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Student shot dead
F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: A student was shot dead by street criminals at Jail road of the provincial capital Peshawar on Wednesday, police said. The street criminals attempted to snatch mobile phone from Hamza Shoaib. Upon resistance, the mobile snatchers shot dead Hamza and fled with snatched cell phone. The body was shifted to hospital for postmortem and police after registering a case into the incident.

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SC Practice and Procedure Act declared legal

Law aimed at clipping CJP's wings 'sustained as being constitutional': Apex court rules in majority verdict

F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: In a major development, the Supreme Court Wednesday "sustained" the Supreme Court (Practice and Procedure) Act 2023 — which deals with the chief justice's powers — as "constitutional" with a 10-5 majority.

The full court, comprising all 15 judges of the apex court, had reserved the verdict earlier on Wednesday on the pleas challenging the law after conducting five marathon hearings. While reading out the order, CJP Isa noted that five members of the bench — Justice Ijazul Ahsan, Justice Muneeb Akhtar, Justice Sayyed Mazahir Ali Akbar Naqvi, and Justice Ayesha A Malik, and Justice Shahid Waheed — had opposed the law.

The CJP mentioned that by a majority of 8-7 — CJP Isa, Justice Sardar Tariq Masood, Justice Syed Mansoor Ali Shah, Justice Amin-ud-Din Khan, Justice Jamal Khan Mandokhail, Justice Athar Minallah and Justice Musarrat Hilali dissenting — sub-section (2) of section 5 of the Act (granting a right of appeal retrospectively) is declared to be ultra vires the Constitution. By a majority of 9-6 (Justice Ahsan, Justice Akhtar, Justice Yahya Afridi, Justice Naqvi, Justice Malik, and Justice Waheed dissenting) sub-section (1) of section 5 of the Act (granting a right of appeal prospectively) is declared to be in accordance with the Constitution.

The verdict acknowledges the parliament's right to legislation under Article 191, which states that the SC rules are subject to the Constitution. The law will be effective from April 21, 2023, the day it was enacted, which means the SC verdicts under 184(3) which came after this date can be appealed for review. One of the major verdicts is in the NAB amendments case, in which Justice Mansoor Ali Shah wrote in the verdict that a full court should be constituted after the decision on the Practice and Procedure Act, or else doubts will be created regarding this court's verdict.

The law gives the power of taking sou motu notice to a three-member committee comprising senior judges including the chief justice. It further aimed to have transparent proceedings in the apex court and includes

the right to appeal. Regarding the constitution of benches, the Act stated that every cause, matter, or appeal before the apex court would be heard and disposed of by a bench constituted by a committee comprising the CJP and the two senior-most judges.

It added that the decisions of the committee would be taken by a majority. Regarding exercising the apex court's original jurisdiction, the Act said that any matter invoking the use of Article 184(3) would first be placed before the committee. On matters where the interpretation of the Constitution is required, the Act said the committee would compose a bench comprising no less than five apex court judges.

About appeals for any verdict by an apex court bench that exercised Article 184(3)'s jurisdiction, the Act said that the appeal would lie within 30 days of the bench's order to a larger SC bench. It added that the appeal would be fixed for hearing within a period not exceeding 14 days. The Act additionally said that a party would have the right to appoint its counsel of choice for filing a review application under Article 188 of the Constitution.

Furthermore, it states that an application pleading urgency or seeking interim relief, filed in a cause, appeal, or matter, shall be fixed for hearing within 14 days from the date of its filing. However, the law had the provision that this right of appeal would also extend retrospectively to those aggrieved persons against whom an order was made under Article 184(3) prior to the commencement of the Act, but the court has struck it down.

Before concluding the hearing earlier on Wednesday, the CJP had urged that parliament and Supreme Court should not be pitted against each other, saying that the legislative body is not the enemy of the people and both institutions should "live and let live". Neither the Parliament nor the Supreme Court consider each other enemies, the chief justice said. "Do not pit the Parliament and Supreme Court against each other," he remarked, insisting on the idea of "live and let live".

"Why do we see each other's institutions negatively? Why can't it be said that one institution legislated for the betterment of another?" CJP Isa

questioned. He maintained that cases, in the long run, will be affected if the full court writes everything about the future in the judgment. "Let go of the future and look at what's in front of you."

Before the attorney general began his arguments, the chief justice jokingly said: "You are last but not the least." Responding to the CJP, Awan said: "I have given arguments for the case to be heard." The AGP said he will respond to the three questions raised during the course of the hearing.

"I will talk about Article 191 and the independence of the judiciary," he said. The AGP said he will argue about the Parliament being the master of the roster, the right to appeal and the question of appeal against the decision of a full court. "The fundamental rights enshrined in Articles 14, 20, 22 and 28 are exercised in accordance with the law," Awan said, addressing judges of the apex court. He added that the right to privacy is regulated by law and also spoke about Article 191 empowering Parliament to legislate.

"Are you saying that the word law in Article 191 is different from the use of this word in other constitutional provisions?" the chief justice asked the AGP. The authority to legislate on the High Treason (Punishment) Act and the Right to Information Act was derived from constitutional provisions, the AGP said. He mentioned that the Parliament, in these laws, did not rely on the Federal Legislative List.

"Since the Constitution was enacted, no amendments have been made to Article 191," he said, emphasising that not amending the aforementioned article ensures the judiciary's independence. Justice Akhtar remarked that the approval of rules was in the hands of the president or governor-general according to the Constitution of 1956.

"According to you, the Parliament is allowed to amend the rules. If your argument is to be accepted, then why did the Parliament not approve the SC rules before this?" the apex court judge asked Awan. "Exercising the power does not mean that the power of the Parliament has lapsed," AGP

(Continued on Back Page)

Nawaz's journey back to Pakistan begins

LONDON (Agencies): Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) supremo and former prime minister Nawaz Sharif has left London for Pakistan via Saudi Arabia and Dubai after four years of self-imposed exile.

Nawaz has left London for Saudi Arabia for Umrah, after which he will reside in Dubai for three days and then fly to Pakistan in a chartered plane on October 21 to address a gathering at Minar-e-Pakistan, where he will chalk out his agenda ahead of next elections. As Nawaz left Avenfield flats ending his exile, he was seen off by his staff, family members, and party workers.

He is accompanied on the Saudi visit by his close friend Mian Nasir Janjua, aide Waqar Ahmed, Karim Yousef, and a few others. Janjua, the owner of MID-JAC company, spent nearly three years in exile in London with Nawaz and returned to Pakistan just a few months ago.

The PML-N supremo will reach Saudi Arabia for Umrah on Wednesday. He will stay in the kingdom for a week during which he will hold important meetings. He will arrive in Dubai on October 17. The flight carrying Nawaz to Pakistan will have the name "Umeed-e-Pakistan", which can carry approximately 150 passengers. "The booking has been made and all arrangements are in place," said a source.

Nawaz, along with party members and journalists, is scheduled to leave Dubai for Pakistan on October 21. The special flight will land in Islamabad from Dubai before proceeding to Lahore, where Nawaz will address the gathering arranged by his party faithful.

Meanwhile, PML-N senior leader Ishaq Dar said there is no chance of Nawaz being arrested on return to Pakistan. He said that transit bail and protective bail would be obtained from the court. "Nawaz Sharif will follow the standard legal procedures." He said that PML-N's narrative will be focusing on the economy. Dar said: "Recovery of the economy is the best revenge."

PML-N, JUI-F for moving ahead

LAHORE (INP): President Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) Shehbaz Sharif and chief of Jamiat Ulema-e-Islam (JUI-F) Maulana Fazlur Rehman have reiterated resolve for moving ahead through mutual consultation and cooperation.

The JUI-F chief on Wednesday called on PML-N's President at his residence in Model Town, Lahore and discussed with him the country's overall situation, including upcoming general elections. During the meeting, the key leaders of two political parties termed the consultation and cooperation imperative to tackle the crises faced by the country.

Speaking on the occasion, Shehbaz Sharif thanked Maulana Fazlur Rehman for 'contributing' to saving Pakistan from bankruptcy in 16 months of Pakistan Democratic Movement (PDM) tenure. "During the 16 months, all political parties only thought of saving the state not the politics", the PML-N president said, adding that only consultation and cooperation can bring Pakistan out of crises.

He expressed hope that the political and democratic system will be strengthened after the return of PML-N supremo Nawaz Sharif. Meanwhile, Maulana Fazlur Rehman termed Nawaz Sharif's return a 'good news' for Pakistan. "The truth has been exposed that Nawaz Sharif was targeted for political revenge", he noted. "Nawaz Sharif and his family were unjustly persecuted and this will remain a dark chapter in country's history," Fazlur Rehman said, adding that calling political leaders 'thieves' was a game of political engineering.

Israel pounds Gaza

No power, no meds, no food in besieged Gaza as blanket-bombing continues



GAZA STRIP: A mourner reacting while burying body of a Palestinian child of al-Agha family, who was killed in Israeli strikes, in Khan Younis.

Israel announces wartime 'emergency govt'

Monitoring Desk

JERUSALEM: Israel's Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu announced Wednesday an "emergency government" with an opposition party leader, Benny Gantz, for the duration of the war with Gaza militants.

"Following a meeting ... held today, the two agreed on establishing an emergency government and war cabinet," said a joint statement by the premier and Gantz, a former defense minister and army chief. The three-member "war cabinet" would include Netanyahu, Gantz and Defense Minister Yoav Gallant. Gadi Eisenkot, also a former army chief from Gantz's party, and Strategic Affairs Minister Ron Dermer will serve as observers, according to the statement.

Monitoring Desk

GAZA: Israel kept pounding Hamas targets in Gaza, where entire city blocks lay in rubble Wednesday, as its soldiers sweeping battlefield southern towns found more victims five days after the militants' onslaught.

The army said a "staggering 1,200" bodies had been discovered, mostly of unarmed civilians, while Gaza officials reported more than 1,000 people killed in Israel's withering campaign of air and

Saudi FM takes part in AL meeting

Monitoring Desk

RIYADH: Saudi Arabia's Foreign Minister Prince Faisal bin Farhan took part in an extraordinary Arab League meeting on the Israel-Hamas war in Cairo on Wednesday. The meeting discussed the military escalation in Gaza and its surroundings, the worsening situation that threatens the lives of civilians and the security and stability of the region, and ways to provide protection for and aid to civilians in the Gaza Strip.

During the meeting, making every possible effort to communicate with all international and regional parties to stop the escalation was discussed. The necessity of adhering to international humanitarian law and not targeting civilians was also discussed.

Lebanon seize rocket launcher near border

Monitoring Desk

BEIRUT: The Lebanese Army on Wednesday found a rocket launcher in Qlaileh plain, south of Tyre, believed to have been used in an attack on Israeli targets the previous day. Army Command said the launch platform was discovered during "a border inspection and was found to be armed with a rocket, which the specialized unit dismantled."

Israeli armed forces said they responded by launching warplane raids on "Hezbollah targets in Lebanon, and barraging the source of the fire." Armed Israeli drones were also deployed and an area close to the town of Marwahin was reportedly hit with phosphorus bombs, the use of which is heavily restricted under international law.

According to officials in Gaza, the enclave will experience a humanitarian catastrophe as the power plant completely shuts down due to a fuel shortage.

US President Joe Biden has pledged to send more munitions and military hardware to its close ally Israel and expressed revulsion at the "sheer evil" of the slaughter of civilians in the unprecedented assault Hamas unleashed from Saturday.

(Continued on Back Page)

Federal Cabinet calls for halt of Israel's bombing

F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: Caretaker Minister for Information and Broadcasting Murtaza Solangi on Wednesday said the Federal Cabinet had called for an immediate halt to Israeli bombardment of civilian areas of Gaza, in addition to lifting of blockade for the provision of relief items to the civil population.

He said the Cabinet meeting, presided over by Caretaker Prime Minister Anwaar-ul-Haq Kakar, also called for prompt measures to allow international aid to reach the civilians in the Gaza.

Addressing a news conference along with Minister for Privatization Fawad Hassan Fawad, he said the forum strongly condemned Israel's bombardment, particularly targeting civil population in Gaza besides expressing concern over the volatile situation, stemming from Israel's illegal occupation, oppression of Palestinians for decades, and blatant violations of United Nations Security Council Resolutions in this regard.

The Federal Cabinet stressed that the issue of Palestine should be resolved in accordance with relevant UNSC resolution, he said, adding it also called for the restoration of pre-1967 status of Palestine. He said the Federal Cabinet reiterated Pakistan's principled stance for the resolution of the Palestine issue in line with the aspirations of its people. Solangi said the forum

reiterated the proposal for the establishment of an independent Palestinian state with its borders predating Israel's illegal occupation in 1967 as well as Bait-ul-Quds (Jerusalem) as its capital. He said the prime minister had directed the federal ministers to undertake only essential foreign visits.

The Federal Cabinet had approved the appointments of former Lahore High Court judge Sohail Nasir as Deputy Chairman of NAB and Syed Ehtesham Qadir Shah as NAB Prosecutor General Accountability, he added. In the Cabinet meeting, he said the approval was also accorded to the proposal of hiring services of the Consortium for Financial Advisory for the Pakistan International Airlines' (PIA) privatization.

On the recommendation of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, he said the Cabinet had approved the receipt of the PLA Commemorative Award Medal from China to Brigadier Shahid Amir for his services for the promotion of Pakistan-China relations.

The minister said on the recommendation of the Ministry of Interior, the Cabinet approved the extradition of Pakistani citizen Shahzad Ahmed S/o Wali Muhammad Qureshi to the United Arab Emirates in a fraud case. Similarly, approval for extradition Arshad Ali S/o Mazhar Ali to Kuwait was also given during the meeting.

He said both the accused would be extradited to these countries in line with the extradition agreements signed by Pakistan with them.

Solangi said the Cabinet had ratified the decisions made during the Economic Coordination Committee meeting held on October 3, 2023. Likewise, the decisions taken in the meetings held on January 21 and 28 regarding the State-Owned Enterprises were also ratified by the cabinet, he added.

No action was being taken against Afghan citizens who had Proof of Registration Cards and residing in Pakistan for the last 40 years, he said, while responding to a query. He said the government would not take any action against those who had Afghan citizen cards that were verified by the previous Afghan government.

The deadline of October 31 for voluntary return was only applicable to those individuals who did not possess any legal document, he said adding thousands of illegal residents had started returning to their countries. To another query, he said the electoral history of the country suggested that polls were held in extreme cold and hot weather. Elections would be held as per the schedule, issued by the Election Commission of Pakistan, he said, adding the caretaker government would provide all-out assistance to the electoral body in this regard.

فوری اطلاع دیں

محکمہ داخلہ و قبائلی امور
خیبر پختونخوا

بہتہ خوری
دھماکہ خیز مواد
منشیات
غیر قانونی ہتھیار
سمگلنگ
غیرقانونی سم کارڈز
انٹرنیٹ کا غلط استعمال
جوا

حوالہ بنڈی
جعلی دستاویزات

خبر پختونخوا کو دہشتگردی سے پاک کرنے میں اپنا کردار ادا کریں
اور ہماری ویب سائٹ پر مذکورہ بالا غیر قانونی سرگرمیوں کی شکایت درج کریں۔

http://hd.kp.gov.pk/index.php/Cms/Complaint



Ombudsman expresses satisfaction over resolution of widow's complaint

KARACHI (APP): The provincial Ombudsman Sindh Aijaz Ali Khan has expressed his satisfaction that after his intervention the widow complainant was able to get service dues and appointment order of her son against deceased quota. A widow, Fozia Perveen in her complaint stated that her husband was ward Boy in DMC Central who died while in service in July 2017 and since then she was pursuing for payment of service dues and appointment of her son against deceased quota, but department failed to provide relief hence she requested to intervene.

