

Maryam meets PML-N leaders  
F.P. Report

LAHORE: PML-N leader Maryam Nawaz continues to hold meetings with the office-bearers of union councils as well as party workers in the National Assembly and Punjab Assembly constituencies of Lahore to discuss proposals to give a rousing welcome to former prime minister and PML-N supremo Nawaz Sharif on his homecoming on October 21.

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Israel pounds Gaza with deadly airstrikes  
UN says total siege prohibited under international law; Saudi crown prince says KSA attempting to control ongoing Israel-Hamas clashes; rockets fired from Lebanon towards Israel



Monitoring Desk

GAZA: Amid unabated strikes on Palestinians, the United Nation's human rights commissioner said Israel's total siege of the Gaza Strip, depriving civilians of goods essential for survival, is banned under international law.

The statement comes a day after Israel imposed a complete blockade on the Gaza Strip including a ban on electricity, water, food, and fuel, and called up an unprecedented 300,000 reservists, raising fears it planned a ground assault. Volker Turk, the UN high commissioner for human rights, said people's dignity and lives had to be respected as he called for all sides to defuse the "explosive powder-keg situation".

"International humanitarian law is clear: the obligation to take constant care to spare the civilian population and civilian objects remains applicable throughout the attacks," Turk said in a statement. The siege risk seriously compounding the already dire human rights and humanitarian situation in Gaza, including the capacity of medical facilities to operate, especially in light of increasing numbers of injured, the statement said.

"The imposition of sieges that endanger the lives of civilians by depriving them of goods essential for their survival is prohibited under international humanitarian law," Turk said. Any restrictions on the movement of people and goods to implement a siege must be justified by military necessity or may otherwise amount to collective punishment, the statement added. The Hamas move-

ment threatened to execute an Israeli captive every time Israel bombs a Palestinian home without warning, with death toll from the clashes crossing 1500.

The Israeli military has claimed that it regained "full control" of the Gaza fence that was breached by the Hamas gunmen who infiltrated into southern Israel on Saturday, according to Al Jazeera. Daniel Hagari, spokesman for the Israeli military, said no Hamas fighter has crossed the fence over the past 24 hours, but did not discount the possibility that some of the gunmen were still within the Israeli-controlled areas. He added that the military is now planting mines in the parts where the barrier was toppled to prevent further infiltrations.

Israeli TV channels said the death toll from the Hamas attack had climbed to 900 Israelis, with at least 2,600 injured, and dozens taken captive. Among the Israeli dead were 260 mostly young people gunned down at a desert music festival, where some of the hostages were abducted. Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu vowed revenge in a fiery speech accusing Iran-backed Hamas of executing tied-up children and other atrocities. "This vile enemy wanted war and it will get war," he said. Gaza's Health Ministry said at least 687 Palestinians had been martyred and 3,726 wounded in Israeli air strikes on the blockaded enclave since Saturday. Apartment blocks, a mosque and hospitals were among the sites attacked, and the strikes destroyed some roads and houses, according to media reports and eye-



witnesses.

Israel also bombed the headquarters of the private Palestinian Telecommunication Co, which could affect landline telephone, internet and mobile phone services. The strikes continued into the night on Monday. The Israeli military said it hit targets in the Gaza Strip from the sea and air, including a weapons depot it said belonged to Islamic Jihad and Hamas targets along Gaza's coast line. Hamas spokesperson Abu Ubaida issued the threat on Monday to kill Israelis among the dozens held captive after the surprise attack on Saturday morning. He said Hamas would execute an Israeli captive for every Israeli bombing of a civilian house without warning, and broadcast the execution.

There was no immediate response from the Israeli military to that threat. Israeli Foreign Minister Eli Cohen said more than 100 people had been taken captive by Hamas during the deadly cross-border incursion over the weekend. Palestinians reported receiving calls and mobile phone audio messages from Israeli security officers telling them to leave areas mainly in the northern and eastern territories of Gaza, and warning that the army would operate there. Dozens of people in Gaza City's Remal neighbourhood fled their homes.

"We took ourselves, children and grandchildren and daughters-in-law and we ran away. I can say that we became refugees. We don't have safety or security. What's this life? This is not a life," resident Salah Hanouneh, 73, said. In Israel's south, scene of the Hamas attack, Israel's chief military

spokesperson said troops had re-established control of communities inside Israel that had been overrun, but isolated clashes continued as some gunmen remained active. Sirens warning of incoming rocket fire blared in Israeli communities near the Gaza border overnight.

The announcement that 300,000 reservists had been activated in just two days added to speculation that Israel could be contemplating a ground assault of Gaza, a territory it abandoned nearly two decades ago. "We have never drafted so many reservists on such a scale," chief military spokesperson Rear-Admiral Daniel Hagari said. "We are going on the offensive." Washington — which provides Israel with \$3.8 billion in military assistance each year — said it was sending in fresh supplies of air defenses, munitions and other security assistance to Israel.

The United States' top general warned Iran not to get involved in the crisis and said he did not want the conflict to the broaden. Iran makes no secret of its backing for Hamas and has applauded the weekend attack while denying any involvement. "We want to send a pretty strong message. We do not want this to broaden and the idea is for Iran to get that message loud and clear," General Charles Q Brown, the chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, told reporters traveling with him to Brussels.

Governments including Italy, Thailand and Ukraine reported that their citizens had perished in the Hamas attacks. In Washington, President Joe Biden announced that at least 11 Americans had been killed



and it was likely US citizens were among those held hostage.

"I have directed my team to work with their Israeli counterparts on every aspect of the hostage crisis, including sharing intelligence and deploying experts from across the United States government to consult with and advise Israeli counterparts on hostage recovery efforts," Biden said in a statement. As Israel conducted intense retaliatory strikes on Gaza, Israeli Defence Minister Yoav Gallant drew international condemnation by announcing a tightened blockade to prevent food and fuel from reaching the strip, home to 2.3 million people. "Depriving the population in an occupied territory of food and electricity is collective punishment, which is a war crime," Omar Shakir, Israel and Palestine Director at Human Rights Watch, said in a statement.

Hamas-affiliated media said at least 20 people had been martyred in Israeli strikes on houses in the Gaza Strip late on Monday. Palestinian media also reported that an Israeli air strike on a building in Gaza City had martyred two Palestinian journalists and seriously wounded a third. Reuters was not immediately able to confirm the reports. The Israeli military had no immediate comment. As it rained, explosions and lightning lit the skies, and the sound of bombings mixed with thunder.

UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres said some 137,000 people were taking shelter with UNRWA, the UN agency that provides essential services to Palestinians. The British, French, German, Italian and US governments issued a joint statement

recognising the "legitimate aspirations" of the Palestinian people, and supporting equal measures of justice and freedom for Israelis and Palestinians alike. They also said they would remain "united and coordinated" to ensure Israel can defend itself. Egyptian President Abdel Fattah el-Sisi and his Turkish counterpart Tayyip Erdogan called on Hamas and Israel to immediately end violence and protect civilians, the Egyptian presidency said.

Qatari mediators held urgent calls to try to negotiate freedom for Israeli women and children seized by Hamas in exchange for the release of 36 Palestinian women and children from Israeli prisons. The prospect that fighting could spread alarmed the region and world. Hezbollah fires rockets into northern Israel Lebanese armed group Hezbollah fired rockets into northern Israel in response to at least three of its members being killed in Israeli shelling of Lebanon. Israel said one of its deputy commanders was killed in an earlier cross-border raid from Lebanon. Fears of a widening conflict meant more volatility for investors. Oil prices jumped more than 4%, gold gained and the US dollar edged up against the euro. Major international air carriers suspended or reined in service to or from Tel Aviv.

Meanwhile, the Saudi Arabia is taking steps to manage the conflict between Israel and Hamas, according to Crown Prince Muhammad Bin Salman (MBS), who spoke with Palestinian President Mahmud Abbas on Tuesday, days after Hamas

(Continued on Back Page)



QUETTA: Caretaker Prime Minister Anwaar-ul-Haq Kakar chairing a meeting of the Provincial Apex Committee.

## Two terrorists killed in Dera

F.P. Report

RAWALPINDI: Two terrorists were sent to hell by the security forces in two separate operations in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Province.

An intelligence based operation was conducted in general area Kulachi, Dera Ismail Khan District where after intense exchange of fire, terrorist Ikram was sent to hell. He remained actively involved in numerous terrorist activities against the security forces including the recent terrorist attacks on Police Station Hathala & Rori Police Check Post.

In another encounter with terrorists in general area Miran Shah, North Waziristan District, own troops effectively engaged the terrorist location as a result of which one more terrorist was sent to hell. Weapons and ammunition were also recovered from the killed terrorists. Locals of the area appreciated the operation and expressed their full support to eliminate the menace of terrorism.

**Funeral prayers of Pak Army martyrs offered:** Funeral prayers of Major Raza Ali Shah Shaheed and Havaladar Nisar Ahmad Shaheed, martyred in an exchange of fire with terrorists on the night of Sunday and Monday, were offered with full military honors in their native areas.

## PM for trickle-down effect of SIFC initiatives

F.P. Report

QUETTA: Caretaker Prime Minister Anwaar-ul-Haq Kakar on Tuesday emphasised that the initiatives taken by Special Investment Facilitation Council (SIFC) at the federal level, should have a trickle-down effect in each province for the benefit of the people.

The prime minister said this while attending the meeting of the Provincial Apex Committee along with Chief of Army Staff (COAS) General Syed Asim Munir and Caretaker Chief Minister of Balochistan Ali Mardan Khan Domki.

During the Apex Committee meeting, the forum was briefed about the revised National Action Plan, law enforcement operations, anti-smuggling and anti-narcotics operations in Balochistan, security of foreign nationals employed on CPEC or non-CPEC private projects.

The meeting was also briefed about the repatriation of illegal foreigners, foreign currency regularization measures, and progress on SIFC initiatives in Balochistan. The prime minister expressed confidence in the progress made by the Balochistan government and assured the full support of the federal government.

During the session, Prime Minister Kakar emphasized that the socio-economic development of Balochistan was imperative for ensuring peace and development of the province. The COAS highlighted that the Pakistan Army would provide full support in concert with the law enforcement agencies and other government departments for enforcement actions against the spectrum of illegal activities with full force to deny pilferage of resources and economic losses that the country suffered due to these activities.

The prime minister said that Balochistan

was rich with mines and minerals and that development in that sector would generate economic activity and job opportunities for the people of the area. Moreover, investments in agriculture and information technology should also be focused, apart from human resource development, he added. He underscored the need for synergy among all relevant departments for gainful effects of the initiatives.

The participants affirmed that state institutions, government departments, and people were united for the progress and prosperity of the province. Earlier, upon arrival, the prime minister and COAS were received by Balochistan chief minister and Balochistan corps commander.

**PM, Balochistan CM discuss law and order situation:** Caretaker Prime Minister Anwaar-ul-Haq Kakar and interim Chief Minister Balochistan Sardar Ali Mardan Khan Domki discussed the situation of law and order in the province. The prime minister, who arrived in the provincial capital this morning, will chair the 14th meeting of the apex committee on the implementation of the National Action Plan.

The chief minister briefed the prime minister about the agenda of the meeting. Caretaker Interior Minister Saffraz Ahmed Bugti was also present in the meeting.

**PM to visit China next week:** Interim Prime Minister Anwaar-ul-Haq Kakar will visit China next week. Sources informed that PM Kakar will leave for China on October 16. It is expected that 15 important agreements and MoUs to be launched under the CPEC project will be signed during his visit. The interim prime minister will participate in the 3rd Forum of Belt and Road Initiative Project on October 17-18. During the prime minister's visit, the ML-1 Railway project worth \$6.67 billion will be signed.

## Govt to ensure free, transparent polls: Solangi

F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Information and Broadcasting Murtaza Solangi on Tuesday said the caretaker government would ensure free, transparent and impartial elections in a peaceful and conducive environment.

In a meeting with former Member of Provincial Assembly, former spokesperson of Balochistan Government and senior politician Farah Azim Shah, he said development and welfare of Balochistan was a priority of the caretaker government. The caretaker Information Minister said there would be no comprehensive progress of the country without the development of Balochistan province.

They discussed the overall political situation of country, especially Balochistan including the elections. Farah Azim Shah expressed full confidence in the leadership and initiatives of Caretaker Prime Minister Anwaar-ul-Haq Kakar. She also lauded the economic and administrative policies of the caretaker government.

Meanwhile, Caretaker Minister for Information and Broadcasting Murtaza Solangi lauded the remarkable services rendered by Pakistan Sweet Home and its Patron in Chief Zamarud Khan for the welfare of orphans and needy children.

The minister, in a meeting with Zamarud Khan, acknowledged Pakistan Sweet Home's role in providing protection, quality education, and effective grooming to marginalized segments of society. Solangi said the children who received education from the organization had excelled in every aspect of life.

## Thousands of Afghans out in cold after quakes

KABUL (AFP): Thousands of Afghans who survived a powerful earthquake that killed more than 2,000 people were bracing for a winter of homelessness on Tuesday, as rescuers made last-ditch efforts to find survivors. Volunteers have worked with spades and pickaxes in Herat province since Saturday's deadly magnitude 6.3 quake — followed by powerful aftershocks — while others dug graves instead.

The United Nations said more than 12,000 people, from some 1,700 families, are estimated to have been affected. It said "100 per cent" of homes were destroyed in 11 villages of Zenda Jan district. Zareen, in the village of Nayeab Rafi, where 11 of his family members were killed in the crush of falling masonry, said aid tents would not withstand the winter storms. "If the government doesn't take us away or help us, we will be stuck here," the man in his 70s told AFP.

Providing shelter on a large scale will be a challenge for Afghanistan's Taliban authorities, who seized power in August 2021, and have fractious relations with international aid organisations. "Not a single house is left, not even a room where we could stay at night," said 40-year-old Mohammad Naem, who told AFP he lost 12 relatives including his mother. "We can't live here anymore. You can see, our family got martyred here. How could we live here?"

In the provincial capital of Herat city — 30 kilometres (19 miles) southeast of the quake epicentres in hard-to-reach Zenda Jan district — Doctors Without Borders said the injured

now faced a new ordeal. "More than 340 patients discharged yesterday don't want to leave the hospital as they have no homes to return to," the charity said on social media site X. Local and national officials gave conflicting counts of the number of dead and injured, but the disaster ministry has said 2,053 people died.

"We can't give exact numbers for dead and wounded as it is in flux," said disaster management ministry spokesman Mullah Janan Sayeq. The UN said on Tuesday the death toll stood at nearly 1,300 with nearly 500 more still missing, the majority of them women. Afghanistan is frequently hit by deadly earthquakes, but the weekend disaster is the worst to strike the impoverished country in more than 25 years. Taliban authorities have banned women from working for UN and non-governmental organisations (NGOs) in Afghanistan, making it difficult to assess family needs in deeply conservative parts of the country.

Amnesty International said the Taliban government should ensure that rescue and relief efforts are carried out "without discrimination" and guarantee unrestricted access to the affected regions to humanitarian agencies.

"It is critical that all assistance meets the needs of the most at-risk groups who often face compounded challenges in crisis situations, including women," said South Asia regional researcher Zaman Sultani. Most rural homes in Afghanistan are made of mud and built around wooden support poles, with little in the way of modern steel reinforcement.

## Bilawal for ensuring education, safety of girls

F.P. Report

KARACHI: Chairman of Pakistan People's Party (PPP) Bilawal Bhutto Zardari has urged that as a nation, more efforts are still needed to ensure the education and safety of young girls in our country.

He said that the entire nation has to work together to prevent issues like discrimination against girls, domestic violence, forced labour and early marriages. The Chairman PPP, in his message on the occasion of the International Day of the Girl Child, said that the girl children of Pakistan are also brave and talented like Pakistani women.

He said that the government and the society are bound to provide a friendly and harmonious environment including better education and health facilities to the girl child. "If given a better environment and opportunity to exercise their due rights, our girls have the potential to change the situation," he noted. Chairman Bilawal said that PPP believes in equal rights and equality for all citizens in the country.

He said that the founding chairman of the party and the first elected Prime Minister of Pakistan, Shaheed Zulfikar Ali Bhutto, introduced progressive thinking and policies for women at the government level for the first time in the country. "The Constitution of 1973, Shaheed Bhutto's great gift to the nation, "encourages full participation of women in all spheres of national life," he pointed out.

Bilawal said that Shaheed Mohtarma Benazir Bhutto, despite her two shortest tenures in government, took revolutionary steps for the progress and empowerment of Pakistani women and girls, including legislation to protect women's rights.









## Journalist Welfare Endowment Fund: Minister emphasizes need to amend rules

### F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: Caretaker Minister of Information, Culture, and Tourism for Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Barrister Feroze Jamal Shah Kakakhel here Tuesday emphasized the necessity of amending rules governing Journalist Welfare Endowment Fund for support journalist fraternity.

He said this while presiding over a meeting of Journalist Endowment Fund Committee. The meeting was also attended by Syed Jabbar Shah, Provincial Secretary of Information, Muhammad

Imran Khan, Director General of Information, Liaqat Amin, Director of Public Relations, Ansarullah Khilji, Press Registrar, Muhammad Ayub, Budget Officer Finance Department, Arshad Aziz Malik, President of Press Club Peshawar, Bakht Muhammad, President of Mardan Press Club and Senior journalist Muhammad Riaz.

The caretaker minister highlighted the importance of proposing amendments to address financial challenges faced by journalists and pointed out necessarily measures to reduce unemployment adding that it would those who are unemployed and facing financial difficulties.

During the meeting, applications for financial support from various journalists were reviewed. Financial support was approved for complete applications while incomplete applications were scheduled for consideration in the next meeting.

Caretaker minister acknowledged challenging conditions in which journalists work and affirmed caretaker government's commitment to utilize all available resources for the welfare of journalists.

He recognized the pivotal role of journalists in promoting transparency in government affairs and disseminating government initiatives to the public.

Barrister Feroze Jamal pledged to introduce amendments to optimize Journalist Welfare Endowment Fund's utility ensuring that journalists receive timely and enhanced assistance during challenging times.

He also instructed that the application process for financial assistance and other procedures should be simplified for convenience of journalists.



PESHAWAR: Provincial president PPP Muhammad Ali Shah Bacha presiding over a party meeting. — F.P. photo by Ghulam Murtaza

## UoP observes World Mental Health Day

### F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: The Department of Sociology, University of Peshawar (UoP) observed World Mental Health Day by organizing a one-day awareness seminar here on Tuesday.

The purpose of the event was to enlighten the students and other circles about mental diseases, their nature and importance.

Besides, Dr. Johar Shah, Dean Social Sciences, Dr. Zohaib Khan of the Khyber Medical University, Dr. Abdul Jalil Khan Associate Professor Khyber Medical University and Dr. Noor Sanauddin University of Peshawar, a large number

of students and people from other circles also attended the seminar.

Addressing the participants of the seminar, Dean Social Sciences Dr. Johar Shah said that the trend of student suicide in Pakistan is increasing day by day, while according to the report of the World Health Organization, more than 15,000 people commit suicide every year and 25% of them are young people.

He further said that despite the fact that the religion has declared this act as haram, but people suffering from mental illness still adopt this path.

About the trend of suicide among students, he

said that most of the students have to face pressure from their parents to get good grades, choosing a career of their choice get them mentally tired to take such extreme step of taking their own life.

He urged the students to always share the pressure exerted on them in the circles of their friends and avoid taking pressure.

Other speakers also urged parents to make their children their friends so that they do not hesitate to choose the career of their choice. He further urged the parents to make the children good humans instead of turning them into machines.

## Breast Cancer awareness session held

### F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: Every year, October is celebrated as Breast cancer awareness month around the globe.

In this regard an awareness session was organized by the Department of Pharmacy, University of Peshawar on Tuesday.

Dr Fatima Khan, a breast cancer oncologist along with her team from Shaukat Khanam memorial cancer Hospital and Research centre delivered an informative talk on the detection, prevention strategies and treatment of breast cancer.

This female exclusive event was attended by students of the Department of Pharmacy along with a large number of students from other Departments of the University.

Professor Dr Jamshed Ali Khan, Chairman Department of Pharmacy, thanked the visiting team and appreciated their efforts for this noble cause.

## Power suspension notified

PESHAWAR (APP): Pesco on Tuesday notified that due to maintenance work power supply will remain suspended from Peshawar Cantt Grid Station on 11th and 15th October from 8 a.m. to 2 p.m.

Subsequently, it said consumers of Tehkal, Islamia College, KTH, Commercial, Jahangirabad, University Town, NCB, Airport, PAF Base, Saddar Road, Mall Road, MES 1,2, Old MCS, Babo Ghari, Marble Industry, CAA, Palosi 1, Behari Colony, Tehkal Payan, Bank of Khyber, Scarp 1 feeders will face inconvenience.

The power supply, it said will also remain suspended from Pesco Colony Grid Station on 11th and 15th October from 8 a.m. to 2 p.m. resultantly consumers of Sikanandar Pura, Lala, Hashnaghari, Chugulpura, Chamkani, Jhagra, Radio Pakistan, Sethi Town, Gulbahar, Zaryab, Phando Road, City Home, Baghbanan, Urmur, Islamabad, Faqir Abad, Sheikh Abad, Molve Je, Nishtar Abad and NHA, feeders will face inconvenience.

Likewise, it said power supply will remain suspended from Shahi Bagh Grid Station on 11th October from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m.



PESHAWAR: Ambassador of Japan Wada Mitsushiro meeting Governor Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Haji Ghulam Ali at Governor's House.

## Secretary visits Rescue 1122 Headquarters

PESHAWAR (APP): The Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Secretary Relief and Rehabilitation Department Inayatullah Wasim visited emergency service Rescue 1122 Headquarters here on Tuesday.

Secretary Relief, accompanied by a delegation, paid a visit to the Provincial Headquarters of Rescue 1122 where Director General Rescue 1122 Dr Khateer Ahmed extended a warm welcome, and the distinguished guest was greeted with traditional hospitality.

During the visit, the delegation examined Rescue 1122's operational equipment and gained insights into various tools used during emergencies.

On this occasion, Dr. Khateer Ahmad, Director General of Rescue 1122, briefed the guests on the services and facilities provided during emergencies.

Rescue 1122's operational equipment, especially the ambulance services, continues to provide timely assistance to patients and the injured, ensuring the safety of countless lives.

