situation and the helplessness of the global community, the UN and its executive arm, the ICC Chief Prosecutor's visit to Rafah crossing and first-hand knowledge of the ground realities is a very important step and a ray of hope for incarcerated Palestinians. The ICC's top executive has clearly underlined that there must be discernible efforts without further delay to make sure civilians in Gaza receive basic food, and medicines unrestrictedly. Mr Khan also expressed his concern about the spike in the number of reported incidents of attack by settlers against Palestinian civilians in the territory Israel has occupied since 1967. According to the ICC Prosecutor, the ICC has launched an investigation into any crimes committed on the territory of Palestine, whether it's by Israel into Palestine or whether it's acts committed on the territory of Palestine or from Palestine into Israel.

Historically, the ICC has an important and denying role in the Palestine conflict which is not only a long-held territorial and humanitarian dispute on the agenda of the United Nations but a case of Israel's war crimes on Palestinian land is still on the agenda of the International Criminal Court (ICC) that was initiated by the Khan's predecessor Ms Fatou Bensouda a few years back. The ICC has caused significant political and legal challenges to the United States and Israel during the tenure of Ms. Fatou therefore western powers installed a British lawyer as their henchman in the crucial post of ICC to gradually defuse all allegations. Although Khan has made a heroic entry amid grave devastation and a worse humanitarian situation in Gaza and might play a little role in the release of humanitarian assistance into the occupied territory. However, the Muslim Ummah and Palestinians should not build high hopes out of the ICC and its Chief Prosecutor, particularly matters concerning Israel's war crimes in Palestine.

The Credo of Central Bank

THE State Bank of Pakistan's Monetary Policy Committee (MPC) has announced to maintain the policy rate at 22 percent. According to the committee, headline inflation rose in September 2023 (31.4%), while the key policy rate projected to decline in October and likely to maintain a downward trajectory in the second half of the current fiscal year.

Pakistan's economic outlook remained highly volatile in the consecutive second year through 2021 and 2022. The public faced serious repercussions of continued political instability together with the worst effects of the war in Ukraine and global energy crisis throughout the past months. Pakistan's failure in economic micromanagement, lax control over the domestic market, market exploitation of business cartels and exchange market manipulation of private banks made this fiasco uncontrollable and unbearable for the government and the masses respectively. There had been significant improvement in economic indicators after the PDM government signed a \$ 3 billion standby program with the IMF but that also had nominal effects on the currency market and inflation.

Realistically, real improvement and sustainability has been observed in Country's economic condition, currency market and skyrocketing inflation after the interim government initiated a military back campaign against the mafias and announced strict measures against violators including deportation of illegal migrants from the country. The inflation rate came down significantly in October due to downward movement in fuel prices, easing prices of some major food commodities, and a favourable base effect. Meanwhile, the domestic economic indicators project a continuous decline in headline inflation in the coming months if no external factor such as the Hamas Israel conflict does not affect the global oil market in the future.

As a matter of fact, the central bank failed to implement a strict regime for the private banks that got involved in currency manipulation, opening of benami accounts, and facilitation of fraud business schemes, which has caused billions of rupee loss to the masses. Similarly the State Bank failed to ensure global standard credit services in the country as a majority of Pakistani banks neither maintain customer credit score nor offer them rewards, which is a serious drawback of our banking sector. There is a lot of room for improvement in our banking system and macroeconomics in the country, however the baboos have no spare time for nation building and public service.

Important Notice

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Time to focus on the rights of oppressed, not the oppressor

Ramzy Baroud

GAZA has changed the political equation in Palestine. Moreover, the repercussions of this devastating war are likely to alter the political equation in the entire Middle East and to recenter Palestine as the world's most urgent political crisis for years to come.

Since the establishment of Israel, facilitated by Britain and protected by the US and other Western countries, the priorities have been entirely Israeli. "Israeli security," Israel's "military edge," its "right to defend itself" and much more have defined the West's political discourse on the Israeli occupation and apartheid. This bizarre US-Western understanding of the so-called conflict - that an oppressor has "rights" over the oppressed - has enabled Israel to maintain a military occupation over Palestinian territories that has lasted for more than 56 years. It has also empowered Israel to neglect the roots of this conflict, namely the ethnic cleansing of Palestine in 1948 and the long-denied right of return for Palestinian refugees.

Within this context, every Palestinian-Arab overture for peace has been rejected; even the supposed peace process, namely the Oslo Accords, turned into an opportunity for Tel Aviv to entrench its military occupation, expand its settlements and corral Palestinians into Bantustan-like spaces, humiliated and racially segregated. Some Palestinians, whether enticed by American handouts or shattered by a lingering sense of defeat, lined up to receive the dividends of the US-Israeli peace - pitiful crumbs of false prestige, empty titles and limited power, granted and denied by Israel itself.

However, the Israeli war on Gaza is already changing much of this painful status quo. Israel's constant emphasis that its deadly war is against Hamas, against "terror," against Islamic fundamentalism and all the rest may have convinced those who are ready to accept the Israeli version of events at face value. But as the bodies of Palestinian civilians, including thousands of children, started piling up at Gaza hospitals' morgues and, tragically, in the

streets, the narrative began to change. The pulverized bodies of Palestinian children, of whole families perished together, stand witness to the brutality of Israel, the immoral support of its allies and the inhumanity of an international order that rewards the murder and reprimands the victim. Of all the biased statements made by US

of cities and towns and on countless street corners around the world.

When Israeli Ambassador Gilad Erdan, who spearheaded many of the lies communicated by Tel Aviv, especially in the early days of the war, delivered his speech, not a single person clapped. The Israeli narrative has clearly crumbled, crashing to a thousand

of political prospects or the absence of a just peace for Palestinians.

Even though Amnesty International said in a statement last week that both sides had committed "serious violations of international humanitarian law, including war crimes," Israel still attacked it, accusing the group of being "antisemitic." In Israel's thinking, even the world's leading international human rights group is not permitted to contextualize the atrocities in Gaza or dare to suggest that one of the "root causes" of the conflict was "Israel's system of apartheid imposed on all Palestinians." Israel is no longer all-powerful, as it wants us to believe. Recent events have proven that its "invincible army" - a brand that allowed Israel to become, as of 2022, the world's 10th-largest international military exporter - has turned out to be a paper tiger. This is what is infuriating Israel the most. "Muslims are not afraid of us anymore," said former Knesset member Moshe Feiglin. To restore this fear, the extremist politician called for burning "Gaza to ashes immediately."

But nothing will turn Gaza into ashes, even if the 12,000-plus tons of explosives dropped on the Strip in the first two weeks of the war incinerated at least 45 percent of the housing units in the territory, according to the UN's humanitarian office. Gaza will not die because it is a powerful idea that is deeply entrenched within the hearts and minds of every Arab, every Muslim and millions of other people around the world. This new idea is challenging the long-held belief that the world needs to cater to Israel's priorities, security, selfish definitions of peace and all other illusions. The discussion should now return to where it should have always been: the priorities of the oppressed, not the oppressor. It is time to speak about Palestinian rights, Palestinian security and the Palestinian people's right - in fact, obligation - to defend themselves. It is time to speak about real justice, the outcome of which is non-negotiable: equality, full political rights, freedom and the right of return. Gaza has told us all of this and much more. It is time for us to listen.

President Joe Biden, the one in which he suggested that Palestinians were lying about counting their own dead was perhaps the most inhumane.

Washington may not realize this yet, but the repercussions of its unconditional support for Israel will prove to be disastrous in the future, especially in a region that is fed up with war, hegemony, double standards, sectarian divisions and endless conflict. However, the greatest impact will be felt in Israel itself. When Palestinian Ambassador to the UN Riyad Mansour gave a powerful speech last week, he could not hold back the tears. International delegations at the UN General Assembly clapped nonstop, reflecting the growing support for Palestine not only at the UN but in hundreds

pieces. Israel has never been so isolated. This is definitely not the "New Middle East" Netanyahu prophesied in his UNGA speech only last month. Unable to fathom how the initial sympathy with Israel quickly turned into outright disdain, Tel Aviv resorted to its old tactics. Erdan last week branded UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres "unfit to lead" and called on him to resign. Guterres' supposedly unforgivable crime was suggesting that "the attacks by Hamas did not happen in a vacuum." As far as Israel and its American benefactors are concerned, no context is allowed to taint the perfect image that Israel has created for its genocide in Gaza. In this perfect Israeli world, no one is allowed to speak of military occupation, siege, the lack

Arab leaders must walk talk on Palestine

Marwan Bishara

THE response of Arab governments to Israel's war on Gaza, like their response to its previous four wars on the besieged Palestinian enclave, has been feeble and flimsy, to say the least. But unlike Israel's past assaults, this unravelling genocide - if not stopped - will have dangerous repercussions for the entire Arab world.

Caught by surprise, Arab leaders sprung into action only after the Arab public made it clear it would not tolerate Israeli atrocities against Gaza's 2.3 million Palestinians. Although Palestine has been and remains the foremost Arab issue, speaking up is all they have done, mostly in babble and clichés. In their Arab League meeting in Cairo on October 11, Arab foreign ministers condemned the killing and targeting of civilians "on both sides", equating the occupied and the occupiers, a Palestinian resistance group and the Israeli occupation army. They spoke vaguely about the need for peace, as Israel set off to re-enact the 1948 Nakba (catastrophe) with another round of violent ethnic cleansing.

The bombing of al-Ahli hospital on October 17, in which some 470 Palestinians were massacred, enraged the Arab and international public, forcing the Arab regimes to react with a bit more resolve. A few days later, Arab foreign ministers succeeded in lobbying UN member states to pass a United Nations General Assembly resolution condemning both the October 7 attacks and Israel's atrocities and calling for an "immediate, durable and sustained humanitarian truce leading to a cessation of hostilities".

The overwhelming support for the resolution, albeit watered-down and non-binding, has demonstrated Israeli isolation within the international community. But the Israeli authorities ignored it altogether, clearly moved by the principle of "the world says what it wants, Israel does what it must". They nonchalantly proceeded to launch a devastating land invasion of the Gaza Strip, cutting off telecommunications in the territory for 36 hours and sowing even more death and destruction. Israel believes that the Arab states are too divided, impotent and indifferent to Palestinian suffering to respond adequately. It is not wrong, alas. Official Arab support for the Palestinian cause has persistently waned over the years. It started with Egyptian President Anwar Sadat's decision to sign a peace treaty with Israel in 1979. Three years later, no one tried to stop the Israeli invasion of Lebanon, which expelled the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) from the country and paved the way for the emergence of Hezbollah in Lebanon and Hamas in Palestine.

In the following four decades, Arab regimes continued to show less and less interest in rallying behind the Palestinian cause, as the Arab world was ravaged by multiple wars, including the Iraq-Iran conflict and the Iraq invasion of Kuwait, two US-led Gulf wars, as well as multiple civil wars following the 2011 Arab Spring revolutions. Today, Arab leaders may be will-

ing to speak out for Palestine, but few are ready or capable of walking their talk. Those with the means to influence events do not mean what they say, and the few who mean what they say lack the means to follow through.

Truth be told, Arab leaders have generally been at odds with Israel as a divisive colonial enterprise in their midst, but they have also been indifferent to the plight of the Palestinians, just as they have been towards the suffering of their citizens. In fact, some regimes have treated their people almost as badly as Israel has treated the Palestinians. Many have spoken for Palestinian rights only because that has given them a semblance of legitimacy in the eyes of their people. Arab impotence has opened the way for other regional players, Iran and Turkey, to flex their muscles and expand their influence at Arab expense, creating another layer of regional complexity and division. Iran's deepening influence and reckless policies in a number of Arab countries have pushed some frantic regimes to openly ally themselves with Israel in return for greater American support.

But that has proven shortsighted as neither Israel nor the United States can or is willing to guarantee their security. Today, these regimes tacitly blame Iran and Hamas for the ongoing escalation in Gaza that is meant to undermine their new partnerships with Israel and drag them into a regional war. Indeed, government-associated preachers, journalists and pundits in countries like Egypt, Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates have condemned what they consider to be Hamas's attempts inspired by Iran to push the region into war, inflicting unbearable suffering on the Palestinian people. But such positions have not swayed Arab public opinion. Wherever they have been allowed to, Arabs have taken to the streets en masse to protest against Israel's atrocities and to call for an international intervention to stop the mass killing of Palestinian civilians. Protest may turn into mass upheaval that can threaten regional stability if no action is taken.

As Israel continues to decimate Gaza and commit massacres of Palestinian children, women and men, its Arab partners must reconsider their normalisation and cooperation agreements before they are forced to do so under heavy public pressure. This de-normalisation process must start with the Palestinian Authority itself, whose insistence on maintaining relations with Israel has allowed it to deepen its military occupation and accelerate the theft of Palestinian land. It is high time for the regime of President Mahmoud Abbas to sever relations with the Israeli government and start protecting its civilians from the Israeli army and settlers wreaking havoc in the West Bank. Arab leaders must come together to end the genocide in Gaza, come what may. Because only by uniting and speaking in one voice in favour of Arab and Palestinian rights would they be able to deter Israeli aggression and foreign interference in Arab affairs.

Aljazeera

Macron keen to make a good impression in the Middle East

Zaid M. Belbagi

THE deep hugs, pursed lips and concerned expressions have come to personify Emmanuel Macron's visits to the Middle East. The embattled French president, who is presiding over a divided republic at home, has used his regional trips as an opportunity to grandstand on the international stage, at times as a figure of authority and at others the engaging face of the West.

From his engagement in the Middle East peace process to his support for peace talks in Ukraine, Macron has demonstrated a readiness to engage in geopolitical complexities and pursue diplomatic solutions. Last week, he visited Israel, the occupied West Bank and Egypt, leaving many perplexed about whether he genuinely thought he could succeed where others have so recently failed. Having

pursued professional and political interests far removed from the Middle East before his election as president, Macron began his first term with a state visit to Morocco. In the time since, he has continued to seek out opportunities to project power in the region, such as through his differences of opinion with Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan, his proximity to Gulf leaders, his involvement in Lebanon and his cultivation of Iraq.

As he shuttled around the region's affected capitals last week, Macron hoped to appear front and center in the Middle East once more. Going further than US President Joe Biden and UK Prime Minister Rishi Sunak, the French president sought to position himself as a Jacques Chirac, not a Francois Hollande, by directing the diplomacy of a country whose raucous issues too often prohibit

her leaders from having a global impact.

In a joint statement with Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, Macron reiterated his support for Israel, while warning of the need to avoid civilian casualties and not lose track of a political solution. Keen to extend France's traditional "friend of both" policy in regard to the conflict, he condemned Israeli settlements in the West Bank and East Jerusalem as being illegal. While being supportive of an independent Palestinian state, France officially considers Hamas as a terrorist organization and calls on it to renounce violence. The president also found time to visit the Palestinian Authority in Ramallah before continuing on to regional capitals. The lack of fanfare surrounding his arrival was perhaps symptomatic of the lowering of France's

position in the region.