The complaint was admitted and referred to the concerned authorities and after protracted persuasion the pension was sanctioned and dues on account of gratuity, provident and financial assistant paid to her besides her son also appointed as Ward Boy against deceased quota. The complainant expressed her gratitude and expressed thankfulness to Ombudsman Sindh for resolving her issues.

1275 kg Chinese Salt destroyed worth Rs1.7m

RAWALPINDI (APP): Punjab Food Authority (PFA) discarded 1,275kg of prohibited 'Ajinomoto' commonly known as Chinese salt worth Rs1.7 million during a raid in Rawalpindi.

PFA Director General Raja Jahangir Anwar said that acting on the tipoff, the team raided a godown in Hamilton Market and recovered 31.87 maunds of monosodium glutamate. He said PFA has registered a case against the food business operator (FBO) over violations in the nearest police station.

The authority took action against the FBO for illegally storing the Chinese salt and failing to present the sale and purchase record of it to the raiding team on the spot, he said. He further said the sale and purchase of Chinese salt is strictly prohibited in Punjab after the PFA imposed a ban on it.

ANF recovers 381.498 kg drugs in 34 operations

RAWALPINDI (APP): Anti-Narcotics Force (ANF) Pakistan seized 381.498 kg drugs & 240 liters liquor worth US\$ 10.139 million internationally, arrested 43 accused including eight women, four foreigners (one Nigerian & three Afghani) impounded 11 vehicles while conducting 34 counter-narcotics operations throughout the country during last week.

According to an ANF Headquarters spokesman, the seized drugs comprised 82,700 kg Opium, 7,273 kg Heroin, 271.594 kg Hashish, eight kg Crystal Heroin, 11,405 kg Methamphetamine (Ice), 116 grams Cocaine and 410 Grams Ecstasy Tablets (680 Tabs). ANF Balochistan recovered 105 kg drugs in four operations and arrested three accused besides impounding two vehicles.

Senate Standing Committee on Climate Change visited the WWF Wetland Centre

F.P. Report

KARACHI: The Senate Standing Committee on Climate Change visited the WWF Wetland Centre in Karachi on Wednesday. The Senate Standing Committee on Climate Change Chairperson Senator Seemee Ezdi was in session regarding the Mangroves conservation and the future outlook in Pakistan with the Special context of the Indus Delta along with her team.

Along with Senator Seemee Ezdi, other members of the Senate committee included Senator Dr. Mohammad Hamayun Mohmand, Senator Khalida Ateeab and Senator Abida Muhammad Azeem attended the event. Director General WWF Pakistan Hammad Naqi Khan addressed the session. He briefed the committee on the climate vulnerability of Pakistan. Khan also highlighted the significant importance of the Indus Delta region and Mangroves conservation.

He further shared that ecologically, mangrove forests are the top habitat for biodiversity as it creates a defense system against natural disasters such as Tsunami, cyclones and sea storms.

Senator Seemee Ezdi also expressed concerns about the challenges of Mangroves conservation and the shrinking

of the Indus Delta region. She also praised WWF Pakistan's performance for the last 10 years in Mangroves conservation and development of marine ecosystems.

Senior Manager Conservation WWF Sindh Altaaf Sheikh provided the committee with a detailed overview of WWF programs in Pakistan. Sharing details on the mangroves conservation approach, he shared that "WWF Pakistan is currently working on 18 different landscapes."

"From mountains to mangroves," he said during the session. Sheikh also shared that the Indus Delta is 5th largest arid ecosystem and hosts 7th largest mangrove forest in the world.

He also described the socioeconomic aspects of the Indus Delta and shared that the delta contributes 98% of shrimp catch and more than 77% of marine fish catch.

Altaaf Sheikh detailed the challenges of the shrinkage of the Indus Delta region due to sea intrusion and soil erosion. He also noted that clearing of mangrove forest land for its commercial use has worsened deforestation leading to loss of biodiversity. The Chief Conservator of Forest Department, Riaz Ahmed Wagan, discussed the role of forest department in the conservation of Mangroves and its future outlook, including environmental and economic benefits.

Caretaker CM orders recovery of kidnapped SHO, policemen

KARACHI (APP): Caretaker Sindh Chief Minister Justice (ret'd) Magbool Baqar, while taking serious note of the kidnapping of six policemen, including the SHO of Kot Shahu police of District Shikarpur, has ordered their recovery within three days and issuing of explanation to the DIG and SSP concerned.

Expressing his displeasure and dismay, the chief minister said police stations have been made so vulnerable and weak that the dacoits attack them and kidnap policemen easily. "This shows that the police officers who are in command in the districts have failed to control, deliver and perform," he said and added that he had learned that most of the SSPs did not go to their offices and do the policing sitting at their homes

which led to emerge such a shocking situation. Justice Baqar talked to the IG Police on the telephone and directed him to visit the Shikarpur district and get the kidnapped policemen recovered within three days. "I want you (IG police) to issue explanations to the DIG Larkana and SSP Shikarpur for their failure to strengthen the police station and secure the police."

The CM said that inefficient, ineffective and unwilling police officers must be replaced with efficient officers. "I am sorry to say that as such incidents are earning a bad name for the government and governance," he declared.

The CM also directed the IG Police to conduct an inquiry into the incident and report him.

France to organize the 2nd edition of "Choose France Pakistan – Education Tour"

KARACHI (APP): Following the success of the first edition in Lahore and Islamabad, the "Choose France Pakistan – Education Tour" is back in 2023 to explore Lahore and Karachi. The program includes a wide range of fields such as management, engineering, humanities, finance, business and sciences. Eleven top-notch French universities are part of the delegation, such as Sciences Po Paris, Centrale Nantes, and EDHEC.

"Choose France Pakistan-Education Tour" is a government initiative from France, organized by the French Embassy in Pakistan, Campus France Pakistan, and their local partners, to promote studying in France. The 2 Education fairs to be organized in Lahore on October 17 and in Karachi on October 19, will give the opportunity to students to interact directly with French universities, learn more about the 1700 programs taught in English at the Bachelor and Master levels, and get details about the 183 scholarship programs available for Pakistani students.

This year, four French business schools are part of the delegation.

According to the latest Financial Times world rankings, French business schools are still topping the ranking. For example, the four best Masters in Finance Pre-experience 2023 is French; among the five best Masters in Management 2023, three are French,

including the one ranked No. 1. For MBA and Executive Education, a French institution is ranked in the top position: INSEAD, an institution with a large alumni network in Pakistan. During this "Choose France Pakistan – Education Tour", French delegates will also visit Pakistani universities to strengthen the academic cooperation between France and Pakistan in the area of business & management, sciences & engineering, and social & political sciences.

Campus France is a French public organization under the umbrella of the French Ministry of Higher Education and Research and the French Ministry for Europe and Foreign Affairs, which provides official and free counseling and support to international students who are looking forward to pursuing higher studies in France. In Pakistan, Campus France is officially represented in Islamabad and Lahore; the office in Karachi is to be opened in 2024. To contact Campus France Pakistan, visit the website <https://www.pakistan.campusfrance.org/> or send an email to pakistan@campusfrance.org List of French universities includes Sciences and Engineering: EPITA, ESTP, Centrale Nantes, IMT Atlantique, Université de Nantes/Polytech Nantes- Business and Management: EDHEC, ESDes, IESEG, KEDGE.



LAHORE: Governor Punjab Muhammad Balighur Rahman posing for a group photo with participants at the Sustainable Development Goals Excellence Awards 2023 ceremony of the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals.

Holy Quran's wisdom promotes for global citizenship, sustainable development: Aneeq

ISLAMABAD (APP): Minister for Religious Affairs and Interfaith Harmony, Aneeq Ahmed on Wednesday highlighted the unique perspective that the Holy Quran provides, linking it with various areas of Social Sciences and offering valuable teachings on their practical aspects.

Addressing the first International Conference on Social Sciences, themed 'Reconsidering Social Sciences Paradigms for Global Citizenship and Sustainable Development' here at National University of Modern Languages (NUML), he said fields such as Education, Psychology, International Relations, Media Communications, Governance and Public Policy, Pakistan Studies, Islamic Studies, and Area Studies share the common objective of enhancing human societies, human behavior, and interactions between nations and cultures.

Minister Aneeq said in the realm of Education, the Holy Quran empha-

sizes the acquisition of knowledge, stating that "Seeking knowledge is obligatory for every Muslim." He said this underscores the importance of education for personal growth and societal development. He said the Holy Quran's encouragement of reflection and contemplation also plays a pivotal role in this regard.

He said Psychology, too, benefits from Quranic teachings, promoting self-reflection, mindfulness, and self-control. He said the Holy Quran encourages believers to control their anger, practice gratitude, and foster positive mental states.

He said in terms of International Relations, the Holy Quran emphasizes peaceful coexistence and diplomacy, inviting people of different faiths to find common ground and work towards mutual understanding and respect. He said this commitment to resolving differences through dialogue is exemplified through various verses.

Communications, Minister Aneeq said with its influence on public opinion, can draw lessons from Quranic teachings on truthfulness, responsibility, and ethical communication. The Quran instructs us to speak the truth and avoid spreading falsehoods.

He said Governance and Public Policy can benefit from the Quranic principle of justice, emphasizing the importance of just governance and leaders' responsibility to prioritize the welfare and justice of their people.

He said Islamic Studies and Area Studies can find a wealth of historical and cultural knowledge in the Quran and Hadith, which provide insights into past civilizations and cross-cultural understanding. In conclusion, Minister Aneeq emphasized that the Holy Quran and Hadith offer a wealth of wisdom applicable to various branches of social sciences. Integrating these teachings into research and practice can foster a more just, harmonious, and sustainable world.

Pakistan committed to interrupt Poliovirus circulation: Dr Nadeem

ISLAMABAD (APP): Caretaker Federal Minister for Health Dr. Nadeem Jan on Wednesday said that Pakistan steadfastly committed to interrupt Poliovirus circulation and join the ranks of polio-free countries.

Addressing the session of the Polio Eradication of 70th WHO Regional Committee meeting in Cairo, Dr. Nadeem Jan said that Pakistan has made great strides against polio.

The minister said that Pakistan Polio Program had taken concerted measures to improve campaign quality and vaccine uptake in the endemic districts such as fractional IPV campaigns to boost immunity and offering pluses such as soaps to promote hygiene. He said through effective case response, Pakistan has prevented the virus from establishing circulation outside the endemic zone.

All-age vaccination is being conducted on the Pakistan side along the Pak-Afghan border. In the security compromised areas, alternate strategies are being employed such as ring-fencing vaccination

and a special campaign to offer polio and routine immunization to children in 69 most vulnerable UCs of southern KP, he told.

The minister said that Pakistan was committed to protecting its children from poliomyelitis and was also mindful of its obligations under the International Health Regulations. This commitment exists across the board, he added.

The minister said that the Prime Minister had very recently chaired a meeting of the National Task Force and inaugurated a nationwide polio campaign. As per the GPEI Strategy 2022-2026, Pakistan has also started

planning for transition, by collecting requisite data as per global standards such as physical verification of assets and HR data collection, the minister said. He appreciated the generous and continued support of all donors and partners to Pakistan as it fights this virus.

NOTICE INVITING E-BIDDING

Public Health Engineering Division, Kurram invites electronic bids from registered Firms/Contractors on the basis of Single Stage Single Envelope system in accordance with KPRA Rules 2014 for the following work:

S. No	Name of Work	Estimated Cost (M)	Bid Security @ 2% + Stamp Duty	Closing Date & Time
1	DWSS Halim Shah Kall Kachkena	11.75	0.254	30-10-2023 12:00 (Noon)
2	DWSS Lalmai Hayat Ali Koroan Lower	10.43	0.2275	
3	DWSS Burki T/Well East Doya Area	14.04	0.2996	
4	DWSS Burki T/Well Upper Area	16.367	0.3479	
5	DWSS Bar Millat Sehra Tahir Korona Karakhela	12.05	0.260	
6	DWSS Terak Arif Koroona Kachkina	11.166	0.2421	
7	DWSS Upper Maindan Ragha Goharjan Korona Kachkina	11.638	0.2515	
8	DWSS at Parow Sub jafar Korona Karakhela	11.959	0.258	
9	Solar Pressure Pump and Storage Tank at Amir Mujtaba Zayrat Burki	2.822	0.0627	
10	Rehabilitation & Solarization of Existing T/Well Bhughra Mengal	1.482	0.036	
11	Construction of Boundary Wall & Solarization of Existing Tube Well at burki	3.12	0.06871	
12	Rehabilitation & Solarization of Existing T/Well Shaheed Hijab Kall Lalmai T/Well	1.867	0.0436	
13	Rehabilitation & Solarization of Existing T/Well Masjid Colony Lower Sehra Karakhela	2.300	0.05225	
14	Rehabilitation of Burki Gravity Angurak and Wali Tang Source	2.888	0.0640	
15	Construction of Water Storage Tank & Lining of Pipe of Existing Water Supply Sahra Kalay Burki	3.385	0.074	
16	Rehabilitation & solarization of Existing T/Well Shah Gul Ghundya Kachkena	4.569	0.098	
17	Burki Street Payment and Drainage System	60.977	1.2383	
18	Bughra Mengal Area Street Payment and Drainage System	9.981	0.219	
19	Kachkena Street Payment and Drainage System	30.135	0.6215	
20	Karakhela Street Payment and Drainage System	26.538	0.550	
21	Lalmai Street Payment and Drainage System	23.163	0.482	

Terms and Conditions:

- Instructions to bidders and any other information may be obtained from the office of the undersigned prior to closing date of bid submission on any working day.
- The contractor/ bidders while quoting their rates shall submit 2% bid security (CDR) and additional security as per KPRA notification No. SRO (14)/Vol:1-24/2021-22 dated 10-05-2022/6058-71
- The bidder shall submit along with their bids, photo copy of PEC Registration, Enlistment, renewal for the year 2022-23, renewal of KPRA, FBR/ NTN, CNIC etc in sealed envelope through Courier Service, in person or through special messenger to XEN PHE Division Kurram at Parachinar on or before closing date and time.
- All notifications of the govt about taxes and other online E-bidding tender rules/ policy of KAPRA will be applicable on tender works awarded to contractor.
- In case of identical rate of two or more than two bidders, their bids shall be evaluated on their technical soundness and experience OR on toss basis.
- Contractors will quote their rates electronically, Tender & BOQ can be downloaded from PHED, and KPRA websites www.phedkp.gov.pk, www.kppra.gov.pk prior to closing date & time.
- Bidding/Tender documents must reach to the office of Executive Engineer PHE Division Kurram on or before dated **30-10-2023 at 1200 Hours**, which will be opened on the same day at **1400:00 Hours**.
- Bidders shall submit Tender Form Fee non-refundable for the work separately @ 0.03% (CDR) on the Engineer Estimate Cost in the name of Executive Engineer PHE Division Kurram.
- The competent authority reserved the right to reject any or all bids by assigning cogent reason.
- All others terms & condition will be as per PPRA Rules and All Taxes will be deducted as per Govt Policy
- CDRs of 1st, 2nd and 3rd Lowest bidders will not be released till completion of tender process.

EXECUTIVE ENGINEER

INF(P)2497/2023

PUBLIC HEALTH ENGINEERING DIVISION DISTRICT KURRAM
Office: Opposite Governor Model School Parachinar Ph # 0926-313253
Email: xenphedkurram@gmail.com



LAHORE: The restoration and decoration work is in progress on Sumit Minar, an obelisk-shaped structure situated in the center of Charing Cross on Mall Road.