The launch of the motorcycle ambulance service in Peshawar was highlighted as a successful initiative by Secretary Relief.

He praised Rescue 1122 for its prompt and efficient services during emergencies, which often go unnoticed. He commended the dedication of Rescue 1122 personnel who operate under challenging conditions.

In an effort to enhance Rescue 1122's services and equip them with the latest tools, all possible resources will be allocated, said Secretary Relief.

A campaign has been initiated to improve the mutual relationship between Rescue 1122 and the public. The goal is to inform the general public about the locations of Rescue 1122 stations in their respective districts, provide information about operational equipment and personnel, and offer training on medical aid and fire safety to community leaders. This initiative aims to ensure a collaborative effort between Rescue 1122 and the public during any emergency situation, the Secretary added.

In the closing moments of the visit, Secretary Relief distributed certificates and cash rewards to the outstanding personnel who excelled in competitions held at the Punjab Emergency Services Academy.

Furthermore, Director General Rescue 1122 presented a memorable shield to Secretary Relief as a token of appreciation. This visit marks an important step in strengthening the partnership between government departments and Rescue 1122, ultimately benefiting the people by ensuring effective emergency response services.

## Collection of 55 books on Japan donated to Gandhara University

PESHAWAR (INP): The Embassy of Japan in Pakistan, in collaboration with The Nippon Foundation, has donated a collection of 55 books on Japan to Gandhara University Peshawar as part of the "Read Japan Project" aiming to promote further understanding of Japan and its culture through books.

WADA Mitsuhiro, the Ambassador of Japan to Pakistan, presented the books to Mrs. Roeeeda Kabir, Chairperson of

Gandhara University, at a ceremony held on Tuesday.

The 55 carefully selected books in English language cover a range of topics related to Japan such as politics, economy, security, philosophy, art and culture.

Ambassador congratulated the students and teachers for receiving this valuable gift from the Nippon Foundation and expressed the hope that with these books, students will have more fascinating information on Japan.

"I also hope that the students as well as the faculty members would continue to explore new ways of learning more about the Japanese culture. On our side, we would provide our cooperation to facilitate this endeavor especially at a time when we have celebrated 70 years of diplomatic relations last year and will celebrate the 70 years of Japanese ODA support for Pakistan next year. Young people are the

future of the country. It is my desire that more and more future generations of Japan and Pakistan will get to know each other, and cooperate in order to make our countries better," said Ambassador Wada.

The Read Japan Project was initiated by The Nippon Foundation in 2008 to promote the understanding of Japan through the donation of Japan related books in English to universities and libraries around the world.

## 19 new dengue cases reported in province

PESHAWAR (INP): A weekly report issued by the Health Department Khyber Pakhtunkhwa here on Tuesday said the number of people affected by the dengue virus has reached to 448 in the province.

According to the report, the highest number of 94 dengue cases were reported from Peshawar, followed by 66 in Swabi, 45 in Mardan while from Charsadda, 37 and from Battagram 31 cases were reported.

The report further informed that from Malakand, 23 dengue cases, from Haripur, 20 cases, from Kohat and Bajaur each 17 cases and from Mansehra 16 cases of dengue fever were reported.

From Dera Ismail Khan, 13 such cases were reported, while from Nowshera 12 cases, from Abbottabad 10 cases and from Chitral Lower, 8 dengue fever cases were reported.

Likewise, it said from Bannu district 7 dengue cases were reported, while from Lakki Marwat 9 cases, from Swat 6 cases, from Dir Upper and Hangu 4 cases each, from Dir Lower 3 dengue cases and from Khyber and Karak districts, each 2 cases were reported.

In Kolai Palus and Torghar each 1 case was reported. During the last week, the report said from Peshawar 7 new cases were reported while from Swabi, 3 cases, from Lakki Marwat 3 cases, from Malakand and Kohat 2 cases and from Kolai Palus one new case was reported.

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## In brief

### 11 colliers stranded, hurt

ORAKZAI (INP): As many as 11 colliers were stranded and injured after blast in a coalmine in Lower Orakzai on Tuesday, Rescue 1122 said. According to spokesperson of Rescue 1122, alleged short circuit caused huge blast due to which a portion of coalmine collapsed and 11 colliers were stranded. The rescue teams pulled out all wounded coalminers and shifted them to different hospital where one injured miner was referred to Kohat hospital due to critical condition.

### Three outlaws held with arms

#### F.P. Report

D I KHAN: The police arrested three outlaws, recovered arms, ammunition and narcotics in Nawab Shaheed and Cantt police stations jurisdictions on Tuesday. According to details, in line with directions of District Police Officer (DPO) Dera, Abdul Rauf Babar Qaisarani, the police continued operations against criminals. Headed by SHO Shaheed Nawab Khan PS, Arslam Khan Gandapur, a team of police during a raid arrested accused Muhammad Naveed s/o Abdul Rehman hailing from Wandha Talgi besides recovering four pistols and 35 bullets from his possession. The Cantt Police arrested a drug pusher Hassan Naveed s/o Abdul Rasheed hailing from Madina Colony and recovered 175 gram heroin from his possession. Another accused was arrested with arms and drugs. The police confiscated the recovered arms, narcotics and after registering separate cases against nabbed outlaws at respective police stations started investigations. Meanwhile, the Deputy Commissioner South Waziristan Lower Muhammad Nasir Khan urged parents to get their children vaccinated against crippling disease during the ongoing anti-polio drive. The DC said that joint efforts should be made to reach out to each child aged up to five years during the campaign so that the area could be made polio-free. In this regard, he was of the opinion that cooperation of parents was important and they should come forward to get their children vaccinated and protect them from life-long disabilities. Several teams have been engaged to administer anti-polio drops to children at houses or other places including bus terminals, exit and entry points and markets.

### Heavy fines slapped on shops

SHIKARPUR (PPI): In Shikarpur, the District Administration has sprung into action following multiple public complaints about the rampant sale and consumption of chemically adulterated milk. Under the directives of Deputy Commissioner Shikarpur, Altaf Ahmed Chachar, the local authorities raided milk shops and fined them. Assistant Commissioner Shikarpur, Muhammad Faizan Zafar, in collaboration with the Food Department, led targeted raids on various milk shops and hotels in the region. These operations involved rigorous testing of milk samples to ascertain the presence of chemical contaminants, specifically soap and detergent powder. The outcome of these raids revealed that several establishments were indeed selling chemical-laden milk. As a consequence, fines were imposed as a punitive measure to deter further malpractice: At Jamani Hall, Pathan's hotel was slapped with a fine amounting to Rs 30,000 for selling contaminated milk, which was subsequently discarded.



QUETTA: MQM Balochistan president Malik Imran Kakar addressing a press conference.

## World Mental Health day observed in Dir

F.P. Report

LOWER DIR: The Helping Hand for Relief and Development (HHRD), a non-governmental organization working for the uplift and welfare of orphans, widows and special persons in the Lower Dir district, on Tuesday arranged a function at its rehabilitation center in Talash to mark the World Mental Health Day.

The center's staff, area elders and parents of the registered special persons attended the function. The HHRD district coordinator Muhammad Bilal, Dr Rizwanullah and psychologist Habibullah highlighted the importance of mental health, types of mental disorders, factors affected mental health and its treatment and rehabilitation services. The speakers said that World Mental Health day was being observed

each year on Oct, 10 to raise mass awareness regarding it.

They said the day provided an opportunity to people and communities to unite behind the theme of this year that is 'mental health is a universal human right'. They said community-based mental healthcare should be provided with interrelated services including general healthcare, psychosocial rehabilitation and peer support services.

Meanwhile the district administration in collaboration with the youth affairs department also arranged a function at the government girls' degree college Adenzai to mark the day. Prof Abbier Iqbal, head of the psychology department, Miss Ismat Shah, head of the psychology department at Government Girls' Degree College Timergara and others spoke on the occasion. They shed light

on mental health and its importance. The speaker educated the audience about the importance of mental health at every stage of life. They said that it was their social responsibility to reduce the stigma around mental illnesses and mental health conditions by showing resilience to the mental and psychological issues.

Prof Farrukh Wasil, who was chief guest, said that the society needed to make collective efforts for helping the people suffering from severe psychological problems. She thanked all the guests and the district youth officer Malik Shahzad Tariq for organizing the useful event at a girls' college. The students keenly participated in the question-answer session. Various skits, drawings and charts were presented by the students of the psychology department expressing the theme of the Day.

## 26 cases reported under Child Protection Act

F.P. Report

BUNER: The child protection officer Buner district Ehsanullah has disclosed alarming raise in the cases of male child sexual abuses in the district while adding that 26 reported cases about children, on Tuesday.

Talking to *The Frontier Post* the district officer with social case officer Abdul Rouf shared that local elders were behind out of court resolution of the issues due to which the accused got scot free or got bail soon. He shared though such like cases were non-compoundable but due to parents lack of interests not presenting evidences the accused easily got bail.

The child protection officer through media persons sent a message that every affected child parents must visit child protection office in front of NBP in Daggar. The child protection officer further said there were staff for psycho thorophy besides counseling and registration case in police and lawyers facilities for litigation in court.

The child protection officer claimed children welfare facilitation services were also available even interaction with other services agencies for the wellbeing of affected children. He appealed parents to have close contact and trust the office and officers for protection rights of their children.

## Couple attempts suicide

FAISALABAD (PPI): In a shocking incident, a poverty-stricken couple attempted suicide in Samandari, Faisalabad, police said Tuesday. The police stated that a couple identified as Umair and Sadia took poison after being fed up their financial condition. The police further said that the husband could not survive and died at DHQ hospital whereas his wife is in critical condition.

Earlier, a woman committed suicide after feeding a poisonous substance to her four daughters in Balochistan's capital Quetta. The horrific incident took place in Quetta's Hazara Town area today in which a woman committed suicide after feeding poison to her four daughters aged between three to 10 years.

## IRRC commits for clean and green Mardan

F.P. Report

MARDAN: Commissioner Mardan Division Shaukat Ali Yousafzai said that government is trying to provide best sanitation services to citizens at their doorsteps. Integrated Resource Recovery Center (IRRC) of WSSCM is contributing a lot in making environment clean and green. He expressed these views while visiting the IRRC plant.

Deputy Commissioner Mardan Abdur Rahman, Assistant Commissioner Mardan Ayesha Tahir, General Manager WSSCM Engineer Muhammad Khalil Akbar, Manager HR & Admin Imran Afridi and Deputy Manager Solid Waste Management Muhammad Ishaq were also present. General Manager Engineer Muhammad Khalil Akbar briefed the Commissioner Mardan Division on WSSCM operations and conversion of organic waste into organic fertilizers. He said that this integrated Resource Recovery Center is the only established center in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa.

This is a multi-Purpose facility which will contribute towards clean and green environment, promote organic farming in the province and will also put a positive impact on employment generation in this particular field as the slogan of the project is "Trash is Cash".

He highlighted that the company has formulated an integrated strategy to make Mardan city clean and green. One hundred sixty tons of waste is collected on daily basis from Mardan city and safely disposed of. Under the IRRC system five tons of organic waste is converted into organic fertilizers on daily basis.

Commissioner Mardan Division Shaukat Ali Yousafzai expressed his satisfaction on the briefing and said that all the available resources will be utilized to provide best sanitation services to the citizens of Mardan. He said that providing the best services delivery to the citizens is our top priority. He directed the relevant authorities to take measures to stop the use of plastic.

**Police arrests murderer killed mother, sisters:** Police arrested accused who killed his mother and 02 sisters and recovered weapon used in the offense. According to the details, a tragic incident of murder of a mother and her 02 daughters took place on September 9 in the Police Station City. Taking strict notice of the case, DPO Najib-ur-Rahman appointed a special team to arrest the accused involved in the incident.

Police team the accused Jawad son of Abdul Rahim was arrested. The arrested

accused confessed his crime and recovered 01 Kalashnikov and 03 pistols along with the murder weapon on his identification. Further investigation is going on with the arrested accused.

Meanwhile, under the chairmanship of District Police Officer Najib-ur-Rehman, a crime meeting of Mardan Police was held at the DPO office On Tuesday, in which SP Investigation Muhammad Suleman Khan, SP Head Quarters Wesal Ahmed, SP City Division Inam Jan Khan, SP Rural Division Muhammad Ijaz Khan, SP Sadar Division Khalid Khan, DSPs of all circles, SHO of the district and investigative staff participated.

In the meeting, the law and order situation in the district was reviewed in detail. Control of social crimes. The steps taken to achieve this were discussed. District Police Chief Najib-ur-Rehman while addressing the police officers said that the protection of the life and property of the public is the primary responsibility of the police. He instructed the police officers to maintain peace. Implement more effective actions against shootings, usury, underplay, drug dealers, gangs, gambling, prostitution dens, car lifting, and other evil elements.

It should be ensured that the elimination of traffic warden should be done against illegal rickshaws and taxi stands from the police bases and squares, and the criminal professionals should be dealt with strictly by continuing search operations and countermeasures on a daily basis. Apart from this, he said that respect and dignity of honorable citizens should be maintained so that the public's trust in the police can be further improved.

**One brother killed other injured in road mishap:** On the Malakand highway, at Jalala Barah Shah, two flying coaches tried to overtake each other crushed two motorcyclist brothers, leaving one brother dead on the spot and the other seriously injured.

On receiving the information, Rescue 1122 ambulance and medical team reached the spot. Rescue 1122 medical team shifted THQ Hospital to Takhtbhai. The deceased youth was identified as Ehsanullah son of Azizullah resident of Khat Kale Shergarh while the injured Obaidullah son of Azizullah was shifted to the hospital by local transport.

According to preliminary information, both brothers were going to passport office in Mardan early in the morning to make passports when they met with an accident on the way. Shergarh police registered a case on the report of deceased's uncle and started investigation.

## Tribesmen hold rally to show solidarity with Palestinians

F.P. Report

JAMRUD: On the fourth day after Hamas launched an assault on Israel a rally in favor of Palestine was taken out here at Bab-e-Khyber, Jamrud on Tuesday. Under the auspices of Fata Quami Jirga numbers of locals including tribal elders and political figures carrying banners inscribed with slogans, supporting Palestine people.

Addressing on the occa-

sion head of Fata Quami Jirga, Malik Bismellah Khan, Said Kabear Afridi, Haji Muhammad Ameen and others said that they support the cause of the Palestine people who rendered matchless sacrifices for it. They condemned the bombardment of Israel on the residential blocks that killed hundreds of innocent Palestinian citizens including 65 children.

"Besides financial assistance we are ready to fight

along with our Palestine brothers against usurped Israel forces to win freedom for them and to uphold honor of Al-Quds," they opined. They demanded the civilized world to stop Israel from bombarding residential buildings and schools that caused human casualties.

It is to be mentioned here that so far 900 Israelis and 770 Palatines have been killed in the war while 100 to 150 Israelis have been made hostage in the fight.

## No one would be allowed to hinder socio-economic activities

Shafi Ullah

MINGORA: Inspector General Frontier Corps North, Major General Noor Wali Khan, presided over a Jirga, a traditional gathering, organized by the Pak Army and Frontier Corps North in Swat. The event was graced by the presence of Commissioner Malakand, RPO Malakand, district administration and military officials, as well as esteemed elders from Swat and Malakand, Ullema

along with a sizable contingent of youth.

In his address, IGFC Major General Noor Wali Khan highlighted the pivotal role played by the people, administration, Pakistan Army and other law enforcement agencies in achieving and maintaining peace in Swat and Malakand. He lauded these areas as symbols of Pakistan's natural beauty and noted the significant increase in local and foreign tourists, underscoring the

area's newfound tranquility.

Major General Noor Wali Khan firmly stated the commitment to uphold law and order, emphasizing that no group or individual would be allowed to disrupt the hard-earned peace or hinder socio-economic activities in the area. During the Jirga, local elders shared their perspectives on the current security situation and discussed the measures implemented to ensure peace and stability in Swat & Malakand.

## Student unions: Fostering democracy and leadership in Pakistan

Engr. Mamoon Ahmad Khilji

**THE decision to revive the Student Union is of paramount importance for Pakistan's democratic future. The resurgence of student unions not only signifies a step towards the restoration of true democracy but also heralds the reinstatement of ideological politics within the country. Over the years, student unions have played an integral role in shaping Pakistan's political landscape. They have advocated for the rights and interests of students and have served as a breeding ground for future political leaders.**

One of the critical roles that student unions fulfill is addressing the issue of lawlessness within educational institutions. They act as a check and balance system within universities, ensuring that the educational environment remains peaceful and conducive to learning. By

actively participating in maintaining discipline and order, student unions contribute significantly to creating a safe and harmonious campus atmosphere.

However, it is disheartening that Zia's martial law ordinance, in effect since February 9, 1984, has persisted for an extended period. This martial law ordinance has, regrettably, stifled the voices of students and limited their ability to engage in meaningful democratic activities on campuses. The revival of student unions presents an opportunity to challenge and overturn these repressive measures, allowing for the free expression of ideas and opinions.

Student unions offer a myriad of benefits to the student body. Firstly, they provide a platform for students to have their voices heard and interests represented to the administration. This representation ensures that students' concerns are not overlooked, leading to policies and decisions that better align with their needs.

Moreover, student unions offer valuable opportunities for leadership development. Students can hold various positions within these unions, such as president, treasurer, or secretary, allowing them to gain practical experience in organizational management, teamwork, and decision-making. These skills are invaluable in both academic and future professional pursuits.

Additionally, student unions actively engage in community service and promote social responsibility. They organize and participate in various projects and charity events/organizing fun fair debates awareness sessions that benefit not only the university community but also the broader society. This fosters a sense of responsibility and compassion among students, encouraging them to become engaged citizens who are aware of their societal responsibilities.

Networking is another significant advantage of student unions that brings together stu-

dents with similar interests or career goals, facilitating connections that can be beneficial in the future, both academically and professionally. These networks can open doors to internships, job opportunities, and collaborative projects.

Furthermore, student unions contribute to skill enhancement. Involvement in planning and executing events, communicating with diverse groups, and negotiating with the administration hones valuable skills that are transferable to various life situations. Advocacy is a central role of student unions. They can advocate for changes in campus policies, improvements in facilities, and the overall quality of education. By doing so, they contribute to a better educational experience for all students and help shape the future direction of the institution.

Student unions are also known for their organization of cultural and social activities. These events not only add vibrancy to campus life but also

promote diversity and cultural understanding among students. They create opportunities for social interaction and the celebration of different cultures, fostering a more inclusive and tolerant environment.

In times of conflict or disputes, student unions often serve as mediators, helping to resolve issues among students or between students and the administration. This conflict resolution capability contributes to a more harmonious campus environment, ensuring that disputes are addressed fairly and equitably.

Moreover, student unions can engage in political activities and promote civic awareness. They encourage students to participate in the democratic process, educating them about their rights and responsibilities as citizens. This engagement in politics helps prepare the next generation of leaders and active citizens.

Lastly, student unions play a crucial role in amplifying the voices of marginalized groups.

They advocate for the rights and needs of underrepresented students, ensuring that their concerns are addressed and their perspectives are included in the decision-making process. This inclusivity fosters a more diverse and equitable campus community.

In conclusion, the revival of student unions in Pakistan represents a significant step towards a more democratic, inclusive, and vibrant educational system. These unions offer numerous advantages to students, including representation, leadership development, community engagement, networking, skill enhancement, advocacy, cultural and social activities, conflict resolution, political engagement, and amplification of marginalized voices. It is time for Pakistan to embrace this opportunity and usher in a new era where student unions can contribute to the betterment of both educational institutions and society at large.





## South China Sea issue

# China urges Philippines to end ‘provocations’



BEIJING (Reuters): China warned the Philippines against further "provocations" at an atoll in the South China Sea, saying such acts had violated Chinese territorial sovereignty, contravened international law and disrupted regional peace and stability. The Philippines' territory is defined by a series of international treaties, and the atoll has never been part of its territory, the Chinese foreign ministry said in a strongly worded statement, referring to the atoll as Renai Reef.

In recent months, the Philippines has been sending supplies to its troops stationed on a World War Two-era, transport-ship-turned-military outpost on the Second Thomas Shoal, prompting the China Coast Guard to repeatedly deploy

vessels to block the resupply missions. China claims sovereignty over nearly the entire South China Sea, pointing to a line on its maps that cuts into the exclusive economic zones of Vietnam, the Philippines, Malaysia, Brunei and Indonesia. The Permanent Court of Arbitration in 2016 said the line on China's maps had no legal basis, which Beijing rejects. The atoll is known as Ayungin in the Philippines, while China calls it the Renai Reef, lying 190 km (118 miles) off the Philippine island of Palawan.

"The Philippines has no legal basis at all to claim sovereignty over Renai Reef on the grounds of its comparative proximity to Philippine territory," the Chinese foreign ministry said in a statement. Since

the grounding of the BRP Sierra Madre at the atoll in 1999 in Manila's attempt to assert its sovereignty claim, China has repeatedly called on the Philippines to tow away the vessel. "The Philippines repeatedly promised to do so as soon as possible," the Chinese ministry said.

"However, 24 years have passed, and the Philippine warship is still there. China cannot accept the Philippines' acts of going back on its words again and again and violating China's territorial sovereignty," it said. The Philippines must stop "making provocations" and "creating troubles" at sea, the ministry added. China will continue to do what is necessary to firmly safeguard its territorial sovereignty and maritime rights and interests, it said.

## Ukrainian forces make headway in east, south

KYIV (Reuters): Ukrainian forces are making some headway in both the eastern and southern theatres of their four-month-old counteroffensive, military officials said. Russian accounts of the fighting said Moscow's forces had repelled Ukrainian attacks near the devastated eastern city of Bakhmut and inflicted heavy casualties in strikes on Ukrainian positions outside the city.

Ukraine's counteroffensive aims to secure control of areas around Bakhmut in order to recapture the town, which was seized by Russian forces in May after months of heavy battles. In the south, Kyiv wants to advance to the Sea of Azov to sever a Russian land bridge linking areas it occupies in the south and east. Iliia Yevlash, a spokesperson for Ukraine's eastern group of forces, said troops had scored a "partial success" near Andriivka, which they captured last month along with the nearby locality of Klischiivka. "We are repelling constant attacks near Klischiivka and Andriivka, Yevlash told national television. "Every day we are making headway in the Bakhmut sector. We are talking about hundreds of metres at a time that we are liberating from our enemies and strengthening our positions. It is, however, too early to talk about achieving concrete goals."