Relations between France and the Middle East are long-standing, with Paris having particularly close ties to the Levant. Having been closely involved in the modern history and politics of the Levantine states of Lebanon, Syria and Iraq, as well as Israel and the Occupied Territories, the current crisis offers Macron the opportunity to restate France's historical credentials. His visit built upon the president's longstanding involvement in Lebanese affairs, through which he has argued the importance of that country's stability to the wider region and called for an overhaul of its political life and economic management. Regarding Syria, on which Macron has been vocal in his opposition to the Assad regime, he came to power too late to have a lasting impact on the con-

flict. It is in Iraq, therefore, where he has sought to have influence. Macron's Baghdad Summit was an attempt to solidify regional cooperation. Last week's regional visit came amid uncertainty over the summit's next meeting, which may be canceled in light of the current events in the Middle East.

Macron's recent diplomatic activity in the Arab world, with a visit to the Gulf scheduled for later in the autumn, comes in the light of the sustained decline in France's influence on the African continent. Macron has attracted criticism for presiding over France's shrinking international role, making the presence of French companies like TotalEnergies in Iraq and Safran and Dassault in the Gulf particularly important to demonstrate his ability to pursue French interests. Through diplomatic platforms such as the Baghdad

Summit, increased economic ties and the soft power projection of cultural projects like the Louvre Abu Dhabi, the French presidential envoy to AIUla and the country's enduring custodianship of certain Catholic sites in Jerusalem, France seeks a role greater than that of mediator. It wants to be a diplomatic leader in the region.

Macron will be president until 2027 but, bound by constitutional term limits, the 45-year-old will be mid-career when he steps down from one of the world's most powerful jobs. His efforts to bolster Europe's influence in international affairs and his responses to international crises - marked by his "no matter the cost" policy during the COVID-19 pandemic - in parallel to his involvement in conflict resolution and peace-building initiatives, stand out as preparation for a greater calling.

War in Sudan is a consequence of a derailed transition

Dirdeiry M Ahmed

TWO hundred days into the war in Sudan, the Sudanese people remain trapped in a conflict not of their own making. More than 9,000 civilians have been killed and 5.6 million forced to flee their homes, while the capital, Khartoum, continues to be ravaged by savage internecine warfare. Meanwhile, the world's attention is gradually shifting elsewhere.

When the war erupted on April 15, the story circulated by international media outlets was that this is a typical power struggle between two generals who were once allies: Abdel Fattah al-Burhan, the commander-in-chief of the Sudan Armed Forces (SAF), and Mohamed Hamdan Dagalo, also known as Hemedti, the commander of the paramilitary Rapid Support Forces (RSF). Nothing is further from the truth. Recently, in a statement marking the six months of the war, United Nations Under-Secretary-General Martin Griffiths said this is "one of the worst humanitarian nightmares in recent history". He emphasised the horrific reports of rape and sexual violence and asserted that the country has been engulfed in chaos. Yet, he said nothing as to why the war is being fought.

If the media have mischaracterised the reason behind the eruption of the war, high-level statements from the international community, like the one above, have been completely silent about it. Neither have tried to envision Sudan's path forward. On April 11, 2019, an uprising triggered by the deteriorating economic situation toppled President Omar al-Bashir, ending his three-decade-long rule. Sudan formerly experienced two uprisings that brought down military regimes - in 1964 and 1985.

Given their experience with past uprisings, in 2019, the Sudanese people widely expected a brief political transition that would address economic issues - with the help of the international community - and prepare the country for multiparty elections within a year or two. However, that was not to be. This time around, two factors that were nonexistent in 1964 and 1985 came into play and proved to be paramount. First, because of the "Islamist" comportment of al-Bashir's regime, regional and international players were more focused on "dismantling" it so the elections would not end up bringing Islamists back to power. For this purpose, the international community had to start a project to remake the country. Dissolving the former ruling NCP and hunting its leaders outside the purview of the law became the main objective of the transition. A commission that was not accountable to the attorney general or subjected to judicial review was formed for this purpose.

The comprehensive overhaul of the country included calls for Sudan to join the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW), to rush into convening pride parades even before homosexuality is decriminalised, and to normalise relations with Israel by joining the Abraham

Accords. These controversial issues were imposed on the schedule of the transition, even though they are the business of an elected parliament. Second, uninitiated neoliberals - mostly former communists and Baathists - were anointed by the international community as the legitimate heirs of al-Bashir. As soon as they became comfortable in their new positions, they completely forgot about the economic woes of the country and failed to produce any programme for reform. Additionally, they did not want to hold any elections, bearing in mind the narrowness of their support base. Soon enough, they locked horns for power, each wanting to have a larger piece of the cake in this exceptionally long transition. As a matter of fact, the entire transition was transformed into an exercise in fielding the neoliberals as the newfound political elite of the country.

When the Constitutional Charter of August 2019, which sealed a marriage of convenience between the military component (both SAF and RSF) on one the hand and the neoliberals on the other, frayed in October 2021, the international community pushed another deal down the throat of the two sides. That was the Framework Agreement of December 2022. Eventually, Hemedti - already beleaguered and fearing international sanctions for launching a bloody crackdown on a sit-in in Khartoum in June 2019 - threw in his lot with the neoliberals in a bid to improve his political fortunes. Allegedly, he was also on a mission "to restore democracy and civilian rule". By then, it was clear to diplomats in Khartoum that an eventual showdown between SAF and RSF was inevitable. Yet, nobody was willing to call for ending the faltering transition and convening elections.

Sudan sits at the intersection of the Middle East, North Africa, East Africa, and the Sahel. As such, it is very much in the throes of all ills of these regions. In this accursed quarter, if you profess a position tolerating the possible return of Islamists to power, you are grabbing the third rail with both hands. That is mainly because some groups and countries in this region are very quick to attack anyone who questions whatever they are doing to exclude Islamists. For them, any Islamist is a member of the Muslim Brotherhood and a likely operative of ISIL (ISIS), al-Shabab or Boko Haram.

In Sudan, in particular, such conversation takes place in the shadow of three decades of government that the West abhorred and always accused of doing something nefarious. This had been the case even though that government went to great lengths to gain Western acceptance, including by agreeing to the secession of South Sudan, adopting the 2005 constitution, and opening unprecedented avenues for women in education, employment, and leadership.

Yet, in this part of the world, it is the past rather than the present

that shapes how current events are seen. It is the stereotype and the cliché rather than the reality that matters. When CNN asked the RSF spokesperson on April 26 about their objective, he said the group was "seeking to capture" al-Burhan and bring him to justice for "many treasons acts against the Sudanese people".

Because RSF was fighting at the beginning of the war for the cause of the neoliberals - namely, to rid the country of the Islamists - international think tanks, like the International Crisis Group (ICG), have not hesitated to wish it well. In a report released in July 2023, the ICG stated: "The RSF has held the upper hand in Khartoum since the early days of the war, but that advantage is only growing more apparent. Even some army backers suggest the RSF is on the cusp of decisive military victory in the capital, especially if it can soon overrun the compound where army leader General Abdel Fattah al-Burhan and some of his key lieutenants are sheltering. The RSF has besieged the headquarters almost since the conflict began; it has now tightened its grip." Calling the SAF's claim to the title of national army "dubious", the report went on to assert: "Given internal fissures and the deep hostility toward the RSF, any settlement raises the risk of a split in the army, including the possibility that hardliners team up with Bashir-era Islamists to fight on. An RSF victory would likely leave no place for those Islamists, who might then face a difficult choice among negotiating surrender terms, battling on in a losing cause or seeking safe passage to a third country."

The sidelining of Islamists in Sudan is clearly a top item on foreign agendas for Sudan. Apart from failing to see the military progress made by SAF, courtesy of its air superiority, the ICG also did not register the change in RSF's goals for the war. While RSF needed the neoliberals for the purposes of winning international legitimacy, talk of "restoring civilian rule" figured prominently in its rhetoric. But as the war scales tipped in favour of SAF, RSF was more in need of a source of fighters to join the war. The neoliberals were of little help in this regard.

As a result, the RSF spokesperson started to claim that their goal is to end "the 1956 state" controlled by riverine communities of central and northern Sudan and to replace it with one controlled by Junaid tribes, the ethnic groups of Arab origin that live in the Kordofan and Darfur regions of Sudan, as well as Chad and Niger. The involvement of fighters from these tribes, be they Sudanese or non-Sudanese, is now a prominent feature of this war. Of course, this has momentous implications for the territorial integrity and sovereignty of Sudan and for the peace and security of the region. As Rosalind Marsden, the former UK ambassador to Sudan and associate fellow at Chatham House, has warned: there is a risk of a "de facto partition, in

which Hemedti controls Darfur and much of Khartoum, SAF controls much of the rest of the country, especially the east and the north, and an armed movement led by Abdel Aziz Al Hilu contests South Kordofan and southern Blue Nile. Indeed, in an audio recording released on September 14, Hemedti suggests for the first time that, if Burhan establishes a government in Port Sudan, he will form a government in Khartoum". Yet this dimension is not taken seriously enough by the international community. For the United States, for instance, the most urgent concerns in Sudan shifted from the exclusion of Islamists to addressing humanitarian needs, not putting the country's transition back on track. Being Sudan's largest contributor of humanitarian aid, the US has expressed its support for a ceasefire and peace negotiations to make delivering aid possible.

Indeed, providing humanitarian assistance to displaced Sudanese people should be the top priority, particularly in the Chadian border town of Adre, where many have fled from neighbouring

Darfur. Nonetheless, if the transition is not fixed, the humanitarian crisis will persist for years to come. Last week, it was announced that SAF and RSF have resumed talks in Jeddah with the hope of agreeing on a ceasefire, and possibly a deal to end the war. With SAF gaining the upper hand on the main battlefield and RSF losing military momentum, it is expected that the latter will sue for peace. This is particularly so because the meandering lines of tribal fighters from Western Sudan to Khartoum started to dwindle. About two weeks ago, mediators from the African Union and the subregional Intergovernmental Authority for Development (IGAD) visited Cairo to consult with politicians on how to start an all-inclusive process to restore the Sudan transition to its path. Perhaps there is a ray of hope after all.

The Sudanese people are hardwired for freedom. A call for elections will resonate with many. Sudan is not new to multiparty elections which were held even during al-Bashir's regime. In 2010, the polls that were convened at the end of the transition period following the second Sudanese civil war were monitored by the Carter Center and were seen as highly credible. It is not true that the Sudan war is a fight between two generals. Nor is it a war that was "decades in the making", as the ICG report would have us believe. To be sure, this is a war that was triggered by a derailed political transition. The parties who caused that to happen still do not see the need for the country to pivot to the path of its transition. For them, a return to the transition implies the vanquishing of RSF and, even worse, the return of Islamists. If that is the likely outcome, for some, it is better to see the country disintegrate. Yet, many active players are now convinced that there is no viable alternative for this country other than to restore the transition to its path.

Israel is forcibly disappearing Gaza

Belén Fernández

ON October 28, Israeli military spokesperson **Daniel Hagari took to X - the platform formerly known as Twitter - with an "urgent message" for the residents of the Gaza Strip. For their "immediate safety", Hagari said in a message entirely in English, residents of northern Gaza and Gaza City were urged to "temporarily relocate south".**

The performance was grotesquely preposterous for a variety of reasons, not least of them that English is the official language of neither Israel nor Palestine - which suggests that the intended audience was not, in fact, the population whose "immediate safety" was supposedly of such concern to Hagari & Co.

Indeed, if safety were actually a concern, the Israeli army would not have slaughtered more than 8,000 Palestinians in three weeks, among them more than 3,000 children. Nor would Israel have continued to carpet-bomb both northern and southern Gaza following its previous warning to Palestinians in the north of the enclave to evacuate south. Just as critically, it is not clear how anyone in Gaza was supposed to see this "urgent message" from Hagari given the total communications blackout that Israel had orchestrated the day before, leaving the territory without telephone or internet service. Anyway, the evacuation warning was presumably appreciated by the section of the online anglophone world that insists on believing that Israel tries really hard not to kill civilians.

Communications in the Gaza Strip have since been partially restored, a turn of events that The Wall Street Journal attributes to the United States' pressure on Israel. To be sure, it is far more ethically important to keep the internet on in Gaza than to, say, stop funding Israel's genocide of Palestinians. The temporary blackout was, however, long enough to induce an all-penetrating sense of helplessness in a whole lot of people worldwide, particularly those with family in Gaza. The torturous uncertainty was captured in many social media posts such as this one

from my Facebook friend Majed Abusalama: "Mama, Baba, Mohammed, Naya, Eliya, Asmaa and the rest are may be killed or alive," Majed, an Al Jazeera contributor who hails from Gaza's Jabalia refugee camp but currently resides in Berlin, is himself a survivor of repeated Israeli aggression against Gaza, including having his school hit with illegal white phosphorus munitions. Eliya is his six-year-old niece; his other niece Naya is just two months old, meaning she has spent nearly half of her life under Israeli bombs. When my father died of cancer in August of this year, Majed sent me a moving note expressing his heartfelt condolences and his own fear of losing his parents - a distinctly constant possibility given their place of residence. Once during an Israeli bombardment, he said, his mother had phoned him from Gaza to say goodbye.

Now, of course, the phone lines were down, and I found myself manically checking Majed's Facebook page to see if any news had managed to pierce the void. He had already lost numerous relatives and friends to the Israeli onslaught, but his immediate family had thus far survived. When communications were partially restored on Sunday, they were still among the living - although many Palestinians were not. The 36-hour blackout likely proved especially deadly as it hindered the work of rescue teams, who could not be contacted to extricate folks from the rubble and otherwise respond to those in need. Meanwhile, the communications shutdown naturally only further inhibited the efforts of journalists and Gaza residents - who already contend on a daily basis with shaky phone and internet service - to transmit the truth of a genocide happening in real time. And while Gaza is currently precariously back online, the bloody offline interlude no doubt also metaphorically encapsulated Israel's unspeakably sinister objective: to disappear Palestinians both physically and conceptually.

It is, in fact, hardly a stretch to argue that taking the Palestinians of Gaza off the online grid is a modern twist on the age-old phenom-

enon of forced disappearances, at least in terms of the lack of accountability for victims as well as the psychological effects on their families. Just as disappeared people cannot aspire to justice while being disappeared, their loved ones cannot aspire to emotional closure without knowing their whereabouts and fates. As has been seen time and again over the decades in situations of mass forced disappearance from Argentina to El Salvador and from Spain to Sri Lanka, family members of disappeared people are often condemned to perpetual psychological limbo, unable to commence the necessary human grieving process while remaining in the dark as to what exactly befell the missing person. Some years ago in the south Lebanese village of Maaroub, I spoke with a silver-haired man named Abed, whose younger brother Ahmed had been involved with the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) in Lebanon and had disappeared in 1983, the year after an apocalyptic Israeli invasion of the country killed tens of thousands of Lebanese and Palestinians. According to Abed, one theory was that Ahmed had ended up in an Israeli prison, but the lack of any concrete information meant that his family members got to spend the rest of their existence in a state of emotional torture.

Obviously, Israel's recent blackout experiment in Gaza was a more short-lived disappearing act. And yet in the context of the past 75 years of Israeli ethnic cleansing and massacres of Palestinians, it should send a fairly "urgent message" - to borrow those well-phrased words of Israeli spokesperson Hagari. One recalls the notorious claim by late Israeli Prime Minister Golda Meir that there was "no such thing as a Palestinian people", which has certainly aided Israel's history of butchery; after all, it is easier to bomb people if they don't exist, right? And even more so, perhaps, if they are all offline. But unfortunately for the state of Israel, neither the Palestinian people nor Israeli war crimes are easily disappeared - and that in itself should be an urgent message for Israel.