PESHAWAR: Governor Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Haji Ghulam Ali addressing a ceremony of All Pakistan Private Schools Management Association.

Govt spends 24% budget on education, says Minister

PESHAWAR (INP): Caretaker Minister for Elementary, Secondary, and Higher Education, Prof Dr Mohammad Qasim Khan has said that the education-friendly policy of the provincial government is evident from the fact that about 24 percent of the provincial budget is being spent on education.

He expressed these views while addressing a function organized under the auspices of All Pakistan Private Schools Management Association at Nishtar Hall, Peshawar here on Wednesday. Besides the secretary of Elementary and Secondary Education, Mutasimillah Shah, the central president Private Schools Management Association Kashif Adeeb

Javadani also addressed the function.

He said that in the current era of globalization and our effort is to prepare students to compete at the international level, equip them with IT skills and introduce them to scientific education along with new innovations.

He added that we still need to work harder to focus on quality education as well as bring out-of-school students to schools and arrest the drop-out ratio.

Paying tribute to the private sector, the minister said that our resources are limited and the private sector is supporting them in this regard. He said that they consider the teachers and students of private edu-

cational institutions across the province as an important part of the education system and taking steps to guide them.

He said that all private educational institutions should make their facilities according to the standards set by the provincial government.

The provincial minister said that the literacy rate has increased significantly with the mutual support of the public and private sectors. He said that girls' education has also been given special attention because by making a girl child educated, the whole family becomes educated and an educated mother gives the best education to her children as well as makes them good citizens.

He added that teachers are respected in every civilized society and teaching is considered a sacred profession, saying the provision of facilities to them is their top priority.

He said that nations achieve development by giving top priority to education and the caretaker provincial government is taking vigorous steps in this regard.

The minister requested the educationists of both the private and public sectors to take steps for areas with lesser education facilities and lower literacy rates and children are facing difficulties in getting education.

At the end of the ceremony, shields were also conferred on distinguished teachers and students of the private sector.

18th Biennial moot of Pakistan Physiological Society concluded

PESHAWAR (APP): The 18th Biennial Conference of the Pakistan Physiological Society concluded on Wednesday in collaboration with Khyber Medical University (KMU) Peshawar, Khyber Girls Medical College Peshawar and Rehman Medical College Peshawar.

The concluding session of the conference was held in Dr. Hafizullah Auditorium KMU, where Pro Vice Chancellor KMU Prof. Dr. Rubina Nazli was the chief guest. It is worth mentioning that the nationwide conference of the Pakistan

Physiological Society is held every two years in different cities of the country. This year the conference was jointly organized by KMU, KGMC, and RMC. More than 500 delegates from all over Pakistan participated in the conference, whereas 13 national and international physiologists discussed various topics in the conference.

As well as another highlight of the conference was the presentation of more than 80 research papers by faculty, postgraduate, and undergraduate students. More than 30 posters and

models were specially presented by junior participants in the conference. Prizes were also distributed among the first 3 position holders in these events. In addition, more than 250 scholars and faculty members were trained in hands-on techniques through 12 pre-conference workshops.

Addressing the closing ceremony as a chief guest, Prof. Dr. Rubina Nazli, Pro Vice Chancellor of KMU, praised the organizing committee for organizing this wonderful conference and hoped that such activities would be held regularly in

the future as well.

She said that gathering of more than five hundred physiologists from all over the country under one roof for three days will open new ways of development in this important field of medicine.

In the end, the chief organizer of the conference and director of IBMS Dr. Inayat Shah, besides thanking the participants, especially the guests who came from far away, announced the organization of the BMedCon2023 conference to be organized by IBMS in November this year.

Awareness among youth essential to eradicate violent extremism

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: Dr. Ayaz Khan, Chief Coordination Officer of Center of Excellence on Countering Violent Extremism (CECVE) Khyber Pakhtunkhwa has said that an integrated strategy for the promotion of peace, tolerance, and solidarity among the youth, especially students, has been formed to eradicate violent extremism.

He expressed these views while addressing a seminar organized at Kohat University of Science and Technology. Dean of University Dr. Muhammad Naseer-ud-Din, Director CECVE Waqar Khan, faculty members, administration officials, and other participants were also among the participants.

Dr. Ayaz Khan shed light in detail on the problem of violent extremism in society, the contributing factors, and the resulting threats to peace, security, and stability. He informed about the efforts and plans of the Centre of Excellence in eradicating violent extremism.

He said that due to the



development of communication, distances have shrunk in today's world and the situation and conditions of one region have their impacts worldwide, which is why the threat of violent extremism is a challenge for nations and societies at the global level. There is an urgent need for understanding and mutual respect between different religious and cultural communities, as well as close cooperation and collaboration between governmental, academic, religious institutions and non-governmental organizations to create a more

secure society.

Dr. Ayaz Khan said that the high tech companies have to come forward to stop the spread of extremist content through the internet and social media so that the spread of extremist content can be stopped and this effective means of fast communication has been brought to work for the promotion of positive and constructive attitudes.

The Chief Coordination Officer of the Centre of Excellence emphasized that knowledge and awareness are very effective tools to prevent and eradicate vio-

lent extremism. The cooperation between them is a very encouraging step that will have positive and far-reaching results. He discussed various opportunities and possibilities for cooperation with the university authorities to work.

Earlier, Dean of Kohat University of Science and Technology, Dr. Muhammad Naseer-ud-Din, thanked Dr. Ayaz Khan for visiting to university and assured of all possible cooperation and support in the national cause of eradicating violent extremism from society.

Passports printing stopped

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: It is revealed that printing of passports had been stopped due to unavailability of lamination paper at Directorate of Immigration and Passport Islamabad, on Wednesday.

The unavailability of lamination

paper had caused the stoppage of passports printing on one hand while on the other side quarrels in the offices across the country is routine of the day. A client at Peshawar Office said that earlier urgent passport would be provided within five days and normal can be obtain in 15 days but latterly delay in

receiving was caused which is continued till today. Moreover, other clients argued that delay in receiving of passports had lead to wastage of visas as well as deprived aspirant from Ummra. The citizens argued Minister Interior and DG Immigration and Passports to resolve the issue on immediate basis.

Afsar's Rasm-e-Qul today

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: The Rasm-e-Qul of Director Afghan Commissionerate Afsar Ali will be observed today (Thursday) at Plot#42, Street-8, Sector 4, Phase-4 Hayatabad. The deceased was brother of Professor Tasleem Ullah at Islamia College, Director Healthcare Commission Badr Munir and Johar Ali of Chicago. The funeral prayer of deceased was offered on 10th October.

Fazl's mother-in-law die

PESHAWAR (INP): Mother-in-law of Jamiat Ulema-e-Islam chief Maulana Fazlur Rahman has passed away on Wednesday. Her Namaz-i-Janaza will be offered after Maghrib prayers at Naran Garden area of Hayatabad in Peshawar on Wednesday. The deceased was the mother of former member of National Assembly Shahida Akhtar Ali and former member of Provincial Assembly Rehana Ismail. JUI Chief's mother-in-law had been sick for quite some time.

2 alleged arm smugglers arrested

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: Police arrested two alleged arm-smugglers and recovered 2800 bullets as well as confiscated the vehicle at Jangali check post, on Wednesday.

On intelligence-based operation, Deputy Superintendent of Police (DPS) Badabbhier Zia Ullah along Station House Officer Nasir Khattak and other police personnel were present for snap checking to counter arm-smuggling.

Police had Adil Nawaz and Adnan residents of Dara Adamkhel while confessed their involvement in arm-smuggling. Police had registered First Information Report (FIR) against culprits and started further investigation.

Meanwhile, SHO Badabbhier on direction of Superintendent of Police (SP) Saddar Abdus Salam Khalid raided Kaga Wala and Ahmadkhel areas on 10th Oct for arrest of culprits while arrested eight culprits including one proclaimed offender.

The proclaimed offender was identified as Dad Sher, alleged culprits including Raham Sher, Sohrah, Sher Akbar, Imtiaz, Ayaz, Zar Nawaz and Akram while police had initiated investigation in this regard.

PBA condemned attacks

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: Peshawar Bar Association (PBA) condemned Israeli attacks on Palestinians and killing of student in front central jail Peshawar on resisting robbery, on Wednesday.

The condemnation was made during PBA's cabinet meeting chaired by president Ishfaq Khalil advocate and argued Organization of Islamic Countries (OIC) to play her role in stopping Israeli attacks on Palestinians in the Gaza Strip.

PBA claimed Israeli forces are attacking Masjid, hospitals and schools as well as civilians which are war crimes under International Law while arguing international community to initiative proceedings against Israel in Criminal Court.

PBA also argued that Palestine and Kashmir disputes had exposed hypocrisy of United Nation and Western World by ignoring human rights violation from the armed forces against the civilians.

Action against pigeons' keepers started

PESHAWAR (APP): The district administration, assisted by the area police, has started an operation against people indulged in pigeon flying and business around the Peshawar Airport to avert disruption in air traffic and possible mishap. The administration had already imposed a ban under Section-144 on sale and purchase and flying of pigeons in the surrounding areas of the airport and confiscated dozens of pigeons from the shops the other day.

Additional Assistant Commissioner, Samira Saba during a crackdown arrested over 12 people for flying pigeons in surrounding areas of the airport

The administration had also made announcements over loudspeakers in the area mosques against pigeons flying around the airport and told the people that there was a complete ban on the business and flying of pigeons around the airport.

FIA conduct raid in Sadar

PESHAWAR (APP): The Commercial Banking Circle of FIA during a raid on the directive of DD Rizwan Shah on Wednesday unearthed an illegal money exchange unit and arrested two accused.

The raid was conducted in Sadar area of Peshawar from where two accused namely Hazrat Bilal and Waqas were taken into custody. The accused were doing an illegal money exchange business without any license.

Governor highlighted significance of educ

PESHAWAR (APP): The Governor Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Haji Ghulam Ali here Wednesday stressed for making advancement in new fields of education and said that a country cannot prosper and achieve respectable position among comity of nations with making progress in education.

He was addressing a ceremony of All Pakistan Private Schools Management Association (APPSMA). The ceremony was also attended by provincial caretaker education minister, Dr. Qasim Jan President APPSMA, Dr. Zakir Shah, Secretary Education, Mutasim Billah and large number of teachers and students.

Governor highlighted the significance of education in the existing age of transformation and said that education guarantees progress and development of a nation.

He said that our religion has also given due importance to education while constitution of the country also gives right of education to every citizen.

He said that private educational institutions have shared the responsibility of government to educate its people and added we must recognize efforts of private schools and prepare a strategy to support them.

He also urged private schools' management to open schools in villages to educate children irrespec-

tive of their profitability. He admitted that due to education sector and said that still thousands of children are uneducated due to absence of needed facilities.

Thousands of children were forced to left education owing to various difficulties and it is our collective responsibility to provide them with chance of education and progress, he viewed.

KP Governor appreciated the results and performance of private schools and said management of private schools should not be pressurized unnecessarily due to their contribution towards education.

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KP Governor appreciated the results and performance of private schools and said management of private schools should not be pressurized unnecessarily due to their contribution towards education.



PESHAWAR: Members of All University Employees Federation holds placards during a protest in favour of their rights. — F.P. photo by Ghulam Murtaza

Performance of Irrigation Department: Caretaker minister chairs meeting on projects

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: The Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Caretaker Minister for Irrigation and Communications & Works Engineer Ahmed Jan Khan presided over a meeting regarding irrigation department here at Peshawar on Wednesday.

Besides Secretary Irrigation Department Mohammad Tahir Orakzai, officers of all the attached wings of department attended.

During the meeting, the caretaker minister was briefed regarding the development plans of the irrigation department, performance of the department and the sectoral responsibilities of all wings in details.

Moreover, the minister

was informed about the efforts made regarding the improvement of the irrigation system under all the institutions of the department so far.

In the meeting, the provincial minister urged the officers to intensify their efforts to improve the existing irrigation system in the province. He added that in order to further improve the efficiency of the department, the officers of the department should realize all their assigned responsibilities and duties and they should play an active role for the development of this province by using their technical skills.

The caretaker minister said that he will make every possible effort to further

improve the irrigation system in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa.

He said that here Allah Almighty has given immense natural resources in the form of water and through the various means, these resources are being used for irrigation and cultivation of agricultural land, but the department should intensify its efforts to make this system more efficient and beneficial.

He said that he will encourage the officers of the department for their best performance and they will be provided with a better environment to perform their duties without any interference so that they can perform their responsibilities in an efficient manner.

Pesco notifies power suspension

PESHAWAR (APP): Peshawar Electric Supply Company (PESCO) on Wednesday notified that due to maintenance work power supply will remain suspended from Jamrud Grid Station on 14th and 17th October from 8 a.m. to 2 p.m. affecting the consumers of Gull Abad feeder.

It said that power supply will remain suspended from Peshawar University Grid Station on 14th and 17th October from 8 a.m. to 2 p.m. resultantly consumers of University Campus, Canal Town, Malakandher, Engineering, Regi, Taj Abad 1,2, Agriculture, Mera Achini, HMC, Ring Road, Danish Abad, Gharib Abad, Rahat Abad 1, CMB, Abdara, Achini 1, Hussain Zai, Sufaid Dheri, Old Bara Road, JAF, Academy Town, DHA, Aksari 6 and Commercial Balding feed-

ers will face inconvenience.

Likewise, it said power supply will remain suspended from Kohat Road Grid Station on 12th and 16th from 8 a.m. to 2 p.m. resultantly consumer of PAF Express, Kohat Road, Wazir Abad, Sunehri Masjid, Banamari, Audit Colony, Civil Quarter, Nauthia, Murshid Abad, Abasin, Deh Bahadar, Kohat Road, Amin Colony, Bara, Nodeh Payan, Dora Road, Landi Arbab, Sheikh Muhammad, Pishtakhara, Swati Gate, Gulberg and Scheme Chowk feeders will face inconvenience.

The power supply will also remain suspended from Bannu Grid Station on 12th October from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. resultantly consumers of Ismail Khani, City 1, Ghori Wala 1, 2, Mandian 1 and Shahbaz and Azmat Khel feeders will

face inconvenience.

The power supply will remain suspended from Mansehra-Balakot Transmission Line on 12th October from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. resultantly consumers of Balakot, Muzaffarabad and Noseri grid feeders will face inconvenience.

180 kg hashish recovered

PESHAWAR (APP): The Excise police on Wednesday foiled a bid to smuggle drugs to Punjab and arrested a drug peddler here. The Excise Police apprehended the drug smuggler after a fierce encounter in which a Sub Inspector sustained bullet injuries.



PESHAWAR: A delegation of Ramdas Bazaar meeting with Mayor Haji Zubair Ali.



In brief

Mayor for action against officers F.P. Report

MARDAN: The Mayor Mardan city Himayatullah Mayar advocate has filed an application to the office of Director anti-corruption establishment, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Peshawar for action against the officers of Tehsil Municipal Administration Mardan for corruption in sanitation and gardening items, it was learnt on Wednesday. As per the application dated October 10, 2023, the city mayor Mardan Himayatullah Mayar stated that he was expressing his deep concern regarding misuse and corruption in Tehsil Municipal Administration Mardan. "Recently, an amount of Rs. 7.00 million have been drawn on the purchase of various sanitation and gardening items, whereas, the items have not been observed on the spot," he alleged. He drew the attention of relevant officials of anti-corruption department that presently, the TMA Mardan was facing critical financial issues, but, the officers continuously were spending the amount maliciously. He pointed out that he had directed all the officers concerned to report in this connection but they were reluctant to comply the directions accordingly.