Ukrainian prosecutors in Donetsk region, the focal point of Russia's campaign in the east, said Russian forces had shelled areas east of the Russian-held town of Donetsk, killing one person. The coking town of Avdiivka, which has resisted Russian advances for months, was also shelled. General Oleksandr Tarnavskiy, commander of forces in the south, wrote on Telegram that Kyiv's troops were continuing offensive operations in the drive southward. "We have had partial success to the west of Verbove," he said, referring to one of a cluster of villages that Ukraine is targeting, with the larger town of Tokmak the next large target. Ukraine's counteroffensive has made slow progress in both theatres, but President Volodymyr Zelenskyy and other officials have denied suggestions by Western critics that Ukraine has failed to achieve its objectives and is hampered by strategic errors. Nineteen months after Russia's invasion, its forces about 18% of Ukrainian territory, according to Western estimates.

## Haley has \$9.1m cash for primaries

WASHINGTON (Agencies): Republican presidential candidate Nikki Haley raised more than \$11 million in the third quarter, giving her more resources than Florida Governor Ron DeSantis as they fight to be the strongest alternative to former President Donald Trump. The former UN Ambassador had about \$11.6 million in cash on hand at the end of September, of which \$9.1 million can be spent in the primary, the Haley campaign said. That compares to about \$5 million that DeSantis, who is polling in second nationally, has to spend on that race. DeSantis reported last week that he had raised \$15 million in the third quarter.

The money gives Haley an edge as she attempts to overtake DeSantis, who has consistently polled higher during the race. In recent weeks, Haley has climbed in polls following two standout debate performances in August and September that raised her national profile. Haley is currently polling in third nationally at 7.2% support, according to a RealClearPolitics average of polls, behind 12.6% for DeSantis. However, both are far behind Trump's 57.4%. Trump also has a \$36 million to spend in the primary. "We have seen a big surge in support and have real momentum," said Haley spokesperson Olivia Perez-Cubas. "Nikki is emerging as the candidate who can move America beyond the chaos and drama of the past and present, and we have the resources we need to do it."

# South Korea to consider pausing military agreement with N Korea

SEOUL (AP): South Korea's defense minister said Tuesday he would push to suspend a 2018 inter-Korean military agreement in order to resume frontline surveillance on rival North Korea, as the surprise attack on Israel by Hamas militants raised concerns in South Korea about similar assaults by the North.

The agreement, reached during a brief period of diplomacy between South Korea's former liberal President Moon Jae-in and North Korean leader Kim Jong Un, created buffer zones along land and sea boundaries and no-fly zones above the border to prevent clashes. Talking with reporters in Seoul, South Korean Defense Minister Shin Won-shik cited the violence in Israel and Gaza to stress the need to strengthen monitoring on the North. Shin was appointed by President Yoon Suk Yeol.

Shin was particularly critical of the inter-Korean agreement's no-fly zones, which he said prevents South Korea from fully utilizing its air surveillance assets at a time when North Korean nuclear threats are growing. Relations between the Koreas have decayed following the collapse of larger talks between Washington and Pyongyang in 2019 over the North's nuclear weapons program. North Korea has threatened to abandon the 2018 agreement while dialing up missile tests to a record pace, prompting the conservative Yoon to take a harder line on Pyongyang than his dovish predecessor. While it would take a complicated legal process for South Korea to fully abandon the agreement, pausing the agreement would only require a decision from a Cabinet meeting, Shin said.

"Hamas has attacked Israel, and the Republic of Korea is under a much stronger threat," Shin said, invoking South Korea's formal name. "To counter (that threat), we need to be observing (North Korean military movements) with our surveillance assets, to gain prior knowledge of whether they are preparing provoca-

tions or not. If Israel had flown aircraft and drones to maintain continuous monitoring, I think they might have not been hit like that," he said. Shin's comments are likely to draw fierce criticism from South Korea's liberal opposition, which has described the agreement as a safety valve between the Koreas as relations continue to worsen. There haven't been major skirmishes between the Koreas since the agreement was reached in September 2018. But South Korea last November accused the North of violating the agreement's tensions-reducing requirements when it fired a missile near a populated South Korean island near their sea border, triggering air raid sirens and forcing residents to evacuate.

In June 2020, North Korea blew up an empty inter-Korean liaison office in the North Korean border town of Kaesong to demonstrate anger over South Korea's unwillingness to prevent its civilian activists from flying anti-Pyongyang propaganda leaflets across the border. North Korean troops also shot and killed a South Korean government official who was found drifting near their sea boundary in September that year. Tensions on the Korean Peninsula are at their highest point in years as the pace of both North Korea's weapons demonstrations and the United States' combined military exercises with South Korea and Japan have both intensified in tit-for-tat. South Korea's Defense Ministry said the nuclear-powered aircraft carrier USS Ronald Reagan and its strike group will arrive in the South Korean mainland port of Busan in the allies' latest show of force against North Korea. The ministry said the Reagan's Carrier Strike Group 5 conducted joint training with South Korean and Japanese naval assets and Tuesday in waters near the southern South Korean island of Jeju. Kim, in turn, has been boosting the visibility of his partnerships with Moscow and Beijing as he attempts to break out of diplomatic isolation and insert Pyongyang into a

united front against Washington.

Recent commercial satellite photos show a sharp increase in rail traffic along the North Korea-Russia border, indicating the North is supplying munitions to Russia to fuel President Vladimir Putin's war on Ukraine, Beyond Parallel, a website run by the Washington-based Center for Strategic and International Studies, said in a report last week. Speculation about a possible North Korean plan to refill Russia's munition stores drained in its protracted war with Ukraine flared last month, when Kim traveled to Russia to meet Putin and visit key military sites. Foreign officials suspect Kim is seeking advanced Russian weapons technologies in return for to boost his nuclear program. North Korea is expected to make its third attempt to launch a military spy satellite this month following consecutive failures in recent months, as Kim stresses the importance of acquiring space-based reconnaissance capacities to monitor US and South Korean military movements and enhance the threat of his nuclear-capable missiles.

In an editorial published, South Korea's JoongAng Ilbo newspaper called for South Korea to take lessons from Israel's failures to prevent the attack by the Hamas militants while strengthening its readiness against potential North Korean aggression. "Israel, surrounded by enemies and terrorist forces, is reminiscent of (South) Korea's current security situation. Even the Mossad failed to detect signs of the attack and Israel's all-weather air defense system Iron Dome exposed a hole," the newspaper said. "The government must be thoroughly prepared for North Korea's possible military provocations when the United States and other allies focus their attention on the Middle East." The inter-Korean military agreement is one of the few tangible remnants from Moon's ambitious diplomacy with Kim. Moon's efforts helped set up Kim's first summit with former US President Donald Trump in June 2018.

# Vietnam-aligned hackers attempted to hack US MPs

WASHINGTON (Agencies): Hackers aligned with Vietnam tried to use social media platforms X and Facebook to install spyware on the phones of dozens of high-profile targets, including US lawmakers, United Nations officials and CNN journalists, Amnesty International said. The powerful hacking tool - designed to siphon off call and text data from phones - was aimed at social media accounts affiliated with Democratic Sens. Gary Peters and Chris Murphy, and Republican congress-

man and House Foreign Affairs Chairman Michael McCaul, according to Amnesty investigators.

Multiple CNN journalists who cover East Asian affairs were also targeted. A CNN spokesperson declined to comment. The researchers said they were unaware of any successful infections using the spyware. But the attempt to compromise powerful lawmakers simply by tweeting at them will raise further concerns on Capitol Hill about the proliferation of commercial spyware. An obscure account on X, the platform formerly known as Twitter, blasted out spyware-laced links to targets of the hackers from

February to June, according to Amnesty. The targets held potentially useful insights on US policy toward Vietnam. Spyware operators normally operate in the shadows, but in this case the hackers had no qualms about trying to use a public platform to entice their targets. "It was quite a brazen and somewhat reckless way to try target people with some quite sophisticated spyware," Donncha Ó Cearbhaill, head of Amnesty International's Security Lab, told CNN.

The European Investigative Collaborations (EIC), a network of over a dozen news outlets, and the Washington Post first reported on Amnesty's findings. Ó Cearbhaill told CNN he and his investigators are "very confident" in the links between the hackers and Vietnam, citing contract records reviewed by the EIC between the Vietnamese government and a company affiliated with the spyware. Researchers with Google's Threat Analysis Group, which tracks state-backed hackers, told CNN the Twitter account spreading the spyware appears to be based in Vietnam. McCaul doesn't manage his social media accounts and there was

therefore not exposed to the link, said Leslie Shedd, a McCaul spokesperson. Office staffers were not affected, either, Shedd said. An aide to Murphy told CNN: "To the best of our knowledge, no one in our office clicked the link."

The Vietnamese embassy in Washington, DC, not immediately respond to a request for comment. A spokesperson for Peters did not immediately respond to a request for comment. For years, cybersecurity researchers and human rights activists have documented the proliferation of spyware designed to break into mobile phones and steal their contents. But the issue gained greater traction in Washington this year following the revelation that about a dozen State Department employees serving in Africa were reportedly hacked with spyware developed by Israeli firm NSO Group. President Joe Biden responded with an executive order in March banning US government agencies from using spyware that is deemed a threat to US national security or are implicated in human rights abuses. In this case, Amnesty said the developer of the spyware

was Cytrox, a North Macedonia-based firm that is owned by Intellexa, an umbrella of Europe-based companies.

The US Commerce Department added Cytrox and Intellexa its "Entities List" in July, which prevents US companies from doing business with them without special approval. CNN could not reach Intellexa or Cytrox for comment. "Clearly these tools are being exported from the EU to states with terrible human rights records," Ó Cearbhaill, of Amnesty International, told CNN. "Then not only are they turned against journalists and human rights defenders, but also against politicians and institutions who should be meaningfully regulating these exports." John Scott-Railton, a senior researcher with the University of Toronto's Citizen Lab, which also studied the Intellexa spyware, said the findings validate the Commerce Department's regulation of the firm. "Meanwhile, if European lawmakers won't bring consequences to reckless vendors, they need to get comfortable with being targeted," Scott-Railton told CNN.

# Liberia elections: Voters head to polls

FREE TOWN (BBC): Liberians are set to vote in a fiercely contested presidential election, with former football star George Weah, 57, making a bid for a second term. His main challenger is former Deputy President Joseph Boakai, 78. Mr Boakai has waged his campaign under the slogan "Rescue", arguing that the West African state went downhill during Mr Weah's first six years in office.

But Mr Weah is confident of victory, saying that he has kept Liberia stable and has improved education. This will be the first time that a generation of young voters, born in peace-time Liberia, will vote for a president. A brutal civil war, which killed an estimated 250,000 people, ended two decades ago. Many Liberians are clamouring for the establishment of a war crimes court to bring to justice the key figures behind the conflict, saying failure to do so has created a culture of impunity. Mr Weah has so far resisted the pressure, saying that focusing on old crimes is not the best way to achieve development. Mr Boakai -

along with two other leading candidates, businessman Alexander Cummings and human rights lawyer Tiawan Gongloe - have pledged to set up a court. About 2.4 million people have registered to vote, with polls due to open at 08:00 GMT. A total of 19 candidates - including two women - are running against Mr Weah, who took over from Africa's first elected female president, Ellen Johnson Sirleaf, after she stepped down at the end of her two terms in 2018. Voters will also cast ballots for parliamentary representatives in Tuesday's election. Liberia's main parties have pledged to uphold peace during the polls, despite clashes between rival camps in the final days of the campaign. Election-related violence left three people dead in September. Mr Weah, who was 1995 Fifa's World Player of the Year, entered politics following his retirement from football. He won his first term in 2017 after securing 61% of the vote in a run-off, defeating Mr Boakai, who served as Ms Sirleaf's deputy.

Analysts say this might be the 78-year-old's last attempt at the presidency. Mr Boakai's opponents have nicknamed him "Sleepy Joe" for allegedly dozing off during public events. He has presented himself as a regular, honest man from a modest background and has been an outspoken critic of Mr Weah's administration. Mr Boakai has pledged to improve infrastructure, invest in agriculture, and strengthen tourism. He has also accused Mr Weah of not doing enough to stamp out corruption. In 2018, a Liberian court issued arrest warrants for more than 30 former central bank officials following the disappearance of \$104m (£85m) while last year, Mr Weah fired three senior officials, including his chief of staff, after the US government sanctioned them for corruption. They denied wrongdoing. Mr Weah dismisses claims that he has fallen short on his 2017 campaign promises, saying that he has made significant strides in his first term, including introducing free tuition for university students.

# Families of the executed appeal to ‘heartless’ Singapore for change

SINGAPORE (Agencies): Family members of prisoners on Singapore's death row are calling on the government to bring an immediate moratorium on executions and implement a review of the city state's use of the death penalty. Relatives of executed prisoners were among those who delivered a petition to the country's Ministry of Home Affairs, the eve of World Day Against the Death Penalty.

The petition gathered more than 1,700 signatures. At least 16 people have been hanged in the Southeast Asian country since 2022 when executions resumed following a lull during the pandemic. "It's high time that the government looks into this matter. They are so stubborn. They are so strict about the death penalty," said Nazria Lajim Hertslet, the sister of Nazeri bin Lajim who was executed last year. Nazeri was sentenced to death in 2017 after being found guilty of possessing just more than 33 grams (1.1 ounces) of heroin for the purpose of trafficking. He was 64 years old when he was hanged last

July. "He [Nazeri] wanted me to tell the whole world about our Singapore government law which is not fair at all for him," explains Nazria, who has been a vocal critic of the death penalty since her brother was hanged. "I'm just worried how many more lives they will take away," Nazria told Al Jazeera. Activists believe there are currently about 50 prisoners on death row in Singapore, with all but three of them jailed for drug-related offences. Singapore's use of the death penalty for drug offences made international headlines earlier this year when 46-year-old Tangaraju Suppiah was hanged.

He was sentenced to death in 2018 for abetting the attempted trafficking of just more than 1kg (35 ounces) of cannabis. His execution was condemned by the United Nations and British billionaire Richard Branson. Amnesty International says Singapore was one of only four countries last year where drug-related executions were confirmed. Singapore's Ministry of Home Affairs says the use of the death penalty for drug

offences is an effective deterrent that keeps Singaporeans "safe from the harmful effects of drugs". Campaigners disagree, arguing that executing prisoners for drug offences does little to deal with the wider issues feeding the illegal drug trade. "There definitely needs to be a more comprehensive view of what drives people towards drugs, rather than putting on a performative stance of the death penalty just to appease people that we are safe," said Elijah Tay from Transformative Justice Collective, a Singapore campaign group. Alongside the petition, campaigners also delivered a letter addressed to K Shanmugam, Singapore's Minister for Law and Home Affairs. They urged him to meet "the victims of Singapore's ruthless and senseless war on drugs". Campaigners were denied access to the Ministry of Home Affairs building as they had failed to make an official appointment. Instead, the petition and letters were handed in to security officials. Al Jazeera contacted the Ministry of Home Affairs for a response.

Joining the families at the ministry was Sharifah Syed Zin. Her brother, Syed Suhail bin Syed Zin, was sentenced to death in 2016 for possessing just more than 38g (1.3 ounces) of heroin for trafficking.

He was previously assigned a date for his hanging but was granted a stay of execution with just one day to spare. "It's a very difficult situation to be in. I'm very worried for him," said Sharifah. "It's tough, it's very tough to keep on thinking about him and the conditions he's under," she added. She wants Shanmugam to fully understand the plight of the relatives of death row prisoners. "Nobody can ever understand how a family member feels if it is not their own person on death row. "If you had asked me 10 or 20 years ago, I would have had no clue. I would have felt compassion but I would have no understanding until now," Sharifah told Al Jazeera. While most of the family members and activists had come from across Singapore to visit the ministry, one made a longer journey to support her late uncle.



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## Regional peace and BJP’s warmongering

**P**AKISTAN Foreign Office has categorically condemned the highly irresponsible remarks by a senior BJP politician and Chief Minister of Uttar Pradesh about taking back Sindhu, a term normally used by Indian leaders for the region around the Indus River in southern Pakistan. Foreign Office Spokesperson Muntaz Zahra Baloch said the Indian politician's provocative remarks are inspired by the gratuitous assertion of 'Akhand Bharat' (undivided India) and reflect a perverse view of history.

This is a decades-old trend in India's domestic politics to incite hate against minorities and spread war hysteria against neighbours to boost public rating among Hindu nationalists which form more than 80% per cent of the Hindu populace in that country. Historically, the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) government has, at times, employed nationalist rhetoric and invoked historical events, including wars, to build support and shape public opinion in India. These heinous tactics had been blatantly and repeatedly used by the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) to incite war hysteria in the public and stoke tension with the neighbouring states after the Hindu nationalist group gained the country's premiership under Mr Atal Behari Vajpai in the late 90s. Later these strategies were extensively used by the Modi regime against religious minorities, low caste Hindus and neighbouring countries particularly Pakistan in 2014, 2019 and at this time when curial state elections are underway across Bharat.

Previously, a BJP leader and Deputy Chief Minister of Karnataka proposed a plan to demolish over 600 Muslim religious seminaries in India, which was followed by provocative remarks against the Islam and Muslim poise personalities which prompted countrywide protests across India. Besides, the verbal desecration of religious beliefs of Muslims and Christians in their Country, Indian leaders have approved politically motivated legislations in the Indian parliament including cow protection and religion conversion laws, inter-religion marriage act, citizenship act, and residential segregation that aimed at promoting Hindu nationalism and hate against minorities and deepened polarization in Indian society.

Presently, multiple states' elections are underway, while grand nationwide polls are expected in the coming months in India, while the Modi-led Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) faces serious challenges in the upcoming electoral contest at the hands of a 28-party bloc of Indian National Development Inclusive Alliance (INDIA) which is jointly contesting the future general election against the BJP under one banner. The BJP leaders have resorted to hatred and warmongering to stoke tension with Pakistan while Indian Intelligence under the guidance of NSA Ajeet Doval is mulling over the scenarios to stage a false flag operation in the Indian-Occupied Jammu and Kashmir (IOJK) to recast the episode of Pulwama attack and mount tension on Pak-India border to pave the way for Modi's third straight victory in the crucial polls.

The government of Pakistan has time and again sensitized the global community about the Indian mindset that seeks to subjugate the identity and culture of not only India's neighbouring countries but also its religious minorities. In fact, such insane ideas and extremist theories are being increasingly peddled by BJP-RSS to further their divisive and parochial political agenda, which has grave consequences for regional peace and stability. Historically, New Delhi's hegemonic designs coupled with growing Hindu extremism castes grave security concerns among the regional states, a majority of whom already faced Indian aggression in the past. The government of Pakistan must share the nefarious designs of Indian leaders with the global community including the United Nations, so the Modi regime's attempts to incite violence against Muslims or stage false flag operations along the Pak-India border could be exposed to the world and be neutralized effectively. Meanwhile, the world should be aware of the draconian face of Indian leaders that had long been hiding behind New Delhi's fake secularism, and fraught democracy in the past.

## What next after Palestine-Israel clash

**T**HE fierce battle between heavily armed Israel military and Palestinian freedom fighters from Hamas and Islamic Jihad has continued over the past three days. According to the reports, over 1600 Palestinians including women and children had been martyred while thousands injured during the indiscriminate shelling and aerial bombing of the Israeli air force while more than 900 Israeli soldiers and common citizens had been killed so far. Staunch rivals have inflicted heavy losses on each other while innocent civilians had also been affected during the heightened hostility from both sides. The Israeli air strikes have turned the Palestinian government and residential buildings into rubble and people took shelter at safe places to protect their lives.

Amid fierce battle the rage and embarrassment of Israeli leadership is unbelievable, as their enemy has caught them in surprise. The Jewish government and its public yet not believe this reality, even the notorious Israeli Intelligence agency, Mossad failed to detect/ smell any threat or scopes of such a high level of incursion by the Palestinians armed groups. The Israeli leadership has vowed to deal with its enemies in such a way that will reverberate them for generations. The Hamas Spokesperson has claimed that their group has achieved its target and is now open to discussions over a possible truce with Israel.

There has been a mix of reaction from the global community after Hamas recent attack against Israel. The United States, the EU and India entirely put their weight behind Israel and called on the world to isolate and prosecute Palestinians. The majority of Muslims states backed Palestinians and called for an early cases fire to give a chance to diplomacy to resolve the longstanding issue of Palestine. Meanwhile, a majority of non aligned nations including Russia, China and others urged to competing nations to demonstrate resilience and turn to negotiations to resolve their dispute amicably. Realistically, unceasing occupation and barbarism of Israeli troops, together with impotence of the UN Security Council (UNSC) and criminal silence of the global community regarding Palestine dispute utterly downcast the Palestinians, who often resort to violence in an attempt to get freedom or sensitise the world about their unceasing miseries. Although, Israel has a powerful military with scores of fighters jets and heaps of lethal arsenals, yet living with an igniting laden bomb is an all time risk for their survival. The Israeli leadership must learn some lesson from the recurrent incursions by the Palestinians by conceiving peace deal inline with UN sponsored two state solution which guarantees a peaceful co-existence of both nations in the future.

### Important Notice

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## Roots and hidden meanings of ‘Al-Aqsa Flood’

Ramzy Baroud

**R**EGARDLESS of the precise strategy of Hamas, or any other Palestinian movement for that matter, the daring military campaign deep inside Israel that began on Saturday was only possible because Palestinians are simply fed up. Sixteen years ago, Israel imposed a hermetic siege on the Gaza Strip. The story of the siege is often presented through two starkly different interpretations: For some, it is an inhumane act of collective punishment; for others, it is a necessary evil so that Israel may protect itself from so-called Palestinian terrorism.

Largely missing from the story, however, is that 16 years is enough time for a whole generation to grow up under siege, to enlist in the resistance and to fight for its freedom. According to Save The Children, nearly half of the 2.3 million Palestinians living in Gaza today are children. This fact is often used to delineate the suffering of a population that has never stepped outside the tiny, impoverished Strip of 365 sq. km. But numbers, though may seem precise, are often employed to tell only a small part of a complex story. This Gaza generation, which either grew up or was born after the imposition of the siege, has experienced at least five major, devastating wars, in which children, like them, along with their mothers, fathers and siblings, were the main targets and victims.