China's economy shows resilience

Clarence Wong

HEADLINES on the global economic outlook have shifted from a **founding recovery amid a cost-of-living crisis early this year to concerns over imminent recession, particularly in continental Europe. There is growing conviction that the central banks of developed economies will maintain high rates for a longer time.**

The argument that more demand destruction is needed to contain high inflation is gaining ground. At the same time, the slow pace of China's economic recovery is adding to the global headwinds. Oftentimes, the debate is mingled with questions on how resilient is the Chinese economy. Is China tracking a slower potential growth trajectory? Structural factors suggest China will not be able to maintain the 8 percent average real GDP growth rate of the past two decades. To begin with, growth will naturally slow down as the economy gets bigger and more mature. Also, China is losing some of its former advantages, such as abundance of labor and low factor cost of production.

So, instead of increasing factor input, China is likely to rely more on productivity enhancement and a better mix of productive factors to drive growth. But is the recovery of the Chinese economy faltering?

Most economic indicators, including retail sales and industrial production (+4.6 and 4.5 percent respectively in August) have reported healthy growth in recent months. The contraction in exports continued at a slower pace (-8.8 percent in August compared with -14.5 percent in July priced in dollar) while the purchasing managers' index improved to 49.7 in August from 49.3 in July. Overall, economic activities are showing signs of stabilization, though further policy support will be needed to reinvigorate the real estate sector and attract more investment. Therefore, can the Chinese economy be said to be resilient? This is one of the hottest topics dominating public debate. Before addressing this question, it would be better to take a look at the concept of economic resilience. Economic resilience means how well an

economy anticipates, prepares and recovers from external shocks (or even avoids them).

Looking through the lens of economic resilience, changes in economic readings and regulations are being seen in terms of whether they increase or decrease vulnerability, not in terms of whether they contribute to or negate economic growth. GDP growth and economic resilience are interconnected and mutually reinforcing. For instance, faster economic growth can contribute to greater economic resilience by strengthening the country's fiscal position. However, equating GDP growth with economic resilience and vice versa would be a mistake because a country, despite undergoing a soft patch of growth, could still be economically resilient.

Economic resilience is built on many initiatives. Some include measures to broaden the country's economic base, introduction of macro-prudential measures, and the strengthening of fiscal disciplines, among others. Some typically involve institutionalized measures to contain and mitigate external shocks. Given this fact, it is conceivable that some initiatives that boost economic resilience could negatively impact growth. The balance of growth-versus-fragility typifies many policy choices. An example will be increasing capital account openness, which will facilitate the development of broader and deeper capital markets while increasing financial and currency risks. Similarly, deleveraging China's highly indebted property sector, which will contribute to higher economic resilience, comes at the cost of temporarily depressing construction activities. Also, some initiatives do not involve growth-fragility trade-offs, like lowering regulatory barriers, increasing regulatory quality and certainty, and other product and labour market policies. On the other hand, not all contributors to resilience show up in GDP calculation, like income distribution and pollution.

Anecdotal evidence helps to highlight examples that show the resilience of the

Chinese economy. For instance, during the three-year-long COVID-19 pandemic, China transitioned to more localized production networks by leveraging its vast domestic consumption base. Increasing digitalization of trade and the extension of production networks closer to final consumers are also demonstrations of the high level resilience of China's industrial base. While there are differences across resilience indexes due to the variation in factors used, there are also some commonalities. For instance, China can significantly improve its economic resilience by intensifying its decarbonization efforts. And there are positive signs that China is moving swiftly to address this issue. China's offshore wind power added about 5 million kilowatt of installed capacity in 2022, accounting for nearly half of the global total. The world's first 16-megawatt ultra-large-capacity offshore wind turbine, located on a Fujian offshore wind farm, was connected to the national grid on July 19 this year. This achievement is part of China's decarbonization efforts to boost its overall economic resilience in the years to come.

Economic resilience and sustainable growth are long-term national objectives. Cyclical fluctuations in economic performance should not be confused with increasing vulnerability. This is particularly true as China moves away from its previous reliance on post-incidence initiatives (for example, counter-cyclical fiscal stimulus) to focus more on pre-incidence initiatives (for instance, fiscal consolidation and fiscal disciplines). In insurance, resilience refers to a society's ability to recover quickly from external shocks like typhoons or earthquakes. That requires a multi-stakeholder risk management approach, including risk identification (exposure to different natural catastrophes), early warning systems (alert of approaching typhoons), risk mitigation measures (robust building codes) and robust post-disaster response (reconstruction efforts). The same applies to economic resilience.

The China Daily

Israel, Iran and US dragged toward war by monsters of their own creation

Baria Alamuddin

AS the Gaza carnage soars, the nationwide threat posed by Tehran-backed paramilitary hordes and their immense missile arsenals is no longer an abstract one. Hundreds of thousands of radicalized transnational paramilitaries are goading themselves into a conflict - ostensibly with Israel, but also probably dragging in the US, its allies and the region.

Militias are already amassing along the Syria-Lebanon-Israel borders, where there are inexorably escalating missile assaults, skirmishes and airstrikes. Israeli military figures have long argued that a decisive confrontation with these factions would ultimately be necessary, particularly now that Israel's leadership widely believes that Iran triggered this latest conflict via Hamas. In Gaza, more than 8,000 have been killed, including about 3,200 Palestinian children. An eruption on Israel's northern border would bring an exponentially greater conflict, with Hezbollah boasting of having 100,000 fighters and 150,000 rockets. Iraq's Al-Hashd Al-Sha'abi exceeds 240,000 fighters, with large affiliated forces in Syria and Yemen. And then there are 190,000 Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps combatants, many already deployed throughout the region. This compares with 170,000 active Israeli military personnel and 460,000 reservists.

With 300,000 Israeli forces already committed near Gaza, this illustrates why a multifront war is Israel's nightmare scenario, particularly with the West Bank in turmoil. US intervention could become inevitable once Iranian proxies wade in: Israel cannot fight everyone at once. American nervousness about all-out conflict is manifested in the timid manner in which it passively observed 18 militant strikes against US targets

in Iraq and Syria, before responding with two bashfully symbolic attacks against militant facilities on the Syria-Iraq border. White House spokesman John Kirby said: "Nobody's looking for a conflict with Iran." Defense Secretary Lloyd Austin said the US had "no intention nor desire to engage in further hostilities." But as militia strikes continue, the US may be reluctantly sucked into an escalatory tit for tat.

Western nationals are being told to leave Lebanon. With the only currently functioning airport in Beirut issuing evacuation protocols, there is nationwide panic about being trapped in the line of fire of an Israeli invasion. This conflict is only possible because all sides created and provoked dangerous phenomena they could not control. Hezbollah and Hamas' very existence is the consequence of historic Israeli machinations. Hezbollah was founded in the smoking ruins of Israel's 1982 Lebanon invasion and Hamas' expansion was credited to Israel's cultivation of Palestine's Islamist movement as a counterweight to the secular Palestine Liberation Organization.

Benjamin Netanyahu's evisceration of the two-state solution decimated Palestinian moderate and intellectual opinion, leaving armed Islamists as the only entities with supposedly viable strategies for resisting occupation. Many Israeli and US columnists argue that Netanyahu and Hamas enjoyed a decades-long "symbiotic" relationship, cultivating each other for partisan political calculations. Malevolent mobs of murderous, messianic settlers, mobilized by extreme-right puppet masters, fomented boiling chaos in the West Bank that threatens to blow up in everybody's faces. The only possi-

ble outcome of the Gaza carnage will be to provoke a desire for vengeance in entirely new generations. Tehran has struggled to control the transnational hordes it cultivated. Capricious militia commanders such as Qais Khazali view perpetual provocation as an endlessly productive strategy, in careers built upon engineering anarchy and mayhem. Kata'ib Hezbollah has threatened attacks on the Gulf, the Houthis are launching drones over Egyptian and Saudi airspace and Iraqi militants are blocking oil supplies along the Jordan border, all fueling perfect storms of conflict regionalization.

Statements from Tehran urge de-escalation, while dealing in provocation. Foreign Minister Hossein Amir-Abdollahian gloated that paramilitaries such as Hezbollah had their "fingers on the trigger" and boasted that their next moves would be "much more powerful and deeper than what you've witnessed." Iran sank decades of investment into Hezbollah, which has played a leading role in training and mobilizing other regional militias. The methodology of mass-casualty suicide attacks, exploited ad infinitum by Daesh and Al-Qaeda, was pioneered by Hezbollah in the 1980s.

Tehran does not want to witness Israel dismembering and eliminating its biggest asset. Hezbollah likewise warned that it will not stand idly by and witness the destruction of Hamas. As with other powers that manipulated Middle Eastern conflicts for their own amusement, Russia is gleefully pouring fuel on the fire, hoping that if the West is drawn into a widened conflict, Ukraine will be entirely forgotten. As Israel's Gaza incursions continue, Hezbollah has been mocked that, despite its

"marching to Jerusalem" rhetoric, it appears highly reluctant to rush into precisely the kind of war it supposedly exists to fight. Hundreds of thousands of battle-hungry paramilitaries were likewise brainwashed that they represent the "Islamic Resistance," tasked with liberating Palestine - whatever the actual Machiavellian objectives of their paymasters. Luckily, Hassan Nasrallah appears, for now, to be sufficiently pragmatic to take Israel's apocalyptic threats seriously, although his efforts to displace the conflict to the Syrian border are unlikely to spare Lebanon. Nasrallah met representatives from Palestinian Islamic Jihad and Hamas, who begged him to enter the conflict, while agreeing to coordinate through a joint operations room.

In 2014, the US allowed the creation of the Iraqi paramilitary Al-Hashd Al-Sha'abi as a hands-off means of combating Daesh, in parallel with US-backed proxies in Syria. But Western powers did nothing to prevent the Hashd beheadings doubling in size, even after Daesh's defeat, despite repeated warnings about the perils such forces posed to regional stability. Like the nastiest slasher movies fevered imaginations can conjure up, this cowardly failure to slay undead demons of past conflicts is returning to haunt us for Halloween 2023.

Opportunistic posturing and provocation by transnational militias and their paymasters offer scant comfort to Gaza's citizens, who are being bombed and starved into oblivion. Nobody wants an expanded conflict: not Israel, not America and certainly not bankrupt Iran. But all these parties have become impotent prisoners of the escalatory cycle they and their proxy legions are energetically fueling.

Arab News



SCCI announces setting of a Bank Facilitation Desk

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: State Bank of Pakistan under the Prime Minister Youth Loan Scheme has introduced a scheme to issue loans to young, male and female entrepreneurs for investment and doing business in various sectors including solar energy, renewable energy, at discounted markup, through which the youth will promote their businesses.

The Sarhad Chamber of Commerce and Industry President Fuad Ishaq announced the setting up of a Bank Facilitation Desk at the Chamber House to facilitate the business community.

According to the details, the Regional Business Head of First Women's Bank, Sharaf Nisa Khattak,

held a meeting with the President of Sarhad Chamber of Commerce and Industry, Fuad Ishaq, at the Chamber House, said in a press release issued here on Tuesday.

On this occasion, the vice President of the chamber Ijaz Khan Afridi, Secretary General Sajjad Aziz and others were also present.

During the meeting, Sharaf Nisa Khattak, Regional Business Head of First Women's Bank Limited informed that bank has offered 5% markup loans on solar energy and renewable energy to youth, male and female entrepreneurs under PM Youth Loan Scheme.

She also informed in detail about the provision of loans at low markup rate by the bank and its various

schemes for doing business/investment in various sectors including business.

The senior officers of the bank have requested the chamber to organize an awareness session about the loan schemes on easy terms for the youth on behalf of the bank at the SCCI level and also to inform the members about these schemes.

Sharaf Nisa Khattak also urged to set up a special facilitation desk of the bank at the level of Sarhad Chamber, which President of the chamber Fuad Ishaq agreed to in the chamber house.

Fuad Ishaq, while speaking on the occasion, has assured the senior officer of the bank to create awareness among the youth/members about various schemes for doing business on easy terms and low markup rate.

The SCCI chief said that the business community of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa has been severely affected by terrorism and the Coronavirus pandemic lockdown, while traders and exporters were facing many difficulties due to the far away from the sea port.

He emphasized that the government and commercial banks should take steps to address the problems of the business community and ensure the provision of low markup and interest-free loans for the development of small and medium businesses and industries.

Fuad Ishaq welcomed the low mark-up loan schemes for youth, men and women to invest in various businesses through the First Women Bank Limited.



PESHAWAR: People buying Jaggery (Gurr) at Gurr Market.

PSX continues with bullish trend, gains 437 points

ISLAMABAD (APP): The 100-index of Pakistan Stock Exchange (PSX) continued with bullish trend on Tuesday, gaining 437.34 points, a positive change of 0.85 percent, closing at 51,920.27 points against 51,482.93 points the previous day.

A total of 455,331,569 shares valuing Rs15.639 billion were traded during the day as compared to 286,621,604 shares valuing Rs11.445 billion the previous day.

As many as 357 companies transacted their shares in the stock market; 188 of them recorded gains and 147 sustained losses, whereas the share price of 22 companies remained unchanged.

The three top-trading companies were Energyco PK with 71,274,408 shares at Rs.3.93 per share, Pak Refinery with 51,538,473 shares at Rs.20.69 per share and WorldCall Telecom with 22,604,739 shares at Rs.1.28 per share.

Rafhan Maize XD witnessed a maximum increase of Rs.170.00 per share price, closing at Rs.8,020.00, whereas the runner-up was Mehmood Textile with a Rs.36.00 rise in its per share price to Rs518.50.

Sapphire FiberXD witnessed a maximum decrease of Rs.37.33 per share closing at Rs1,033.67, followed by Lucky Core Ind. with a Rs.11.39 decline to close at Rs.622.84.

Rupee sheds 53 paise against Dollar

ISLAMABAD (APP): Pakistani Rupee on Tuesday witnessed 37-paise depreciation against US Dollar in the interbank trading and closed at Rs281.47 against the previous day's closing of Rs280.94.

However, according to the Forex Association of Pakistan (FAP), the buying and selling rates of the Dollar in the open market stood at Rs280.8 and Rs283.3 respectively.

The price of the Euro increased by Rs 2.44 to close at Rs298.84 against the last day's closing of Rs296.40, according to the State Bank of Pakistan (SBP).

The Japanese Yen remained unchanged and closed at Rs 1.87; whereas an increase of Rs2.01 was witnessed in the exchange rate of the British Pound, which traded at Rs341.89 as compared to the last closing of Rs339.82.

The exchange rates of the Emirates Dirham and the Saudi Riyal decreased by 14 paise each to close at Rs76.63 and Rs75.02 respectively.

IMARAT plans Pak's biggest REIT

F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: IMARAT Group, the leading real estate developer in Pakistan, is pleased to announce the establishment of a Real Estate Investment Trust (REIT) management company (RMC). This is a precursor to IMARAT's launching its own REIT next year.

The newly established REIT management company will initially incorporate four projects from IMARAT Group's extensive portfolio of 15 projects. These selected projects demonstrate the Group's commitment to innovation, sustainability, and delivering value to its

investors.

Over the next few years, the saleable inventory for these REIT projects is estimated to be worth \$1 billion. This significant figure underscores the potential of this venture and the substantial returns it could yield for investors.