APC welcomes PK-89 limitation F.P. Report

PABB: All Parties Conference (PAC) Nowshera welcomed new limitation of PK-89 and announced social boycott from applicants challenged Election Commission of Pakistan in writ jurisdiction, on Wednesday. During APC Pakistan Muslim League Nawaz leader Alam Sharif, Jammate-e-Islami former candidate Haji Bashir Khan, PPP Iftikhar Ali, JUIF leader Mohib Ullah Shah, ANP Syed Ayub Shah, Essa Khan, Sohail Khan, TLP leader Maulana Sana Ullah, PTI Ibrahim Shah, Malak Ijaz advocate, Zulfiqar Aziz, Muhammad Ilyas Khan, Najm-uz-Zaman advocate, Taimour Kamal, Malak Qasim, Abdullah Shah, Saddam Durrani and Fayyaz Khan along with others were present. The participants argued that ECP had made limitation as per population and demands of APC to ensure proper representation of citizen at provincial assembly.

Drive against encroachments F.P. Report

BUNER: The additional assistant commissioner Faisal Ismail and Tehsil Municipal Officer (TMO) Afsar Ali Khan with staff and police on Wednesday removed encroachments at Daggar and warned that operation against permanent encroachments would be continued till clearing the road limits in the district headquarters. However, the private hospitals union leaders Norul Jamil expressed the administration should take them into confidence before the operation.

Crackdowns F.P. Report

TIMERGARA: District administration along with Food Safety and Halal Food Authority crack-down against substandard food/ chips. Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Food Safety and Halal Food Authority Lower Dir team on the special instructions of Deputy Commissioner Dir Lower Muhammad Fawad, conducted a food safety inspection of food-related businesses in Kumbhar Bazar. During the inspection, hotels, grocery shops, butcher shops and salt factories were informed about food safety, non-standard chips, drinks, tea contaminated with artificial color and prohibited items were confiscated and fine was imposed on the owners.

Special Economic Zone Rashkai an important project

Syed Waliullah Shah

NOWSHERA: Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Caretaker Minister of Industries, Commerce, Technical Education and Newly Merged Districts Affairs Dr. Aamir Abdullah has said that Special Economic Zone Rashkai is an important project of the provincial government towards industrial development, which has been established under CPEC through Pakistan and China's mutual cooperation.

He said that this project will prove to be an important milestone for the promotion of industrialization and economic development in the province, while it is the government's effort to provide all facilities to the entrepreneurs and companies setting up industries here. He expressed these during a briefing while visiting Rashkai Special Economic Zone on Wednesday.

Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Economic Zones Development and Management Company Javed Iqbal and other officers of the company, officers of the CPEC project and "China Roads and Building Company" (CRBC) representatives, who are working with the provincial government in

the construction work of the zone were present. On this occasion, the caretaker minister was given an in-depth review of the importance of the special economic zone, established under CPEC for industrial development, its unique features and the completion of its construction infrastructure in the first phase.

In this way, they were also briefed about the facilities to be provided in the zone in the future phases. The caretaker minister was told that the establishment of the special zone is one of the major projects being established in the country under the CPEC project, which is being built in collaboration between the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Economic Zones Development Company and the Chinese construction company CRBC.

He was informed that the construction work of the first phase of the zone has almost been completed while this special zone will cover a total area of 1000 acres. Similarly, 702 acres of land in the zone has been allocated for industrial plots and 76 acres for commercial plots.

He was told that not only domestic but also foreign industrialists and businessmen are being attracted for industrialization in the economic zone, while in the

first phase plots have been provided here for 18 domestic and one Chinese industry. He was told that all the facilities are being provided in the zone as per the required standards, while on this occasion the caretaker minister was informed about some issues related to electricity and gas.

Speaking on this occasion, the caretaker minister said that the attraction of foreign investors in Rashkai Special Economic Zone is a good gesture. He assured that all possible facilities will be provided to domestic and foreign investors here and in this regard he also gave clear instructions to the concerned authorities.

He said that related matters will be raised with the relevant quarters for its immediate solution regarding electricity and gas matters so that there will no problem for the industries and this industrial zone develop rapidly according to its geographical importance. Meanwhile, the caretaker minister also inspected various construction projects within the zone and expressed satisfaction over their quality. The caretaker minister was also presented with a shield by the Chinese construction company CRBC on the occasion of the visit.

Admn bans on illegal SIM for public safety

F.P. Report

MARDAN: In response to the alarming rise in illegal SIM card sales and the potential threat for public safety Deputy Commissioner Abdur Rehman has taken decisive action by imposing a ban under Section 144 of the Code of Criminal Procedure.

According to sources that several reports had indicated that unauthorized individuals were openly selling mobile phone SIM cards on the streets and in local markets. These illicit sellers went to extreme lengths, utilizing materials like silicon to capture the biometric thumbprints of buyers during SIM activation. Subsequently, they duplicated these fingerprints onto X-ray films and created fake fingerprint membranes from silicone,

which were then used to activate additional SIM cards.

The gravest concern surrounding this illegal practice is the misuse of these SIM cards activated through fake fingerprints. Such SIM cards have been linked to criminal activities, including extortion, bank frauds, and even acts of terrorism. There was a growing fear that the proliferation of this illegal SIM card trade might lead to a severe law and order crisis, posing a direct threat to public safety.

To combat this pressing issue and safeguard the lives of the district's residents, Deputy Commissioner Abdur Rehman, in accordance with the authority vested in him under Section 144 of the Cr.P.C., has issued a comprehensive ban on the

sale of illegal SIM cards by unauthorized sellers and dealers in streets and markets throughout Mardan District.

This order has been implemented with immediate effect and will remain in force for a duration of two months, unless amended or revoked earlier. The aim is to crack down on the illicit SIM card trade and prevent any further misuse for criminal activities.

According to the notification if any individual found in violation of this order, will face legal consequences under Section 188 of the Pakistan Penal Code (P.P.C). Deputy Commissioner Abdur Rehman has emphasized the seriousness of this ban and urged both the public and mobile phone companies to support this measure in the interest of public safety.



MANSEHRA: A participant of a workshop casting her vote during mock poll exercise at Hazara University. - F.P. photo

As many as 2300 personnel deploys for anti-polio campaign

F.P. Report

LAKKI MARWAT: More than 2300 policemen have been deployed to guard polio teams during the ongoing anti-polio drive in Lakki Marwat district. The five-day campaign began in 40 union councils of the district on Monday for which the health department has constituted 1011 teams to administer at least 196403 children below five with oral polio vaccine. A police official said on Wednesday that they had formulated a comprehensive and foolproof security plan for the polio eradication campaign.

He said that the cops would perform security duty with mobile teams

during door to door activity. "The law enforcement personnel have also been deployed at fixed centres established in health facilities", he maintained. He said that police commands, cops in civvies and district special branch personnel had been tasked to keep an eye on movements of suspects and anti-social elements at sensitive places.

"We have also increased snap checking and street and road patrolling in the district in order to provide a safe environment to polio workers to their job without any fear", he added.

Meanwhile, residents in several rural localities boycotted the vaccination drive aiming to save their chil-

dren from lifelong paralysis. Local deputy commissioner Rehmat Ali took serious notice of the issue and directed additional assistant commissioners to engage reluctant people in talks and convince them to end the boycott.

Additional ACs Sultan Nooruddin Ahmer and Gohar Ali negotiated with elders in Darra Pezu, Sarfraz Landaka and other areas and acquainted them about the usefulness of anti-polio vaccine for kids' health. They asked the people not to link their demands with the health of their children. They said that refusal on part of parents could risk the life of their children.



FAISALABAD: Special Advisor to PM for Human Rights and Women Empowerment, Mushal Hussein Mullick, receiving honorary shield from VC of Government College University.

ECP hold workshop in Hazara University F.P. Report

MANSEHRA: A Students Vote Education and Awareness Workshop held at Hazara University Mansehra, arranged by PILDAT to mainstream Youth into Electoral Process. Regional Election Commissioner Abbottabad and District Election Commissioner Mansehra addressed students and answered their questions.

They emphasised upon students to confirm their votes quickly as 25th October 2023 is last date for Vote Registration, Correction, Transfer and deletion. Both speakers also urged students to fulfill their national duty by casting vote in upcoming General Elections. Faheem moderated the workshop. District Election Commissioner Mansehra and his staff arranged a Mock Poll exercise to familiarize Students to learn Voting process at the polling station. Students took keen interest in the Session and Mock poll exercise.

Mother killed daughter injured over family feud F.P. Report

MARDAN: Family feud claimed life of a woman and serious bullet injuries to her daughter on Mardan-Nowshera road near Masithi Railway Pattak on Wednesday. The officias of relevant police station Sheikh Maltoon Town, quoted the injured female identified as Aleena, 18, as saying that she along with her mother named Mst Nazia were on their way to Mardan Kachehri after having meeting with her imprisoned father in district jail Mardan when the incident took place.

She told police that their rivals identified as Intiyaz and Khalid opened firing over them when they reached near Masithi Pattak, resolutely, her mother died instantly while she herself received multiple bullet injuries. Police had registered FIR on the complaint of injured girl against the accused Intiyaz and Khalid followed by beginning further investigations into the case by the police. However, it is pertinent to mention here that son of the slain woman identified as Raees had gunned down four persons including his grandmother, maternal uncle, his wife and infant son about one month back. Later, on the occasion, the alleged killer Raees was also shot dead by relatives of the victims.

Fazal Haq serving nation: Eminent educationist and Principal of The Fazal Haq College Mardan Samina Khan said that the success of children depends on the attention of their parents. Fazal Haq College is an ideal educational institution. We are not involved in the race of marks and positions. We are focusing on training along with the education of children. She was talking to media representatives in her office. Principal Samina Khan said that the leadership of Fazal Haq College is a challenge. No less, this college has a glorious past and bright future.

Law College students hold protest against extra fees

F.P. Report

LARKANA: The students of Shaheed Benazir Bhutto Law College took out a rally against the increase in examination fees, which turned into a protest in front of the Larkana Press Club, where the students protested against the injustices of the college administration.

Addressing the sloganising demonstration, Abdul Samad Jagirani, Mir Umran, Shoaib Abbasi and others said that first, second and third-year students at Shaheed Benazir Bhutto Law College in Larkana. A letter has been issued to increase the annual examination fee from seven thousand to fifteen thousand rupees, which is a complete abuse and injustice to the students.

While the college management is engaged in trying to take away the educational rights of the students by artificially increasing the examination fees, instead of reducing the fees, increasing the fees is a

conspiracy to destroy the education system completely, he said. Majority of the students in the colleges are poor students who have been admitted to get education. Due to the sudden increase in the fees, they are now in despair.

The notification of increase in transfer fees should be withdrawn, other distressed students will be forced to take important measures, the responsibility of which will be assigned to the college administration.

Police arrests 18 alleged culprits: The police of Larkana district arrested 18 accused including those wanted in various cases of serious nature during operations in different areas, while stolen goods including mobile phones, motorcycles were recovered. While conducting an operation, accused Barkat Shabrani was arrested along with an unlicensed gun and a large quantity of bullets, while the officials of Hydari Police Station

arrested Kashif Gad, the kingpin of crime, along with a revolver, bullets and two mobile phones.

SHO of Walid Police Station along with the staff arrested the alleged accused Saeed Mirjat, Atta Gopang, Ghulam Haider and Toheed Abro during the operation while Taluk police station arrested Ropooosh Mills Arbab Hoti. And Baqrani police arrested the wanted suspect Sajjad Lashari, Warisno Machhi police arrested two wanted suspects Saadullah Brohi and Jameel Gangharu, while Arja police arrested the wanted suspect Mor Sheikh and Market police raided the gambling den and arrested seven gamblers.

After that, they were handed over to Lockup. Meanwhile, the police of Bakapur Jail recovered a motorcycle during patrolling, while investigation has been started after filing a case against the arrested accused at the police station of their limits.

Parties urged to donate Rs1b to national exchequer

F.P. Report

LOWER DIR: The Gujjar Qaumi Movement (GQM) Chief Haji Zarin Khan Gujjar has asked all the political parties to voluntarily donate Rs 1 billion to national exchequer owing to the deteriorating economic situation in the country.

Speaking at a news conference at Chakdara after returning from a two-day trip to Azad Jammu and Kashmir here on Wednesday, Haji Zarin demanded the national accountability bureau to take into accounts all the previous lawmakers irrespective of their political status. The GQM general secretary Muhammad Nazir Gujjar and other activists were also present on the occasion.

Haji Zarin said that they visited the Azad Kashmir area on the invitation of the Azad Gujjar Forum Dadyal chapter where they met with leaders of the Gujjar clan. He thanked the Forum's president Jehangir

Khan and his cabinet members Javed Khan, Juma Gul, Ali Muhammad and Gul Zaman.

The GQM chief said the election commission of Pakistan should declare the plunders ineligible for contesting the next general elections in the country. He said the caretaker government with the support of the Chief of Army Staff General Asim Munir had launched several operations for strengthening the economy, curbing power theft, tax evasion, currency smuggling and illegal hoarding in the country.

He said that his party was fully supporting the government and the establishment in this regard. He said the government should make no compromise on expelling people having no legal travel documents. He asked the government to take strict actions against the elements involved in currency smuggling. The GQM declared May 9 and 10 as a tragic incident and said that his party would never support such acts and

vandalism in Pakistan. He demanded the establishment in the military courts and made them an example for others.

PTI lawmakers: The Pakistan Tahreek Insaf former MPAs Malik Shafiqullah Khan, Malik Liaquat Ali and Azam Khan were re-arrested by the anti-corruption department soon after their release from the district jail Timergara here on Wednesday. Earlier a local court confirmed their bail request and ordered their release from the jail.

The former lawmakers were taken into custody by the anti-corruption department on the alleged irregularities in the appointment of class IV employees to different government departments. Talking to local journalists the former lawmakers said that they stood by the PTI chief Imran Khan and would never leave him in this difficult time. They said that no pressure could force them to part ways with the PTI.

GHS Topi named after Sahibzada Abdul Qayyum Khan

F.P. Report

SWABI: Commissioner Mardan Division Shaukat Ali Yousafzai named the Government Higher Secondary School Topi after the first Muslim Chief Minister Sir Sahibzada Abdul Qayyum Khan in an open court held at Tehsil Complex Topi.

In an office in Topi Tehsil, he immediately announced the opening of a License branch and the solution to the drainage problem in Gadoon Industrial Estate. In Kachhari, especially Commissioner Mardan Division Shaukat Ali Yousafzai, RPO Mardan Division Muhammad Sulaiman Khan, DPO Swabi Harun Ali Rasheed, Deputy Commissioner Swabi Gohar Ali, Tehsil Chairman Haji Muhammad Rahim Jadoon, four Tehsil ACs, except the officers of all departments.

Traders, counselors, administrators, industrialists, people from every school of thought participated. Use of Narcotics in school, colleges and other issues including the increase in transport fares were also discussed in detail.

Commissioner Mardan Division, RPO and Deputy Commissioner Swabi immedi-

ately issued orders for the arrest of those involved in drug trafficking. Later, on the demand of the people of Topi, the name of Sir Sahibzada Abdul Qayyum Khan was announced as Higher Secondary School Topi. Apart from this, he also announced the opening of drainage in Gadoon Industrial Estate and licenses branch in Tehsil Topi. On this occasion, Commissioner Muradan said that the doors of Deputy Commissioner Swabi and my office are open all the time.