"If you surround your enemy completely, give them no chance to escape, offer them no quarter, then they will fight to the last," wrote Sun Tzu in "The Art of War." Yet, year after year, this is precisely what Israel has done. This strategy has proved to be a major strategic miscalculation. Any attempt at merely protesting the injustice of the siege, by gathering in large numbers at the fence that separates besieged Gaza from Israel, was not permitted. The mass protests of 2018-2019, known as the Great March

of Return, were answered with Israeli sniper bullets. Scenes of youngsters carrying other bleeding youths and shouting "God is great" became a regular scene at the fence. However, as the casualty count increased, media interest in the story simply faded with time. The hundreds of fighters who crossed into Israel through various entry points at dawn on Saturday were the same young Palestinians who have known nothing but war,

**Videos circulating on social media showed Palestinian fighters yelling in Arabic, with that distinct, often harsh, Gaza accent, "this is for my brother," "this is for my son." They shouted these and many other angry statements as they fired on panic-stricken Israeli settlers and soldiers. The latter had, on many occasions, abandoned their positions and run away. The psychological impact of this war will most certainly exceed that of October 1973, when Arab armies made quick gains against Israel, also following a surprise attack.**

siege and the need to protect one another. They have also learned how to survive, despite the lack of everything in Gaza, including clean water and proper medical care. This is where the story of this generation intersects with that of Hamas or Palestinian Islamic Jihad or any other Palestinian group.

Yes, Hamas chose the timing and the nature of its military campaign to fit into a very precise strategy. This strategy, however, would not have been possible if Israel did not leave these young Palestinians with no option but to fight back. Videos circulating on social media showed Palestinian fighters yelling in Arabic, with that distinct, often harsh, Gaza accent, "this is for my brother," "this is for my son." They shouted these and many other angry statements as

they fired on panic-stricken Israeli settlers and soldiers. The latter had, on many occasions, abandoned their positions and run away. The psychological impact of this war will most certainly exceed that of October 1973, when Arab armies made quick gains against Israel, also following a surprise attack. This time, the devastating impact on the collective Israeli thinking will prove to be a game-changer, since the "war" involves a single

Abu Obeida, the Brigades' famous masked spokesman. They all urged unity and insisted that Palestine is a component of a larger Arab and Islamic struggle for justice, dignity and collective honor. The group called its campaign "Al-Aqsa Flood," thus again recentring Palestinian, Arab and Muslim unity on Al-Quds - Jerusalem - and all its holy places.

Everyone seemed shocked, including Israel itself, not by the Hamas attack per se, but by the great coordination and daring of the massive, never-seen-before, operation. Instead of attacking at night, the resistance attacked at dawn. Instead of striking at Israel using the many tunnels under Gaza, they simply drove there, parachuted in, arrived by sea or, in many cases, walked across the border. The element of surprise became even more baffling when Palestinian fighters challenged the very fundamentals of guerrilla warfare: Instead of fighting a "war of maneuver," they, however temporarily, fought a "war of position," thus holding the areas they gained inside Israel for many hours. Indeed, for the Gazan groups, the psychological warfare was as critical as the physical fighting. Hundreds of videos and images were beamed through every social media channel, as if hoping to redefine the relationship between Palestinians, the usual victim, and Israel, the military occupier.

Regardless of how many Palestinians Israel kills in retaliation, although tragic, it will hardly salvage the tattered image of an undisciplined army, a divided society and a political leadership that is solely focused on its own survival. It is too early to reach sweeping conclusions regarding the outcomes of this unprecedented war, but what is crystal clear is that the fundamental relationship between the Israeli occupation and occupied Palestinians is likely to be altered, and permanently so, as a result of what took place on Oct. 7, 2023.

Dr. Mohammed Al-Sulami

"near abroad." Since 2020, there has been a risk of destabilization of the northern provinces of Iran because of the tensions between Azerbaijan and Iran. This largely explains the increase in military exercises by the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps in the northern regions of Iran. This is to show the priority given by the Iranian authorities to preserving the territorial integrity of the country, but also to send a message to Baku on its cooperation with Israel and to Ankara on its military cooperation with Azerbaijan. There is also, according to the Iranian perspective, the fear of pan-Turkism as a decisive factor in the deterioration of Iranian-Azerbaijani relations since 2020. The internal dispute in Iran has placed the question of minorities at the center of the problem of the survival of the Iranian political system and the presence of an Azerbaijani minority in the northwestern provinces

of Iran. This fear is fueled by the participation of members of the Turkish-speaking community in Iran in the protests of the fall of 2022 following the death of Mahsa Amini. In other words, in a phase of national protests and popular discontent, the authorities' fear of destabilization of the country by the periphery has increased.

Also, since 2020, the geopolitical context having changed, Iran has refrained from supporting Armenia, recognizing Baku's legitimate right to recover its territorial integrity, which had been violated by the Armenian forces in Nagorno-Karabakh. Thus, the ceasefire of November 2020 led Tehran to consider the lasting installation, on the northern flank of its border, of a Turkish-Azerbaijani presence and the reduction of length in the Iranian-Armenian border. Moreover, Ankara, as a strategic military partner of Azerbaijan, has taken part in the fighting

## New poll reveals how Ukrainians feel about war and future

Gabriel Levin

**A**S Kyiv fights a bloody war with Moscow, a new Gallup public opinion poll gives a striking look inside what ordinary Ukrainians think about their country's future. VOA talked to leading experts to help unpack the findings. "Given everything that's happening, paying attention to what's going on in Ukraine daily is more important now than it was before," Julie Ray, Gallup's managing editor for world news, told VOA.

Gallup is an independent global research organization based in Washington that is best known for its public opinion surveys. Nearly every Ukrainian agrees that winning the war means regaining all the land that Russia has conquered from their country since 2014, when the Crimean Peninsula was annexed by Moscow, the Gallup survey found. While most Ukrainians support fighting until the war is won, that majority is shrinking. Last year it was 70%, and this year it is 60%. "Fatigue is building up," said Sergey Radchenko, a scholar of Soviet history at Johns Hopkins.

A growing number of Ukrainians are now hoping Kyiv can negotiate an end to the conflict. That sentiment, Ray said, is especially strong near the front lines in the nation's south and east, where the toll of war is worst. One in two Ukrainians reported in Gallup's survey that they struggle to afford food and shelter. Experts say that Russia wants to see increasing disillusionment in Ukraine as the war drags on. "That's why [Russian President Vladimir] Putin has pursued this strategy of targeting infrastructure, power plants and so on," Radchenko said. "He wants to exhaust the Ukrainian public." This winter, Putin could make further headway.

"There are going to be difficult conditions," said Joseph Nye, a former dean of Harvard Kennedy School. "As the Russians concentrate on destroying infrastructure, people are going to go cold and hungry. That's probably going to have some effect on how Ukrainians view the war." "Although there is some evidence of fatigue, Ukrainians overall remain committed to winning the war," Ray said. Continued approval of the army and Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy, she added, are key to victory. Ukrainians are deeply confident in their military, with approval ratings at a record high of 95%, according to Gallup. Support for Zelenskyy has faltered slightly but is still overwhelmingly strong at 81%. Gallup's findings show that Ukrainians may back Zelenskyy now, but shrinking confidence in his leadership, however subtle, "sounds sort of like bad news," Radchenko said. "If

I were [Zelenskyy] looking at this polling data, I would start getting worried." Zelenskyy's slight decline in support could owe to the fact that Ukraine's "offensive has been less decisive than last year's," Nye explained. But Nye does not see any cause for concern. "[US President Joe] Biden," he said, "would be delighted to have such poll numbers, and so would any leader in the democratic world. Ups and downs are natural." Zelenskyy's approval ratings depend largely on his diplomatic successes in the West, experts say.

Ukraine's two greatest military aid providers are the US and Germany. Fifty-three percent of Ukrainians approve of the US and German governments, Gallup found. That number was a marked dip from last year's data for the US, but an increase for Germany. "There's a creeping sense of disappointment with the US that it hasn't delivered as much as it could have, given all Ukraine has been doing to hold back Russian aggression," Radchenko said. "All that [Ukrainians] have been asking for is financial help, military help." As Republican and Democratic politicians in the US spar with one another over sending military equipment to Ukraine, "Germany has come through in its support," Radchenko said. The survey was conducted on the heels of July's NATO summit, where Biden told the world that Ukraine wasn't ready to join NATO until after the war was over. "It's possible that ... raised some questions," Ray said. "The percentage of Ukrainians who said they didn't have an opinion about US leadership increased to 25% and disapproval also ticked up to 22%."

Unsurprisingly, Ray said, 0% of respondents support the Kremlin, and only a sliver of Ukrainians back the Chinese government (Beijing is Moscow's top trade partner, and one of its closest political allies). Almost three-quarters of Ukrainians believe that their country will join NATO and the European Union within a decade, Gallup's polling shows. "It will be hard for Ukraine to get into NATO as long as the war continues," Radchenko said, pointing out a contradiction in how most Ukrainians want both NATO membership and to see the war through.

NATO countries are formally obligated to defend each other, so being admitted in the middle of a war is a difficult sell, experts say. "There's nothing to prevent anyone from wanting more things than they can get," Nye said. "But there's a trade-off. It's hard to see [Ukraine's] accession to NATO being agreed on by all member nations when shooting is still going on." Nevertheless, Ukrainians are optimistic. "[They] see their future firmly planted with the West," Ray said. VOA

## Iran’s growing rivalry with Turkiye in the South Caucasus

**I**RAN is encountering difficulties in its immediate neighborhood, whether in its relations with the Taliban government in Afghanistan or its relations with Azerbaijan. President Ebrahim Raisi's regional diplomacy has not had an immediate effect on the strained relations with the country's neighbors to the north. We have even observed a destabilization of the northern border of Iran during recent years.

The northern border, which was an island of stability from the end of the First Nagorno-Karabakh War in 1994 until the war of 2020, is now an area of tension directly threatening the maintenance of stability in the border regions within Iranian territory. The period of stability was particularly important for the Iranian authorities, as the western border suffered the consequences of the Gulf conflict and US military invasions of Iraq in 1991 and 2003. During the same period, the eastern border was destabilized on two occasions: dur-

ing the takeover of power by the Taliban in 1996 and following the US military intervention in Afghanistan in 2001. From Tehran's point of view, since 2020, the dire security situation in the South Caucasus is due to the rising influence of regional rivals such as Turkiye or foes such as Israel and their respective alliances with Azerbaijan. The discourse on rising external influences is key to explaining the lack of reform in Iran's regional policy toward the South Caucasus, despite the perception of a new Turkish challenge in this area. Indeed, this region was a Russian-Iranian sphere of influence for many years and Turkiye was unable to take a grip on it until after the fall of the Soviet Union in 1991.

The Iranian discourse on the role of external actors is therefore a confession regarding the failure of its policy in the South Caucasus. Tehran was unable to limit the rise of Turkish and Israeli influence in what it considers as its

against the Armenians. The Second Nagorno-Karabakh War in 2020 not only played a crucial role in the development of Turkish influence, but also in Israeli-Azerbaijani relations. This new geopolitical configuration also led to a rapid deterioration in relations between Iran and Azerbaijan, although the development of economic exchanges remains a hurdle to the risk of military escalation.

A conventional war against Azerbaijan is being considered by Iranian military strategists as a possible scenario over the coming years. What has been announced by the official Iranian media is greater support for Armenia in the event of a new confrontation between Armenia and Azerbaijan. This explains why, according to some Western sources, Iran might be using drones to monitor the border area and even delivering them to Armenia, which Yerevan denies.

Azerbaijan's victory in the Second Nagorno-

Karabakh War inevitably changed the strategic environment, with Iran now in an unfavorable position. Beyond its posture as a failed mediator in the South Caucasus, Iran will likely seek to intensify its diplomatic and commercial ties with Azerbaijan, which now controls Nagorno-Karabakh's supply routes and also hopes to complete the Zangezur Corridor. On the other hand, Armenia remains a useful partner that offers new possibilities amid the waning Russian influence as a result of the Ukrainian war.

Iran will probably not be able to seize this unprecedented opportunity in the South Caucasus. It wants to avoid becoming a power that is incapable of asserting an "independent" policy in a region that Tehran nevertheless considers as its "near abroad." Turkiye, more than Russia, will eventually provoke a new geopolitical situation as a result of the decreasing Iranian influence in the South Caucasus region.



# Netanyahu is drawing the US into war with Iran

**ISRAELI Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu has spent the past three decades sounding the alarm about Iran's nuclear programme and threatening to attack the country on countless occasions. Most recently in September, he said in a speech to the United Nations General Assembly that Tehran must face a "credible nuclear threat" before his office corrected the record to "credible military threat".**

After Hamas's attack on October 7, Netanyahu may finally be able to act on his threats. The gruesome scenes in southern Israel have provided the Israeli prime minister with the necessary pretext and international backing for a wider response. Netanyahu has both a political and a personal stake in all this. A drawn-out regional conflict would block or at least postpone any official accountability for his utter failure to prevent Hamas's attack from happening in the first place and could also put his multiple indictments on corruption charges on an indefinite hold.

Overnight, he transformed from a failed and embattled prime minister to a wartime leader, with opposition parties clamouring to join him in a national unity government. He declared war and ordered an immediate retaliation against Hamas's stronghold in Gaza. The Israeli army unleashed a vicious campaign of bombardment on the overpopulated Gaza Strip, killing more than 500 people, and preparing for a potential land invasion. Netanyahu has not elaborated on the next phases of the war, but he has received the unconditional support of Western governments to do what it takes, as long as it takes, to "defend Israel". The administration of US President Joe Biden has gone even further, providing Israel with more arms and ammunition, dispatching its most modern and sophisticated aircraft

carrier, the Ford, along with a number of destroyers to the Eastern Mediterranean, and beefing up other forces stationed in the region, enough to start World War III.

Biden's motivation for the escalatory deployment is, reportedly, strategic deterrence, meant to ensure that "no enemies of Israel can or should seek advantage from the current situation". But historically, Israel has never allowed any foreign boots on its soil, and is in no need of

joined in by making the case for Iranian involvement. The Wall Street Journal even reported - based on interviews with unnamed local sources - that Iranian officials and members of the Islamic Revolutionary Guards Corps were directly involved in orchestrating and planning the attacks over several weeks. US officials have said they haven't seen evidence of Tehran's involvement, yet.

For its part, Iran has called the

***Iran and its allies' temerity may well come back to haunt them, just as Israel's hubris did - leading to its utter humiliation at the hands of Hamas fighters. Neither Iran nor Israel is learning from history, as they continue to escalate their proxy conflict towards war.***

the US armadas to take on Hamas. Biden's incentive, therefore, could also be political, ie to ensure that the GOP doesn't exploit the Israeli drama at his expense ahead of the presidential elections in 2024. Already, Republican opponents have tried to link Biden's recent prisoner swap deal with Iran, which involved the unfreezing of \$6bn in Iranian assets, to the Hamas attacks. But Netanyahu and his fanatic ministers may have something very different in mind for the US deployment, that goes beyond military deterrence and political posturing. He may try to widen the scope of the war to include Iran.

His government has already accused Iran of supporting and directing Hamas's operation, as it has previously done about other Palestinian attacks on Israelis. Scores of Israel supporters and neo-conservatives, as well as media pundits in the US and Europe, have

attack a spontaneous Palestinian action in self-defence, but officials have not tried to hide their glee at Israel's misfortune.

They have expressed confidence that the attack will deter further Arab, meaning Saudi, normalisation with Israel, and eventually lead to its downfall. Meanwhile, Iran's ally the Lebanese Hezbollah has praised the Hamas operation and engaged the Israeli forces in the Israeli-occupied Shebaa Farms, threatening greater involvement if Israel enters Gaza. Iran and its allies' temerity may well come back to haunt them, just as Israel's hubris did - leading to its utter humiliation at the hands of Hamas fighters. Neither Iran nor Israel is learning from history, as they continue to escalate their proxy conflict towards war. For years, the Israeli army and secret services have sabotaged the Iranian nuclear programme and targeted Iranian assets abroad. Iran for its part has support-

ed various client armed groups in the Middle East, attacking US and Israeli allies.

Despite his bluster and bravado, Netanyahu couldn't and wouldn't attack Iran, without a green light and support from the US. But the bloody attacks are a game-changer, giving the Israeli prime minister the perfect opportunity to realise his fantasy of crushing Iran, by tricking the Biden administration into war. This will not be easy considering Biden's presumed commitment to end "the forever wars", reflected in the humiliating withdrawal from Afghanistan in 2021. His administration has also moved to prioritise the great power competition with China and Russia, especially after the latter's invasion of Ukraine. But in reality, the US has not withdrawn from the Middle East, it has merely moved around its forces and military assets in the region. Biden himself has vowed to "not walk away and leave a vacuum to be filled by China, Russia, or Iran".

Once the case against Tehran's role in the attacks has been fully articulated by Israel and the US, they might first try to pressure it into facilitating the release of Israeli captives taken by Hamas - a top priority for Netanyahu. If Iran refuses and chooses to use Hezbollah as leverage against Israel, this could well trigger a wider confrontation that draws in the US with incalculable consequences. Unfortunately, in the adulterated world of Washington politics, unconditional US support of Israel is the only thing that Republican and Democrats agree on. It is crucial to remember that the situation in 2023 is vastly more challenging and complicated than the lead-up to the invasion of Iraq in 2003, which ended in utter disaster for the US and Iraqis. A repeat against Iran is sure to be far worse for all concerned.

# Get this straight, Western media

Andrew Mitrovica

**THIS fact may come, I suspect, as a surprise to many people whose grasp of the world is shaped by their exclusive consumption of Western media: Israel has waged war on Palestinians for decades. The deep and lasting human consequences of Israel's terrifying, perpetual war on Palestinians - prosecuted with indiscriminate cruelty by an occupying army and its de facto proxies, fanatical settler militias - have been plain for anyone willing or inclined to see, for generations.**

Countless lives lost and maimed in body and spirit. Land and homes stolen. Livelihoods and ancient traditions destroyed. The exhausting cycle of having to rebuild, then watching all the promise and possibility turn, in an instant, to dust. The wholesale imprisonment of a people penned like cattle behind walls and barbed wire fences, where water and electricity, food and fuel, are switched on and off on a colonial power's whim. But, of course, much of the Western media won't acknowledge these facts and outrages. That's because many of the reporters and columnists now gripped by the latest eruption of murderous madness in Palestine and Israel have always interpreted events through a prism largely dictated by Israel - whether they are prepared to admit it or not. In this myopic calculus, Israel is always the victim, never the perpetrator. Israel's understanding of history matters; Palestinians' reading not only of the past but of the present and the future too, does not count. And, perhaps most indecent of all, Israeli lives and deaths matter; Palestinian lives and deaths don't.

Riyad Mansour, the Palestinian ambassador to the United Nations, made this point in a quiet, but persuasive address he delivered on Sunday to that apparently powerless body. "History," he said, "begins for some media and politicians when Israelis are killed. Our people have endured one deadly year after another". Mansour recounted the repeated warnings he and other exasperated Palestinians have issued - time and again - of the potential "consequences of Israeli impunity and international inaction". He was not alone. Human rights groups based in Jerusalem, London and New York have published report after report that establishes, as a matter of international law, that Israel has, for a long time, been guilty of apartheid - a state-sanctioned, systemic policy to impose ethnic supremacy over besieged Palestinians with brutal, grinding efficiency. Implicit in those dense, meticulously

chronicled studies was what amounted to a blazing flare intended to seize finally the flighty attention of complicit Western governments and media. Israel's deliberate, organised oppression is not only unsustainable, it disfigures both the oppressor and the oppressed. Ultimately, violence begets violence in round after round of horrific vengeance by both sides.

Predictably, the cautions were not heeded. Instead, many Western news outlets either dismissed outright or used the familiar vocabulary of denial to obscure the blatant truth. Others opted for wilful malpractice, preferring to devote time and resources to the death of a celebrity dog over the documented theft, deprivations and indignities endured by Palestinians - young and old. At the core of this blindness is a shared doctrine that holds that a Palestinian is a disposable non-entity, an expendable by-product of Israel's right to exist and to defend itself. In this perverse construct, Palestinian civilians are not considered innocent casualties of war but remain largely responsible for their own deaths and desperate fates. The result: Western columnists will defend Israel - without so much as a hint of doubt or equivocation - despite its demonstrable record of erasing Palestinians whenever it wants, wherever it wants, for whatever reason it wants. The sad, human evidence abounds. Mahmoud al-Saadi, an 18-year-old student, was erased by Israel while walking to school in the Jenin refugee camp last November. Mohammad al-Tamimi, a two-and-a-half-year-old toddler was erased by Israel while he was sitting in his father's car parked outside their home in Nabi Saleh, a village northwest of Ramallah in the occupied West Bank, as he waited to go to a birthday party in June 2023. Shireen Abu Akleh, a 51-year-old Palestinian-American journalist was erased by Israel while she was preparing to report on yet another raid in Jenin in May 2022. Dr Izzeldin Abuelailash, a 67-year-old Palestinian-Canadian physician, scholar and humanitarian, witnessed three of his daughters - Bessan, 21, Mayar, 15, Aya, 13 - and a niece, Noor, 17, being erased when Israeli tank shells shattered the family home in the Gaza Strip in January 2009. Omar Abdulmajeed Asaad, a 78-year-old Palestinian-American retiree was erased by Israel while en route home to Jiljilya, a town a little northeast of Ramallah in the West Bank, after an evening playing cards with friends in January 2022. Soldiers marched Asaad to a nearby construction site and

dumped him onto cold stone pavers. That's where he died of a "stress-induced heart attack". Alone. Twelve-year-old Hassan Abu al-Neil was erased by Israel on August 21, 2021 while standing on what remains of Palestinian soil in Gaza in defiance of the occupation. The lethal ledger goes on and on and on.