"We are excited about this new chapter in our growth story," said a spokesperson for IMARAT Group. "The establishment of a REIT management company aligns with our vision to provide diverse and profitable investment opportunities. We believe that this initiative will not only benefit our investors but also contribute positive-

ly to the real estate sector and the economy at large."

IMARAT Group invites all interested parties to explore investment opportunities with its new REIT management company. Further details about the projects included in the REIT will be shared in due course.

IMARAT Group is a leading real estate developer with a diverse portfolio of 15 projects. With a "Passion to Build" philosophy, and the vision to transform Pakistan's real estate sector, the Group is committed to delivering high-quality, sustainable developments that offer excellent value for investors.

JS Bank stands with Global Pinktober drive

F.P. Report

KARACHI: Reiterating its commitment to social responsibility, JS Bank participated in Global Pinktober Month, dedicated to raising awareness about breast cancer and the importance of early detection.

The month began with awareness activities designed to communicate essential knowledge about breast cancer, its risk factors, and the role of early diagnosis to internal and external audiences through multiple platforms, including digital and social media channels.

"We're not just a bank; we're a community. And in our community, we look out for each other," said Basir Shamsie, President & CEO of JS Bank.

The awareness campaign was followed by an interactive session for all JS Bank's employees. Dr. Zubaida Qazi, Founder & President of Pink Pakistan Trust, conducted the session at the Jahangir Siddiqui auditorium at IBA, Karachi. She shared details about this life-threatening cancer, the importance of regular self-examinations, and clinical screenings, which can significantly improve the chances of survival. The session also gave a chance to the breast cancer survivors to share their stories of strength and resilience.

The teams at JS Bank also visited Shaikat Khanum Hospital, PIMS and Jinnah Hospital in Lahore, Islamabad and Karachi, respectively, to show solidarity with the cancer patients. The Bank also partnered with Mumtaz Hospital to offer free one-on-one screening and consultation with Dr. Ziauddin Hospital to conduct awareness sessions for its staff, helping them identify the early signs of breast cancer.

Breast cancer affects millions of women worldwide, irrespective of their race, age, or nationality. By coming together to support Pinktober, JS Bank hopes to empower individuals to take charge of their health and encourage them to spread the message of early detection to their loved ones.

Pinktober is more than just a corporate social responsibility initiative; it's a call to action. It's a reminder that we all have a role to play in creating a better future for ourselves and our communities. By joining hands, we can make a real difference in the lives of those affected by this disease.

JS Bank is amongst the fastest-growing Banks in Pakistan, with both a domestic and an international presence. The Bank is a leader in the SME space and has a substantial footprint in Digital Banking and Consumer Loans. JS Bank has been recognized on multiple international and national forums, including the prestigious AsiaMoney, Asian Banking, Finance, DIGI, and Pakistan Banking Awards. JS Bank is part of JS Group, one of Pakistan's most diversified and progressive financial services groups.

Fatima Fertilizer signs agreement with Mastercard — to digitize farm input payments in agriculture



F.P. Report

DUBAI: Fatima Fertilizer, Pakistan's leading fertilizer manufacturing company, and Mastercard, a global technology company in the payments industry, have signed an agreement aimed at modernizing Pakistan's agricultural ecosystem by ensuring financial inclusion of farmers. This strategic collaboration will leverage the latest technologies to digitize payment transactions between a nationwide network of thousands of fertilizer dealers and the farmer community.

A fundamental goal of this agreement is to enhance the country's national food security. By boosting the agricultural sector's efficiency and productivity, Fatima Fertilizer and Mastercard seek to significantly contribute

towards a more secure and stable food supply. This collaboration will also focus on implementing innovative agricultural practices and technologies that can increase the per-acre yield and improve the economic situation of farmers.

Rabel Sadozai, Director of Marketing and Sales at Fatima Fertilizer, expressed her commitment to this endeavor by saying, "Fatima Fertilizer believes in the modernization of Pakistan's agricultural sec-

tor, including the financial inclusion of farmers. Our collaboration with Mastercard will harness modern technologies to uplift Pakistani farmers' social and economic prosperity and position them as key players in safeguarding national food security."

Arslan Khan, Vice President and Country Business Manager, Pakistan at Mastercard, said, "During its 20-year presence in Pakistan, Mastercard has become a trusted partner to

the country's public and private sector entities in driving financial inclusion and digitizing new payment flows. This agreement with Fatima Fertilizer marks an important step in our efforts to bring 50 million micro, small, and medium enterprises (MSMEs) worldwide into the digital economy by 2025. Together, we will empower smallholder farmers to access vital resources that enable them to step up their role in achieving Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 2: Zero Hunger, while improving lives in their communities."

This collaboration is a critical milestone in advancing the financial well-being of Pakistani farmers and strengthening the nation's agricultural supply chain. By introducing digital payment solutions and fostering financial inclusion, Fatima Fertilizer and Mastercard are working together to drive growth, efficiency, and prosperity in Pakistan's agricultural sector.

22nd Shaikat Khanum Cancer Symposium to begin

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: The 22nd Shaikat Khanum Cancer Symposium is going to be held from the 3rd to the 5th of November 2023, for the first time in Peshawar.

The event will be a hybrid meeting and this largest oncology meeting in Pakistan will have more than 100 scientific talks.

There will be more than 60 international speakers from around 12 countries. Pre-symposium workshops will be held a day before the symposium and will have sessions on pathology and surgical oncology, including a live surgery session.

This meeting will provide a platform to delegates

from a variety of areas, including leading researchers, scientists, practitioners and trainees from across the world to exchange knowledge and expertise related to cancer diagnosis, treatment and research.

The plenary speaker this year is Professor Syed A. Hussain, Professor of Medical Oncology, from the University of Sheffield, UK, who will discuss Precision Medicine in Oncology - Changing Landscape in Cancer Management.

To promote cancer research, top submissions will receive the Ahsan Rashid Memorial Medal, named in honour of a great supporter and benefactor of

the Shaikat Khanum Memorial Trust.

Other awards include Bashir-Alavi Award, which will be given to the best research article published from Pakistan, and Begum Mir Memorial Award to be given to the best free paper in the nursing category.

The symposium is accredited by the American Association of Continuing Medical Education (AACME) for 36.75 credit hours.

The organising committee looks forward to welcoming you to this hybrid event in Peshawar, which is an excellent opportunity to discuss the latest advancements in the dynamic field of oncology.

Court Notice

In the Court of Saima Ehsan Civil Judge II/Allaqa Qazi Buner at Daggar. Case No. 207/1. Institution.5/7/2023. Date of hearing. 6/11/2023.Said Ghani VS Mst Manany widow etc. Notice to No. 3/2. Shah Rukh Khan. 3/3. Fida Khan sons of Mst Rasheda (late) residents of Barkalay Swari teshel Gagra Buner. Whereas in the above mentioned case the mentioned defendants can not be served in the ordinary way, it is, therefore, proclaimed that if the said defendants will/shall not appear personally or through dually authorized agent or pleader in the court at 8.30 am dated 6/11/2023 the proceeding will be taken ex- parte. Given under my hand and seal of this Court.

Public Notice

It is Published Through this notice that I. Muhammad Zubair Son of Labath Khan R/o House No. 164 Sector IV, KDA Kohat presently residing at Doha Qatar is the owner of Plot No. 72, Sector E-3 Size, 5 marla Phase, II KDA Kohat has appointed Mr. Zia-Ud-Din Son of Lal Zarin R/o House No. 89 sector No. E-2 Phase, II KDA Kohat Through (Special) Deed No. 579. Bahi No. 04 Volume No. 287 dated 25/10/2023 which is registered in the office Kohat of Tehsildar/ Sub Registrar. The Attorney holder now wants to Transfer the above said Plot. If any Bank /Institution/Firm/Person has any objection about the Transfer he should contact the housing officer UADA within 15 days in writing with Proofs otherwise plot will be transferred and no objection will be accepted. (Project Director Urban Area KDA Kohat).

Court Notice

In the Court of Saima Ehsan Civil Judge II/Allaqa Qazi Buner at Daggar. Case No. 282. Institution. 5/4/2022. Date of hearing. 13/11/2023. Fida Husain VS Raza Husain. Notice to No 3. Momin Khan. 4. Afzal Khan. 5. Bawar Khan sons of Masken residents of Pacha Kalay teshel Gadezai Buner. Whereas in the above mentioned case the mentioned defendants can not be served in the ordinary way, it is, therefore, proclaimed that if the said defendants will/shall not appear personally or through dually authorized agent or pleader in the court at 8.30 am dated 13/11/2023 the proceeding will be taken ex- parte. Given under my hand and seal of this Court.

year ended June 30, 2023, together with the auditor's report. A final cash dividend of 15 percent on both ordinary and convertible preference shares was also approved. Hence, total dividend paid for the year is 25 percent.

Presiding over the meeting, Chairman PPL Board of Directors Mr. Shahab Rizvi welcomed shareholders to the meeting. He appreciated management and staff's efforts in achieving extraordinary financial results as well as operational milestones during 2022-23, notably the highest-ever profit-after-tax of Rs. 98 billion in PPL's history. He shared that the company made four discoveries - Shahpur Chakar North in

operated Gambat South Block and three in partner-operated Tal and Kirthar blocks. With this, the company added 226 Bcfe in 1P reserves.

PPL clinched four new blocks - one operated and three partner-operated - during the year. Besides, 1,416 line km 2D and 1,130 sq. km 3D seismic data was acquired. The company paced up exploration efforts in high-risk-reward Balochistan-based frontier assets with initiation of 2D seismic in Margand, Musakhel, Kuhan and Suleiman blocks and 3D seismic in Pezu Block. He further shared that the PIOL consortium for PPL-operated offshore Block 5 in Abu Dhabi aims to drill identified prospects in 2023-24.

Despite natural decline from mature fields, PPL has improved its production from the previous year with approximately 815 MMscfde, primarily due to increased offtakes from Kandhkot, around 160 MMscfde, as well as development drilling- three wells in operated and two in partner-operated fields. Despite these efforts, he pointed out



that the mounting circular debt with PPL's receivables crossing half a trillion rupees in the gas business has put a severe burden on the company's liquidity. Efforts are underway to resolve the issue at the highest level.

On the mining front, PPL has entered into definitive agreements for Reko Diq project with a 25 percent equity stake with OGDCL and GHPL. A new company Pakistan Minerals (Private) Limited has also been established. He shared that a detailed feasibility

study of Reko Diq project is underway with expected production in 2028.

PPL's operated mining arm, Bolan Mining Enterprises, earned the highest-ever net sales revenue of Rs. 1.8 billion while pacing up efforts to kick off Baryte-Lead-Zinc (BLZ) project.

PPL is significantly invested in health and safety of its employees, contractors and stakeholders as well as restricting the environmental footprint of its operations. On the CSR front, the company spent

Rs. 3 billion during 2022-23, one of the highest in its history, to focus on community transformation through on ground, long-term development projects in operational and urban areas. PPL has been recognized as one of the largest corporate donors for the 18th consecutive year by the Pakistan Centre for Philanthropy.

Looking ahead, PPL is poised to bridge the national energy supply-demand gap through potentially large hydrocarbon discoveries in high-risk high-

reward frontier basins, including offshore concessions, and international ventures to broaden its portfolio.

Efforts will continue to maximize recovery from existing reservoirs, including mature fields, with the use of latest technology and upgrading facilities. Moreover, PPL will keep enhancing its stakes in the mining sector and look for opportunities in the energy value chain, including green energy, to expand its outreach as an integrated energy player.



In brief

Sri Lanka win over Pakistan

KARACHI (APP): Sri Lankan U-19 team defeated Pakistan U-19 squad by 165 runs here on Tuesday. The visiting side of Sri Lanka U19 squad won the ODI series 3-2. Sri Lanka U-19 team had given Pakistan a target of 294 runs to win. Santh Jayawardene scored 82 runs for Sri Lanka. Rusanda Gamage scored 66 and Palindu Perera scored 47 runs. Pakistan's Obaid Shah, Mohammad Ibtisam and Arafat Minhas took 2, 2 wickets. In pursuit of the desired target, Pakistan team was all-out for 128 runs. Arafat Minhas could play an innings of 57 runs. The Sri Lanka Under-19 cricket team will leave for their home country on Thursday.

Throwball Championship

ISLAMABAD (APP): The 12th Culligan Boys & Girls Throwball Championship-2023 will kick off at the PSB Coaching Centre, Karachi from November 14. The Championship would be played under the auspices of Pakistan Throwball Federation and in collaboration with Sindh Throwball Association. According to Secretary General, Pakistan Throwball Federation, Maqbool Arain men and women's teams from all over would take part in the championship and draws of the event will be announced on November 7. The semi finals and final of the championship would be played on November 17 and 18, respectively. The concluding ceremony of the Championship would also be held on November 18 where trophies, medals and certificates will be delivered to winning teams players.

Swiatek off mark with WTA Finals opening win

CANCÚN (AFP/APP): World number two Iga Swiatek overcame a shaky start to defeat Wimbledon champion Marketa Vondrousova in straight sets Monday in her opening WTA Finals game in Cancun. Polish star Swiatek looked out of sorts in an error-strewn first set in which she trailed 2-5 before roaring back to clinch a 7-6 (7/3), 6-0 victory. The 22-year-old four-time Grand Slam champion from Warsaw is bidding to reclaim her world number one tennis ranking from Aryna Sabalenka at this week's season-ending finals in Mexico. However that goal looked unlikely during a nervy opening from Swiatek, who was broken in her first service game before seventh seed Vondrousova held for a 2-0 lead. Swiatek managed to claw the break back in the fourth game to square the first set at 2-2 but then fell to pieces as Vondrousova broke for a 3-2 lead and then held to go 4-2 up. Another shaky service game from Swiatek ended in a break of serve to leave Vondrousova in the driving seat at 5-2. But Vondrousova's game collapsed thereafter, and Swiatek broke back twice in quick succession to level the set at 5-5 before holding for 6-5. Although Vondrousova steadied the ship to hold serve and set up a tie-break, it was only a temporary reprieve. Swiatek quickly took control of the breaker and clinched the set when Vondrousova double-faulted. Vondrousova's service game went into meltdown in the second set, with Swiatek breaking her three times in a row. Another Vondrousova double-fault left Swiatek 5-0 up, and the Pole sealed victory on her serve in the final game.



KOLKATA: Shaheen Shah Afridi is ecstatic after reaching 100 wickets in ODIs.

World Cup 2023

Pakistan race to victory to eliminate Bangladesh

KOLKATA (Agencies): Fakhar Zaman scored a rapid 81 as Pakistan raced to a seven-wicket win over Bangladesh in the World Cup. Set 205 to win, Fakhar and Abdullah Shafique put on 128 to help Pakistan surge to victory in 32.3 overs.

Shaheen Afridi earlier took his 100th one-day international wicket as he spearheaded a fantastic bowling effort to bowl Bangladesh out for 204.

Bangladesh's sixth straight loss means they are the first side officially out of semi-final contention.

Tigers captain Shakib Al Hasan opted to bat first at the toss but his side were soon in trouble as Shaheen trapped Tanzid Hasan lbw fifth ball to claim his landmark wicket.

Shaheen struck again in his next over and when Harris Rauf removed Mushfiqur Rahim, Bangladesh were 23-3.