The RPO immediately responded to police complaints. Taking notice, the DPO issued instructions to all the SHOs to take immediate action against the drug dealers in their respective areas. Tehsil Mayor Rahim Jadoon presented a traditional turban to Commissioner Mardan and RPO Mardan Division, while AC Swabi were Ravithi Cheel. At the end of the program, a collective prayer was offered. On this occasion, Commissioner Mardan Division Shaukat Ali Yousafzai, DIG Mardan Division Sulaiman Khan, several police officers, DPO Swabi Haroon Rasheed, DSP Topi Shafiq Khan, SHO Kalu Khan, Ajab Khan Durrani, SHO Chhota, for their excellent performance and especially in the anti-narcotics campaign.



Thursday, October 12, 2023

Navy ‘tracks’ Iranian ships with unmanned systems

WASHINGTON (Agencies): Traditionally crewed ships and aircraft teamed up with 12 unmanned platforms to conduct enhanced maritime security operations in the Strait of Hormuz last month. The exercise involved "tracking" Iranian navy and Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps navy ships and small boats in the region, according to US Naval Forces Central Command.

"The integration of new, multi-domain unmanned platforms into routine fleet operations provides more 'eyes on the water,' enhancing maritime domain awareness and increasing deterrence in the region," said Vice Adm. Brad Cooper, commander of US Naval Forces Central Command and US 5th Fleet, in a Navy news release Friday. The operation came after the Navy sent the amphibious assault ship Bataan and dock landing ship Carter Hall, with more than 3,000 sailors and Marines embarked, to US 5th Fleet in July to bolster security in the region. That move was in response to recent attempts by Iran to harass and seize merchant vessels. US Central Command claims Iran has attacked or seized approximately 20 vessels since 2021. These unmanned platforms can assist keeping navigation safe and promoting the free flow of commerce in the region, Cooper said.

"This enhanced maritime security serves as a deterrent against malign activity and strengthens regional stability, which is good for everybody," he said. The Navy did not disclose

which type of unmanned platforms participated in the exercise, but said they included underwater, surface and aerial vehicles. Seven task forces were involved. Navy creating unmanned, AI operations hub within US Southern Command Among them was Task Force 59, which was established in September 2021 to foster experimentation and integration of unmanned systems and artificial intelligence with maritime operations. The task force operates more than 100 unmanned vessels, and it has paved the way for similar initiatives involving unmanned systems in Central and South America. Capt. Joe Baggett, director of maritime operations for US Naval Forces Central Command and US 5th Fleet, noted that the command has operated unmanned systems for years, but said "manned-unmanned teaming" operations will become the norm moving forward. "Adding our new USVs, and then integrating all of these platforms into fleet operations, is how we expect to fly and sail well into the future," Baggett said in the release. Secretary of the Navy Carlos Del Toro told Navy Times' sister publication, Defense News, in December 2022 that integrating unmanned platforms into maritime operations would require perfecting the technology so they can operate safely and independently, and ensuring that the Navy develops a concept of operations needed to "match the unmanned technology with the manned technology." "The third part of that is continue to

refine the training and the cultural changes that are necessary so we can train our workforce to be able to integrate those technologies into our warfighting structure, as well as provide the data, the intel and the warfighting capability necessary to support the joint force," Del Toro said.

The Department of Defense has deployed multiple assets to deter Iranian maritime hostility. In addition to the Bataan and Carter Hall, the department sent Air Force F-35 and F-16 fighter jets and the destroyer Thomas Hudner to the region in July after Iran tried to seize two oil tankers in the Strait of Hormuz and the Gulf of Oman on July 5. In one instance, an Iranian ship fired upon one of the merchant vessels, Pentagon press secretary Sabrina Singh told reporters in July. The US Navy destroyer McFaul intervened in both cases and the Iranian vessels subsequently departed the scene. Last month, Iran's Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps navy shined a laser at a Marine Corps AH-1Z Viper attack helicopter assigned to the 26th Marine Expeditionary Unit deployed with the Bataan. "These are not the actions of a professional maritime force," US Naval Forces Central Command spokesman Cmdr. Rick Chernitzer said in a statement last month. "This unsafe, unprofessional and irresponsible behavior by the Iranian Revolutionary Guard Corps navy risks US and partner nation lives and needs to cease immediately."

Zimbabwe MPs lose seats because of fake letter

HARARE (Agencies): Fifteen opposition MPs in Zimbabwe have filed a court appeal saying they were tricked into losing their parliamentary seats. The losses came after a man falsely claiming to be the party's secretary said the MPs were no longer members. On receipt of the fake letter, Zimbabwe's parliamentary speaker declared the 15 seats vacant.

Resultant by-elections could hand ruling party Zanu-PF the majority it needs to amend the constitution. Letter was signed by "Sengezo Tshabangu", who claimed to be the secretary general for Citizens Coalition for Change (CCC), Zimbabwe's main opposition party.

It was littered with grammatical errors. CCC leader Nelson Chamisa asked speaker Jacob Mudenda to disregard the letter, saying the party had no secretary general and had not expelled or recalled any MP. "The conduct of Mr Tshabangu is in fact a wanton violation of our laws and a clear act of criminality," Mr Chamisa wrote. Despite the opposition leader's request, Mr Mudenda, a Zanu-PF MP, declared the 15 seats vacant in a letter to the electoral commission. The affected CCC MPs filed a court appeal. "We will not accept such disdainful conduct against our constitution and our democracy," said Promise Mkwanzzi, spokesman for the CCC. The case is likely to worsen political tensions, which have been running high in the southern African country since controversial presidential elections in August. Mr Chamisa, 45, lost to incumbent 81-year-old president Emmerson Mnangagwa in a race that international observers said fell short of democratic standards. Zanu-PF, who have been in power for more than 40 years, secured a majority in parliament, but fell a few lawmakers short of the number required to change the constitution. The CCC alleged that since the election, more than a dozen people affiliated with its party, including MPs and councilors, have been arrested on spurious charges.

Russia launches drones into Ukraine

KYIV (Agencies): Russia launched 36 drone attacks overnight on Ukraine, according to Kyiv's air force, in Moscow's latest air raid targeting the country. Ukraine's air force said in a statement that its defence systems had destroyed 27 of the drones. The attacks using Iran-made Shahed drones targeted the Odesa, Mykolaiv and Kherson regions of Ukraine, the air force said on the Telegram messaging app.

Moscow launched a total of 36 Iranian-made drones from the Russia-annexed Crimean peninsula, it added. The air force did not say which targets, if any, the nine other drones may have hit. The governor of Mykolaiv, Vitaliy Kim, said on Telegram that one of the drones had been destroyed over his region. There was no immediate comment from Russia. Separately, Kherson region's administration said on its Telegram channel that four people had been injured and several buildings damaged in 79 instances of shelling using mortars, artillery and drones. Russia has stepped up attacks on ports in southern Ukraine since exiting a deal that allowed safe passage for grain shipments through the Black Sea in July. Kyiv has also warned that Moscow is restarting a campaign of aerial attacks on Ukrainian energy infrastructure, mirroring attacks that last year left millions without heating and water for long periods. In September, Moscow launched more than 500 Shahed drones - a monthly record, according to Ukrainian consultancy group Defense Express. Moscow launched its full-scale invasion of Ukraine in February 2022, after annexing the Crimean peninsula from Ukraine in 2014.

‘Not proud at all’: Japan’s army struggles to recruit



TOKYO (BBC): A recent open day at a Japanese military base near Tokyo was a fun family outing but, despite the games and snacks, the army recruitment stand was bereft of visitors. "This is the reality. The festival is always packed but no one comes," confessed one of the two soldiers on duty, unwanted leaflets on the table next to a green armoured vehicle.

Japan has massively upped its defence spending in recent years, alarmed by China's growing assertiveness in the region and the frequency of North Korea's missile tests. But a report by a panel of experts in July highlighted an "extremely high" risk that the armed forces would be weakened because of a lack of personnel. Although numbers fluctuate from year to year, since 1990 the strength of the Self-Defence Forces, as Japan's military is known, has fallen by more than seven percent to under 230,000.

In 2022 fewer than 4,000 people joined up, undershooting the target by more than half. The last time its objective was met was in 2013. Many advanced economies are having problems recruiting enough people, with the situation particularly acute in Japan, where one in 10 people is 80 or over. But according to current and former soldiers who spoke to AFP, it's not just demographics to blame. "I was ashamed to say that I was in the Self-Defence Forces. It didn't make me proud at all," said Yuichi Kimura, 45, a former parachutist who now runs a firm helping former soldiers get civilian jobs.

Morale is "low", he said, due to "poor pay" and a "lack of ambition" on the part of the armed forces, whose role since World War II has been exclusively defensive in line with Japan's pacifist constitution. Many join up hoping to help during natural disasters, but are dismayed to find themselves doing military tasks. "Most soldiers weren't thinking at all about national defence (when they joined)," said Kohei Kondo, 25, a former sergeant.

Japan's defence ministry insists it only recruits suitable candidates but according to media reports, standards have fallen, including when it comes to psychological tests. In June, two people were killed by a new recruit in a shooting incident at a military firing range.

Japan "recruits just about anybody because no one expects an actual armed conflict", said Kimura, the former paratrooper. In an effort to halt the decline, in 2018 Japan increased the maximum age for new soldiers to 32 from 26. Another solution, the July report said, is to use more unmanned vehicles in the air, on sea and on land. The army is even reportedly considering allowing recruits with tattoos - markings traditionally associated with "yakuza" gangsters.

Japan also aims to increase the proportion of women by 2030 to 13 percent, from nine percent at present. Featuring photos of smiling servicewomen, the defence ministry website promises "an environment adapted to women". But according to Fumika Sato, professor of military sociology and gender sociology at Hitotsubashi University, there is a considerable gap with "reality on the ground". The army is "an environment conducive to harassment and sexual violence", she told AFP. The army has been roiled for the past year by a series of damaging revelations of sexual assault within its ranks. They started when former soldier Rina Gonoï went public with explosive allegations of abuse that drew major attention.

There is no concrete evidence of a link, but in the year to March 2023, the number of female recruits tumbled 12 percent, having previously risen every year since 2017. "Things were happening in my company that could have had the same repercussions," admitted Kodai Suzuki, 27, another former soldier. "What parents would let their daughter join such an institution?" a serving junior officer said on condition of anonymity.

China raises concerns over Scot’s Taiwan trip

BEIJING (Agencies): China has conveyed its disapproval to Australia over a visit to Taiwan by former Prime Minister Scott Morrison, according to a Beijing diplomat, with the trip threatening to undermine efforts by both countries to improve relations ahead of a state visit later this year. Speaking at the Asia Society event in Melbourne on Wednesday, Ambassador Xiao Qian said Morrison's visit to Taiwan was a "serious concern" and hoped Australia's politicians would be "sensitive" to China's views.

After years of diplomatic tensions, relations between the two major trading partners have normalized ahead of Prime Minister Anthony Albanese's planned visit to Beijing later this year. However recent trips to Taiwan by Australian politicians may derail the warming ties. Morrison met with Taiwan President Tsai Ingwen at the Presidential Palace in Taipei, according to the Central News Agency, where he delivered a speech saying that

Australia would "always be great friends with the people of Taiwan." Just last month, a delegation of Australian lawmakers visited Taiwan. Although Taiwan has been self-ruled since the end of China's civil war in 1949, the government in Beijing views the island as a renegade province. President Xi Jinping has said China will do what's necessary to reunite Taiwan with the mainland.

China's envoy on Wednesday said he wanted to see the relationship between Australia and China develop even further, adding the common ground between the two countries was greater than their differences. "We want to move beyond stabilization, and to further improve our relationship," Xiao said. Relations between Australia and China reached their lowest point in 2020, after Morrison who was the prime minister called for an international investigation into the origins of Covid-19 - a politically sensitive issue for Beijing. In response, the

Chinese government imposed trade sanctions on a range of Australian exports, including heavy tariffs on wine and barley. Following the election of Albanese's center-left Labor government in May 2022, Australia and China saw significant improvement in their relations. High-level ministerial meetings between the two countries restarted, while a number of sanctions on Australian exports were lifted. Albanese is expected to visit Beijing before the end of 2023, a trip scheduled to mark 50 years since the first visit of an Australian leader to China in 1973.

Asked about growing concerns over the state of the Chinese economy, Xiao said the worsening data in recent months was only temporary and that the overall trajectory of the country's growth was positive. "Australia should have confidence in China's economy, and should have confidence in trade relations, economic relations between the two countries," he said.

Cuba keeps seat on UN Human Rights Council

HAVANA (Agencies): Cuba was reelected to the United Nations Human Rights Council despite criticism from several advocacy groups and activists about the island government's imprisonment of over a thousand peaceful protesters and dissenters. Notably, Russia, which was kicked out of the council last year after its invasion of Ukraine, could not win its seat back.

Cuba received 146 votes, and Russia only 83. The council members are elected by the 193 UN nations with a simple majority of 97 votes for a three-year term. Candidates are selected by region. The Cuban government quickly celebrated the diplomatic victory on social media. "The reelection of Cuba to the Human Rights Council is a recognition by the international community of the humanist work of the Revolution," Cuban Foreign Affairs Minister Bruno Rodríguez said on X. "We will continue on our

path towards building a more just society for all." The election of Cuba and other authoritarian nations like China adds to the debate over the council's fairness and its real power to hold human-rights violators accountable. Nikki Hailey, a Republican presidential candidate and former US ambassador to the UN, Nikki Hailey, weighed in after the vote, calling the council "a farce." "China and Cuba are some of the worst human-rights abusers in the world, and today they won reelection to an entity that is supposed to protect human rights," she said in a statement. "I've said it before, and I'll say it again: the UN Human Rights Council is a sham and an organization that is not worthy of its name."

Ahead of the vote a joint report by UN Watch, Human Rights Foundation and the Raoul Wallenberg Center for Human Rights, three non-government organizations that promote

human rights around the world, highlighted that authoritarian governments have used the seat at the council to protect abusers and have failed to advocate for the victims. The report deemed Cuba, Russia, China, Burundi, and Kuwait as "unqualified" to be part of the council. The last two countries also won their seats. "Cuba is an authoritarian, undemocratic, one-party communist state [that] continues to quash all dissent, prohibit independent media, and severely restrict basic civil liberties," the report says. "Cuba commits serious human rights violations, including unlawful or arbitrary killings.... torture and cruel, inhuman and degrading treatment of political dissidents, detainees, and prisoners by security forces; harsh and life-threatening prison conditions; arbitrary arrests and detentions." Cuban exiles and activists had called on the international communi-

ty to reject the country's candidacy.

"Naming Raul Castro and his puppet Miguel Diaz-Canel to sit on the world's human-rights body would be like placing Jack the Ripper on the committee to end knife violence in London," said John Suarez, the executive director of the Center for a Free Cuba. "If Cuba is reelected to the Human Rights Council, it will be with the support of complicit states," Cuban activist Carolina Barrero said on X. "We Cubans, human rights organizations and activists, condemn the reelection of a bloody dictatorship that has plunged our country into misery and oppression." As a current member of the Human Rights Council, Cuba has opposed resolutions speaking out for human-rights victims in Iran, Syria, Belarus, Burundi, Nicaragua and Venezuela, the joint report says, and has not supported resolutions to support victims in Ukraine.

Hurricane Lidia crashes into Mexico’s Pacific coast

MEXICO CITY (Agencies): Hurricane Lidia has crashed into Mexico's Pacific coast as an "extremely dangerous" Category 4 storm, killing at least one person as residents sought shelter from torrential rain and powerful winds. Lidia made landfall near the popular beach resort of Puerto Vallarta, with maximum sustained winds of about 220km per hour (140 miles per hour) the United States National Hurricane Center (NHC) said.