In the awful days, weeks and potentially months ahead, a gallery of writers will, no doubt, stand rhetorically shoulder-to-shoulder with Israel's Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and his appalling calls to impose a total blockade on Gaza and bludgeon it into a "deserted island" in the wake of Hamas's ruthless onslaught. Netanyahu's chilling vow to effectively obliterate Gaza and his warning to the 2 million Palestinians who live in that thin strip of land to "get out" is the inevitable expression of apartheid, which is predicated on the dehumanisation of an entire people. As Palestinian-American writer, Ra'fat Al-Dajani, has explained, the dehumanisation of Palestinians is based on two tenets widely held among Western media: "Palestinians are violent because of who they are - because of something intrinsic in their very nature and culture," Dajani wrote, rather than "because of the oppression and violence of the Israeli occupation". As a corollary to this, "since Palestinians lack basic standards of morality... the only way to interact with them is through the use of force, whether state-sponsored force by the Israeli security forces or non-state actors such as Israeli settlers. Force is the only language they understand." Both of these blasphemies have already been on display on Western cable news channels' 24/7 loop and in opinion pages featuring the usual parade of Israeli-aligned officials and pundits. In rebuttal, Mansour was obliged, remarkably, to state the obvious: "We [Palestinians] are not sub-humans. Let me repeat: We are not sub-humans. We will never accept a rhetoric that denigrates our humanity and reneges our rights. A rhetoric that ignores the occupation of our land and oppression of our people." Mansour defended the resistance as an understandable response to Israel's longstanding war on Palestinians, saying: "Israel cannot wage a full-scale war on a nation, its people, its land, its holy sites and expect peace in exchange." In the end, the ambassador said, Palestinians, and Palestinians alone, will decide their destiny. "The Palestinian people will be free one day or another, one way or another," Mansour said. He is right.

Aljazeera

# Israel is paying price for the Battle of Gaza

**IN 2007, Israelis were gloating over the fighting between Hamas and the Palestinian Authority in the Battle of Gaza. Hundreds died in that battle between brothers. Hamas took control of the entire Gaza Strip and expelled members of Fatah to Ramallah. Israeli media circulated images of some of these individuals in their underwear on the streets after fleeing to the West Bank.**

For Israel, this situation was advantageous. The Palestinians were preoccupied with internal strife, leading to the emergence of two conflicting Palestinian statelets, instead of them progressing toward the establishment of two separate states - a Palestinian state and an Israeli state. The unified Palestinian government collapsed and Hamas appointed its own judiciary and police force, as well as making Ismail Haniyeh prime minister. In Ramallah, the PA appointed Salam Fayyad as prime minister. The Arab League and the EU supported the Ramallah government, while Iran provided funding to the Gaza group. This separation solidified and the vision of a Palestinian state gradually dissipated. The lives of Palestinians in Gaza became a perpetual state of misery, as border crossings were closed and livelihoods disrupted. Tunnels were dug, allowing Iran to infiltrate the Gaza Strip and support its own groups. These groups were disciplined and prepared to serve Iran's interests.

Abdul Rahman Al-Rashed

Despite the presence of Hamas, a power vacuum persisted, indirectly supported by Israel's failure to help the legitimate PA regain control of Gaza. It is important to note that, five years prior to Hamas assuming control, Israel had undermined the capabilities of the emerging PA in Bethlehem and Ramallah instead of strengthening them. Since 2007, Gaza has been trapped in a vacuum, with the exception of Hamas as a military organization, which competes with Palestinian Islamic Jihad but does not recognize it. Vacuums, as seen in Libya, Yemen, Lebanon and Afghanistan, pose a significant threat to stability.

This threat extends beyond the people of Gaza and Israel, as many militants who have carried out armed operations against Egypt in the Sinai Peninsula have infiltrated from Gaza. Even within Gaza, Hamas no longer holds absolute power, as Palestinian Islamic Jihad and Al-Qaeda-affiliated groups have emerged. If Israel genuinely seeks stability, it must reconsider its policies that obstruct the realization of the Oslo Accords' promise to establish a Palestinian state and reevaluate its interactions with the PA. True peace and stability can only be achieved with a legitimate Palestinian government that possesses real authority and is supported by the international community. Amid the ongoing conflict, attention is focused on

Hamas and Israel, while the PA remains on the sidelines. The truth is that the disruption and weakening of the Ramallah government have contributed to the growth of Hamas and Palestinian Islamic Jihad not only in Gaza but also in the West Bank.

Since the separation, the PA has experienced a decline in its capabilities, functions and influence. The strangulation of the PA aims to prevent the establishment of a Palestinian state, while limiting its authority to areas significantly smaller than what was agreed upon in the Oslo Accords (the PA currently controls only 1,000 sq. km out of the more than 5,000 sq. km stipulated in the Oslo Accords). Additionally, the Gaza Strip remains outside its jurisdiction. With the leadership of the PA undermined, it is unrealistic to expect them to extend their control and bear the responsibility. The security of Israel is intrinsically tied to the stability of the Palestinian territories. Like any other nation, the Palestinians should be empowered to govern their regions.

This necessitates support for the PA, the development of its capabilities and the enhancement of its capacities over time. Israel cannot adopt the approach taken by the Assad regime and forcibly deport 2.5 million Palestinians to Egypt, the only neighboring country. Nor can it tolerate the prolonged consequences of Gaza's closure under the authority of Hamas and Palestinian Islamic Jihad.

# From the Berlin Wall to Unity Day: The significance of German reunification

**EACH year on October 3 Germany observes its "Tag der Deutschen Einheit," the anniversary of the day in 1990 when East and West Germany reunified after almost 45 years apart. The Chancellor of West Germany at the time of reunification, Helmut Kohl, voiced the sentiment that "German unity was achieved not through the power of our arms, but by the strength of our hearts." The Day of German Reunification is celebrated as a national holiday in Germany, marked by various events and festivities. It is generally viewed with pride and as a symbol of progress, however, opinions on reunification can vary among Germans.**

While the shame and trauma of the Nazi regime and the Second World War will forever be part of Germany's history, the process of reunification and the subsequent transformation of the country helped many older Germans regain a sense of pride and identity based on democratic values, peaceful cooperation, and a commitment to reconciliation and responsibility for the past. German reunification symbolised a new beginning for the nation, one that emphasised unity, democracy, and its place in a united Europe and the world. Younger Germans, especially those who were born after reunification, may not have the same emotional connection to the event. For them, the division of Germany may be more of a historical fact rather than a personal experience.

Differences in perspectives on reunification can still be found between East and West Germans. While there has been significant

Kristian Alexander

progress in bridging economic and social disparities between the two regions, some Eastern Germans still feel that they have not fully benefited from reunification in terms of economic opportunities and development.

Unlike many other cases of political change and unification, the process in Germany was largely peaceful. The events leading up to reunification were characterised by peaceful protests, negotiations, and diplomacy rather than armed conflict. Throughout 1989, East Germany experienced a wave of peaceful protests and demonstrations calling for political reforms and greater freedom. These protests, particularly in cities like Leipzig and Dresden, gained momentum and public support.

Erich Honecker, the long-time leader of East Germany, was replaced by Egon Krenz in October 1989. Krenz initiated some political reforms but was unable to quell the protests. This leadership change signalled a willingness on the part of East German authorities to negotiate and compromise. On November 9, 1989, the East German government announced that citizens could travel to West Germany freely. Border guards would no longer patrol the barrier between the two areas. The Berlin Wall, which had stood for nearly three decades, had fallen.

The decline of the Soviet Union influenced Germany's decision to reunify. USSR leader Mikhail Gorbachev's policy of glasnost, or openness, reduced tension with the United States, and the US supported German reunification as part of its policy toward a "whole and

free" Europe. After the reunification, Soviet troops withdrew troops from East Germany, and relations between the two countries were normalized. The USSR would collapse two years later.

The German reunification process was a complex endeavour, but unlike other efforts in history, such as the former Yugoslavia, Vietnam, and Yemen, the division of Germany was not primarily driven by ethnic, linguistic, or historical factors but rather geopolitical rivalries. East Germany (the German Democratic Republic or GDR) had a significantly less developed economy compared to West Germany (the Federal Republic of Germany or FRG), and transitioning the GDR's centrally planned economy to a market-oriented system resulted in significant economic disparities and challenges in job creation and infrastructure development in the former East. Harmonising the two Germanys was expensive for the West, who provided significant financial support to the East for infrastructure development and social welfare programmes. Estimates of the total cost of reunification have ranged from hundreds of billions to over a trillion euros.

Reunification also required the integration of the political systems of East and West Germany. This involved dismantling the GDR's political structures and incorporating former GDR citizens into the democratic institutions of the FRG. It also required dealing with the legacy of the GDR's authoritarian regime. After German reunification, the German government

undertook several measures to deal with the scars left by the GDR's authoritarian regime. Addressing this legacy was crucial for the process of national reconciliation, the establishment of democratic institutions, and the promotion of human rights and social justice. One of the most significant steps taken was the opening of the archives of the Stasi, the GDR's secret police. Citizens were granted access to their own Stasi files, allowing them to see the extent of state surveillance and informer networks. This provided transparency and allowed victims to seek justice and accountability.

The reunification of Europe's largest economy catalysed deeper European integration by emphasising stability and cooperation. Germany's active support for the European Union's expansion eastward brought economic growth to emerging democracies. Moreover, the establishment of the euro currency, backed by Germany's economic strength, boosted cross-border trade and economic convergence. Germany's leadership in tackling key EU challenges, from migration to climate change, has reinforced the union's cohesion.

While significant progress has been made, some lasting effects of the reunification process are still visible in Germany today, particularly in terms of economic disparities and social differences. All in all, however, reunification has led to a stronger and more unified Germany with a more prominent role in European and international affairs. This is something the Germans should be proud of as they celebrate this historic moment.

Gulf News

# CPEC fully proves its real worth

Mushahid Hussain Sayed

**IN a speech at the Nazarbayev University in Astana, Kazakhstan, President Xi Jinping launched what has become the 21st century's most significant development initiative. By June 2023, China has signed agreements with 152 countries and 32 international organizations on Belt and Road cooperation. Comprising the Silk Road Economic Belt and the 21st Century Maritime Silk Road, the Belt and Road Initiative has helped improve infrastructure and connectivity between and within countries.**

We in Pakistan, neighbor and strategic partner of China, are fortunate to have the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor as part of the Belt and Road Initiative. The CPEC has helped build an enabling economic environment in Pakistan with energy, education and the economy being among its key pillars. China has invested nearly \$26 billion in direct projects in Pakistan, creating 236,000 jobs, generating 8,000 megawatts of electricity, and building 510 kilometers of highways and 886 km of the national electricity grid. Also, about 28,000 Pakistani students are studying in China and more than 20,000 Pakistanis are learning Chinese.

The CPEC is not just about bricks and mortar. It is also about people-to-people exchanges, which are at the core of the strategic bond between the two "iron brothers",

Pakistan and China. The CPEC was launched when Pakistan was facing immense challenge from terror groups. It was also facing instability and conflict due to the US "war on terror" in neighboring Afghanistan. By launching the CPEC, China gave a vote of confidence to Pakistan and its people, and raised Pakistani people's hope for a better future. The CPEC's successful completion of "early harvest projects" on schedule, with no job cuts even during the COVID-19 pandemic, speaks volumes about the dedication and commitment of both sides to complete these projects.

The Belt and Road Initiative demonstrates resilience and continuity of a world that is facing turbulence and transformation. The past 10 years has seen the investment of \$1 trillion in about 3,000 Belt and Road projects, which have created 420,000 jobs and helped lift 40 million people out of poverty. As it celebrates its 10th anniversary, the Belt and Road Initiative faces a barrage of propaganda from its detractors in the West who largely view it through a geopolitical lens because they seek to contain China by igniting a new Cold War.

As an English saying goes, imitation is the highest form of flattery. To counter the Belt and Road Initiative, the West, especially the United States, has come up with similar development initiatives

only to fail in delivering any of its promises. For example, in 2018, the US Congress passed the BUILD Act (Better Utilization of Investments Leading to Development Act), with an institutional back-up in the form of the International Development Finance Corporation, and having a financial outlay of \$60 billion for infrastructure projects. But nothing materialized. In 2021, at the G7 Summit in Cornwall, the United Kingdom, US President Joe Biden announced the "Build Back Better World" (B3W) initiative with much fanfare. A year later, after Biden failed to launch any project, the G7 rebranded B3W as the "Partnership for Growth in Infrastructure and Investment". Concurrently, the European Union launched its copycat version, "Golden Gateway", to "compete" with the Belt and Road Initiative. None has shown any concrete outcomes in terms of projects launched.

And at the G20 Summit in New Delhi in September, the US, together with the EU and some other countries, launched yet another "historic" initiative to "counter" the Belt and Road Initiative: the "India-Middle East-Europe Economic Corridor". What critics of the Belt and Road Initiative fail to realize is that the China-proposed initiative is not just about building projects; it is





# Rationalization of duties and tariffs demanded

## F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: Sarhad Chamber of Commerce and Industry president Fuad Ishaq demanded rationalization of duties and tariffs on exporting items to improve cross border mutual trade and exports.

The SCCI chief said high duties/tariffs on imported items has encouraged transit and illegal trade, which should be eliminated.

Also, he urged Islamabad and Kabul to devise a joint mechanism to remove hurdles in order to carry out smooth trade between the two neighbouring countries.

Similarly, he called for reforms in the Federal Board of Revenue and taxation system and facilitating the business community.

Fuad Ishaq was speaking to a 24 member traders' delegation headed by Ghulam Bilal Javed here at the chamber house on Tuesday.

Sanaullah Khan, senior vice president and Ijaz

Khan Afridi, vice president and Sajjad Aziz, Secretary General of the chamber and others were present during the meeting.

He noticed the Pak-Afghan mutual trade had dropped to \$400 to 500 million, which was around \$2.5 billion a few years ago.

Other members of the delegation consisted of chairman All Pakistan Sarafa Gems and Jewellery and Tahafaz e Hindkowan Foundation Haji Amin Hussain Babar, Shahid Khan, presidents and general secretaries from the business community.

Members of the business community during the meeting raised concerns about repatriation of illegal Afghan refugees and current state of the national economy and highlighted other issues that were adversely affecting trade and commercial activities in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa.

The delegation formally congratulated the newly elected president Fuad Ishaq and senior vice president Sanaullah Khan and

expressed hope that they along with other members of the cabinet will play an important role in resolution of the business community issues.

Fuad Ishaq while speaking on the occasion assured that the business community issues would be resolved on priority basis by taking up relevant authorities at federal and provincial level in an efficient manner.

The SCCI chief urged the government to take pragmatic steps to provide a conducive business atmosphere for revival of the ailing economy.

Meanwhile, a delegation of the Industrialists Association Peshawar (IAP) led by its acting president Ayub Zakori also called on the president Sarhad Chamber of Commerce and Industry.

Other members of the industrialists' delegation include Senator Nauman Wazir, senior member IAP Malik Niaz Ahmad, Farhad Asfandyar, Haris Mufti, Junaid Altaf, Salman Altaf, secretary general Muqtasid

Ahsan and others.

Ayub Zakori and other members of the delegation congratulated the newly elected president and senior vice president of the chamber and expressed their best wishes and hope they will serve the business community with new passion and zeal.

Fuad Ishaq assured the IAP delegation that the SCCI will take up all issues that had been mentioned during the meeting with relevant federal and provincial authorities and resolve them on priority grounds.

Later, a delegation of Khyber Bazar Carpet Association led by former president Faiz Muhammad Faizi also met with the chamber's newly elected cabinet members and congratulated them and expressed hope that they will deliver the business community in an efficient manner.

Members of the delegation included Haji Attaullah Mohmand, Haji Muhammad Azeem and others.



MULTAN: Traders displaying bananas during auction as shopkeepers participate in bidding of bananas at fruit market.

## Stock Exchange gains 418 points

ISLAMABAD (APP): The 100-index of the Pakistan Stock Exchange (PSX) gained 418.48 points, a positive change of 0.88 per cent on Tuesday, closing at 48,140.28 points against 47,721.80 points the previous day.

A total of 350,067,949 shares valuing Rs.10.762 billion were traded during the day as compared to 233,661,179 shares valuing Rs. 7,076 billion the previous day.

As many as 345 companies transacted their shares in the stock market; 227 of them recorded gains and 94 sustained losses, whereas the share price of 24 companies remained unchanged.

The three top-trading companies were K-Electric Ltd with 33,899,306 shares at Rs.2.46 per share, Pak Refinery with 26,344,125 shares at Rs.16.43 per share and WorldCall Telecom with 21,344,125 shares at Rs.1.30 per share.

Unilever Foods witnessed a maximum increase of Rs.550.00 per share price, closing at Rs.21,250.00, whereas the runner-up was Sapphire Fiber with a Rs.69.99 rise in its per share price to Rs.1144.99.

Nestlé Pakistan witnessed a maximum decrease of Rs.100.00 per share closing at Rs.7000.00, followed by Thal Ind. Crop. with a Rs.10.90 decline to close at Rs.227.09.

**Gold rates decrease by Rs.15,500 to Rs.199,500 per tola**

The per tola price of 24 karat gold decreased by Rs. 15,500 and was sold at Rs. 199,500 on Tuesday compared to its sale at Rs.215,000 on September 09, 2023.

The price of 10 grams of 24 karat gold also decreased by Rs.13,546 to Rs.171,039 from Rs.184,585 whereas the prices of 10 gram 22 karat gold went down to Rs.156,786 from Rs.168,967 the All Sindh Sarafa Jewellers Association reported.

The price of per tola Silver also decreased by Rs.50 to Rs.2,500 whereas that of 10 grams silver went down by Rs.42.87 to Rs.2,143.34.

The price of gold in the international market decreased by \$55 to \$1,856 from \$1,911, the Association reported.

## SNGPL's crackdown against gas theft: 58 connections cut off, fine imposed

### F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: During the ongoing crackdown against gas pilferers, SNGPL continued raids in Punjab, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and Islamabad, disconnecting another 58 connections while imposing fine of Rs.11.6 million and 542 under billing cases processed.

In Lahore, the regional team disconnected 04 connections on illegal use of gas and another five on use of compressor and 42 under billing cases have been processed. The region also booked an amount of Rs. 0.022 against under billing cases.

In Bahawalpur, the regional team disconnected five connections on use of compressor while another 01 on illegal use of gas and 05 under billing cases

processed.

The company disconnected 07 connections on illegal use of gas while another two connections on the use of compressor, 19 under billing cases have been processed in Multan. The regional team imposed fine of Rs 0.086M against gas pilferers.

In Peshawar and Karak, the company disconnected 06 connections on account of direct use of gas and illegal connections. The regional team also launched 1 FIR against gas thief and 0.009 amount has been booked against gas theft.

In Rawalpindi the regional team disconnected 03 gas connections on direct and illegal use of gas and 02 under billing cases have been processed.

SNGPL's team in Mardan 06 connections were disconnected on illegal

use of gas. The team also booked an amount of Rs 0.340M against gas theft.

In Gujranwala 04 meters were disconnected on illegal use of gas while 05 on the use of compressor and amount of Rs 0.719M have been booked against gas theft and under billing/gas theft cases. The team also processed 108 under billing cases.

In Gujrat, 216 under billing cases have been processed and amount of Rs0.058 have been booked against gas theft.

In Sahiwal, 04 connections were disconnected on illegal use of gas.

The regional team in Faisalabad 120 under billing cases processed and 05 disconnected on illegal use of gas while another 01 on use of compressor. Fine of Rs 9.531M was also imposed against gas pilferers.

## FFC wins 'Best ESG Reporting Award' at annual award ceremony

### F.P. Report

KARACHI: Fauji Fertilizer Company Limited (FFC) was conferred with "Best ESG Reporting Award" at 20th Annual Excellence Awards Ceremony organized by the CFA Society Pakistan in Karachi.

FFC was represented by Brig Irfan Khan, Company Secretary and Syed Imran Rizvi, Manager Corporate Affairs. The Company Secretary received the award on behalf of FFC. This award is an acknowledgement of best ESG practices, compliance to international ESG disclosure frameworks with our continued commitment to global ESG implementation mission.



## Engro Polymers offers support for flood-resilient housing solutions

### F.P. Report

KARACHI: Engro has extended its support for flood-resilient housing solutions, in partnership with Sindh Rural Support Organization (SRSO) and Indus Valley School (IVS). In this regard, Engro recently shared findings from two projects at a briefing held at the IVS, Karachi.

Engro Polymer & Chemicals led the collaborative project with Indus Valley School to explore PVC as the material of choice in rehabilitation efforts. Through extensive research into flood-responsive housing and the socio-cultural aspects of rural Sindh, the IVS students shared a shelter design using regional materials and construction techniques, incorporating locally sourced bamboo, sundried brick, concrete blocks, and recyclable

UPVC sheets.

These materials not only align with the region's climate but are also highly adaptable as they are designed to float, transform, submerge, or block in response to flood disasters, ensuring safety and security for their inhabitants. The partnership exemplifies how industry and academia can unite to address pressing real-world challenges using the wisdom of local materials and construction whilst making use of the next generation of architects and designers.

Similarly, Engro Foundation - the social investment arm of Engro Corporation - in partnership with the Sindh Rural Support Organization (SRSO) supported the construction of 146 climate-resilient residential units in two hard-hit villages of District Kambar Shahdadkot. Elevated three feet

above ground level, these units were constructed using readily available materials, and recyclable UPVC sheets. Thatched roofs were provided to regulate temperatures and make the rooms habitable during hot weather, and each unit consisted of one room, kitchen, bathroom, and a courtyard. What's exceptional about this initiative is the extensive community mobilization, with an immense focus on empowering local communities to own and carry out construction activities.

"As a responsible company, we are actively pursuing three sustainability streams, including carbon offsetting, advanced recycling through circularity of plastics, and water conservation," said Muhammad Idrees, Chief Commercial Officer of Engro Polymer & Chemicals. "Our goal is to develop the local construction industry by promoting

the use of modern PVC materials that are not only environmentally friendly but also designed to withstand the toughest conditions, including flash floods.

## PSX announces recipients

ISLAMABAD (APP): In an exciting development for the capital markets and the economy as a whole, the Pakistan Stock Exchange announced the much-awaited list of the Top 25 Companies Awards recipients for the year 2022.

These are the most prestigious and coveted awards in the corporate sector and were initiated by the Exchange in 1978, according to a news release here on Tuesday.

The selected companies have excelled on the basis of their financial performance, governance, and operational achievements, as well as sustainability and ESG-related initiatives. They truly are leaders in all respects in Pakistan's corporate sector.