Mahmudullah and Liton Das led the recovery but the former was bowled by a beauty from Shaheen soon after reaching his half-century and wickets continued to fall at regular intervals before Mohammad Wasim took three in seven reverse-swinging balls to wrap up



Fakhar and Abdullah put up a strong stand.

the innings.

After a frenetic start, Pakistan soon settled into their chase and Fakhar - recalled for his first game since Pakistan's opening match against the Netherlands - showed his intent with a monstrous six over the leg side off Taskin Ahmed.

He proceeded to hit a further six maximums before he holed out off Mehidy Hasan Miraz 19 runs shy of a hundred but, by that stage, the result was a formality and Muhammad Rizwan hit the winning

runs with 105 balls to spare.

Seamers show what might have been for Pakistan

Coming into this World Cup, Pakistan were seen as genuine contenders for the trophy and while a dominant win keeps them in the hunt for a semi-final place, they have so far fallen well short of expectations.

A much-vaunted pace attack has failed to fire, particularly up front.

At Eden Gardens on Tuesday, they finally came to the party with Shaheen

the star of the show.

The left-arm's potency with the new ball has been part of what has made Pakistan such a threat in white-ball cricket in recent times but, despite taking 13 wickets prior to the Bangladesh game, has lacked the zip that makes him so special since returning from a knee injury.

However, he looked somewhere close to his best as he claimed two wickets in his first two overs and Rauf also struck in the powerplay.

There was less threat through the middle overs but a bit of Shaheen magic did for Mahmudullah and Rauf bounced out the other key batter, Shakib.

Once the ball started to reverse swing, Pakistan's seamers were in their element and Bangladesh were forced into survival mode.

They didn't last long. Mohammad Wasim clinically mopped up the tail to leave Pakistan with a very modest target.

Two more wins might still be enough to send the 1992 champions into the semis but, if not, Pakistan will be left ruing the time it took for their fast bowling unit to find form.

Men's Ballon d'Or: Lionel Messi wins eighth award, beating Erling Haaland to trophy

PARIS (Agencies): Argentina and Inter Miami forward Lionel Messi has won the Men's Ballon d'Or for an eighth time.

The 36-year-old was recognised at the ceremony in Paris after helping his country win the World Cup in Qatar last year.

England and Real Madrid midfielder Jude Bellingham won the Copa Trophy for the world's best player aged under 21. Messi won his record-extending Ballon d'Or award ahead of Manchester City forward Erling Haaland.

France forward Kylian Mbappe - who became just the second man to score a World Cup final hat-trick in the 4-2 penalty shootout loss to Argentina - finished third.

"It's nice to be here once more to enjoy this moment," Messi said. "To be able to win the World Cup and achieve my dream." The former Barcelona and Paris St-Germain star added: "I couldn't imagine having the career I've had and everything I've achieved, the fortune I've had to be part of the best team in history. "All of them [Ballon d'Or awards] are special for different reasons."

Norway international Haaland scored a record-breaking 36 goals in 35 league games and hit 52 in all competitions as City won the Treble of Premier League, Champions League and FA Cup. He was recognised for his achievements with the Gerd Muller Trophy for best goalscorer.

"I want to thank Manchester City, the whole club," said Haaland. "I also want to thank my family and all the people around me for making me who I am today."

Messi moves further out in front of the rest

The Ballon d'Or recognises the best footballer of the year and is voted for by 100 journalists from around the world.



As well as helping Argentina to World Cup glory, Messi also played a key role as Inter Miami won their first trophy - the Leagues Cup - and has scored 11 goals in 14 appearances for the Major League Soccer side.

He has now won three more Ballon d'Or awards than anyone else, with Cristiano Ronaldo having won it five times, most recently in 2017. The Portugal international, who plays for Al Nassr in Saudi Arabia, was not named on the shortlist for the first time since 2003.

Martinez recognised as world's best goalkeeper

Argentina World Cup winner and Aston Villa goalkeeper Emiliano Martinez won the Yashin Trophy for the best goalkeeper in the world. Martinez won the Golden Glove in Qatar, saving a spot-kick from Kingsley Coman in the penalty shootout win against France in the final.

He also helped Aston Villa finish seventh in the Premier League and secure a place in the Europa Conference League.

However, Martinez was jeered by some of the crowd at the Paris cere-

mony. The goalkeeper was criticised for this celebration after winning the World Cup against France last year.

Manchester City win club of year award

Manchester City were named the club of the year at the awards for the second year running. Pep Guardiola's side became only the second English team to win the Treble of Champions League, Premier League and FA Cup last season. They had seven players shortlisted for the men's Ballon d'Or award.

Vinicius Jr recognised as he vows to fight against racism

Real Madrid winger Vinicius Jr received the Socrates Award for his contribution off the field and vowed to keep speaking out against racism in world football.

Vinicius has been the target of racist abuse regularly in La Liga games for the past two seasons.

He was recognised for starting a foundation that is building schools in impoverished areas and investing in education in Brazil.

"I will remain strong in the fight against racism," said the Brazilian. "It is a very sad thing

to talk about racism nowadays, but we have to continue in the fight so that people suffer less."

Beckham pays tribute to Sir Bobby Charlton

Former England and Manchester United midfielder David Beckham presented the men's Ballon d'Or to Messi, but before announcing the winner he paid tribute to Sir Bobby Charlton.

The England World Cup winner died at the age of 86 earlier this month. "I probably don't have to tell this room how special Sir Bobby was to the world of football," Beckham said. "He was respected on the field for what he won but was respected even more off the field for what he stood for."

"He will be missed. When we looked up into the stands he would always be there cheering us on."

"He started it off for me. If it was not for Sir Bobby turning around to Manchester United and saying 'watch this young man' I probably would not have played for Manchester United."

"I owe him everything."

Ballon d'Or top 10

1. Lionel Messi (Argentina and PSG/Inter Miami)
2. Erling Haaland (Norway and Manchester City)
3. Kylian Mbappe (France and PSG)
4. Kevin De Bruyne (Belgium and Manchester City)
5. Rodri (Spain and Manchester City)
6. Vinicius Jr (Brazil and Real Madrid)
7. Julian Alvarez (Argentina and Manchester City)
8. Victor Osimhen (Nigeria and Napoli)
9. Bernardo Silva (Portugal and Manchester City)
10. Luka Modric (Croatia and Real Madrid).

Three matches decided in ongoing RMI Media Cricket League

PESHAWAR (APP): Three more matches have decided on Tuesday when PPC Fighters, and PPC Qalandars qualified for the quarter-finals while PPC Markhor beat Dolphins by nine wickets in the ongoing RMI Media Cricket League being played here at Cornal Sher Army Stadium here. Umar Daraz of Information Department was the special guest on this occasion.

He was accompanied by Peshawar Press Club President Arshad Aziz Malik, former presidents M Riaz, Shamim Shahid, Sports Committee Chairman Zafar Iqbal, Khyber Union General Secretary Imran Yousafzai and other senior journalists were also present.

PPC Fighter beat PPC Sultan by 51 runs in the first by setting up 139 runs. Shah Faisal hammered 54 runs with three towering sixes and three boundaries. Naeem Babar added a classic 36 runs with four boundaries and Adnan Haider stood out with 27 including three sixes.

For PPC Sultan, Rifaat Ullah dismissed two players and Basir Qalandar dismissed one player. Playing in reply, PPC Sultan scored 88 runs for the loss of four wickets in the stipulated overs. Adnan stood out with 38 including five boundaries and Rifaat Ullah smashed an elegant 32 runs with four boundaries. Sajjad got two for the fighter while Shahid and Waqar got one each.

In the second match, PPC Qalandar defeated PPC Falcons by seven wickets. Batting first, the Falcons scored 82 runs for the loss of three wickets, with all three players run out. Aamir made 36 including three boundaries and a six and Mudassir Zeb was outstanding with 26 runs, laced with three boundaries. In reply, Qalandar fulfilled the required runs for the loss of three wickets. Fayaz stood out with 45, Kamran 12 and Zakir 11 runs. On behalf of Falcons, Arif, Amir and Arshad took one wicket each. In the third match, PPC Markhor defeated PPC Dolphin by nine wickets.

Asian Taekwondo Open C'ship kicks off today

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Combaxx 5th Asian Taekwondo Open Championship for Senior Poomsae and Kyurogi is all set to commence at the Pakistan Sports Complex on November 1.

This prestigious event, organized by the Pakistan Taekwondo Federation (PTF), will run until November 5, featuring the participation of 27 countries vying for the coveted top honors. A remarkable 27 countries, in addition to 26 regional and provisional teams, have registered to compete in this mega event, underscoring the global significance of this championship.

The PTF had the privilege of hosting four Asian Taekwondo Union Courses from October 27 to 31, held at Hamidi and Rodham Halls. This event marks a historic moment for Pakistan, as it welcomes the first-ever participation of Prof. Kyu Seok Lee, President of the Asian Taekwondo Union (ATU), in the country's taekwondo history. The opening ceremony is scheduled for November 2, with the grand closing ceremony set to take

place on November 5.

Top taekwondo athletes from around the world will showcase their skills in the senior category competitions of Kyurogi and Poomsae at the Liaquat Gymnasium. It's worth mentioning that the PTF also successfully organized the 4th Asian Open in Pakistan last year, contributing to the promotion of a positive image of Pakistan through sports.

The participation of 27 countries, including Afghanistan, Bahrain, Brazil, Egypt, Germany, Great Britain, Indonesia, Iran, Iraq, Jordan, Kazakhstan, Kuwait, Luxembourg, Montenegro, Nepal, Netherlands, Oman, Palestine, Republic of Korea, Saudi Arabia, Serbia, Türkiye, UAE, Uzbekistan, and The Humanitarian Foundation (THF), promises to make this extravaganza a spectacular showcase of taekwondo excellence and global unity.

Taekwondo courses to help Pakistan coaches: Seok Lee:

Asian Taekwondo Union (ATU) President Prof. Kyu Seok Lee believes the Kyurogi

and Poomsae Education Courses were a milestone for Pakistan coaches as it would aid in enhancing skills and talent.

Knowing new rules and techniques would help them improve the quality of coaching and umpiring, and train other coaches in their country, he said at the closing ceremony of the 5-day Kyurogi and Poomsae education courses under the auspices of the Asian Taekwondo Union in collaboration with the Pakistan Taekwondo Federation.

It should be noted that 144 Pakistani coaches, managers and referees participated in the Kyurogi Education Course, 52 in the Referees Education Course and 51 in the Poomsae Education Course.

Moreover, 56 Pakistani coaches, managers and referees participated in Kyurogi and 17 Pakistani coaches, managers and referees participated in Poomsae. Lee said due to the efforts of the Pakistan Taekwondo Federation, the sport was gaining popularity in Pakistan at the grassroots level.

Saudi Arabia set to host 2034 World Cup

MELBOURNE (Agencies): Saudi Arabia is set to host the men's 2034 World Cup after Australia decided against bidding to stage the tournament.

Football Australia confirmed its decision only hours before Fifa's deadline for declarations of interest on Tuesday.

Saudi Arabia is the only other nation to bid.

"We have reached the conclusion not to do so for the 2034 competition," read a statement from Football Australia. Australia's governing body says it intends to focus its efforts on hosting the AFC Women's Asian Cup in 2026 and the Club World Cup in 2029.

The 2026 World Cup will take place in the US, Mexico and Canada. Morocco, Portugal and Spain will host the 2030 tournament, with matches also in Argentina, Paraguay and Uruguay. Fifa had said the 2034 World Cup would be held in Asia or Oceania, and an Australian bid was regarded as the only potential challenger to Saudi Arabia, which announced its intention to bid shortly after Fifa's decision.

Despite receiving support from the Asian Football Confederation, Saudi Arabia would likely be viewed as a controversial host. It has been criticised for its human rights violations - 81 men were executed on one day last year - women's rights abuses, the criminalisation of homosexuality, the restriction of free speech and the war in Yemen. Saudi Arabia's international standing was severely damaged by the 2018 killing of Jamal Khashoggi, a US-based Saudi journalist who was a prominent critic of the government.

Human rights campaigners say sport is being used by the Saudi government to detract from long-standing reputation issues, a process known as 'sportswashing'.

Last week Human Rights Watch said: "The possibility that Fifa could award Saudi Arabia the 2034 World Cup despite its appalling human rights record and closed door to any monitoring exposes Fifa's commitments to human rights as a sham." On Tuesday Amnesty International called on Fifa to secure "clear and binding commitments" from Saudi Arabia.

It said: "Human rights commitments must be agreed with potential hosts before final decisions on holding the tournaments are made."

"The best chance for Fifa to obtain binding guarantees to protect workers' rights, ensure freedom of expression and prevent discrimination linked to the World Cup is during the host selection process - not after the hosts have been confirmed and tournament preparation has begun."

Qatar's hosting of the 2022 World Cup drew criticism because of its stance on same-sex relationships, its human rights record and its treatment of migrant workers.

Fifa dropped plans for Saudi Arabia to sponsor the 2023 Women's World Cup following a backlash from co-hosts Australia and New Zealand, players and sponsors, but Saudi Arabia is keen to host the 2035 tournament after forming a women's team last year.

Like the 2022 men's tournament, the 2034 edition would almost certainly be held in winter because of extreme heat in the summer, although modernising existing infrastructure rather than building new stadiums would likely make it more environmentally friendly than Qatar. Saudi Arabia's Public Investment Fund (PIF) completed a takeover of Newcastle United in 2021, and manager Eddie Howe said: "Our trips out there to Riyadh and Jeddah were two very different experiences."

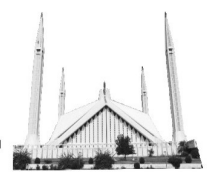
"Everywhere we went was well organised; we were well looked after. If that's a sign of what a World Cup might look like, structurally it will be really good."

Football Australia chief executive James Johnson said bidding for the World Cup was "not going to be favourable to Australia". He said: "Saudi is a strong bid. They have a lot of resources, and not just [for] the 2034 World Cup. They are disrupting European football paying higher dollars. This is a disruption in the market and that is what positions Saudi in a strong way. From the government, top down they are prioritising investment in football. That is difficult to compete with."

Another sporting milestone for Saudi Arabia? Saudi Arabia has hosted several major sporting events since 2018, including football, Formula 1, golf and boxing, and will stage the Club World Cup in December.

Hosting the World Cup would represent another significant sporting milestone. Prince Abdulaziz bin Turki bin Faisal, Saudi Arabia's sports minister, said the bid "constitutes an important and natural step in our journey as a country passionate about football".

PIF has taken control of four of the nation's top clubs - Al-Ahli, Al-Hilal, Al-Ittihad and Al-Nassr - in the Saudi Pro League, and Cristiano Ronaldo, Karim Benzema and Neymar are among the high-profile players to have joined the league, which was formed in 1976. The launch of the lucrative LIV Golf series in 2022 led to the PGA Tour and DP World Tour agreeing to merge with PIF in June after a year of disruption, with PIF governor Yasir Al-Rumayyan appointed chair of the unified men's game.



In brief

IRSA releases 106,700 cusecs water

ISLAMABAD (APP): Indus River System Authority (IRSA) on Tuesday released 106,700 cusecs water from various rim stations with inflow of 57,400 cusecs. According to the data released by IRSA, water level in River Indus at Tarbela Dam was 1524.52 feet and was 126.52 feet higher than its dead level of 1,398 feet. Water inflow and outflow in the dam was recorded as 29,100 cusecs and 52,000 cusecs respectively. The water level in River Jhelum at Mangla Dam was 1203.55 feet, which was 153.55 feet higher than its dead level of 1,050 feet. The inflow and outflow of water was recorded 8,600 cusecs and 35,000 cusecs respectively. The release of water at Kalabagh, Taunsa, Guddu and Sukkur was recorded as 63,000, 41,300, 44,100 and 13,500 cusecs respectively.