"Life-threatening winds and flooding rainfall spreading inland over west-central Mexico," the NHC said in a bulletin. Mexican President Andres Manuel Lopez Obrador said the government had deployed about 6,000 members of the

armed forces to help residents. "You must take refuge in safe places - stay away from low areas, streams, rivers and hillsides," he wrote on social media.

Authorities in the state of Nayarit said one man was killed when a tree fell on the van he was driving north of Puerto Vallarta. In the town, residents boarded up windows and dragged sacks of sand from the beach to reinforce flood barriers in front of their shops.

Authorities at the airport said it would be closed until 8am (14:00 GMT) on Wednesday. School classes were suspended, businesses closed early and most residents waited out the storm at home or in shelters opened by the

authorities, according to reporters from the AFP news agency. Social media videos showed heavy rain as far as the inland city of Guadalajara. Some people reported fallen trees blocking roads and rivers threatening to burst their banks. Lidia was expected to bring rainfall of up to 30cm (12 inches) to Nayarit, Sinaloa and Jalisco states, the NHC said. "These rains will likely produce flash and urban flooding, along with possible mudslides in areas of higher terrain near the coast," it warned. "A dangerous storm surge is expected to produce significant coastal flooding near and to the south of where the center makes landfall. Near the coast, the surge will be accompa-

nied by large and dangerous waves," the NHC added. Hurricanes hit Mexico every year on both its Pacific and Atlantic coasts, usually between May and November. Further south, Tropical Storm Max left two people dead and injured at least two more in the southern state of Guerrero, one of the country's poorest regions, authorities said.

Lidia comes eight years after Patricia, a Category 5 hurricane - the highest level on the Saffir-Simpson scale - struck close to Puerto Vallarta with winds that forced thousands of people to flee their homes. Scientists have warned that storms are becoming more powerful as the world gets warmer with climate change.

US, Venezuela near deal on sanctions relief for steps toward fair elections

CARACAS (Agencies): The US and Venezuela are close to reaching an understanding that would bring limited sanctions relief in exchange for steps to ensure fair elections in the Latin American country next year, according to people familiar with the matter. As part of the informal deal, the US would be willing to lift some oil and banking sanctions on Venezuela once Caracas announces measures to hold its presidential elections in a more democratic fashion, the people said. Those steps would include removing a ban on all opposition candidates to run for office. Once those conditions are met, the US would be open to lifting penalties on both Venezuela's central bank and the state-owned development bank, giving the

administration of President Nicolas Maduro a path to reengage with financial institutions to recover at least \$3 billion held in accounts in Europe, according to the people, who asked not to be identified discussing the fragile discussions.

Sanctions relief being considered by President Joe Biden's administration would also extend to members of Maduro's entourage, the people said, though it's not expected to include prominent financiers such as Alex Saab, a top Maduro ally who has been imprisoned in the US since 2021. Venezuela's Information Ministry didn't immediately respond to a request for comment. In a step that could pave the way for relief from US sanctions, Venezuelan government

representatives are expected to reach an agreement with opposition leaders on the election, the people said. They intend to close the agreement ahead of the Oct. 22 opposition primary elections, according to the people.

Ending the ban on opposition candidates, including frontrunner Maria Corina Machado, would clear the way for them to run in the 2024 election, according to the people. Candidates must still request removal of the restriction to Venezuela's Supreme Court, a requirement that delayed the agreement for months as it's seen as key to giving Machado a chance to win the vote. Maduro has also agreed not to interfere with the opposition primaries later this month and to invite international observers to oversee

the general election, as well as to release dozens of political prisoners from detention centers, which was a crucial point for Washington, according to one of the people. A spokesperson for the White House National Security Council said that the US is ready to provide sanctions relief once Venezuela moves toward restoring democracy and holding fair elections. So far, the spokesperson said, Venezuela hasn't taken those steps. Maduro has sought for years to end US sanctions on the feeble Venezuelan economy to guarantee his regime the financing it needs to keep operations afloat. His government is in dire need of cash to potentially launch his third presidential campaign ahead of the 2024 vote.

Haley calls UN Human Rights Council ‘a farce’

WASHINGTON (Agencies): Former South Carolina Gov. Nikki Haley (R) called the United Nations Human Rights Council (UNHRC) a "farce". "I saw it as ambassador firsthand & today is further proof," Haley said in a post on X, the platform formerly known as Twitter. "China & Cuba are human rights abusers, & today they won reelection to an entity that's supposed to protect human rights. The UNHRC is a sham. It is not worthy of its name."

Haley, who served as US ambassador to the UN from 2017 to 2018 under her rival

for the 2024 GOP presidential nomination, former President Trump, was commenting on China and Cuba's reelection to the UNHRC. According to the UN, 15 new members were elected to the council as well. Russia and Peru failed to secure seats, the UN said. Haley has been a strong critic of China during her current presidential campaign, calling trips by Biden administration Cabinet members "embarrassing" last month. "You don't send Cabinet members over to China to appease them," Haley said in an interview

on CNN's "State of The Union." "You start getting serious with China and say we're not going to put up with it. They keep sending different Cabinet officials over ... and it's embarrassing." She has even called out Trump, saying he "showed moral weakness" during meetings with Chinese President Xi Jinping in a speech earlier this year. "Trump was almost singularly focused on our trade relationship with China ... but Trump did too little about the rest of the Chinese threat," Haley said.

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JALIL AFRIDI
Managing Editor

Printed and published by Mahmood Afridi at
Moraka's Printers, 27 Abdara Road, University Town,
Peshawar.

Peshawar Office: 091-5700095, 0300- 9009001

Peshawar Fax: 091-5703687, Post Box No. 573

E-mail: fppeshawar@thefrontierpost.com

Lahore Office: 0335-4026284

Email: fplahore@thefrontierpost.com

Islamabad Office: 0321-5066253

Email: mahmoodafridi@thefrontierpost.com

Karachi Office: 021-32213411, 0300-8340907

Email: fpkarachi@thefrontierpost.com

“USA and Canada Toll Free Number 1-800-5905747

The darment ECO

THE 27th session of the Council of Ministers of the 10-member ECO bloc was recently held at Shusha, the cultural capital of Azerbaijan. The Foreign Ministers of Pakistan, Iran, Turkey, Afghanistan, Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Uzbekistan, Tajikistan and Turkmenistan met at visiting resort of the Central Asian Republic and weighed the pros and cons of their three and a half decades old regional bloc that largely failed to achieve its manifesto throughout the past. The vast organizational setup including the ECO Secretariat, and multilayer mechanisms along country offices has no utility except holding periodic meetings, futile debates and actionless correspondence that could not contribute any positivity in the past decades except the expansion of the group from a three-nation party to 10 member bloc.

The Economic Cooperation Organization (ECO) is an intergovernmental body comprising 10 nations, 8 million square kilometres and half a billion people, representing 15% of the world population, and with a share of only about 2% in global trade. Meanwhile, ECO intra-regional trade is less than 8 per cent of the region's aggregate trade and in stark contrast to other regional groupings such as the EU and ASEAN, that should a matter of concern for the member states as well as the high-ups sitting in the group Headquarters in Istanbul. Interestingly, the bloc has set its targets and anticipated goals while adopting multiple agreements to boost intra-regional trade, travel, tourism, and multilateral cooperation but all those endeavours went in vain because of certain administrative and technical hurdles together with diverging trade and economic priorities of the member nations. The 13th ECO Summit approved historic ECO Vision 2025 and adopted a landmark preferential trade arrangement between the member states aiming to lower tariffs in the region over an agreed time frame. Unfortunately, after nearly a decade, all those promises and claims are still decorative instruments without implementation or practical application.

Historically, the ECO has made trivial progress in certain areas, while it faced several challenges and limitations in pursuance of its agenda over the past years. The bloc could only achieve limited economic integration, least infrastructural development and regional connectivity, inadequate institutional capacity and high tariff barriers among the member states marred the scope for regional economic multilateralism and shared growth. Meanwhile, persistent political tension among the member nations including unceasing political instability in Afghanistan seriously restricted the regional trade and connectivity within the bloc. Similarly, the global economic dynamics and external geopolitical factors adversely influenced the success of regional economic integration of the ECO bloc, which shared multiple bonds but lacked cooperation.

In fact, the ECO is a unique mechanism which provides the neighbouring Muslim nations in South and Central Asia with a sizeable forum for regular interaction, close cooperation, and strengthening of ties in their region. It also continues to hold the promise of a bright future for our succeeding generations with an enormous geo-political significance of their region which comprises the modern-day silk route from Tashkent and Bukhara to Kabal, Lahore, Karachi, Tehran to Ankara and Izmir. The ECO member nations must realize the importance of their bloc, by weighing their strengths and assessing the reasons behind their failures. That is nothing else except a lack of will, external interventions and laxity of the leaders, otherwise, this bloc is not inferior to the European Union, ASEAN and ECOWAS, which are vigorously pursuing shared economic aspirations of the people of their region. Hence, there is a dire need for renewed efforts for an early implementation of the ECO Connectivity framework and operationalization of road and rail links that can foster transit and trade activity throughout the region. After all, destiny could only be achieved through practical endeavours instead of actionless verbosity and theorization.

Smog, a serious hazard to human life

THE ever growing smog has now become an existential hazard for citizenry life in major cities including Lahore, Peshawar, Faisalabad, Hyderabad and Karachi, while this deadly phenomena is shaping into catastrophe in small cities and towns throughout the country. Recently, the metropolitan government ordered all private and public schools along with markets and factories to remain closed on Wednesday due to the worsening smog situation in the Provincial Capital. The public offices will operate with 50% strengths and the Punjab government was mulling to impose coronavirus-like restrictions in Lahore metropolitan area to control the worsening effects of smog that causes serious risks to citizenry life.

Smog, a combination of smoke and fog, can have several negative effects on both the environment and human health. That poisonous polluted air puts harmful effects on respiratory system, leading to conditions such as asthma, bronchitis, and aggravated allergies along with causing serious Cardiovascular Issues in human beings and animals. Smog is also hazardous for vegetation, decreases crop yields, and contributes to acid rain, damaging forests, lakes, and other ecosystems along with reducing visibility, impairing vision and the likelihood of accidents on the road and in aviation.

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The Frontier Post will not be responsible for the comments in the articles and letters. The Frontier Post requests the writers of articles and letters to please make sure that they write their email addresses and mention the names of the cities, towns, districts or teshil of their residences at the bottom of their articles and letters.



Europe needs rational, not emotional, debate on immigration

Nadim Shehadi

FAIRUZ, the iconic Lebanese singer, puts on the melancholic tone of a lovesick girl with a dilemma who longingly appeals to her absent lover to "Come and Don't Come." She asks him to lie to her and say that he is coming: "A lie is not a sin, promise that you will come and come but don't come." Europe has a similar predicament with immigration.

Europe's problem is that it badly needs immigrants but at the same time it is doing everything it can to prevent them from coming and, when they do arrive, it has difficulties integrating them into society. Politically, the resurgence of far-right parties and the difficulties in integrating immigrants and refugees is a toxic combination. Yet the dual problems of an aging population and an imbalance in the distribution of skills means that Europe needs to find a way to accommodate young newcomers and train them to fill both gaps.

In Western Europe in particular, aging populations mean that social security systems are threatened with collapse if there is no injection of young people who will contribute to future retirement pensions. The math is simple: we have always been under the illusion that our social security contribution is an investment in our own future, like putting money in a piggy bank. In reality, today's contributions are financing other people's current pensions. What pensioners long ago thought of as investing in their own future is paid for by the contributions of younger people today. An aging population means less money available for more people. The piggy bank has a gaping hole in the bottom that keeps growing, while it is being filled less and less. Europe is also moving politically to the right as it gets older. When the young people of today reach the age of retirement, their pensions need to be paid for by the young people of tomorrow, but there will not be enough of them if their numbers are not boosted by immigration. People are living longer

and, the longer they live, the more they will depend on pension funds - immigration is their lifeline and they are against it at the same time.

But this is not all. For Europe to become competitive, especially with the rise of China, it needs to regain a set of skills it has lost over time. It has invested in higher and less practical academic qualifications and lost the more practical ones. The result is that there are more engineers than there are mechanics. In the health sector, what is needed are more nurses and people to operate machines and maintain them; there is no shortage of doctors. You may have the chefs, but you also need the sophisticated maitre d' with languages, as well as waiters, dish washers and potato peelers. Europe has invested in high-end academics and neglected vocational skills, meaning these need to be filled by immigration. In other words, the European workforce needs to import or train a broad range of skills that it has lost through its educational policies.

Tim Cook, the CEO of Apple, says that the popular conception that companies go to China because of low labor costs is wrong. "China stopped being the low-labor-cost country many years ago. And that is not the reason to come to China from a supply point of view. The reason is because of the skill, and the quantity of skill in one location and the type of skill it is," he said. Cook gives the Chinese educational system the credit for maintaining vocational expertise while other countries were de-emphasizing such skills.

He used the example of the tooling skills required to manufacture Apple products. "In the US, you could have a meeting of tooling engineers and I'm not sure we could fill the room. In China, you could fill multiple football fields," he said. For a society to function, you need plumbers, mechanics and people who can do maintenance - in other words, the full spectrum of skills. These are the ones that European nations

need to import, but they are only getting the mass labor that is not trained. Europe needs to invest in vocational training, especially of the newcomers, the immigrants and the refugees. You need to train the practical people to fill the gaps.

At the same time, immigration is a complex and controversial issue in Europe, as it involves economic, social, cultural and security aspects. You hear of social unrest, border disputes and threats to leave the EU, with walls and border fences being erected. Migrants and refugees are often perceived as a security threat and a source of social unrest in countries like France, Sweden, the Netherlands and Belgium. The attempts to stop them are also a humanitarian crisis involving human rights violations.

The International Organization of Migration estimates that more than 26,000 people have died or gone missing in the Mediterranean since 2014. Human rights organizations report that migrants are exploited, abused and subjected to violence and trafficking.

The bottom line is that Europe needs to find the right formula to integrate the migrants and, at the same time, avoid political problems like the rise of populism and the far right. It also needs to import or create the skills that are needed for it to restore a productive economy. It is a multidimensional balancing act. The choice is between two very different models of integration: the French and the British and their variants. The French approach is that of full assimilation. They believe they can turn new arrivals into Frenchmen and women and the emphasis is on republican values, such as universalism and secularism, leading to integration.

British multiculturalism has no such ambition. It recognizes and celebrates cultural and religious diversity and encourages the coexistence of various groups, which are given some autonomy and freedom in terms of religious and cultural practices. The same words have opposite

meanings in each model. Pluralism in the British model means that different communities can live together while preserving their own identities, while "pluralisme" in France means that different people can be integrated into one French culture and one identity.

Even if a happy medium is found and Europe manages a better integration, there is still a far more complicated problem of whether to treat the problems at source or to wait until they come to you. There was a time when intervention was justified in the countries that the migrants and refugees were fleeing from, and this was reflected in EU policies. Aid can be channeled to vocational training in the countries that are the source of migrants; it does not need to be done now, it should have been done 10 years ago. Ideally, Europe should be able to choose, like the Canadians do, based on certain criteria and needs. Attempts to make deals with countries like Tunisia, Libya and Turkiye to control the migration flow have had limited results and the methods remain controversial.

Looking at Europe from the East, the picture is different. The numbers of refugees and immigrants are relatively small compared to those absorbed by countries like Turkiye, Jordan, Lebanon and some Gulf states. The net inflow to Europe in 2021 was 1.2 million people in a population of close to 450 million, just over 5 percent of whom are migrants and refugees. It is not a case of exaggerating a problem, it is also a case of messing up the solution.