The PSX Top 25 Companies Awards recognize companies achieving certain key pre-requisites for this prestigious award, which include having a minimum dividend distribution of 30 percent and shares of the company having been traded at least 75 percent of the total trading days in a year, among other pre-requisites.

Subject to achieving these pre-requisites, the companies are further weighed based on certain quantitative and qualitative criteria. In terms of quantitative criteria, PSX selects listed companies which have performed exceptionally in the context of profitability ratios, dividend related ratios, and turnover of shares, among other specifics.

In terms of qualitative criteria, PSX selected high-performing listed companies based on CSR, reporting on SDGs, ESG-related initiatives, and diversity and inclusivity, among other considerations.

The price of 10 grams of 24 karat gold also decreased by Rs.13,546 to Rs.171,039 from Rs.184,585 whereas the prices of 10 gram 22 karat gold went down to Rs.156,786 from Rs.168,967 the All Sindh Sarafa Jewellers Association reported.

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The price of gold in the international market decreased by \$55 to \$1,856 from \$1,911, the Association reported.

### F.P. Report

LAHORE: Committed to be a force for good, Nestlé Pakistan launched its corporate campaign - 'Achai Se Bana, Achai Ke Liay' emphasizing the goodness of food.

Nestlé Pakistan with its wide range of foods and beverages, helps bring tasty and balanced diets for millions of people across all occasions and life stages.

Speaking at the event, Jason Avanceña, Chief Executive Officer, Nestlé Pakistan said, "Our corporate campaign is an effort to bring to life our purpose of 'unlocking the power of food to enhance quality of life for everyone, today and

for generations to come'."

"As a company we are highly cognizant of our impact, everything we do at Nestlé is driven by this purpose. We understand that the world around us is changing fast and in these changing times, we are working to build a positive future."

"We are committed to be 'a force for good' throughout our value chain by Creating Shared Value for individuals, communities and the planet, delivering on our sustainability agenda," he added.

Talking on the occasion, Faisal Rana, Head of Communication & Marketing Services at

Nestlé Pakistan said, "The essence of 'Achai Se Bana, Achai Ke Liay' lies in encapsulating the inherent goodness of Nestlé products and exploring how this goodness positively impacts the lives of not only those who choose them but anyone associated with them."

The central theme of "Achai" is thoughtfully divided into two aspects - 'Achai se Bana' (Made with Goodness) emphasizing the high quality of Nestlé products, and 'Achai ke Liay' (Made for Goodness) highlighting how this goodness naturally extends to enrich the lives of consumers and the planet.

## ICCI, IBECHS to establish Expo Centre in Federal Capital

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Intelligence Bureau Employee's Cooperative Housing Society and Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry (ICCI) have agreed for the establishment of a state-of-the-art Expo Centre in the federal capital with joint efforts.

In this regard, the IBECHS hosted a reception in the honor of delegation of Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry (ICCI) here Tuesday.

Both sides held fruitful discussions to move forward. Speaking on the occasion, Tariq Mehmood, President, Intelligence Bureau Employee's Cooperative Housing Society said

expo centers play an important role in promoting exports and attracting investment. He said that the Expo Center as a joint venture of Gulberg Green and ICCI in the Federal Capital would provide permanent exhibition facilities to encourage buyer-seller interaction and promoting trade and exports.

He asserted that this project of national importance would go a long way in improving the economy. Tariq Mehmood said that the Expo Centre would make the federal capital a hub of business and investment activities and stressed the value addition of products to boost exports and

revive the economy. He said that Gulberg Green was situated at an ideal location and many new development projects would be completed here. He was optimistic that the Expo Centre would open up many new avenues for promotion of business, investment and exports.

Ahsan Zafar Bakhtawari, President, Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry said that the partnership between ICCI and Gulberg Green for the Expo Centre was a step in the right direction to improve the economy as this permanent facility would showcase the exportable products of Pakistan and boost exports. He said that many coun-

tries including China and Turkey have increased their exports and tourism by organizing expos and hoped that this Expo Center would also help enhance exports and tourism in Pakistan. He said that Pakistan has great potential to boost exports and expressed hope that the expo center would contribute positively towards achieving this goal.

The President ICCI said that the Chamber has been making efforts since long for the establishment of a new industrial estate in the region and it is ready to work with Gulberg Green for materialization of this important project.

## PPL achieves production enhancement milestone



### F.P. Report

KARACHI: Pakistan Petroleum Limited (PPL) has achieved significant production gain of 13 MMscfd gas and 90 bpd condensate from existing wells through a rigless production

enhancement campaign.

The company is vigorously pursuing production enhancement utilizing latest techniques and production optimization efforts. These initiatives were successfully carried out on a number of wells in Sui Gas

Field, Gambat South and Hala between June and September 2023.

Against the backdrop of maturing producing assets, PPL remains committed to enhancing their production to secure energy for the future.



**In brief****U-16 wrestling trials held**

FAISALABAD (APP): Inter-tehsil under-16 wrestling trials were held at the Kalim Shaheed Sports Complex under the aegis of the district sports department here on Tuesday. More than 50 wrestlers from six tehsils took part. The trials were held to select an under-16 wrestling team at the district level. The trials were held in 8 different weight categories including 42kg, 44kg, 48kg, 52kg, 57kg, 72kg, 68kg and 74kg. District Sports Officer Sajida Latif was the convener.

**Habib Girls win netball match**

KARACHI (APP): On the second day of PNF Net Ball Cup the semi final matches of Pool U-13 were played in which 1st semi final match was played between Habib Girls & City school North Nazimabad, which Habib Girls won the match by 3-0. In second Semi Final, Karachi Grammar School beat Beacon Lite by 7-0, third Semi-Final, City URC walk over Bay View academy by 1/0 and in 4th Semi Final match Trinity School Beat Alpha School by 5/0, a communicate said. In Pool U-15 Karachi Grammar School (W) beat Habib Girls School by 11-0 and in another match the Karachi Grammar beat Nasra School Korangi by 10-0. In Pool U-17, City PAF Chapter beat St. Joseph School by 7-3 and in Pool U-19, KGS Green beat Habib School by 22-7 and KGS White beat Hybro by 8-0. President of Pakistan Netball Federation Mudassar Arain encouraged all the teams and said that the trend of competition gives motivation to the players to move forward. Players use all their abilities to win.

**Gill to miss match against Pakistan**

NEW DELHI (Agencies): The cricket-lovers will feel the absence of top Indian striker Shubman Gill in the high-powered clash between Pakistan and India as the batter is hospitalized due to the dengue fever. The batter contracted the virus a couple of days ago and now his condition has worsened as doctors detected in the reports that his platelet count is low. Gill was shifted to a hospital in Chennai on Monday. The Indian cricket board medical panel is overseeing his treatment. Gill is expected to miss two matches first against Afghanistan on 11 Oct and against Pakistan to be held On Oct 14 in Ahmedabad. Earlier, he also missed a match against Australia, which was India's opening match of this World Cup. The current year has brought blessings for Gill as he turned up the chief scorer in one-day internationals making the Indian batting line stronger. Cricket-fans love the opening pair of Gill and Rohit Sharma.

**Uefa abandons plan to readmit Russia U17s**

MOSCOW (Agencies): Uefa has abandoned plans to reinstate Russian U17 teams into next year's youth European Championships. Last month European football's governing body announced it was exploring how to reintegrate the Russian youth team into the international setup, having suspended all Russian teams from Uefa competitions following the full-scale invasion of Ukraine in February 2022. Now the organisation says that finding a way to reintegrate Russia's U17 side has proven too difficult logistically.

# Rizwan, Shafique lead Pakistan to World Cup record win over Sri Lanka



HYDERABAD: Mohammad Rizwan's century kept Pakistan on track.

## Euro 2028: Uefa confirms UK and Republic of Ireland as tournament hosts

LONDON (Agencies): The United Kingdom and Republic of Ireland will host the 2028 European Championship, Uefa has confirmed.

The joint bid ran unopposed after Turkey withdrew to focus on a bid with Italy for Euro 2032, which was also confirmed at a meeting in Switzerland.

The UK and Ireland focused on Euro 2028, with Uefa's approval, after they ended a plan to be Europe's preferred candidate for the 2030 World Cup. London's Wembley Stadium and Glasgow's Hampden Park hosted games at Euro 2020.

Football Association of Wales chief executive Noel Mooney said he would "like the national stadium of Wales to host the opening match" but that it is "up to Uefa" to decide.

"To bring the tournament to Wales is a special day for us," he said. "We're excited. We've put forward a schedule of matches, we think Cardiff is perfect for the opener and we look forward to it.

"We hope by hosting, and having these big matches in Cardiff, we can bring Wales to the world in a way it hasn't been before."

Former Wales captain Gareth Bale, who attended the presentation in Nyon, added: "For me as a Welshman, I would love for Cardiff to host the opening match. We have the stadium and infrastructure for it."

The Republic of Ireland, Northern Ireland and Wales have never hosted a major football tournament.

Matches at Euro 2028 are set to be held at 10 different grounds, including Wembley, Hampden Park, Cardiff's Principality Stadium and Dublin's Aviva Stadium. Belfast's Casement Park and Everton's Bramley-Moore Dock stadium, the former unbuilt while the latter is still under construction, were also included in the bid.

England were one of the 11 countries to host Euro 2020 along with Scotland, as well as being sole hosts of the 1966 World Cup and Euro '96. England also

hosted the record-breaking Women's European Championship in 2022.

While Italy had only bid for the 2032 tournament, Turkey had initially bid to host both Euro 2028 and 2032. Turkey withdrew from the running to host Euro 2028 last week after their bid with Italy for 2032 was approved by European football's governing body.

They have 20 potential host stadiums, of which 10 will be chosen, five per country, by October 2026.

Turkey hosted June's Champions League final between Manchester City and Inter Milan at Istanbul's Ataturk Olympic Stadium, but a major international tournament has never been held in the country.

European champions Italy hosted the Euros in 1968 and 1980, while Rome's Stadio Olimpico was also used as a venue at Euro 2020. Germany will host Euro 2024 with the most recent championship being played in 2021 instead of 2020 because of the Covid-19 pandemic.

## India finally initiates process to issue visas to Pakistani journalists

NEW DELHI (Agencies): The Indian embassy has initiated a process to issue visas to Pakistani journalists, who are willing to travel to India for coverage of the ongoing ICC Men's World Cup 2023.

Sources said the Indian High Commission had contacted the journalists to submit their passports at the earliest for visa processing. It is recalled that visas for the Pakistan team were granted barely 48 hours before they left for what is their first tour of India since the T20 World Cup in 2016.

Last week, the Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB) said in a statement that the visa delay had put the board "under immense pressure".

"PCB is disappointed to see that Pakistani journalists and fans are facing uncertainty about obtaining an Indian visa to cover Pakistan's opening game in the ICC World Cup," it said. "Their presence not only adds vibrancy to the stadium but also contributes to the global coverage and appreciation of the game. "We have been reminding ICC about their obligations and members' agreement on issuing visas for fans and journalists for the last three years and continue to raise concerns with all relevant authorities."

Pakistan began their campaign on the field with an easy victory over the Netherlands on Friday. They are playing Sri Lanka in their second world cup clash today (Tuesday).

## Palestine team withdraws from Malaysia tournament

WEST BANK (Reuters): The Palestine soccer team has withdrawn from a tournament in Malaysia after a fresh crisis broke out between Israel and the Palestinian group Hamas over the weekend, disrupting the team's travel arrangements, the Football Association of Malaysia (FAM) said on Tuesday.

"The withdrawal came due to players being unable to travel because of the events and circumstances that the Palestinian territories are going through," Firas Abu Hilal, secretary-general of the Palestinian Football Association, told Reuters. The Palestine national football team had been scheduled to compete in the Merdeka Cup — an international friendly tournament in Malaysia — from Oct. 13-17 along with India, Tajikistan and host country, Malaysia.

Hilal said the players' plans had been disrupted by the repeated closure of a crossing connecting Jordan to the Palestinian territories, through which they would have traveled to Malaysia.

The Palestine team are due to play 2026 World Cup qualifying matches against Lebanon and Australia in November. They have also qualified for next year's edition of the Asian Cup in Qatar, which will run from Jan. 12 to Feb. 10.

HYDERABAD (AFP): Mohammad Rizwan and Abdullah Shafique clubbed centuries as Pakistan chased down the highest target in World Cup history to beat Sri Lanka by six wickets in Hyderabad on Tuesday.

The diminutive Rizwan overcame leg cramps to score a 121-ball 131 not out while Shafique hit a 103-ball 113 as Pakistan overhauled their 345-run target in 48.2 overs.

The victory gives Pakistan two wins in as many games and a huge boost in confidence ahead of their high-profile clash against India in Ahmedabad on Saturday. "Always proud when you perform like that. It was difficult and when you chase like that, it's special," said Rizwan. "Every player in the dressing room had the belief we can chase that."

On his cramping, he said: "Sometimes cramps, sometimes acting!"

Sri Lanka's imposing total of 344-9 was built around brilliant hundreds from Kusal Mendis and Sadeera Samarawickrama. "I thought with the way the wicket behaved, we were 20-25 runs short," said Sri Lanka skipper Dasun Shanaka.

Rizwan cracked eight boundaries and three sixes while Shafique's knock had ten boundaries and three sixes as Pakistan improved on the previous highest World Cup chase of 328 by Ireland against England in

Bangalore in 2011.

Rizwan added a match-turning 176 run stand for the third wicket with Shafique and another 95 for the fourth with Saud Shakeel who made a 30-ball 31.

Rizwan and Shafique lifted Pakistan from a disastrous start in which they lost Imam-ul-Haq (12) and skipper Babar Azam (ten) to pacer Dilshan Madushanka.

Haq, who completed 3,000 runs in 67 innings to become the second joint fastest to the milestone, hooked into the hands of the fielder while Azam edged a flick behind the wicket. Shafique, who replaced out-of-form Fakhar Zaman, justified his selection by reaching his maiden hundred off 97 balls. Shafique fell in the 34th over to Matheesha Pathirana but Rizwan continued the chase, reaching his third ODI hundred off 97 balls. He hit the winning single and raised his hands in delight.

When Sri Lanka batted, after winning the toss, Mendis smashed the fastest century for Sri Lanka in a World Cup match with a 77-ball 122, his highest score in ODIs and third century.

Mendis dropped twice. It was an innings spiced with 14 boundaries and half a dozen sixes, leading the charge for Sri Lanka while Samarawickrama hit an 89-ball 108 for his maiden hundred.

Samarawickrama hit 11

boundaries and two sixes.

Mendis twice escaped dropped catches -- Shaheen Shah Afridi dropped him off his own bowling in the fifth over and then Imam-ul-Haq blundered in the next over again off Shaheen on 18.

Mendis completed his 50 off 40 balls with his seventh boundary, lifting Sri Lanka from the early loss of Kusal Perera (nought) in the second over to Hasan Ali. Mendis put on a 102 with Pathum Nissanka whose 51 came off 61 balls with seven boundaries and a six. Once Nissanka fell to Shadab Khan, Mendis and Samarawickrama unleashed some superb hitting against Pakistan's pacers and spinners alike, adding 111 for the third wicket. They were savage on fast bowler Harris Rauf, hitting him for two sixes and a boundary in the 21st over. When Shaheen came back for a second spell, Mendis cracked three fours in the 25th over.

Hasan was hoisted by Mendis for a six to allow the batsman his third hundred off 65 balls. It was his first century in three-and-a-half years but he had made 76 in the opening defeat to South Africa and now has at least five half-centuries in his last seven ODIs. Previously, Kumar Sangakkara held the Sri Lanka World Cup record with a 70-ball hundred, scored against England in 2015.



DHARAMSALA: Dawid Malan takes the aerial route.

## World Cup 2023 England bounce back by thrashing Bangladesh as Dawid Malan hits century

D H A R A M S A L A (Agencies): England responded to defeat in their World Cup opener by comprehensively beating Bangladesh by 137 runs in Dharamsala.

After last week's heavy nine-wicket loss to New Zealand, Dawid Malan's superb 140 from 107 balls formed the basis of a much-improved England's 364-9.

Malan put on 115 for the first wicket with Jonny Bairstow and 151 from just 117 balls with Joe Root, who made a typically composed 82 from 68.

Root and Malan took the score to 266-1 in the 38th over but the loss of eight wickets for 96 runs meant England failed to take full advantage.

Their score still proved plenty, however, with seamer Reece Topley, brought in to replace spinning all-rounder Moeen Ali, bowling a fine new-ball spell. He took two wickets in as many balls in the second over and bowled Bangladesh captain Shakib Al Hasan for one in the sixth.

Liton Das held firm with 76 and Mushfiqur Rahim made 51 but the required run-rate was always climbing. Topley returned to dismiss Mushfiqur - the left-armers finished with figures of 4-43 - and Bangladesh slowly slid to 227 all out in 48.2 overs.

The win means England move to Delhi, where they play Afghanistan on Sunday, with momentum and confidence boosted. Perhaps crucially, their net run-rate is also significantly boosted.

Malan stands tall for England

England struggled to 282-9 in their tournament opener as they started their World Cup defence with an alarming thrashing by the Black Caps. Malan edged to a 24-ball 14 in Ahmedabad but in the foothills of the Himalayas - at one of the most scenic grounds in the world - he showed a superb mix of power and placement to record his first World Cup ton.

The opening stand eased English nerves. Malan got into his work by flicking Mustafizur Rahman over deep square-leg for six early on. He then drove anything too full and clubbed the Bangladeshi bowlers when they regularly dropped short and reached his century in 91 balls.

Bairstow was bowled for 52 - he went back to a quicker ball from Shakib - but afterwards Root, who passed Graham Gooch's tally of 897 runs to become England's leading run-scorer in World Cups, played in his trademark style, reaching 40 without fuss and becoming increasingly aggressive.

The pair put England's record World Cup total of 397 under threat but, after Malan was bowled trying to heave away spinner Mahedi Hasan, the middle order failed as Bangladesh improved by mixing their pace and fielding well.

Buttler, who promoted himself to number four dragged on for 20, Root then skied a catch to Mushfiqur to depart for 82 and Liam Livingstone was bowled by Shoriful Islam next ball while Harry Brook picked out long-on,

also on 20. While not perfect, this was England looking more like their fearless selves.

Topley shines on return. England's large total gave them breathing space when it came to defending on the controversial Dharamsala outfield, which was covered by bare, sandy patches. It was notable how fielders from either side often refrained from dives and slides.

Topley was brought in because the venue, which is almost 1,500m above sea level, aids pace bowling. He found movement to catch the edge of Tanzid Hasan's bat and gift Buttler a simple catch, before the dangerous Najmul Hossain Shanto drove loosely to point a ball later.

Shakib looked to dig in but could do nothing when he was bowled by a beauty from Topley which nipped in and clipped the balls.

While Topley impressed, opening partner Woakes struggled with the new ball, as he did against New Zealand. His first four overs cost 34 but he found the edge of Mehidy Hasan Miraz in his fourth over, before returning to take a feather of an edge from Das in his second spell.

Topley, though, was the standout.

As Mushfiqur tried to take the game deep by running ones and twos, the left-armer had him caught on the boundary after slicing an edge to deep third.

The Surrey quick's one error was dropping Mahedi at mid-on off Adil Rashid but that, with Bangladesh crawling along to protect their net run-rate, only delayed the inevitable.





## In brief

### IRSA releases 119,800 cusecs water

ISLAMABAD (APP): Indus River System Authority (IRSA) on Tuesday released 119,800 cusecs water from various rim stations with inflow of 73,400 cusecs. According to the data released by IRSA, water level in River Indus at Tarbela Dam was 1529.85 feet and was 131.85 feet higher than its dead level of 1,398 feet. Water inflow and outflow in the dam was recorded as 40,200 cusecs and 55,000 cusecs respectively. The water level in River Jhelum at Mangla Dam was 1218.05 feet, which was 168.05 feet higher than its dead level of 1,050 feet. The inflow and outflow of water was recorded as 8,400 cusecs and 40,000 cusecs respectively. The release of water at Kalabagh, Taunsa, Guddu and Sukkur was recorded as 79,300, 71,800, 60,400 and 20,400 cusecs respectively. Similarly, from River Kabul, a total of 9,300 cusecs of water released at Nowshera and 4,000 cusecs released from River Chenab at Marala.

### Three bike lifters arrested

RAWALPINDI (APP): Police have arrested three bike lifters and recovered seven stolen motorcycles from their possession, said a police spokesman on Tuesday. He informed that a team under the supervision of SHO, City Police Station managed to net three bike lifters namely Abdul Razzaq, ring-leader, Muhammad Babar and Zulqarnain and recovered seven stolen motorcycles and other items from their possession. A case has been registered against the accused while further investigation is under way. Superintendent of Police, Rawal, Faisal Saleem said the accomplices and facilitators of the accused would also be sent behind the bars. He said that the operation against the bike and car lifters would further be accelerated.

### 34,445 tested for Hepatitis

RAWALPINDI (APP): As many as 34,445 persons had been screened for Hepatitis B and C so far during the second phase of the Local Hepatitis Elimination and Prevention (LHEAP) drive that started on July 10. According to the District Health Authority spokesman, the LHEAP was underway in four Union Councils (UCs) - 10,11,14 and 15 of the city while 147 people diagnosed with HBV and 619 with HCV so far. He informed that 14,127 persons had been vaccinated for HBV while teams visited 6,568 houses to date, adding the LHEAP drive was being carried out in collaboration with the US-based task force for Global Health. The spokesman urged the residents to come forward and screen themselves for Hepatitis free of cost.

### Police arrest two street criminals

RAWALPINDI (APP): In an operation against criminal elements, Rawalpindi Police here on Tuesday arrested two street criminals and robbers and recovered Rs 27,700 cash, weapons and other items from their possession. According to a police spokesman, Sadiqabad police arrested two members of a gang namely Abdullah and Ahmed Iqbal, wanted in various cases. Police recovered Rs 27,700 cash, weapons and other items from their possession. Superintendent of Police, Rawal Faisal Saleem appreciated the police team and directed to accelerate operations against street criminals and other lawbreakers.



ISLAMABAD: Caretaker Minister for Federal Education and Professional Training, Madad Ali Sindhi attended the 'Laptop Distribution Ceremony' as the chief guest, organized by National Skills University.