Two bike lifters arrested

RAWALPINDI (APP): Police have arrested two bike lifters, and members of 'Ubaid' gang besides recovering 23 stolen motorcycles and other items from their possession. According to a police spokesman, a team under the supervision of SHO, Dhamial Police Station managed to net two bike lifters namely Ubaid Khan, ringleader and Muhammad Anis and recovered 23 stolen motorcycles and other items from their possession. A case has been registered against the accused while further investigation is underway. Superintendent of Police, Saddar said the accomplices and facilitators of the accused would also be sent behind bars. He said that the operations against the law-breakers were being accelerated further.

Police arrest five gamblers

RAWALPINDI (APP): Rawalpindi district police arrested five gamblers and recovered Rs 4020 stake money, two mobile phones, three motorcycles and other items from their possession, said a police spokesman here on Tuesday. He informed that Gujjar Khan police conducted a raid and arrested five gamblers namely Tahir, Rambo, Badshah, Rana and Pervaiz, who were allegedly involved in betting while playing doli dana. Police recovered Rs 4020, two mobile phones, three motorcycles and other items from their possession. A case has been registered against the accused while further investigation is under process. Superintendent of Police, Saddar said that gambling is the root cause of other evils and those involved in such crimes do not deserve any concession.

Wanted members of snatcher gang held

ISLAMABAD (NNI): Islamabad Capital Police Koral police team arrested two wanted members of a snatcher gang involved in numerous snatching activities and recovered snatched cash, mobile phones, motorbike and weapons with ammunition used in crime from their possession, a public relations officer said. He said that, following the special directions of Islamabad Capital City Police Officer (ICCP) Dr. Akbar Nasir Khan, the Islamabad capital police have intensified their crackdown against the criminal elements in order to eliminate crime from the city. Following these directions, the Koral police team used technical and human resources and succeeded in apprehending two wanted members of a snatcher gang involved in numerous snatching activities in various areas of Islamabad.



ISLAMABAD: CDA administration demolish a makeshift settlement using heavy machinery on the last day of the deadline fixed by government for illegal immigrants to leave the country in the outskirts of Islamabad.

Rajaemphasizes strengthening parliamentary bond, economic cooperation with Rwanda

ISLAMABAD (APP): Speaker National Assembly Raja Pervez Ashraf, on Tuesday, said Pakistan, through its Look Africa Policy, is determined to enhance its collaboration with the 'Continent of the Future,' including Rwanda. This collaboration holds significant promise due to the region's economic potential, abundant natural resources, enticing investment opportunities, and extensive support for Pakistan at regional and international forums. The NA Speaker remarked during a meeting with Dr. François Xavier Kalinda, President of the Senate of the Republic of Rwanda, and his high-level parliamentary delegation here. Pervez Ashraf

emphasized the longstanding history of cooperation and camaraderie between Pakistan and Rwanda, reaffirming the enduring friendly relations between the two nations. Acknowledging the strong parliamentary connections, the Speaker praised the existence of Pak-Rwanda Friendship Groups in both parliaments.

He also stressed the importance of regular high-level parliamentary delegation exchanges between the two sides, as it provides an opportunity for mutual learning and further strengthens the parliamentary friendship.

Speaker Ashraf also mentioned Pakistan's active participation in the 145th Inter-Parliamentary

Union (IPU) Assembly held in Kigali in October 2023. During this event, Pakistan introduced an emergency item concerning climate change, highlighting its global significance and the need for collective action and resource allocation to address this pressing challenge.

Dr. François Xavier Kalinda, expressed deep gratitude for the warm reception and kind words, underscoring Rwanda's high regard for its friendly relationship with Pakistan. He reaffirmed Rwanda's commitment to strengthening this bond further in various fields of mutual interest. The meeting concluded with a commitment to advance fraternal ties for the mutual benefit of both nations.

‘Connectivity, an indispensable element for modern economies’

ISLAMABAD (APP): Chairman Senate Muhammad Sadiq Sanjrani on Tuesday highlighted that connectivity was an indispensable element for modern economies, playing a vital role in socio-economic development and the empowerment of communities. He said this during a meeting with Chairman of the Asia Pacific Network Information Centre (APNIC) Foundation, Danish A. Lakhani, and Director General of APNIC, Paul Wilson. The discussion revolved around critical issues pertaining to internet development and connectivity in Pakistan and the broader Asia Pacific region.

The meeting served as a platform for meaningful dialogue on the role that internet connectivity plays in today's world, emphasizing the need to extend this essential service to remote areas of Pakistan, particularly in Balochistan. Sadiq Sanjrani underscored the significance of IT infrastructure development as a fundamental driver for the nation's progress, stating that it was crucial to equip the youth with IT-related skills to foster innovation and economic growth. He commended the tireless efforts of APNIC in strengthening connectivity in Pakistan, recognizing the organization's commitment to bridging the digital

divide. The chairman highlighted that Pakistan was currently in the process of rolling out 5G Spectrum, expressing hope that this significant advancement would contribute significantly towards generating the much-needed economic activity in Pakistan.

Danish A. Lakhani and Paul Wilson expressed their gratitude for the opportunity to engage in such a constructive dialogue. They affirmed APNIC's commitment to furthering internet development and connectivity in the Asia Pacific region and assured the chairman that APNIC would remain dedicated to working alongside the Government of Pakistan to achieve the objectives.

Police ensuring foolproof security arrangements

ISLAMABAD (NNI): Following the special directions of Islamabad Capital City Police Officer (ICCP) Dr. Akbar Nasir Khan, the Islamabad Capital Police is using all available resources to ensure the peace and tranquility within the federal capital, a public relations officer said.

He said that the Islamabad Capital Police

ensured data registration, identification documents and effective search of citizens entering the high security zone on a regular basis. Action against 678 vehicles and 537 motorcyclists over traffic rules violations on various checkpoints of high security zone was also taken. During the last week, the Islamabad Capital Police removed tinted glasses and

improper number plates from 665 vehicles, impounded 13 vehicles without papers and issued challan tickets to 537 motorcyclists for not wearing helmets and over-speed violations. Strict directions have been issued to police officers and officials performing their duties at high security zone checkpoints to excise their duty with full responsibility.

FIA arrests two fraudsters for making fake documents

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Federal Investigation Agency's cybercrime circle Rawalpindi on Tuesday arrested two accused of being involved in making fake travel documents and other official documents for illegal and criminal elements. The accused were identified as Azmat Sharif and Mohammad Nadeem. Accused Azmat Sharif was involved in preparing fake documents related to government institutions who were arrested from different areas of Rawalpindi during raid.

The accused had created fake official cards in the name of government offi-

cials. During the raid, one mobile phone, 2 desktop computers and 1 printer were recovered from the possession of the accused.

Apart from this, 6 fake cards of the government department, 33 fake driving licenses and materials for preparing several fake degrees were also recovered from the possession of the accused.

In another operation, Mohammad Nadeem was arrested from Rawalpindi who was involved in online fraud in the name of fake identity. The accused was involved in selling substandard medicines to people online by pretending to be

Hakeem Babar.

In the meantime, FIA's Commercial Banking Circle Peshawar continues to crack down on the elements involved in the illegal business of money exchange. The arrested accused were involved in the Hawala/Hundi and illegal currency exchange business. The accused were identified as Owais, Razaullah and Shah Zaman who were arrested from different areas of Peshawar. The FIA team recovered 31 lakh 65 thousand Pakistani rupees from the accused along with evidence related to the Hawala/Hundi was also recovered from the accused.

7 netted for violating vegetable price regulations

ISLAMABAD (APP): In a crackdown on price gouging, the Assistant Commissioner of Pothohar Nahel Hafiz on Tuesday arrested seven vendors in Islamabad's vegetable market for violating government-prescribed rates and failing to display the notified rate list.

The Assistant Commissioner also issued warnings to other shopkeepers in the market, reminding them that the government is taking action against those who are overcharging customers.

The operation was part of a larger effort by the Deputy Commissioner of Islamabad to crack down on price increases in the city. The Deputy Commissioner has instructed all Assistant Commissioners to conduct regular inspections of markets and take action against any vendors who are found to be violating the law.

The arrest of seven people in Islamabad's vegetable market is a strong signal that the government is serious about tackling price gouging. This operation will send a message to other vendors that they must comply with government regulations or face the consequences.

Safe City has introduced an automated system

ISLAMABAD (NNI): In light of the special instructions of Islamabad Capital City Police Officer (ICCP), Dr. Akbar Nasir Khan, the CPO Safe City/Traffic under the Safe City Islamabad e-challan system has initiated crucial measures to synchronize images of traffic law violations captured by cameras of significant importance, a public relations officer said.

He said that in order to streamline and enforce traffic laws more rigorously, an addition of 2,273 new cameras of significant importance has been made to the e-challan system.

The recent addition of cameras will prove vital for synchronizing images of traffic law violations in city streets and commercial areas. The data from all these cameras integrated into the Safe City network is used to issue e-challan tickets for various violations, including improper parking, helmetless motorcycle riders, unregistered vehicles, and other traffic law violations.

UN, Int'l rights organizations must enable Kashmiris, Palestinians to exercise right of self-determination: Mushaal

ISLAMABAD (APP): Special Assistant to Prime Minister on Human Rights and Women Empowerment Mushaal Hussein Mullick Tuesday appealed to the United Nations and other international rights organizations to give the people of Kashmir and Palestine their right to self-determination for permanent peace in the region. Talking to a Private news channel, she highlighted the plight of illegally detained Hurriyat leaders and activists languishing in different jails of India and the territory, adding that the Kashmiri detainees are being tortured in jails.

She mentioned that the Indian government wanted to hang Hurriyat leader

Muhammad Yasin Malik, who has been languishing in New Delhi's Tihar jail, in the month of December.

Mushaal said Indian troops are committing brutalities on the people of the occupied territory and reiterated that the resolution of the Kashmir dispute was imperative not only for durable peace in the world. India is using brutal acts and military force to suppress the freedom struggle of Kashmiris, but the morale of Kashmiris is high and they are bravely fighting these atrocities, she mentioned.

India is killing Kashmiris under a nefarious plan to convert the majority of Muslims into a minority in the occupied territory, she added.

Embassy celebrates 100th Anniversary of Proclamation of Republic of Türkiye

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Embassy of Türkiye in Pakistan celebrated the 100th Anniversary of the Proclamation of the Republic of Türkiye here the other day.

Türkiye Ambassador in Pakistan, Dr. Mehmet Paçacı on the occasion said, "I commemorate Ghazi Mustafa Kemal Atatürk, the founder of our Republic, and express our gratitude to our holy martyrs and our veterans who fought for the same blessed cause and entrusted our beautiful homeland to us at the cost of their lives."

He said, the Republic of Türkiye signified the rebirth of a noble nation from its ashes, one that preferred to die instead of making compromises on its liberty, independence, and honor. "We are proud of being a member of such a heroic nation that has the "character of independence," he said. He also mentioned that the Turkish War of Independence was

not only the success of the Turkish nation but also a well-documented part of our shared history with Pakistan. He added, "The sacrifices and selfless support by the South Asian Muslims during the Khilafat Movement, and their political and financial contributions to the Turkish sacred cause, have and will never be forgotten."

He emphasized that the Turkish Independence War had also become a profound inspiration for sub-continent Muslims in their struggle for freedom.

Founding father of Pakistan, Quaid-e-Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah, expressed his appreciation for the Turkish struggle and its exceptional leader, Atatürk, as the builder of Modern Türkiye and an example to the rest of the world, especially to the Muslim states in the Far East. He also played a video message by Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan. President Recep

Tayyip Erdogan on Republic Day congratulated wholeheartedly the Turkish citizens living across the world.

"At this turning point in our glorious history, I commemorate all our heroes who pioneered the establishment of our new state, first and foremost the founder of the Republic, Ghazi Mustafa Kemal Atatürk, and wish Allah's mercy upon them," the president said.

The president further said, "The journey of our nation from the past to the future continues to this day, from the Seljuks to the Ottomans, and from the Ottomans to the Republic of Türkiye." He said, "With our growing economy, strengthening democracy, increasing reputation, expanding sphere of influence, and our principled and visionary foreign policy, we continue to be "the protector of those in need" all over the world.

21 more contract with dengue in 24 hours

RAWALPINDI (APP): As many as 21 more dengue cases were reported in Rawalpindi during the last 24 hours, raising the tally of confirmed cases to 2,322. District Coordinator Epidemics Prevention and Control (DCEPC), Dr. Sajjad Mehmood, Tuesday said that, among the new cases, nine patients had arrived from the Pothohar town urban area, six from

Municipal Corporation area, four from Rawalpindi Cantonment, and one from Chaklala Cantonment.

He said 51 patients were admitted to the city's allied hospitals, out of which 40 were confirmed cases while 2,281 were discharged after treatment. Dr. Sajjad informed that the district administration had registered eight FIRs, issued tickets to 11, sealed one

premise, and a fine of Rs 16,000 was imposed against the violations of dengue SOPs during the last 24 hours. The health officer said fogging and surveillance had been extended in those areas from where dengue patients were reported regularly. He urged the residents to be careful during wee hours and in the evening as it is the suitable time for mosquito bite.

Chinese ambassador calls on caretaker minister for energy

ISLAMABAD (APP): Ambassador of China to Pakistan Jiang Zaidong called on Caretaker Federal Minister for Energy Muhammad Ali here on Tuesday. The Minister appreciated the continuous engagement of China in the energy sector with Pakistan, said a press release.

He extended his congratulations for the successful 3rd Belt and Road Forum for International Cooperation that was held earlier this month in China.

The ambassador remarked that BRI has become a new guide for international development, Industries of both sides can benefit from this cooperation.

The ambassador welcomed the proposal of the Energy Minister to organize a delegation of private companies to meet with Chinese enterprises in order to boost cooperation. The minister further remarked that Pakistan's future energy landscape will revolve around indigenous and renewable sources. Renewables, transmission networks and DISCOs could be some of the prime areas for linkages between China and Pakistan, he said.

He said utilizing the cutting-edge technology of Chinese corporations, the Coal Gasification plant in Thar can help bolster the energy supply to industry.



ISLAMABAD: A man carrying wood on hand cart to be used as fuel for cooking purposes at Chak Shahzad neighbourhood in the Federal Capital.

MoMP urged to create jobs

KABUL (Agencies): Tribal elders from Logar Province have met with Sheikh Shahabuddin Delawar, the Acting Minister of Mines and Petroleum, to discuss the mineral resources in their region. The elders requested that the ministry pay greater attention to these resources and create job opportunities for the residents of Logar province. The meeting, which was attended by deputies from the ministry, was held in high regard by the elders.

ARCS aid earthquake victims

KABUL (Agencies): The Afghan Red Crescent Society (ARCS) has extended its support to several families in the Rabat Sangi district of Herat province, who were adversely affected by a recent earthquake. This assistance comes at a crucial time as the winter season approaches, and the victims are in dire need of heating equipment. An ARCS official in Herat reported that the organization has distributed 1,380 blankets to 460 families impacted by the earthquake.