No wonder The Financial Times last month described European policy on refugees as being in "disarray," with little room for rational debate. A friend summarized it well by saying that Europe is all icing and no cake. What it is importing is a base, but to have the whole cake - i.e., the right combination of knowledge and skills - it needs to find a way of discussing immigration rationally rather than emotionally.

Arab peace initiative the only way to end the bloodshed

Dr. Dania Koleila Khatib

THE world was taken by surprise by the Hamas attack on Israel. No one was expecting this level of sophistication from the militant group. We still do not know how events will unfold, but we know one thing - the status quo that existed before the operation is not sustainable anymore.

Former US National Security Adviser H.R. McMaster tweeted that Israel should use the occasion to "crush" Hamas. Supposing that this was executable, what would happen next? New York Times columnist Thomas Friedman spoke of the need for Israel to restore its deterrence. Again, supposing this was feasible, what would come next? Going back to the situation prior to the operation does not look possible.

If anything, "Al-Aqsa Flood" has shown us that Israeli policies are not sustainable. The expansion of settlements, the occupation, the daily subjugation of Palestinians and the provocations at sacred sites do not work. The former head of Dubai police Dhahi Khalfan posted on his X account a video of a Palestinian child being brutalized by Israeli soldiers. He commented: "What do you expect from these children when they become young men?" Israel's goal has been to maintain the status quo, the occupation. Israel is not ready to accept a Palestinian state or to recognize the Palestinian right to statehood. At the same time, it does not want to give them citizenship. This would mean that Israel would lose its Jewish majority. These options represent tough choices for Israel - renouncing the land that many Israelis perceive was given to them by God or losing the Jewish character of the state.

To escape this dilemma, the safest political choice was to maintain the status quo, the occupation, while sweet-talking the international community about its intention to eventually accept the two-state solution. People blame Benjamin Netanyahu for expanding the settlements; however, settlements have expanded under every single Israeli government, even during the Oslo process. Though Netanyahu has been more vocal and his government more racist, his policies are merely a continuation of previous governments' policies. However, the Hamas operation has now broken that status quo. Israel needs to face reality - its policies have not worked. The other fact that this operation has revealed is that Israel is vulnerable and its enemies are beefing up their capabilities. The "edge," whether military or technological, that we used to hear about is no longer as obvious as it was before. And we are talking here about Hamas, not Hezbollah, which is far more sophisticated.

Does Israel want to try its luck? This might have the opposite effect to what is intended. While Israel wants to reestablish deterrence and show the Palestinians who is the boss, it might expose its vulnerability as well as its brutality. We have to

remember the war on Lebanon in 2006. Initially, the international community stood with Israel and its "right to defend itself" following the kidnapping of two soldiers on the Blue Line. However, after civilian casualties started amassing on the Lebanese side, international opinion changed and people started asking for a ceasefire. So, although the international community is currently supporting Israel, this support is likely to erode once Netanyahu executes his "vengeance" and turns Gaza into "rubble." Unlike before, when Palestinians were unequivocally accused of terrorism, today the mainstream media features pro-Palestinian commentators who are speaking about the root cause of the problem - illegal occupation.

Also, Israel should not underestimate the Palestinian people's resilience. I spoke to my Gazan friend following the Hamas operation and she told me that even she was shocked by her family's determination. She told me they are not afraid. They know they could be bombed at any time, so why would a new Israeli assault be any different? Hence, continuing the military operation would not really be in Israel's interest, especially now that the country is more fractured than ever before. To save his skin, Netanyahu would need to give his people something, but a total victory is not possible. For the Palestinians, it is do or die and they will not give up easily. Hamas leader Ismail Haniyeh has already spoken about the "battle" extending to the West Bank and Jerusalem. Does Israel want a situation it cannot control?

Now is the time to relaunch the Arab Peace Initiative. The Arab League, under the leadership of Saudi Arabia, should do so. Inside Israel, it is the time to rally round the flag, but the average Israeli can see that there is no end to this mess. This is the time to avert all-out war in the region, in which Israel would ultimately not be a winner. The Arab Peace Initiative should be promoted extensively to the Israeli public. In parallel, the Arab League should lobby for it with the UN, EU, NATO, the US and in capitals around the world. Of course, Israel will have its reservations and concerns, particularly regarding Iranian support for Palestinian factions. This is where the current rapprochement with Iran can be used to discuss the matter. However, it is important for Arab states to push for the Arab peace plan. Now is the time that the idea can capture the attention of the world. It should be presented as the solution that will end these periodic confrontations, which are getting bloodier with every new episode. Despite the narrative, the US knows that Israel is vulnerable and is facing grave threats that will not be extinguished by a land operation or by "obliterating Hamas' terror infrastructure," as some have suggested. The Arab Peace Initiative is the only viable endgame for everyone.

EU destined to miss its 2030 enlargement deadline

Ranvir S. Nayar

WHEN EU leaders met for an informal gathering in Granada in Spain last week, one of the key topics on the agenda dealt with one of the most problematic areas for the bloc - its long-pending enlargement. But when the EU released a press statement after the meeting, the issue was buried at the bottom, dismissed in a paragraph that said the potential future members and the current members alike needed to prepare for the expansion.

The EU has set itself a deadline of 2030, with 10 nations lined up for membership. The discussions on membership have been blowing hot and cold with many of these nations for nearly two decades, most notably with Turkiye, which has been a candidate since 1999, and North Macedonia, which has been waiting since 2005. But the EU has never been united on enlargement and some members have blocked mem-

bership talks with specific nations due to bilateral issues. For instance, France had a tiff with Turkiye and ensured that it stayed a perennial candidate country. Similarly, Greece had blocked Macedonia's candidature until it changed its name to North Macedonia. As recently as October 2019, France had vetoed accession talks with Albania and North Macedonia, citing problems with the process of expanding the EU.

However, it seems that the situation on the ground has changed significantly in the past year or so, especially due to the Russia-Ukraine war, which has pushed even a reluctant France to proactively campaign for a larger EU. It is believed this would help fend off Russian attempts to spread its influence in Europe. Going into the meeting in Granada, French President Emmanuel Macron was one of the most vocal champions of enlargement at the earliest opportu-

nity. He was backed by German Chancellor Olaf Scholz, who urged his fellow European leaders to expedite the membership negotiations for the countries that have been knocking on the EU's doors, waiting to be let in.

Of the 10 that are in the queue, eight - Turkiye, North Macedonia, Montenegro, Serbia, Albania, Moldova, Ukraine and Bosnia and Herzegovina - already have candidate status and have been holding seemingly never-ending negotiations to define the terms and conditions of their admission. Two more, Georgia and Kosovo, are awaiting candidate status so that they can also launch their own negotiations.

But the meeting in Granada showed the challenges that enlargement holds. First, not all the leaders are keen on enlargement as it would be an extremely

expensive proposition. The bloc's poorer member nations receive more funding each year to help them develop. It is estimated that integrating only one country, Ukraine, would add 186 billion (\$196 billion) to the cost over seven years. Taking all the candidate countries in at the same time would leave Brussels with a much larger bill to foot, as most of them have a lower gross domestic product per capita than the bloc's current poorest member, Bulgaria. With about 35 percent of the EU's budget dedicated to agriculture subsidies, the arrival of a large farming country like Ukraine would radically shift the current distribution sheet.

But it is not just a monetary question. The enlargement of the EU, with its current decision-making processes, would also make it a huge challenge to envisage how the organization

would work. Already, with the current 27 members, it struggles to arrive at many decisions. Most decisions, notably in foreign policy, have to be made by consensus only, which means even a small country, for its own reasons, can hold out, crippling the EU's decision-making process. The EU can also be tripped up in areas like migration and asylum policy, where decisions can be made by a qualified majority of 15 states, representing 65 percent of the bloc's population. This was clearly demonstrated at the Granada meeting, where Poland and Hungary joined hands to scuttle any decision.

Thus, if the bloc struggles to reach decisions rapidly when it has 27 members, it would require a major leap of faith to see it functioning smoothly and effectively if 10 more members were to be inducted. So, before the EU rushes into enlargement, which is a prospect very difficult to imagine in the cur-

rent situation, it would do well to overhaul its internal mechanisms in order to accommodate 10 more members and be a functional body of 37 or more nations. This would be a difficult task, as it would require political leaders to give up grandstanding and think beyond their own petty interests - and even beyond the interests of their own nation, giving precedence to the interests of the European community, even if the two are not really aligned. The decision-making process also needs to be simplified with the introduction of a simple majority, be it on the basis of the number of member states or in terms of overall population. But getting there will require a lot of hard work and sacrifices by all EU members. Currently, few leaders in the community seem capable of doing what is needed, meaning the 2030 deadline for enlargement is almost certain to be missed.

Conflict inevitable in the absence of a Palestinian state

Ghassan Charbel

It is too soon to wonder what the Israeli political, military and security institutions will conclude from the current developments. It is also too soon to wonder what Hamas will conclude. Will the Israeli institutions view the developments as a terrible setback that must be overcome by making Hamas and Gaza pay a price equal to the damage they have dealt the image of the Israeli army and its deterrence power? Will it preoccupy itself with punishing those whom it deems responsible while still preparing for the next war?

One must await the end of the war, which may spiral out of control if it stretches on and witnesses even greater violence than we have seen so far. What about Hamas? What will it conclude? Will it consolidate its conviction that there can be no other solution than war and prepare for more wars to come? In this case, what about the West Bank and the simmering tensions there in the wake of the current fighting? What about the Lebanese-Israeli border, where the embers lie in wait for the possible expansion of the war? What about the Lebanese-Syrian border? Will the war spread across it in spite of Russia's presence in Syria? What about the entire region? What of the allies of the warring parties, namely the US and Iran?

What is taking place is greater than just a war between Israel and the Gaza Strip. It is a new crossroads in a long and bitter conflict between the Israelis and Palestinians. It is no exaggeration to say that the new images are unprecedented. It is no simple feat for the Qassam Brigades to attack Israel by land, sea and air. It is no simple feat to confuse the Israeli

army like this. It is no simple feat to reach such heavy death tolls, cause this many injuries and take so many people captive. It is no simple feat to prepare for such a war and to take Israeli intelligence by surprise. We are speaking here about Gaza, which the Israeli army believed it was besieging and keeping a close eye on. The scenes are indeed unprecedented. It is no simple feat for Hamas fighters to enter the settlements around Gaza and take several residents hostage. It is also no simple feat for the Qassam Brigades to shower Israel with thousands of rockets.

The battle on the first day was that of optics above anything else. The regular Israeli army was incapable of immediately retaliating and addressing the loopholes that were exploited. Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu himself was forced to acknowledge that Israel was at war and that he had to call up the reservists. The memories of the people of the Middle East are full of long and bitter conflicts. The Palestinian-Israeli conflict is at the forefront. One of the many chapters of this long lesson is that the conflict cannot be resolved through war, and it also cannot be resolved through a settlement. The Israeli army achieved a resounding victory in 1967. It broke the Arab armies and occupied more territories. But the war did not force the losers to surrender. Instead, they retaliated hard in 1973. Israel was taken by surprise, but American support prevented an Arab victory. The shock of the war did not persuade Israel to opt for peace as a way to end the conflict. It only agreed to enough points that would see Egypt quit Gaza. Israel

was deluded into thinking that Egypt's departure would bring an end to the wars and that the Palestinian cause would eventually be forgotten.

In the 1970s, Beirut became the capital of the Palestinian cause. The clashes on the Lebanese-Israeli border were heated messages. The Palestinians were underscoring their demand for their rights. Israel was trying to deprive them of these rights. In 1982, Israel concluded that it should uproot the Palestine Liberation Organization from its last remaining foothold on the Arab-Israeli front line. The Israeli army invaded Lebanon and besieged Beirut, forcing the PLO to withdraw from the country. Israel believed at the time that the Palestinian cause would be defeated in exile. Neutral observers believe that Israel lost major opportunities to guide the conflict toward a settlement that would stop the cycle of wars. It lost the opportunity presented by Yasser Arafat's handshake with Yitzhak Rabin at the White House. It was a handshake between two warriors who each enjoyed full legitimacy in their own environment. Israel underestimated the importance of Arafat's political and military legitimacy and his Palestinian, Arab and Islamic legitimacy. Ariel Sharon was deluded in believing that a "boycott" of Arafat would destroy the Palestinians' dream of the establishment of their own state. Israel also wasted the opportunity presented by the Arab Peace Initiative, which was declared at the Arab League Summit in Beirut in 2002. The initiative was the product of arduous efforts to resolve the conflict in a way that would guaran-

tee the establishment of a Palestinian state side by side with Israel. The latter was promised that it would be included in the region should it be receptive to the proposal.

Israel's sense of superiority and power led it to waste more opportunities. It believed that the post-9/11 world and the US invasion of Iraq offered a golden opportunity to impose a status quo that disregards the essence of the Palestinian conflict. It took away all hope from the Palestinians and its behavior weakened the position of moderates, who were banking on reaching a negotiated settlement. Israeli society slipped further toward the right. The current Israeli government includes figures who make provocations on a daily basis. The result is the situation we have now. The embers of war could be blown in more than one direction. But the expansion of destruction and the war will not eliminate the extraordinary scenes that unfolded on that first day, when Israel witnessed the unexpected. This conflict can only be resolved through deriving some lessons. The first is acknowledging the Palestinians' right to have their own independent state. Any other option means merely biding time until another, even fiercer, war claims more lives, especially among civilians, and causes massive economic losses. The question remains: What will the fighters conclude when the fighting stops? They cannot emerge from this chronic conflict without carrying out a deep review and taking painful decisions. The formation of a Palestinian state is the first step toward establishing stability in the region. Without it, we will witness more conflicts like the one unfolding right now.

Arab News

Gaza 2023: Our Warsaw Uprising moment

Haidar Eid

It is Gaza again! But it is different this time! Instead of reacting to one of apartheid Israel's regular genocidal attacks, the resistance movements have taken the "first" step in an unprecedented move. Instead of waiting for Israel's "generosity" when it decides, through mediators, to open one of the seven gates of the largest open-air prisons on earth, the inmates - having learned from the Warsaw Uprising of 1944 - decided to bring it down themselves.

The deadly medieval siege that has been imposed on Gaza since 2007 - supported by the European Union and the United States - along with recurrent genocidal wars launched by Israel are an attempt to make the Palestinians of Gaza disappear - albeit slowly and painfully. No more! Enough is enough.

The resistance movements in Gaza, right and left, have decided to turn the table upside down. They have given the Palestinian struggle a new impetus, a clear direction towards liberation and decolonisation. To understand the events of today, it is important to remember the context of the Palestinian struggle of the past 30 years. The decision by the leadership of the Palestinian Liberation Organisation (PLO) to do what used to be unthinkable - coexist with Zionism - led to the disastrous Oslo Accords which, in effect, truncated Palestinian history. The Naksa - the Israeli occupation of the West Bank, Gaza the Golan Heights and the Sinai desert in 1967 became separate from the Nakba - the mass expulsion of Palestinians from their homeland in 1948.

The focus became the occupation and not the settler colonialism that stood behind it, while "peace negotiations" served as a cover for Israeli violence and the continued dispossession of the Palestinians. As Israeli historian Ilan Pappé maintains in his book *The Biggest Prison on Earth*: "Israeli strategists discovered that if you want to implement ethnic cleansing by other means, the alternative to expulsion is not to allow people to leave the place where they live - and thus they can be excluded from the democratic balance of power. They are contained inside their own areas, but do not have to be counted in the overall national demographics since they cannot freely move, develop or expand, nor do they have any basic civil and human rights." Apartheid Israel has made it absolutely clear that since it cannot get rid of us completely, we

must become its slaves, people without any rights. The majority of Israeli Jews support the genocidal policy of their governments because, as Zionists living in apartheid Israel, they are indoctrinated into believing that they are entitled to certain privileges that must be denied to the indigenous population of the land.