## Pak prosperity lies in implementing skilled education: Minister

ISLAMABAD (APP): Caretaker Federal Minister for Education and Professional Training Madad Ali Sindhi said that skills development and technical education can play critical role in the economic prosperity of the country. He was addressing at the laptop distribution ceremony as the chief guest, organized by National Skills University (NSU) here Tuesday.

He said that institutions like the NSU need to be developed in every district of the country. The NSU's curriculum and teaching-learning practices must be replicated nationwide due to its unique nature, he added. The education minister said that Pakistan's future lies in enhancing youth employability by improving soft and hard skills required at workplaces.

Further elaborating on skills, the minister stressed

the need to enhance opportunities for youth to learn skills in all provinces of Pakistan. He said that there was a dire need to develop more such institutions in all provinces of the country.

Madad Ali Sindhi said that skills development can lead to enhancing employability/entrepreneurial opportunities for youth nationwide. Introducing Skills Learning programs at the district level will be an opportunity to popularize skills education linked with employability and job markets. The minister took a deep interest in various ongoing programs and advised the Vice Chancellor to prepare a detailed report for implementing skills education nationwide. Vice-Chancellor NSU, Prof. Dr. Muhammad Mukhtar, in his welcome message, outlined the successes of the University over the past four years.

The University has been transformed from a desert-

place to the most progressive skills learning center, got recognition from the UNESCO/UNEVOC, participated in the UNEVOC Network Coaction Initiative 2022, and is continuing this honor for 2023.

The federal minister interacted with students receiving laptops in their meritorious accomplishments. He advised the students to pay attention to their studies and learn employable skills.

The students and faculty praised the federal minister's vision related to enhancing the employability of Pakistani youth across the country. Madad Ali Sindhi also took a tour of laboratories and workshops and advised faculty members to pay full attention to training Pakistani youth. He also praised the contribution of the University's Advisory Council toward their support of curriculum development and its alignment with workplace-ready learning.

### ANF recovers over 31 kg drugs in three operations

RAWALPINDI (APP): Anti-Narcotics Force (ANF) while conducting three operations managed to recover over 31 kg of drugs and arrested five accused including four women, said an ANF Headquarters spokesman here on Tuesday.

He informed that in three operations conducted near Chungi number 26, Islamabad, ANF recovered 31.2 kg drugs from the possession of five accused including four women. Two attempts to smuggle drugs by women, residents of Lahore, Karachi, Quetta and Peshawar, travelling in passenger buses were foiled and a total of 30 kg hashish was recovered.

## Aneeq advises youth to learn Islam

ISLAMABAD (APP): Caretaker Minister for Religious Affairs and Interfaith Harmony, Aneeq Ahmed on Tuesday advised the young individuals to invest their prime to learn Islamic knowledge.

Addressing the Seerat Conference and Mehfil-e-Milad-un-Nabi Peace Be Upon Him, organized by National Accountability Bureau (NAB) in collaboration with Pakistan National Council of the Arts, Punjab College of Commerce, and Islamabad Model College for Boys F-7/3 as a chief guest, he encouraged the youth to read three verses of the Holy Quran daily, along with translation and interpretation, to strengthen their connection with the divine scripture and its Messenger Muhammad Peace Be Upon

Him. Minister Aneeq said, "If you want to become beloved to Allah Almighty, then follow the footsteps of His Beloved Prophet Muhammad (SAW)."

He highlighted that the character and ethics of Prophet Muhammad (SAW) were a living embodiment of the Quran stressing that we should strive to be warriors of character, not just in words but in actions.

Minister Aneeq urged students to acquire knowledge for the betterment of Pakistan and to serve humanity. He said the sending of Prophet Muhammad Peace Be Upon Him was not only for the completion of noble character but also for the betterment of humanity. "Trials come in the life of nations, the believer does not despair." He maintained.

## RWMC held anti-smog/dengue activity at educational institute

RAWALPINDI (APP): In connection with the ongoing Anti-Smog and Anti-Dengue campaign, the Rawalpindi Waste Management Company (RWMC) on Tuesday carried out an awareness activity in Punjab College for Women, Satellite Town to aware students and staff of the hazards of smog, dengue virus and the importance of cleanliness.

Chairman RWMC Saqib Rafiq while speaking on the occasion asked the students not to burn waste and chemicals in the open as they were the major cause of smog while burning garbage

was a legal offence.

Terming the students as Ambassadors of cleanliness he urged them to create awareness around their surroundings and neighborhood about the prominence of hygienic environment.

Saqib also asked the partakers to ensure the spraying of water to prevent dust and to use masks and glasses and added that the promotion of tree plantation was vital for avoiding smog and checking environmental pollution.

The RWMC Chairman said that the purpose of this activity was to educate the students about

the causes and harms of smog so that the young generation could apply these standards in their lives to make their surroundings hygienic.

He apprised the students and college staff that smog was a dangerous type of smoke that was fatal to the environment and human health.

The communication and social mobilization team of RWMC also distributed information pamphlets to the students and other participants.

Later an awareness walk was also held to create awareness about smog and dengue.

## World Space Week concludes

ISLAMABAD (APP): The World Space Week celebrations concluded on Tuesday in Pakistan, like across the globe, after conducting various exhilarating activities to provide an opportunity for young students and the general public to learn about the benefits of space technology and its applications. The space-related organizations and education institutions in the federal capital, like other cities, arranged different competitions, seminars and conferences on the importance of space technology in the current era.

The United Nations General Assembly has declared October 4-10 as World Space Week to educate young students and the general public about the bounties of space technology and its applications.

The UN General Assembly selected October 4 to commemorate the

launch of the first human-made Earth satellite, Sputnik 1, on October 4, 1957, and the signing of the Treaty on Principles Governing the Activities of States in the Exploration and Peaceful Uses of Outer Space on October 10, 1967. World Space Week Association (www.worldspaceweek.org), a non-government, non-profit international organization, coordinates this celebratory week worldwide through National Coordinators appointed in each country. In Pakistan, the event is coordinated by the country's national coordinator, the Secretary of the National Space Agency of Pakistan, SUPARCO, through the Space Education and Awareness Drive (SEAD). The week is celebrated around the globe in more than 96 countries with 8000+ participants worldwide, organized by different

space agencies, aerospace companies, schools, planetaria, museums, and astronomy clubs, all synchronized for effectual public awareness.

Every year, the World Space Week Association (WSWA) declares a theme to highlight a specific aspect of space. National coordinators then plan and organize events around this theme. Institute of Space and Technology virtually marked World Space Week by arranging a number of activities highlighting this year's theme "Space and Entrepreneurship". The activities were arranged by the Space Education Research Lab, National Center of GIS and Space Applications, IST, According to an official of IST, World Space Week is the annual week of celebrating achievements and contributions of Space Science, technology, and its applications.

## Railways retrieve 1,028 acres land from illegal occupants

ISLAMABAD (APP): Pakistan Railways has retrieved as many as 1,028 acres of its land worth millions of rupees from illegal occupants during various anti-encroachment operations across the country.

"A many as 503 acres retrieved in Punjab, 151 acres in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, 341 acres in Sindh and only 33 acres in Balochistan," an official in the Ministry of Railways told APP. He said that about 3,287 acres in Punjab, 832 acres in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, 5,180 acres in Sindh, and 687 acres of land in Balochistan were being encroached.

The official said that in light of the directives of the Supreme Court, the anti-encroachment operations for retrieval of encroached railway land all over the Railway network were initiated and a joint procedure order was issued to all divisional superin-

tendents for retrieval of Railways land from encroachment.

"The anti-encroachment schedules, on a three months basis, are being prepared and sent to all concerned in line with the joint procedure order," the official added.

He said Pakistan Railways had also decided to accelerate its ongoing anti-encroachment operation against land grabbers across the country to recoup its land from different individuals, groups, and even business organizations who were using it for residential, commercial, and agricultural purposes for decades.

"The encroachment operation will be launched with the assistance of Railway Police and district administrations of the relevant provincial governments," he added.

He said the organization was taking several steps to retrieve

encroached land from the land grabbers including a detailed survey being carried out to identify the encroached land, occupied by the individuals and under illegal occupation by various government departments.

The official said that First Information Reports (FIRs) were being lodged and cases were registered and sent to PR Judicial Magistrates for expeditious trial. The issue regarding illegal occupation and possession of Pakistan Railways' land by government departments and institutions has also been taken up with the concerned departments, he added.

The official said PR owned 167,690 acres of land across the country, of which 90,326 acres was in Punjab, 39,428 acres in Sindh, 28,228 acres in Balochistan, and 9,708 acres in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa.

## Graduation ceremony honors police department promotion course graduates

ISLAMABAD (APP): A graduation ceremony was conducted to honor the achievements of officers who successfully completed the first Upper Course, 11th Intermediate Course, and 20th Lower Course at Police Lines Headquarters Islamabad. The distinguished gathering included Islamabad Capital City Police Officer (ICCPPO) Dr. Akbar Nasir Khan, alongside high-ranking officials such as the SSP/Dy. Commandant of Capital Police College, AIG Operations, SP Headquarters, DSP Capital Police College, and various staff members.

During this significant event, ICCPO Dr. Akbar Nasir Khan presented awards and certificates to the officers and cadets who exhibited exceptional performance throughout their training courses.

Addressing the ceremony, ICCPO Dr. Akbar Nasir Khan lauded the dedication and hard work of the officers and cadets who successfully completed their training courses. He urged them to carry out their duties with diligence, unwavering commitment, and a sense of duty to the community. ICCPO expressed his joy in being

part of the Islamabad Capital Police graduation ceremony and extended his congratulations to Capital Police College for delivering top-quality training to officers and cadets in record time.

He emphasized the importance of public service and encouraged all attendees to uphold the highest values of law enforcement. ICCPO Dr. Akbar Nasir Khan remarked, "You are privileged to have the opportunity to serve the community. Remember, true honor comes from serving the people. Upholding the law, ensuring justice, and safeguarding the lives and properties of citizens are our primary responsibilities. Treat the public with respect, and you will receive respect in return." Furthermore, ICCPO Dr. Akbar Nasir Khan expressed his confidence that the skills acquired during training would be effectively applied, making officers and cadets invaluable assets to both the police force and the community.

He also stressed the need to modernize and strengthen training programs at Capital Police College for continued excellence in law enforcement.



ISLAMABAD: Caretaker Federal Minister for Railways, Communications & Maritime Affairs, Shahid Ashraf Tarar chairing a meeting at Ministry of Railways.



### Aid from Turkey reached

HERAT (Agencies): The first shipment of humanitarian aid from the Republic of Turkey has arrived in Herat province to assist those affected by the recent earthquake. The aid, which includes tents, blankets, medicine, and medical supplies, was delivered by a Turkish plane accompanied by a rescue team of 27 individuals. An official from the Republic of Turkey was also present in Herat for the distribution of food packages.

## The Frontier Post

Rabi-ul-Awwal 24, 1445 — Wednesday, October 11, 2023

### Survivors recount impact

HERAT (TOLOnews): The residents of Herat city said that the major earthquake on Saturday, which was followed by a series of aftershocks, has left huge financial losses in the city and caused the destruction of property and residential houses. They added that two to three people from each family died as a result of a recent earthquake in the city. The earthquake was a very terrible event that happened in several of our villages. We have many wounded and martyrs.

## IEQ urges world to prevent Israel genocide

KABUL (Agencies): Abdul Qahar Balkhi, the Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan's (IEA) foreign ministry's spokesman on Tuesday called on the international community to urgently prevent Israel from committing genocide against Palestinians.

Balkhi said on X: "Cutting water, food, medicine & electricity supplies, martyrdom of 704 civilians, including 143 children and 105 women, & deliberate targeting of homes, mosques, hospitals & ambulances in the Gaza Strip by the brutal Israeli forces amounts of war crimes & crimes against humanity."

He added: "We urge world countries & bodies, particularly Muslim countries and the UN, to urgently prevent the Zionist

regime from committing a genocide which unfortunately has the support of the US and some European countries."

The call came as Israel pounded the Gaza Strip on Tuesday with the fiercest air strikes in the 75-year history of its conflict with the Palestinians, razing whole districts to dust despite a Hamas threat to execute a captive for each home hit.

Israel has vowed "mighty revenge" since Hamas fighters rampaged through its towns, leaving streets strewn with bodies in by far the deadliest attack in its history.

It has called up hundreds of thousands of reservists and placed Gaza, crowded home to 2.3 million people, under total siege.

Israeli media said deaths

from Saturday's Hamas attacks had reached 900, mostly civilians gunned down in homes, on streets or at a desert dance party.

Scores of Israelis and some foreigners were taken to Gaza as hostages. Some were paraded through the streets.

Gaza's health ministry said Israel's retaliatory strikes had killed at least 770 people and wounded more than 4,000. The air strikes, already the heaviest ever, intensified on Tuesday night, shaking the ground and pouring columns of smoke and flames into the morning sky.

The UN said more than 180,000 Gazans had been made homeless, many huddling on streets or in schools. Bombardment shut roads to emergency crews.

### Commission setup to address issues

KABUL (Agencies): A special meeting was convened under the chairmanship of Mullah Mohammad Hassan Akhund, the Prime Minister of the Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan, as per the decree of Amir -al-Mu'minin, the Supreme Leader.

The meeting, which included acting ministers from relevant ministries, focused on the situation of Afghan immigrants in neighboring countries.

The meeting led to detailed discussions on potential solutions to existing problems based on gathered information and reports.

As a result, a commission was established to address the issues faced by Afghan refugees in a timely manner and to improve the management of relevant departments.

To ensure coherence and transparency in the commission's activities, a committee led by Mawlawi Abdul Salam Hanafi, Deputy Prime Minister for Administrative Affairs, was tasked with arranging a procedure for the commission as soon as possible.

This procedure is expected to properly organize the affairs of relevant departments and foster greater cooperation among them.

### Freight train arrived

KABUL (Agencies): Afghanistan Railway Authority (ARA) says a freight train carrying goods from China arrived in Hairatan land port on Monday after crossing Uzbekistan and Kyrgyzstan.

The freight train, with 22 wagons, was filled with vehicle parts, Afghanistan Railway Authority (ARA) officials said.

Afghanistan Railway Authority (ARA) head Bakht-ur-Rahman Sharafat says the Islamic Emirate is committed to expanding trade relations with all countries – near and far.

Sharaf said that connecting Afghanistan with other countries through a railway line can accelerate the country's quest for self-sufficiency.

"Let's think broadly, let's think about the region, we assure you that the development of Afghanistan is the development of Uzbekistan," Bakht-ur-Rahman Sharafat said.

Meanwhile, a representative of Uzbekistan has assured the traders of providing more facilities to address business activities.

"We are with Afghanistan to facilitate the transfer of commercial goods, and the work on the Trans-Afghan railway also continues," said the representative.

Last year, an agreement for the transfer of commercial goods from China to Afghanistan was signed between officials of the IEA, China, Uzbekistan and Kyrgyzstan.

According to officials, 42 containers of commercial goods have so far reached Afghanistan from China through this economic corridor.

## FAO's Depy DG in Kabul for talks on food security



KABUL (Agencies): The UN's Food and Agriculture Organization deputy director general Bath Bechdol met with the Islamic Emirate's deputy foreign minister Sher Mohammad Abbas Stanekzai on Tuesday for discussions on food security related issues.

According to a statement issued by the ministry of

foreign affairs, Stanekzai expressed his gratitude to FAO for their continued cooperation, adding that the IEA pays special attention to agriculture, irrigation and food security.

He said however that there is still a need for assistance from international agencies.

Stanekzai said he hopes

FAO will focus its assistance on infrastructural projects, the principle of sustainability and requirements of the agricultural sector and farmers, especially on alternative livelihoods for them to replace poppy farming.

Bechdol said that this was the highest-level delegation to visit Afghanistan

in the last 20 years, and that FAO is determined to continue to expand assistance at a technical level to the people of Afghanistan.

The Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations is a specialized agency that leads international efforts to defeat hunger and improve nutrition and food security.

## Earthquake casualties in Herat's Zindajan reach over 1,200: UN

KABUL (Khaama Press): The United Nations Coordination Office for Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) has stated that in the earthquake on Saturday, 1,294 people were killed and 688 others were injured in the Zenda Jan district of Herat province.

OCHA reports that there are currently 485 individuals missing, comprising 191 men and 294 women.

According to OCHA's report, six houses, three schools, three kinder-

gartens, and two educational centres in this district have been destroyed, and eight other schools have also been damaged.

The UN organization added that 33 unaccompanied children, 17 elderly individuals without caregivers, and 53 women heading households have been identified in this district.

On Saturday, an earthquake with a magnitude of 6.3 shook Herat province.

Meanwhile, The Afghanistan Ministry of

Disaster Management has reported that 4,000 people were killed or injured on Saturday in the Herat earthquake. They mentioned that 1,983 houses were destroyed across 20 villages in Herat.

The Taliban has not released specific casualty figures—currently, 35 search and rescue teams with a thousand personnel work at the earthquake site.

On the other hand, Herat experienced its third earthquake on Monday, October

9, 2023, with a magnitude of 5.1, following previous quakes measuring 4.7 and 4.9. This ongoing seismic activity is causing growing concerns for the future, especially with winter approaching.

Relief workers highlight dire conditions, particularly for women and children in the Zindajan district, where the earthquakes have significantly affected their physical and mental well-being, adding to their grief and loss.

## Takhar laborers say wait for days to find work

TALOQAN (Pajhwok): Daily wagers in northern Takhar province say they wait for days in Talqan city, the provincial capital, to find work, but return homes empty-handed.

These laborers complain their economic situation has worsened and ask the government to provide them with work opportunities.

Juma Khan 54, a government employee in the previous government who became jobless after the political change, said: "I was working in the logistics department with the previous government, but I am jobless since two years and live in a rented house with my family."

He said he daily came to the main square in Talqan city to find a job, but often found none.

Juma Khan said: "My economic situation is worsening with each passing day. The current government has dismissed some former employees. We ask the government to reinstate the employees or provide them work opportunities."

Bismillah, another worker, said: "Lack of employment opportunities and the current government's refusal to accept employees



of the previous government has left us with no choice but to work as laborers."

"If I work for one day, I remain unemployed for ten days, if someone comes to hire a few workers from Talqan square, hundred others follow him to try their luck."

He said: "I live in a rented house; we ask the government to create employment opportunities for the jobless people."

Mohammad Azim, another worker, told Pajhwok he was a mason and he would previously charge 1,500 afghanis per day, but now he was paid

only 500 afghanis due to lack of work opportunities. He said he had found no work since last six days.

According to him, thousands of people from other provinces arrive here in search of work and local workers are grappling with the problem of unemployment.

He added workers from Nuristan, Laghman and Kunduz provinces came here, adding to the woes of local workers.

Takhar work and social affairs director Mullah Saifullah Mubariz said the government was trying to create jobs and unemployed

workers will be provided with jobs opportunities.

The governor's media office officials also said efforts were underway to complete incomplete projects. The gold mine will be given to a Chinese company which will generate dozens of employment opportunities.

He added dozens of people were currently engaged in two roads' repair projects — Takhar-Kunduz highway and Takhar-Badakhshan highway.

He said the local administration was determined to create a favorable environment for jobs creation.

## UK welcomes release of four British nationals

KABUL (TOLOnews): The Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office said in a statement that it welcomes the release by the "current administration of Afghanistan of four British nationals who were detained on allegations of breaking the laws of Afghanistan."

"On behalf of families of the British nationals, we express their apologies to the current administration of Afghanistan for any violations of the laws of the country," the statement said, reminding British nationals of the requirement to comply with rele-

vant "UK counter-terrorism legislation when overseas and abide by all laws of the country of destination."

In a separate statement, the Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office said that the UK government does not support the use of UK "territory by anyone, including Afghan nationals, to plan, recruit for, incite or finance terrorism in Afghanistan, or to seek political change through violence."

"We strongly discourage others from doing so," the statement reads. "Political change sought through armed violence or incite-

ment of violence that amounts to an offence in UK law can be subject to investigation."

The statement further said that any kind of violence is not in the interests of Afghanistan and the international community.

The Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office noted that there is no alternative to engaging pragmatically with the current administration of Afghanistan in a bid to promote peace, deliver essential humanitarian support to the Afghans as well as to address shared concerns on security.

## Nuristanis travel thru neighboring provinces to reach Paron

PARON (Pajhwok): Residents of six districts in eastern Nuristan province say they travel through neighboring provinces to reach Paron City, the provincial capital, due to lack of a direct road.

Noogram, Doab, Mandol, Want Waigal, Kamdesh and Bargi Matal are districts that are not directly connected to Paron City. The residents of these districts travel to Laghman, Nangarhar and Kunar to reach Paron City.

Dayee Gul, a resident of Doab district, told Pajhwok Afghan News it took two days to reach Paron in a car.

He said if the government constructed Kordarteen road, it would enable people to reach Paron in few hours.

Abdul Rahim, a resident

of Anesh village of Mandol district, said that Kordarteen was a strategic road that connected western Nuristan to the center.

He said the previous government had launched construction work on the road, but it could not be completed. He said: "This road connects Bazargkhelo area of Noogram district with Kordar 3 of Wama district. The work on this road was once completed, but snowfall and floods destroyed it."

Enayatullah, a resident of Want Waigal district, said work on the road connecting the six districts with the provincial capital had been stopped. He urged the government to complete the road to ease the affairs of residents.

Residents of two districts of eastern Nuristan, Kamdesh and Bergi Matal, also say they travel through Kunar's Ghaziabad, Asmar, Shigal, Asadabad, Watapur, Pechdara and Chapa Dara and enter back to Nuristan.

Shar Malik Faqiri, a resident of Kamdesh district, told Pajhwok that work on the road connecting two districts of east Nuristan has long been stopped.

He urged the government to restart construction of the old road in Kamdesh and Bergi Matal districts in order to directly connect the districts to Paron.

Nuristan Public Works chief Maulvi Ahmad Nabi Adel says this year significant achievements in terms of the province's development have been made and

progress achieved in connecting the districts.

He added a basic bridge has been approved in Korder area at a cost of 25 million afghanis and work on it was ongoing.

He added that the Ministry of Public Works had the plan to connect districts of Nuristan in coordination with the Ministry of Rural Reconstruction and Development and practical work will start soon.

Abdul Shakur Akbarzai, media officer at Nuristan Rural Development Department, told Pajhwok that connecting six districts of Nuristan had been included in the budget provided by the World Bank during the previous government, but the projects had to be postponed.