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

EU provides aid to earthquake victims

HERAT (Khaama Press): The European Union has taken a significant step to aid earthquake-affected families in Herat, with a humanitarian flight touching down, carrying 92 tons of essential supplies. Among the aid supplies, the EU contributed 57 tons of blankets and winterization kits, all from their stockpile in Dubai. The World Health Organization received 20 tons of much-needed medicines, while the World Food Program (WFP) received 15 tons of food as part of this relief effort.

The EU is not stopping here; they plan two more flights to Herat and Kabul from Brindisi and Dubai. These flights will collect contributions from Ireland, Italy, and EU Humanitarian Partners. France is also playing its part by bolstering the transport and warehousing capabilities to ensure efficient distribution of aid, the EU said.

Following the initial earthquake in Afghanistan on October 7th, the EU swiftly approved a humanitarian aid package. This package included 2.5 million euros in funding for humanitarian organizations.

Additionally, the EU offered in-kind assistance from its Emergency Response Coordination Center (EHRC) stocks. Considering the planned flights and the support provided, the EU's total response to the earthquake amounts to 4.5 million euros.

This concerted effort demonstrates the EU's commitment to assisting those affected by natural disasters and crises.

Compensation for 300 properties paid out



KABUL (TOLOnews): Kabul Municipality reported that in the last two years, the acquisition rights of more than three hundred properties have been paid to their owners. Kabul Municipality said that among the owners of these properties, there are people whose houses were acquired ten years ago.

"Since the conquest of the Islamic Emirate until now, three hundred and twenty-eight properties have been acquired, the total value of which is 244 million Afghanis, which has been paid to their owners," said Mohammad Khalid Sajistanini, the deputy of Urban Services and Environmental Protection department of Kabul Municipality.

The director of acquisition of Kabul Municipality announced the beginning of the process of acquiring houses in different areas of Kabul, adding that the process of distributing compensation has also started for the owners whose ownership and identity have been established.

The properties of persons that are acquired, those persons who have personal property, they need to stabilize the property in accordance with the law," said Mohammad Hanif.

At the same time, the representative of Kabul Municipality said that the acquisition rights of past and future projects will be paid from the internal revenues of Kabul Municipality.

"The entire budget comes from the internal revenue of Kabul Municipality. Kabul municipality has sources of income..." said Nimatullah Barakzai, an official of the municipality.

Kabul Municipality department has announced the start of six other public benefit projects in the near future in Kabul.

EU provides 15 million Euros to support women-led businesses

KABUL (Khaama Press): The Head of the European Union Delegation in Kabul has emphasized the economic empowerment of women in Afghanistan as a pivotal priority. She stated that the European Union is allocating 15 million euros to support local businesses led by women in the country.

On Tuesday, Raffaella Addis, the Head of the European Union Delegation in Kabul, said in her social media platform X that this assistance is intended to support local businesses led by women and enhance their access to financial services. The United Nations Development Office in Afghanistan will manage it.

According to her, women's economic empowerment in Afghanistan is "crucial."

It should be noted that in the past two years, women who were previously deprived of education and job opportunities have increasingly turned to professions such as calligraphy, painting, and small-scale businesses. They continue to face challenges in this regard.

Local sources in Balkh province have confirmed that officials from the Taliban administration in Afghanistan recently banned 15 women's tailoring factories in Mazar-e-Sharif's "Zalal" commercial market.

The Taliban administration had previously instructed these women tailoring owners to relocate their shops to a specialized women's market called "Khadija Kubra Market." However, they refused to do so, as their shops were separate, and men did not have access to these places.

Due to a lack of customers, they did not move their businesses to the market created by the Islamic Emirate.

Meanwhile, Husna Raufi, a determined woman in Kabul, expresses concern over the closure of 15 tailoring centres in Balkh, stating that many women who engage in tailoring can contribute to various sectors through these centres.

According to Ms Raufi, the closure of these tailoring centres, alongside the "very harsh financial blow," has inflicted additional hardships on women, their small local businesses, the country, and the Ministry of Economy.

Canada welcomes Afghans

KABUL (Khaama Press): Canada is nearly meeting its pledge to welcome 40,000 Afghan refugees by year-end. The Minister of Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship for Canada announced that the government of this country has fulfilled its promise to relocate a minimum of 40,000 Afghan refugees to Canada.

Marc Miller stated that they are accepting more requests from Afghan citizens for immigration to Canada.

Miller said, "We are currently processing and advancing immigration requests we have previously received, and we will accept more Afghan migrants through regular immigration programs, including refugee resettlement and family sponsorship."

The Minister of Immigration for Canada mentioned that the program to relocate 40,000 Afghan refugees after the fall of Kabul is "one of the largest resettlement programs for Afghans in the world, and our work continues."

Mr. Miller referred to the "Taliban's terror in Afghanistan" and said that its effects on the rights and freedoms of the people of Afghanistan, especially women and girls, know no bounds.

The Minister of Immigration stated that the Taliban's rule over Afghanistan in August 2021 led to a "political, economic, and humanitarian crisis" in the country, affecting millions.

The Canadian government remains committed to prioritizing the evaluation of eligible applications and has pledged to offer healthcare, education, skills training, and social services to Afghan refugees living in Canada.

Canada ranks second to the United States in Afghan resettlement and was among the pioneers in launching a particular program for vulnerable Afghans, including women activists, human rights defenders, persecuted minorities, LGBTQ individuals, and journalists.

No armed conflict should exist in Afghanistan



KABUL (TOLOnews): Amir Khan Muttaqi, the acting foreign minister of the Islamic Emirate, on a visit to Türkiye, has met with Hakan Fidan, the foreign minister of Türkiye.

The two discussed strengthening diplomatic and economic relations and the creation of new trade corridors between Afghanistan and Türkiye.

Hafi Zia Ahmad Takal, the deputy spokesperson for the ministry of foreign affairs of the Islamic Emirate said that in the meeting the Turkish foreign minister emphasized that no armed conflict should exist in Afghanistan, and also added that Türkiye will cooperate with Afghanistan in the capacity building of different sectors," said Hafi Zia Ahmad Takal, deputy spokesperson for the ministry of foreign affairs.

"(Türkiye) does not want another armed conflict in Afghanistan... World countries including the US believe that armed conflict should not exist in the country and that political ways need to be sought," said Najibullah Jame, a political analyst.

According to Takal, during the meeting with the Turkish foreign minister, Muttaqi insisted on the official acceptance of Afghan diplomats, adding that the move will be beneficial for bilateral relations. Takal also said that the acting minister has met with Suleiman Jalif, 77 Insaat Director and head of the Afghan-Turk business council.

In the meetings, Amir Khan Muttaqi said that Islamic Emirate is striving to expand business with regional countries, in particular Türkiye, and that new land corridors will be activated and be strengthened to develop business, said Hafiz Zia Takal.

Camps being set up for returnees from Pakistan

KABUL (Pajhwok): Temporary camps are being established in Nangarhar and Kandahar provinces for refugees returning from Pakistan.

With the deadline for their voluntary repatriation expiring tomorrow (Nov 1), undocumented Afghan migrants are returning in droves from the neighbouring country.

A makeshift camp is being set up in Lalpura district of eastern Nangarhar province to house the returnees, who will be given basic facilities.

Nangarhar's Deputy Governor Saeedullah Banuri was quoted as saying that returnees from remote provinces would reside in this camp for some time. Provincial officials say up to 4,000 refugees return from Pakistan daily. The returnees are provided health services in Torkham town — the main crossing between Afghanistan and Pakistan.

A similar camp is also being built in the Spin Boldak district of southern Kandahar province for the refugees deported by Pakistan.

A delegation from Kabul recently visited Kandahar to launch the construction of the camp, the acting minister of refugees said.

Ariana News quoted Khalil-ul-Rahman Haqqani as saying: "We want to build temporary camps with all facilities for the returnees until they are cleared and sent to their permanent places."

Baradar inspects Salang Pass reconstruction project



KABUL (Agencies): Mullah Abdul Ghani Baradar, the Deputy Prime Minister for Economic Affairs, conducted an inspection of the Salang Pass reconstruction project.

Baradar was accompanied by Acting Public Works Minister Mohammad Issa Sani during the visit.

According to a statement released by Baradar's office, he met the officials of companies working on the project, expressed his appreciation for their efforts and provided necessary instructions to ensure quality and timely completion of the project.

The Salang highway holds immense significance as a vital trade and transit route in Afghanistan.

Currently, two different construction and road development companies are engaged in the fundamental repair and reconstruction of this 80-kilometre road.

So far, 80 percent of the work has been accomplished in the tunnel and galleries, and it is expected to be completed and inaugurated soon.

The reconstruction of the Salang highway is expected to significantly enhance trade and transit between Central Asia and South Asia through Afghanistan.

Mother and child forever separated in Herat earthquake tragedy

HERAT (Khaama Press): The Herat earthquake's devastation is a tragedy beyond words. Amidst the heart-wrenching tales emerging from this disaster, the plight of mothers mourning their children stands out. Take, for instance, Javaher, a 33-year-old woman trapped beneath the rubble, her five-year-old child buried beside her, their pleas for help lost in the chaos. The enduring solitude, intensified by the timing of the catastrophe, has tragically separated mother and child forever — one beneath the earth, the other in a hospital.

The story unfolds in the early days of autumn in the year 1402 (Solar year). Silence and tranquillity, so characteristic of the village and countryside, prevail where Javaher resides. Javaher, a mother in the vibrant province of Herat, lives in one of the villages of this province with her three children, far from her husband. She is unaware of the impending tragedy lurking in the calm before the storm.

This young mother is caring for her children. Her husband had gone to Iran some time ago to earn a living, especially for the winter expenses. It's 11:30 AM in the Zindajan district of Herat province. Javaher is trying to prepare breakfast for herself and her children. The sounds of her children, like sweet whispers, reach Javaher from another room. She, a mother who considers her children her only source of livelihood, is blissfully unaware of the impending tragedy about to strike her and the entire region.

Just as Javaher had prepared the food, the catastrophic earthquake struck. She ran and screamed, attempting to reach her children, but everything and everyone suddenly disappeared. She was trapped under the rubble and couldn't free herself. She wanted to get up and go to where she knew her children were, but there was no one there to help Javaher. A mother's desperate struggle to save her children took hours and hours.

Javaher says, "When I was buried under the rubble, I could hear the cries and screams of my beloved ones, but I couldn't free myself, and no one heard our cries."

Gradually, the sound of Javaher's children no longer reached her. She was particularly close to her five-year-old child, Zarmina. "I couldn't hear the sound of Zarmina anymore. I had become a mother who couldn't rescue her child from beneath the earth. My hands and feet were bound, and in front of my eyes, the earth had taken my innocent child away," Javaher recalls.

She remained trapped under the rubble for hours, unconscious from the intense effort to save her children, until a rescue team finally transported her to a hospital. Her two other children were also taken to the hospital, but Zarmina, the youngest member of the family, was forever separated from her mother.

Javaher, due to being in the hospital during the burial of her five-year-old child, wasn't present. Zarmina was buried with the help of neighbours. The wound in Javaher's heart will remain forever.

Javaher says, "I was so helpless that I couldn't even touch my lifeless child for a longer time. I was a mother who couldn't retrieve her child from beneath the rubble." Javaher reminisces about moments just before the earthquake when little Zarmina, with a childlike smile and innocence, had asked her mother to get a lovely dress for her to wear upon her father's return from Iran.

Now, more than two weeks have passed since the devastating earthquake in Herat.

Javaher and her family live in a tent amidst the cold weather, just a few steps away from their ruined home. She says, "Day and night, I stare at my ill-fated destiny while sitting inside the tent, looking at the remains of my home."

They endure the nights with severe storms and chilly weather, and Javaher, from her tent, looks at the ruins of her home, where her little daughter's grave lies.

The villages of Zindajan no longer have the atmosphere of the past. Here, there is no trace of the girls who used to play in the streets and houses, their laughter unheard. The village has not only been left in ruins overnight, but its residents have waged a hundred years.

In the village where Javaher lives, each family has lost their daughters, and the village has become a place where every mother sees it as a monster. A monster that swallowed the children shook the houses and left thousands in this cold and stormy weather helpless and grieving.

Javaher says that many institutions and officials have promised to build houses for them before winter, but in a village turned into a graveyard, she no longer wants to live.

She says, "This village took my home from me, then built ruins, and after that, my child, with whom I had only spent five years, was taken from me, and her father left for her a life without a mother."

The memories of the five-year-old, the destruction of her home, severe mental distress, uncertainty, and deep mourning are things that can be witnessed when stepping into the tents of the earthquake victims.

Tears welled up in Javaher's eyes as she expressed her heartfelt wish, "I wish our home were made of mud so I could endure, and today, I wouldn't be sitting here separated from my child."

Anti-war protest hits US Congress hearing as Biden officials seek aid for Israel

WASHINGTON (Reuters): Two of President Joe Biden's top advisers asked US lawmakers to provide billions more dollars to Israel on Tuesday at a congressional hearing interrupted repeatedly by protesters denouncing American officials for backing what they called "genocide" against Palestinians in Gaza.

Secretary of State Antony Blinken and Secretary of Defense Lloyd Austin testified to the Senate Appropriations Committee on Biden's request for \$106 billion to fund ambitious plans for Ukraine, Israel and US border security. Arguing that supporting US partners is vital to national security, Biden requested \$61.4 billion for Ukraine, about half of which would be spent in the United States to replenish weapons stocks drained by previous support for Kyiv.

Biden also asked for \$14.3 billion for Israel, \$9 billion for humanitarian relief — including for Israel and Gaza — \$13.6 billion for US border security, \$4 billion in military assistance and government financing to counter China's regional efforts in Asia. As the hearing began, a line of anti-war protesters raised red-stained hands in the air. Capitol police later removed them from the room after shouted slogans including, "Ceasefire now!" "Protect the children of Gaza!" and "Stop funding genocide."

Blinken did not respond to the protesters, but when he was asked later about the possibility of a ceasefire, he said that would "simply consolidate what Hamas has been able to do and ... potentially repeat what it did another day." A pause, however, for humanitarian reasons can be considered, he said, "We do believe that we have to consider things like humanitarian pauses to make sure that assistance can get to those who needed

and people can be protected and get out of harm's way," Blinken said.

Blinken said Gaza in the future could not be governed by Hamas, but could also not be run by Israel, adding that ideally an "effective and revitalized Palestinian Authority" could ultimately run the strip, while other countries in the region could step in to help under temporary arrangements. US troops in Iraq and Syria have been attacked at least 20 times since Oct. 17 by Iran-backed groups, triggering US air strikes last week against two unoccupied arms storage facilities in Syria. But those attacks, which were meant to deter further attacks, have failed to do so, with near daily attempts to strike American forces in both countries.

Austin said that if such attacks do not cease, "We will respond." On Ukraine, Austin said, "I can guarantee that without our support (Russian President Vladimir) Putin will be successful." Blinken said US support for Ukraine has made Russia's invasion of Ukraine "a strategic debacle."