## Sar-i-Pul IDPs seek financial support for resettlement

SAR-I-PUL (Pajhwok): Some Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) in northern Sar-i-Pul province have called for support to return to their homes.

They said due to economic problems they were unable to return to their places of origin.

Faizullah, the resident of Al Jihad district, told Pajhwok Afghan News that he and his family migrated from his home back in 2019 due to conflict and now due to economic problems was unable to return to their

place of origin.

"From the past four years I work as a labour, I find rent and electricity bills by hardship and my house in ancestral place have been also destroyed, I want the Refugees Affairs Department to help me in going back to my home and provide financial support to build my house."

Akbar, hailing from the Chahar Boluk district in Balkh province, said he migrated from his place of origin two years ago but now he had no money to

return to his home.

"I want the government to provide financial support for my return to my home so that I would be able to build my home and end the displacement life."

Ghulam Hussain from the Merza Awlang district of Sar-i-Pul province, said he migrated from his own town back in 2016 and his house was also destroyed due to conflict.

He also asked the government to facilitate his return to his original place. Refugees Department

Director Mullah Mohammad Umar said 2,000 families from the Sozma Qila, Sayyad, Aljihad district have request for support for their resettlement.

He said their department was not financially sound to support IDPs and built their homes but NGOs and other help providing agencies had been asked to provide support.

He pledged efforts were underway to facilitate the return of IDPs to their places of origin.





ISLAMABAD: President Dr Arif Alvi chairing a meeting regarding implementation of Zainab Alert Response and Recovery Act 2020 at Aiwan-e-Sadr.

# Collaboration needed for recovery of missing children: President

F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: President Dr Arif Alvi on Tuesday said that to raise awareness about the issue of abducted and missing children, greater collaborations is needed among the civil society, non-governmental organizations (NGOs), national and provincial government departments.

He called for taking steps to ensure the implementation of Zainab Alert Response & Recovery Act (ZARRA) 2020 throughout the country to protect and safeguard our children. President Alvi was chairing a meeting regarding the implementation of Zainab Alert Response & Recovery Act (ZARRA) 2020, at Aiwan-e-Sadr, President Secretariat Press Wing said in a press release.

The meeting was attended by Secretary Ministry of Human Rights Allah Dino Khowaja, Director General ZARRA, representatives of different NGOs working for children's rights, and senior government officials. During the meeting, the President emphasized the need for awareness at the grassroots levels about the ZARRA Act and responsibility of police officials to ensure timely registration of complaints and FIRs about the missing children.

He also called for raising awareness about the ZARRA helpline "1099" among the people to timely

register complaints. President Alvi said that response time of the local police to missing children's complaints should be improved and they should take prompt action to find missing children as the first 24 hours after a child's disappearance were critical for their recovery.

He called for increasing cooperation among the civil society and government departments to protect and recover missing children, besides providing psycho-social counselling to affected children and their families. During the meeting, the President highlighted the need for further improving the implementation of ZARRA Act by identifying gaps and shortcomings in its implementation at the provincial and district levels.

He said that after taking input and advice from civil society and NGOs, corrective measures should be taken to bring about improvements. Dr. Arif Alvi said that ZARRA's coverage should be extended to the entire country by allocating adequate resources and creating awareness among the people. He also called for ensuring better management of alerts and complaints about missing children on 1099 helpline, PM Citizen Portal and ZARRA app by ensuring 24/7 service to the complainants.

Meanwhile, the President Dr Arif Alvi on Tuesday stressed giving

opportunity to all political parties to run the upcoming general elections. "Democracy becomes meaningless if people are not able to elect leaders of their choice", he said. The president expressed these views while talking to the former federal minister and Senator, Muhammad Ali Durrani, who called on him here at the Aiwan-e-Sadr.

President Alvi said the upcoming general elections should be free, fair, transparent and inclusive. He emphasised that all political parties and their leadership should be given equal opportunities to participate in the election process to strengthen democracy in the country. The president was of the view that there was a dire need for political, institutional and stakeholder unity in the country to battle the difficulties on all possible fronts, including that of economy.

"Bitterness must end and give way to cooperation and forgiveness", he said. He stated that difficult decisions needed backing of the people and their participative ownership. He said the forthcoming general elections provided a good opportunity to create the vibrancy needed to rebuild our country. The president also appreciated the statements given across the spectrum by all political leaders that there should be a level playing field as only this single issue of inclusivity was the essence of democracy.

## PPP calls for abolishing death penalty

F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: On the eve of 'World Day Against Death Penalty' today the PPP has called for abolishing the death penalty. "Until the death penalty is abolished as a result of a larger public debate on the efficacy of death penalty in deterring crime the victims be given right to proper defence and protected against torture for extracting confession", said a statement issued today by the President of the Human Rights Cell of the PPP former Senator Farhatullah Babar.

The number of crimes carrying the death penalty must be drastically decreased from the present 33 and juveniles and mentally challenged persons be spared from execution. Legal and consular services to migrant Pakistani workers be ensured and the procedure for mercy petitions against executions streamlined, he said.

He said that studies showed that Pakistan executed only the poorest and the most marginalized whose fair trial rights were often violated and convicts were tortured in the broken criminal justice system. Highlighting it he said that sometime back two brothers accused of murder were acquitted by the Supreme Court after years on death row but only after they had been hanged.

It is shameful that in such a broken criminal justice system the senate committee recently passed a private member bill calling for public hangings, he said and called for immediate withdrawal of the proposed amendment. He said that after the APS massacre in December 2014 there was a public outcry to hang the terrorists. However over 85 per cent of the executions carried out thereafter were for ordinary crimes and not related to terrorism, he said.

He said that states abolishing the death penalty have increased and more and more Muslim countries had placed moratorium on executions but in Pakistan the number of crimes carrying the death penalty had progressively increased. He said that as murder was punishable with death or life imprisonment a measure of arbitrariness in giving death penalty was unavoidable. The Supreme Court has held that death is usual punishment, but there are also court judgments calling for 'justice with mercy' and that reasons must be recorded why a judge, he said.

He said that the Quran stressed mercy and forgiveness. The Quranic injunction 'in just retribution there is life for you' (2:179) was a subtle suggestion that 'qisas' (retribution) was not revenge but protection of life.

# Petitioners not interested in plea: PHC observed

Humayun Khan

PESHAWAR: A divisional bench of Peshawar High Court (PHC) comprised Justice Ijaz Anwar and Justice Shakeel Ahmad adjourned hearing on former Speaker Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Assembly Mushtaq Ghani along with others writ pleaded for holding election in constitutional timeframe of 90 days, on Tuesday.

Advocate General Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Amir Javed along with Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) lawyer Mohsin Kamran Sadiq while counsel for petitioners Shumail Butt, Muzzam Butt and Alam Khan Adenzai advocates appeared before PHC.

During hearing Justice Shakeel Ahmad inquired regarding scheduling general election in the country, however, ECP's lawyer argued that the commission had announced holding of polls in last week of January 2024 without specific date. The counsel Shumail Butt advocate argued that Governor

Khyber Pakhtunkhwa didn't submitted comments till today, in the meantime, Governor's lawyer Clerk informed PHC that reply has been submitted by today.

Although, Shumail Ahmad Butt advocate that they are ready for arguments if the respondents are ready but they will argue that some replies are still awaiting. Additional Attorney General Sana Ullah argued that this case is time-bared, however, Justice Ijaz Anwar observed that now petitioner also didn't take interest in the case.

The counsel Shumail Butt advocate responded to PHC observation that honestly speaking the petitioner didn't told them anything while court adjourned further hearing after arguments. Meanwhile, Special Judge Anti-corruption court Khyber Pakhtunkhwa adjourned hearing on bail pleas of former parliamentarians in case regarding illegal posting and recruitment till 24th October.

During hearing former parliamentarians including Zahir Shah Toru, Ifitkhar Mashwani, Abdus Salam, Tufail Anjum and Mujahid Khan appeared before court while arguing that the counsel is present before Military courts and can't be appear before Anti-corruption court. Special Judge Anti-corruption court Khyber Pakhtunkhwa extended bails of former parliamentarians and adjourned further hearing till 24th October.

Moreover, Child Protection Court Peshawar convicted culprit for 16 years of imprisonment and imposed Rs5 lakh fine after following guilty in sexual offense against minor. According to prosecution, the convicted culprit booked in First Information Report registered at Aga Mir Jani police station for sexual offense against school's child. The child protection court had convicted culprit for 16 years of imprisonment and ordered to pay Rs5 lakh fine to victim's family as compensation.

## ECO intra-regional trade needed to be enhanced: FM

SHUSHA (Agencies): Caretaker Foreign Minister Jilil Abbas Jilani on Tuesday said that the Economic Cooperation Organization (ECO) member states need to change the dynamic of their intra-regional trade and make determined efforts to support regional trade integration.

In a statement at the 27th ECO Council of Ministers meeting held at Shusha, the cultural capital of Azerbaijan, he said that ECO intra-regional trade was less than 8 percent of the region's aggregate trade and was in stark contrast to other regional groupings such as the European Union where intra-regional trade stood above 70 percent. Jilil Abbas said that the ECO region comprising 8 million square kilometers and half a billion people, representing 15 per cent of the world population, had a share of only about 2 per cent in the global trade.

He recalled the "ECO Vision 2025", adopted during the 13th ECO Summit in Islamabad which aptly provided them a roadmap. "To seize the moment, we need to make concerted efforts to meet intended targets and anticipated goals, as enunciated in the ECO Vision 2025 and set a realistic time frame for their completion to reap tangible benefits," the foreign minister said. He said the ECO Trade Agreement (ECOTA) was a

landmark preferential trade arrangement aiming to lower tariffs in the region over an agreed time-frame. In the long-term, the minister said, it comprised the single, most comprehensive ECO initiative to broaden intra-regional trade and socio-economic prosperity of their future generations.

"Its early implementation would foster transit and trade activity through enhanced connectivity within the ECO framework," he said and urged all member states to regard the early operationalization of ECOTA as a priority in a spirit of cooperation and accommodation so that their region might benefit from the true potential of enhanced economic interaction and trade linkages," a press release quoted the foreign minister as saying.

The caretaker foreign minister said Pakistan attached great importance to ECO. "Not only does it provide avenues for regular interaction, close cooperation, and strengthening of ties in our region, it also continues to hold promise of a brighter future for our succeeding generations in a rapidly shifting geopolitical order," he observed.

The caretaker foreign minister opined that the geo-political significance of their region was enormous. Historically, the Silk Route, comprising the modern-day ECO region,

had been at the crossroads of travellers and tradesmen, and served to join the Eastern and Western civilizations since antiquity. "We stand at the crossroads of North-South and East-West hemispheres. Moreover, world's strategically significant transport corridors pass through this region including International North South Transport Corridor (INSTC), China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) or the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI)," he added.

The foreign minister further reiterated that the key to unlock the geo-economic potential of the ECO region was in the connectivity and elaborated that they could achieve this objective by taking three vital steps: (i) development of road and rail projects, (ii) liberalization of visa regimes and (iii) simplification of border procedures.

Foreign Minister Jilani said some of the most significant contributions of ECO had been the operationalization of Istanbul-Tehran-Islamabad (ITI) road corridor, along with implementation of Transit Transport Framework Agreement (TTFA), and establishment of a fund for its implementation. Under the TIR system, trucks of the National Logistic Cell of Pakistan had been successfully transiting cargo through Iran.

## IHC removes objections on Imran's ICA

ISLAMABAD (INP): The Islamabad High Court (IHC) on Tuesday removed the objections of the Registrar office on intra court (ICA) appeal seeking provision of security and facilities to chairman PTI in Adiala Jail.

The court directed the registrar office to fix the case for hearing. A two-judge bench comprising Justice Mianqul Hassan Aurangzeb and Justice Arbab Muhammad Tahir heard the case. During the hearing, the petitioner's lawyer Sher Afzal Marawat Advocate read out the verdict of single member bench bench dated September 25, regarding the shifting of chairman PTI to Adiala Jail.

The lawyer said that the single member bench had not passed any order regarding the provision of facilities to the chairman PTI and permissions to meet his lawyers and family members. He said that the jail administration was permitting the family of chairman PTI to meet him twice a week. Only the four lawyers were being allowed to meet him, he said. He prayed the court to amend the judgment of the single member bench. The court issued the above instructions.

## 'Imran cannot be allowed to talk to his sons'

ISLAMABAD (INP): The incarcerated Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) chairman and former prime minister cannot be allowed to talk to his sons, the Adiala jail superintendent told a special court on Tuesday. The PTI Chairman Imran Khan was sent to jail on August 5 following his conviction in the Toshakhana case and later was shifted to the Adiala Jail in cipher case.

The jailer said this before a special court formed under the Official Secrets Act, hearing the case to allow the PTI chairman to talk to his sons from Adiala Jail. The plea of the PTI was taken up by Judge Abul Hasnat. The jailer of Adiala prison said suspects arrested under the Official Secrets Act cannot be allowed to talk abroad. The judge after the response of the jailer, summoned the Jail SOPs regarding telephone talk of the prisoners with relatives and adjourned the hearing of the case until October 18. It is to be noted that PTI chairman is currently in Adiala Jail in the cipher case. He was shifted from Attock Prison on the orders of the Islamabad High Court CJ. PTI chief Imran Khan and vice chairman were booked for 'deliberately missing a copy of the diplomatic cipher'. The special court will indict both Qureshi and the PTI chairman on October 17.

## Fazl warns of street protests

F.P. Report

MULTAN: Maulana Fazlur Rehman, the chief of the Jamiat Ulema Islam-Fazl group (JUI-F) asserted that the party would not hesitate to take to the streets if its rights were violated. He delivered this stern warning during a JUI-F Workers' Convention in Multan on Tuesday.

He expressed deep pride in the party's ideology, its historical legacy, and the unwavering commitment of its workers, claiming that these attributes set JUI-F apart from other parties. Highlighting the Million March, Maulana Fazlur Rehman emphasized that the party had demonstrated its strength on that occasion and if their rights were ever infringed upon, the party would readily resort to street protests as a means of redress. Furthermore, he indicated that JUI-F was not only competing with other political parties within Pakistan but also positioning itself on the global stage.

Maulana Fazlur while addressing various issues including the return of the Pakistan Muslim League Nawaz (PML-N) Supreme Mian Nawaz Sharif, expressed his hopes for Nawaz Sharif's return to Pakistan. He said he would be pleased if Nawaz Sharif returned home. In his remarks, Maulana Fazlur Rehman touched upon the challenges faced by Pakistan, particularly in the domains of human rights and economic stability.

## Curtailling CJP's powers

# Apex court adjourns hearing on petitions against law

F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: The Supreme Court of Pakistan on Tuesday adjourned the hearing of petitions challenging the SC (Practice and Procedure) Act till today 11 am (Wednesday). The hearing was broadcast live on state-run PTV, allowing the nation to witness the proceedings and the arguments presented by the lawyers.

After assuming charge as the chief justice, CJP Isa had ordered the hearing to be live-streamed and had implicitly vacated the April 13 suspension of the enforcement of the SC Practice and Procedure Act. During the hearing, Chief Justice of Pakistan Justice Qazi Faez Isa has barred fellow judges sitting on the full court from asking questions during the hearing of nine challenges to the Supreme Court (Practice & Procedure) Act, 2023, which is being streamed live on national television.

The 15-member full court was conducting the fourth hearing on Tuesday and at the start of every hearing the CJP had declared that the court will wrap up the case today but it could not do so due to time constraints, partly due to lengthy arguments being presented by the counsels and the frequent interruptions by the judges, putting up queries which led to hearing being adjourned. As the proceedings were set into motion on Tuesday, the CJP interrupted the arguments himself this time restraining his colleagues from asking questions until the arguments are complete.

When Justice Ijazul Ahsan tried to pop a question, Justice Isa directed the counsel not to answer it and focus on his arguments. "This is the fourth hearing of this case and other cases are being delayed due to it," the CJP added. Justice Isa urged his colleagues to halt their questions. "Everyone on the bench wants to fire a query but let the lawyer complete his argument," he remarked.

The CJP also stopped Justice Munib Akhtar from asking questions again and again. Justice Munib Akhtar responded, saying "I am also a judge of this court and asking questions is a right of the judge," he hit back. Justice Isa "You should field your questions when the arguments will conclude." Then, Justice Akhtar said "I regret that I am being interrupted again and again." Ignoring CJP's directive, Justice Munib Akhtar went ahead with his question, asking the lawyer to just tell him as to what Article 191 means?

The Chief Justice remarked that he is not interrupting the question. He asked his fellow judges to listen to the lawyer and then the questions would be answered, we should write the decision instead of giving an opinion beforehand. Muttahida Qaumi Movement-Pakistan's (MQM-P) lawyer Faisal Siddiqui said that Parliament cannot legislate to curtail the powers of the Supreme Court, but this principle is not affected by the existing law. Justice Ijazul Ahsan said that the Act interfered with the independence of the Supreme Court. He wanted the lawyer to answer whether the law has interfered with the internal working of the Supreme Court. Justice Munib Akhtar asked whether the legislative entries give the Parliament supervisory powers over the Supreme Court.

Lawyer Siddiqui said that they could read "subject to" and "law" separately. Justice Ahsan asked why the Constitution has said that judiciary, executive and legislative are

separate. Siddiqui said that the Act does not interfere in the internal working of the Supreme Court. The Parliament does not enact such legislation which bars the Supreme Court from making its rules, he added. Justice Ahsan remarked that the Parliament violated all the constitutional limits while enacting this Act.

Qureshi said that he would explain that no violation has been committed by describing all the clauses that would be read together with the Act. He said that Parliament could supervise the parliament. Justice Ahsan interjected remarking that supervising means to get control of the Supreme Court. Qureshi said that even Parliament has limits to its supervisory role. Justice Munib inquired whether the legislative entries give supervisory authority to the Parliament over the Supreme Court. Justice Mansoor Ali Shah remarked that if Article 191 is read in conjunction with Legislative Entry 58, Parliament had complete power to legislate.

He said that Salahuddin gave this reference that the Parliament could even abolish the Supreme Court rules. The law says that the appeal would be sent to a larger bench, but the question is will this larger bench consist of all new judges? Will a larger bench be made by adding new judges to the bench which heard the case in the first place, Justice Shah asked.

The full court could not complete the hearing on Tuesday as well and the proceedings were adjourned for Wednesday at 11:30 am. Earlier in the day, the Supreme Court resumed hearing a set of petitions challenging the SC (Practice and Procedure) Act seeking to scuttle the powers of the chief justice of Pakistan. A 15-judge Full Court led by Chief Justice Qazi Faez Isa is hearing the case. The attorney general, lawyers of the Pakistan Bar Council, and others are supposed to present their arguments on the case. At every previous proceeding, Chief Justice Qazi Faez Isa expressed his resolve to conclude the case but the case was prolonged and the proceedings still linger.

So far, the Full Court has conducted three, while the larger bench led by former chief justice Umar Ata Bandial held five hearings of the case. In a pre-emptive move, the SC larger bench ordered a ban on the law in the first hearing on April 13. Under the act, the authority of taking suo motu notices and formation of benches has been assigned to a bench consisting of three senior judges including the chief justice of Pakistan. The affected party will also be given the right of appeal in the Review plea within a month, and it could also be allowed to change its lawyer. The law gives the right of appeal in Review pleas with retrospective effect.

During yesterday's hearing, Chief Justice Qazi Faez Isa expressed his exasperation over the submission of additional documents. He remarked that since today was the last day of the hearing, any submissions could have been done before. The top judge fumed as to how the justice system would run like this. He said nowhere in the world such things happen. CJP Isa observed that parliament must not be hindered from doing something good only because it lacks a two-thirds majority. He further remarked that the Parliament passed the Supreme Court (Practice and Procedure) Act 2023 with good intentions.



HERAT: People gathered around their house hold items after earthquake in Afghanistan.

## Israel pounds Gaza

(Continued from Page 1)

launched a surprise attack on Tel Aviv.

Saudi media reports that, during their conversation, MBS expressed his solidarity with the Palestinian people and assured Abbas that his country continues "to stand by the Palestinian people to achieve their legitimate rights to a decent life, achieve their hopes and aspirations, and achieve just and lasting peace." The spiralling violence kicked off amid speculation that Saudi Arabia, which has never recognised Israel, would agree to normalise ties as part of a deal in which it would obtain security guarantees from the United States as well as assistance in developing a civilian nuclear programme.

However, MBS told Fox News last month that the Palestinian issue was "very important" for Saudi Arabia, home to the holiest sites in Islam in Mecca and Medina. "We need to solve that part. We need to ease the life of the Palestinians," MBS said. The 38-year-old

has also spoken about the crisis by phone with Egyptian President Abdel Fattah al-Sisi and Jordan's King Abdullah II, according to Saudi Press Agency.

Moreover, a salvo of rockets has been fired from southern Lebanon towards Israel, as tensions mount in the border region where Israeli forces and armed factions in Lebanon have exchanged fire over the last three days. A number of rockets were fired towards Israel on Tuesday, with Reuters news agency citing a security source saying Palestinian factions had carried out the attack.

Israeli forces responded to the missiles with artillery fire, said the source, noting that some 15 rockets were launched from Lebanon, of which four were intercepted and 10 fell in open spaces. "In response to the launches identified from Lebanese territory toward Israeli territory, IDF soldiers are currently responding with artillery fire," a statement from the Israeli military said.

So far, the two sides have walked a careful line,

with limited fire that has allowed each side to avoid a potentially devastating confrontation. "What's happening here seems to be a kind of contained tension. Lebanon is not yet a war zone. However, it's an area of operation. But it seems it's also a space for both sides to exchange messages," Al Jazeera's Ali Hashem reported from southern Lebanon.

He said the rockets were intercepted by Israel's anti-missile system. Hezbollah has expressed support for the Palestinians, saying its "guns and rockets" are with them. On Sunday, it fired missiles on Israeli positions in the disputed Shebaa Farms area along the border. Three Hezbollah members were killed in an Israeli bombardment on Monday.

But the mainly Shia group has so far not opened a major second front against Israel in the ongoing war. In 2006 Hezbollah and Israel fought a 34-day war that left more than 1,200 dead in Lebanon, mostly civilians, and 160 in Israel, mostly soldiers.