Congress has already approved \$113 billion for Ukraine since Russia invaded in February 2022. The White House has said it has less than \$5.5 billion in funds to continue transferring weapons from US stockpiles to Ukrainian forces fighting Russia. The path forward for Biden's latest funding plan looks uncertain. Democrats solidly back Biden's strategy of combining Ukraine aid with support for Israel, as do many Republicans in both the Senate and House of Representatives. "We need to address all of these priorities as part of one package — because the reality is these issues are all connected, and they are all urgent," Senate Appropriations Committee Chairperson Patty Murray said.

Senator Susan Collins, the committee's top Republican, said she

would judge the funding request on whether it makes the United States more secure. But Republicans who lead the House of Representatives object to combining the two issues, joined by some party members in the Senate. Opinion polls show public support for Ukraine aid declining and many Republicans, particularly those most closely aligned with former President Donald Trump, have come out against it. With federal spending fueled by \$31.4 trillion in debt, they question whether Washington should be funding Ukraine's war with Russia, rather than backing Israel or boosting efforts to push back against a rising China.

Newly elected House Speaker Mike Johnson has voted in the past against assistance for Kyiv. On Monday, he introduced a bill to provide \$14.3 billion in aid to Israel by cutting funding for the Internal Revenue Service, setting up a showdown with Democrats. The House bill does not provide humanitarian aid for Gaza. Biden's support for Israel, which already receives \$3.8 billion in annual US military assistance, has drawn criticism amid international appeals for Gaza civilians to be protected. Israel this week launched a ground offensive in the Gaza Strip as it strikes back at Islamist Hamas militants who killed 1,400 people and took at least 240 hostages in a rampage on Oct. 7.

Palestinian authorities say Israel's "total siege" of Gaza since that rampage has killed more than 8,300 people, thousands of them children, and left a dire need for fuel, food and clean water. Blinken said about 400 US citizens and family members — about 1000 people — are stuck in Gaza and would like to get out. He said the department was working on the issue but had not yet found a way to help them leave.



ISLAMABAD: President Dr. Arif Alvi addressing an event in connection with White Cane Safety Day, at Aiwan-e-Sadr.

Plan finalized for repatriation of illegal foreigners

ISLAMABAD (PPI): The government has finalized a comprehensive plan for repatriation of illegal foreign nationals including

Afghans to their countries from tomorrow (Wednesday). According to details, the Ministry of Interior has set up 49 holding area points across the country to help these people respectfully cross the border after thorough screening.

Out of them, 36 holding centers have been established in all 36 districts of Punjab, three in Peshawar, Haripur and Landi Kot districts of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, two in Kemari and Malir districts of Sindh and three in Quetta, Chagai and Pishin districts of Balochistan.

Similarly, one holding center each has been established in Islamabad Federal Capital and Gilgit. Moreover, Chaman, Noor Wahab, Badini and Barab Chah crossing points in Balochistan and Torkham, Khariachi, Ghulam Khan and Angoor Adda points in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa will be used for crossing Pak-Afghan border. Meanwhile, a special App has been launched by NADRA for convenience of repatriates and a control room has also been set up at Interior Ministry for monitoring the entire process.

Khyber Pakhtunkhwa government has also launched an emergency number 1700 to deal with any situation. As voluntary repatriation closed on Tuesday, two new passport offices have been established at Qilla Abdullah and Jamrud and One Document Regime for passport has been implemented for future travelling across the Pak-Afghan border.

ECP to ensure faor polls: Sikandar

LAHORE (INP): Chief Election Commissioner (CEC) Sikandar Sultan Raja Tuesday reassured that Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) will utilize all available resources for the peaceful conduct of elections and impartial polls will guarantee the strengthening of democracy in the country. Talking to a private news channel, he said that the ECP would ensure an enabling environment for the conduct of free and fair elections so that nobody could raise objections to the polls' outcome later. He urged the public to remain patient and play their due role in promoting the cause of democracy by supporting the upcoming elections.

"ECP has also invited international observers to observe the upcoming general election, he said, adding, that their presence would add a valuable dimension to the polling process, ensuring its transparency and impartiality". "In this connection, all necessary arrangements will also be made for international observers to carry out their duties effectively and independently", he said. Replying to a question, he said that the relevant election officers will be given access to the electoral system upgrade and internet. "The Election Commission is also completely satisfied with the steps taken by the Punjab government so far," he added.

SC stops courts from verdict in NAB cases

F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: The Supreme Court (SC) on Tuesday stopped accountability courts from issuing a final verdict in graft cases. The court issued the directives while hearing the first-ever intra-court appeals (ICAs) against its Sept 15 majority judgment, which struck down amendments to the accountability law.

It adjourned the hearing till the detailed verdict on the law clipping the chief justice's powers is released. The larger bench headed by Chief Justice of Pakistan (CJP) Qazi Faez Isa and including Justice Aminuddin Khan, Justice Jamal Khan Mandokhail, Justice Athar Minallah and Justice Syed Hasan Azhar Rizvi took up two ICAs one filed by the federal government and the other by former SSGL managing director Zuhair Ahmed

Siddiqui.

The five-judge SC bench took up the ICAs in line with its Oct 11 short order in which the PDM government-made law to regulate the affairs of the top court namely the Supreme Court (Practice and Procedure) Act 2023 was upheld. On Oct 26, the Supreme Court had also issued a circular for the information of all concerned that any appeal filed in the top court against the decisions taken on petitions moved under Article 184(3) of the Constitution should be moved in the form of ICA.

During the hearing, Attorney General for Pakistan (AGP) Mansoor Usman Awan appeared before the court as the federal government's counsel while Farook H. Naek was present as Siddiqui's lawyer. Naek urged the court to suspend its verdict on the accountability law tweaks.

However, it was rejected. Noting that the detailed verdict on the law clipping the CJP's powers was not released yet, the apex court adjourned the hearing till then. At the outset of the hearing, AGP Awan came to the rostrum and informed the court that Khan was abroad and had sought adjournment of the hearing. Here, CJP Isa noted, "We have also received a few other applications."

He then asked Naek if he was supporting the SC verdict on the NAB law or opposing it, to which the latter replied that he was opposing it. The chief justice then observed, "You have written that according to the practice and procedures [law], a five-member bench should hear the NAB amendments case." He then asked Naek to present his arguments if he was still maintaining the same position.

ATC orders release of KP ex-deputy speaker

Humayun Khan

PESHAWAR: Special Anti-Terrorism Court (ATC) Peshawar Judge Jahanzeb Shinwari ordered release on bail of former Deputy Speaker Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Assembly Mahmood Jan in murder case, on Tuesday.

According to prosecution, former deputy speaker had killed Mahmood Jan on person of Essakhel tribe named Muhammad Ali while injuring one other over land dispute in the premises Regi police station.

It is worthy to mention that Mahmood Jan was arrested from premises of the court after rejection bail before arrest earlier. Latterly, former deputy speaker Mahmood Jan filed bail plea before ATC while

the court ordered his release.

Anti-Corruption court extends interim bail pleas: Special Anti-Corruption Court Peshawar extended interim bail pleas of Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) former parliamentarians till 21st November in illegal recruitment case due to unavailability of Judge Babar Ali Khan.

Former parliamentarians Gul Dad and Ajmal Khan appeared before court while Anwar Zeb was absent as he is behind bars in Maintenance of Public Order (MPO).

The counsel for Anwar Zeb requested for withdrawal of Bail before Arrest as former MPA is on judicial remand in jail. The former MPs are nominated in corruption cases for

alleged malpractices in developmental projects at Bajaur district.

Meanwhile, District court Dera Ismail Khan had discharged former Provincial Minister Kamran Bangash in second case but police had arrested him in third case for anti-state rhetoric on social media.

The case was registered at Tank on complaint of Adnan stating that Kamran Bangash had propagated anti-state rhetoric and encouraged PTT's workers for bringing licensed arms to Long March processions. The counsel Ali Zaman Advocate argued that a fabricated First information Report had registered against Kamran at DI Khan and requested for discharging from the allegations.

Board minutes of 500 officers in KP bureaucracy approved

Syed Adnan

PESHAWAR: In a significant development, the Provincial Selection Board convened a meeting last month to consider promotions for officers serving in various government departments. The meeting saw a multitude of officers elevated to higher ranks, marking a momentous step in their careers.

During the meeting, officers were promoted across different Basic Pay Scales (BPS), including

promotions from BPS 17 to 18, 18 to 19, 19 to 20, and 20 to 21. The decisions made in the meeting aimed to recognize the dedication and hard work of the officers, providing them with opportunities for greater responsibilities and challenges in their respective roles.

Today, the official minutes of the meeting were issued, detailing the deliberations and decisions made by the Provincial Selection Board. The

issuance of these minutes signifies a crucial step towards the formalization of the promotions. It is anticipated that the promotions will be officially notified in the coming days, bringing a sense of accomplishment and pride to approximately 500 officers from diverse cadres and grades. Among the officers promoted from grade 20 to 21 were Nazar Hussain, Javed Marwat, Abdul Jabbar Shah and other officers.

IHC issues written order regarding restoration of Nawaz's appeals

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Islamabad High Court (IHC) on Tuesday issued a detailed written order regarding revival of appeals of Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz's (PML-N) Quaid Muhammad Nawaz Sharif against his conviction in the NAB references.

Chief Justice Aamer Farooq and Justice Miangul Awan Aungzeb, in the seven-page order, said the request of the petitioner to restore his appeals in Al-Azizia Steel Mills and Avenfield Property references had been approved.

However, the division bench would decide the appeals on merit.

It stated that the National Accountability Bureau (NAB) had clearly stated that it had no intention to arrest the former prime minister. It further said that the petitioner was not arrested under the interim order of the court after he arrived Pakistan. The interim relief of not arresting Nawaz Sharif was extended for two days by the court.

The verdict said that the court had served notices to respondents on October 24,

on the petitions of Nawaz Sharif for restoration of his appeals and accepted the case for restoration of appeals on October 26. It further said that in the Al-Azizia reference, the sentence of the petitioner had been suspended by the Punjab Government under section 401 (2) of the CRPC.

The decision said that NAB's prosecutor general also did not oppose the restoration of the appeals, hence, the appeals were restored with all legal effects.

PM calls CPEC ‘once a century’s opportunity’ for Pakistan

ISLAMABAD (APP): Caretaker Prime Minister Anwaar-ul-Haq Kakar has termed the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor a 'once in a century opportunity' and said that Pakistan is focusing on its second phase to attain rapid economic and industrial growth.

The prime minister, in an interview with China's Phoenix TV aired on Tuesday, said CPEC initiated under China's Belt and Road Initiative had helped Pakistan witness significant development in diverse sectors. He mentioned that China's Urumqi and Pakistan's northern Gilgit-Baltistan had huge prospects for cooperation, particularly in trade and tourism.

Pakistan, he said, was expecting big economic activity and an influx of tourists between the two countries, which would bring an improvement to the social and economic lives of the people. "Urumqi could become an opening gateway for us to the mainland China. It is a win-win situation for both Pakistan and China," he added.

Also, he mentioned the progress in Balochistan after the underdeveloped province was integrated through the CPEC projects. On the significance of BRI, Kakar said the unique opportunity and transformation would not be restricted to Pakistan but would spread to the region with the develop-

ment of north-south roads, and rail and road networks. This, he said, would lead to the enhancement of China's economic and political influence in the world.

PM Kakar said during his visit to China, he was "utterly and completely mesmerized" by the impressive journey of progress made by the country. "This impression would transform me as the biggest ambassador of Pakistan-China friendship," he added. Asked to describe China in three words, he said, "Dignified, huge, and self-confident". Of the Pak-China ties, he termed them the "closest, most valuable and most desired as valued deeply by both sides".

"Pakistan and China are intertwined. Though two different countries, but one nation moving in the same direction," he said. On cooperation with China in green energy to combat climate change, he highlighted that Pakistan was one of the worst victims of natural disasters and would take it to various multilateral forums of the world and China. "Climate change will determine our policies being an exponential threat to the country and the region. We cannot respond in isolation," he said.

About the rise of China seen as a threat by some countries, he said no power on earth could undo the emerging power. "The correct approach to

handle is to cooperate with China rather than to contain it," he added. On relations with the United States, PM Kakar said the cooperation in areas of security and counter-terrorism continued as Pakistan was committed to fighting terrorism and extremism.

Asked about prospects of improvement in ties with India, he said Pakistan had very deep and complex challenges from the Indian side despite the constant efforts for peace. "Peace seems to be an elusive idea from the other [India] side." He said Pakistan would not miss if there was any opportunity for improvement in relations with India, however, stressed that without the resolution of the issue of Jammu and Kashmir, a dialogue or a normal trade activity was "unthinkable".

On the role of the international community in the settlement of the Jammu and Kashmir issue, he said, "The world needs to prioritize the moral principles rather than its self-centered strategic interests." On the situation in Gaza, he called for an immediate ceasefire and said that the "utterly unacceptable violence be treated as war crimes". He stressed the creation of an unhindered humanitarian assistance corridor to Gaza to ensure the supply of essentials, including food and medicines.

Alvi for mainstreaming visually impaired persons

ISLAMABAD (APP): President Dr Arif Alvi on Monday said it was the collective responsibility of the society to mainstream the visually impaired persons by providing them with vocational skill sets and specialized jobs.

Addressing an event held in connection with the White Cane Safety Day, the president stressed sensitizing the society towards blind and the visually impaired by identifying their special needs and accommodating them. Begum Samina Alvi, members of the diplomatic community, and visually impaired children attended the event meant to raise awareness about the ways to address the challenges faced by persons with such disabilities, here at the Aiwan-e-Sadr.

The president said career education and vocational skills for visually impaired students should be started as early as possible in the mainstream school system. This

will provide fellow students an opportunity to deal firsthand with persons with disabilities and learn to accommodate them in society, he said.

President Alvi also emphasized improving the accessibility of visually impaired persons through assistive technological gadgets including the personal digital assistants that guide them as the sensory camera sees objects and describes them aloud. He said the white cane was the tool for the visually impaired person to be identified in public, thus easing their mobility outdoors.

He said ending discrimination and helping such people to become self-reliant and useful members of society needed to be the goal of the State. Dr Alvi said the country's first visually impaired diplomat Saima Saleem made history by making a speech at the platform of the United Nations. He also mentioned Yousaf Saleem

who became the country's first visually impaired judge and set a courageous example for other people with such disabilities.

He lauded the efforts of the Ministry of Human Rights for providing educational opportunities to children with disabilities and addressing their specific needs. Interim Minister for Human Rights Khalil George said the ministry was raising awareness about physically challenged persons through various activities and advocacy programmes.

He said the special needs school under the ministry was providing education through Braille and other modern assistive gadgets. The visually impaired children presented a tableau on the national song 'Dil Dil Pakistan'. The president distributed white canes among the visually impaired children and later along with Begum Alvi had a group photograph with them.

Israel is committing war crimes in Gaza: Senate informed

ISLAMABAD (INP): The Senate is continuing discussion on Israeli atrocities and aggressive actions against the innocent Palestinians. Participating in the discussion, Dilawar Khan said the world community should fulfill its responsibility for the resolution of Israeli-

Palestinian conflict. He paid glowing tributes to the sacrifices of Palestinians.

Quratulain Marri while highlighting Israeli atrocities in Gaza said this is a well thought out and planned ethnic cleansing and genocide of Palestinians. She said the

Israeli Prime Minister is a warmonger. She stressed for forcefully raising voice against the Israeli atrocities. Mushahid Hussain Sayed said Hamas is a political organization representing the people of Palestine and opposing the state terrorism of Israel.