In 1948, to implement this racist ideology, ethnic cleansing was the solution. And in 1967, enslavement became the only option. In the face of this reality, Palestinians have reached common ground on the enemy being settler colonialism, but they have failed to agree on how decolonisation should be understood and achieved. In recent years, there has been a radical shift in the strategic thinking on this point, one that looks at Israeli-Palestinian relations within the framework of settler colonialism and apartheid. True liberation within this context means achieving true equality in historic Palestine after the return of all Palestinian refugees to the towns and villages from which they were ethnically cleansed in 1948. No wonder Gaza has decided to take this unprecedented move. Two-thirds of Gazans are refugees entitled to their right of return in accordance with United Nations General Assembly Resolution 194 of 1948.

It is rumoured that the resistance fighters who managed to enter Sderot are the grandsons of refugees from the village of Huj, which was ethnically cleansed by Zionist militias in 1948 and renamed Sderot. Others are from the village of Hirbya, renamed Zikim by the Israelis. They have dared to do the "unthinkable," i.e., return, not as visitors granted permission by the coloniser but as liberators upholding their right to their ancestral land. This radical act of return points to the post-Zionist future we should envision that will bring liberation to all. Liberation for us means dismantling the structures of Zionist settler colonialism and apartheid and addressing the inequalities and injustices it has inflicted on us, the indigenous population of Palestine, over the past 100 years.

Liberation for us aims to transform the relationship between Palestinians and Israelis into one based on total equality and justice. The settler society is expected to abandon all colonial privileges and display real willingness to accept responsibility for past crimes and injustices. The compromise that indigenous Palestinians are

expected to offer is to accept settlers as equal citizens in the new state between the Jordan River and the Mediterranean Sea. This is the path to peace and security, and the international community, which has long accepted Israel's war crimes against the Palestinians and has even been complicit in them, will have to embrace it. Having learned nothing from history, US President Joe Biden made it clear the day Palestinian fighters crossed through the barbed wire to Israel that he is fully behind Israel, giving its army the green light to commit more war crimes against the civilians of Gaza. Three days after the start of the resistance inside 1948 Palestine, Israel has killed more than 770 people in Gaza, including 140 children, and injured 4,000. More than 180,000 people have had to flee their homes as their neighbourhoods have been viciously targeted by Israeli war planes; I am one of them.

Leaders like Biden would do well to remember Brazilian educator and philosopher Paulo Freire's words: "With the establishment of a relationship of oppression, violence has already begun. Never in history has violence been initiated by the oppressed. How could they be the initiators, if they themselves are the result of violence? ... There would be no oppressed had there been no prior situation of violence to establish their subjugation. Violence is initiated by those who oppress, who exploit, who fail to recognize others as people - not by those who are oppressed, exploited, and unrecognized." In Gaza and Jenin, we refuse to march to Israel's death chambers like sheep. In Gaza and Jenin - in fact, in all of historic Palestine - we have made it absolutely clear that we will resist the settler, colonial, apartheid regime between the Jordan River and the Mediterranean. And we expect the international community to support our struggle for justice and freedom in exactly the same way as it has supported the Ukrainian resistance against the Russian invasion. The double standards we have seen have convinced us that it is our duty as Palestinians to create the political space for our liberation where none has been afforded to us. We cannot compromise on our basic rights, including the right to self-determination and the right of return. We have a clear path towards liberation that strays away from the facade of talking independence and camouflaged racist solutions.

Aljazeera

Starmer's vision silenced Labour sceptics

Rafael Behr

COMBINE confidence of success with dread of disappointment, and you get the nervous excitement at Labour's annual conference this week. On paper, the facts line up to make a Labour government look inevitable: opinion poll leads, by-election victories, demoralised Tories practically craving release into opposition.

But for a party that has swallowed a lot of defeat, a diet of promising data doesn't ease the gut feeling that something could still go horribly wrong. In the hotel bars and around the conference fringe, everyone knows that Keir Starmer is very probably Britain's next prime minister, but there has been a provisionality to that view that falls short of faith. Partly that is recognition that voters don't like to feel their support is taken for granted. But there are deeper reasons to resist complacency. Labour strategists know their road to power has to pave over a bog of public contempt for politics.

That is why Starmer's speech to conference on Tuesday explicitly posed the question: why Labour? He knows that national readiness to be rid of the Tories is not an embrace of the opposition. That is why his answer was dense with references to "security", "healing", "shelter", "the hope of the hard road". Starmer knows that his target audience feels shaken by years of economic volatility and burned by the dodgy pyrotechnics of glib promises. Indecision is hard to measure, but some polls suggest as many as one in six voters have no current preference.

Labour is ahead on issues that usually settle elections - trusted more than the Tories to run the economy, for instance - but a majority say they just don't know. Starmer is rated as a more capable leader than Rishi Sunak, but not by miles. His personal approval rating looks more like the negative scores Ed Miliband and Neil Kinnock were getting shortly before their defeats than the positive endorsements

that propelled Tony Blair to Downing Street. In terms of parliamentary arithmetic, Blair didn't have far to travel. But Starmer needs to gain 123 seats for a majority of one. The necessary swing is about 12 points, which is within the bounds of current polling but extremely rare for a general election. The last time it happened was Clement Attlee's 1945 landslide.

Usually, there is a late tilt back to the incumbent government. Then again, not much about British politics in recent years suggests that what usually used to happen is a reliable guide to what will come next. One trend that scrambles any predictive signals that precedent might send is the unravelling of traditional party identities. The 2019 general election looked superficially like a restoration of the old two-party duopoly. Around three-quarters of all votes were shared between Labour and Tories. But that tidy distribution masked volatility that had been building for a generation, and was supercharged by Brexit. The Tories' 2019 landslide completed a conversion of Labour's leave-voting heartlands that was already in evidence in the previous election.

Boris Johnson bagged the glory for toppling the "red wall", but the majorities he had to overturn had been eroded by Theresa May. She gets no credit because she also blew her party's majority elsewhere. That shock result in 2017 obscured more than it illuminated. Labour's voter coalition was an unstable coalition of people who wanted Jeremy Corbyn to be prime minister and people who really didn't, but felt it was safe to register an anti-May protest because polls suggested she couldn't actually lose. The closeness of the 2017 election gave the Tories a double advantage two years later. The red wall was on wobbly foundations already - and anti-Corbyn voters weren't taking any chances. Johnson's whopping

victory gave an illusion of decisive realignment to what expressed, in reality, millions of people losing the habit of voting for any party by default.

These are the undecideds who give Sunak a slender hope of blocking Starmer's path to a majority. They tend to be socially conservative, anxious about the cost of living, concerned about illegal immigration - and deeply sceptical about politics in general. They are not clustered in the red wall but live across the country, often in suburbs and small towns. "Stevenage woman" is the (typically crude but not inaccurate) demographic personification. She is a working mother in her forties, with a salary that is stretched thinner every month. She voted for Brexit and Johnson, not with any fixed ideological agenda but on the basis that things very obviously needed shaking up. Then Johnson turned out to be a cheating, lying charlatan, and Brexit delivered none of its promised benefits. Those disappointments don't translate into a natural swing of the pendulum to Labour, but leave it suspended somewhere between apathy and despair. This may be the most poisonous effect of Brexit: Johnson squandering so much hope for radical transformation on a plan that was destined to make life harder for the people who invested the most hope in it. It debased the currency of political promises, making it harder for any subsequent prime minister to earn trust. Sunak faces the additional weight of incumbency. Winning from Downing Street will be tricky when, according to one recent survey, 62% of people say Britain is going in the wrong direction and 77% agree with the proposition that the country needs "a new team of leaders". A straw for the prime minister to clutch is that only 42% are confident Labour has that team.

The gap between demand for

something new and trust in the opposition explains why Sunak used his speech at last week's Tory conference to pitch himself as the true change candidate, with Sir Keir Starmer - the knighthood is always stressed - as the agent of a failing status quo. The strategy is to seed suspicion of Starmer in the minds of undecided voters and pray for an economic recovery that makes people think twice about regime change. It is the longest of long shots, but maybe the only one available. It means a year of scorched-earth politics, using the king's speech, autumn statement and spring budget as platforms for campaigning provocation instead of serious government: cutting taxes, for instance, knowing it undermines any prospect of sustainably funding public services, purely in order to make Labour squirm over whether to raise them again.

So far, Starmer has successfully swerved these traps, but at a cost. Dodging and weaving has allowed the Tories to depict the Labour leader as a slippery character who will say anything to get elected. Much the same is said by leftwing dissenters. One of Starmer's tasks at this week's conference was to look less like a man sneaking up on power and more like a leader striding with purpose and a destination in mind. Anyone tuning into his speech on Tuesday should have been satisfied on that front. The party faithful in the hall were positively inspired. But the next challenge is reaching the people who actively tune out, who can't say which party they might support because they don't think party politics has any answers. This is why the stakes are so high. Sunak plans to make the race as shallow as possible. But the question on the ballot paper will be as deep as they come: whether British democracy is still capable of delivering meaningful change. It is an argument Starmer can win, must win, and it shouldn't even be close.

The Guardian

Polls indicate an Australian indigenous voice is unlikely

Luke Hunt

AUSTRALIANS go to the polls Saturday in a vote for a constitutional change that, if successful, would guarantee Indigenous people a say in parliament, after a campaign that has been widely criticized for dividing the country through racist undertones.

The latest opinion polls indicate the 'yes' campaign is struggling to win over a majority of Australians and four of the six states required to change the constitution, a major setback for Prime Minister Anthony Albanese who initially put forward the proposal in March. Back then more than 60% of the population favored constitutional change but one poll by RedBridge, conducted in late July, found that support has fallen to just 39%.

Surveys by pollsters Morgan and Essential during late September and early October have shown a slight increase towards the 'yes' campaign with about 43% in favor of granting Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders - two distinct cultural groups - a 'Voice to Parliament.' "It's very exciting and yet very scary," said Jill Gallagher, a Gunditjmara elder with the Aboriginal community in the southeast state of Victoria, who is advocating a 'yes' vote. According to the 2021 census there are 983,700 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders, about 3.8% of the total Australian population, divided into some 300 nations speaking 170 different languages, who have occupied the continent for more than 60,000 years.

Historians have documented at least 400 massacres of First Nations people since European settlement began in 1788. They remain the most disadvantaged group in Australia with a life expectancy about eight years less than the national average. Unemployment, suicide, domestic violence and imprisonment rates are all disproportionately higher when measured against non-Indigenous Australians. "We've been disempowered for so long and it's important that our peoples are recognized," Gallagher told VOA. "But more than just recognition it's about having a voice that we can talk to parliament and the senior government of the day."

Two constitutional amendments have been put forward, whereby the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Voice may make representations to the Parliament and the Executive Government" on issues that affect them. Further, parliament shall "have power to make laws with respect to matters relating to the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Voice." The Voice emerged from the "Uluru Statement from the Heart" written by delegates to the First Nations National Constitutional Convention, held in Central Australia in May 2017. Gallagher was among the signers. She said the Voice would also put "the final nail in the coffin of Terra Nullius" meaning "land uninhabited," a concept used by the British to justify colonization. Aboriginal advocates say Terra Nullius was used to

avoid the word "invasion" and the miscarriages of justice that followed. "Colonization has happened, it's here, we can't do anything about that, we can't change the past," Gallagher said. "But what we have to do is work out how, as an Indigenous people, how do we live in two worlds." Constitutional change requires a double majority, meaning more than half of Australians at the national level and within at least four of the six states must approve the amendments for The Voice to pass. Then an Indigenous executive body can be established to advise the government. Early voting began last week, with all major religious groups, many Australian corporations, artists, musicians and major league sporting clubs backing The Voice. Left-leaning Albanese voted yes, telling journalists, "I did so proudly in the knowledge that non-Indigenous Australians are being asked to grasp the hand of friendship." But campaigning has also split along political party lines.

The right-wing conservative opposition, including former prime ministers John Howard and Tony Abbott, have campaigned for the 'no' vote, warning constitutional change would divide the country by race, while others have argued the amendments lack detail. A small minority of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders are also voting no, saying, "The Voice does not go far enough. They want treaties at a national level similar to New Zealand and Canada. Separate treaties are currently under negotia-

tion, individually, by Australia's states. "We are being asked to recognize the legitimacy of the white constitution, and in the most meaningless way," Michael Mansell, a lawyer and prominent activist with the Black Sovereign Movement, told broadcaster ABC.

"A treaty confers rights on Aboriginal people and imposes obligations on all governments. A 'Voice' does not confer any rights and doesn't impose any obligations," he said. Hackers in China have also been accused of attempting to amplify social discord. A July report, by the Australian Strategic Policy Institute, found fake social media accounts were part of an "ongoing Chinese Communist Party influence and disinformation campaign." It said platforms including Facebook, Instagram, YouTube and X (formerly Twitter) were being used to target "Australian domestic and foreign policies, including by amplifying division over the indigenous voice referendum."

He says non-Indigenous Australians should embrace The Voice and the world's oldest surviving culture, enabling children to learn an Aboriginal language, history, dance and the culture of first nations in their local area. "It would be amazing for Australia to embrace Aboriginal history of this land and it would make Australia distinctive, unique and the world would look to Australia as being something more than just an England in the Sun," Conochie added.

VOA

What will Israel's ground offensive in Gaza look like?

Sadiq Shaban

ISRAEL appears on the precipice of a potential ground offensive in Gaza, and an extraordinary mobilisation of troops is currently unfolding. With 300,000 military reservists rallying, a staggering number in a nation of 9 million, the signs point unmistakably towards a massive incursion into Gaza, possibly accompanied by a new front against the Lebanese Hezbollah in the north.

Israel's Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, in a televised address, has spoken about a protracted war and vowed to obliterate Hamas. Israel's strategic objective: to dismantle Hamas' military infrastructure and cripple their capacity for future assaults. The looming Israeli ground offensive carries the weight of ominous consequences. The invasion against Gaza-based Hamas, follows the militant group's audacious attack on Israel on October 7. Close to 900 Israelis were killed in that operation. Hamas took more than 100 hostages in what is described as one of the most daring militant ops during recent years. A palpable sense of impending doom has gripped Gaza. The prospect of an Israeli ground invasion looms large over the 365 sq km Strip with the spectre of a refugee crisis being a real possibility.

With the stage set for a harrowing infantry-led urban assault, Israel's tanks, formidable as they are, can prove vulnerable in the labyrinthine streets

of Gaza. Drones, thousands of them, would play a pivotal role, navigating the perilous maze. Israel's elite special forces are presently waiting in the wings. However the unprecedented scale of the Gaza hostage crisis presents a challenge like no other. With over 100 hostages scattered throughout the territory, rescue operations could prove too hazardous. The IDF's "Momentum" programme, emphasising technology and intelligence, aims to fast-track military decisions. Yet, recent events have demonstrated the vulnerability of even the most sophisticated networks. The reliance on technology is a double-edged sword. The previous significant Israeli ground incursion into Gaza commenced on July 17, 2014, during a 50-day conflict with Hamas. That ground op was an extension of Operation Protective Edge, which had commenced on July 7 as a response to Hamas rocket attacks, following earlier skirmishes and increased tensions.

A multitude of Israeli infantry and artillery units, backed by air and naval support, entered the Gaza Strip nearly a decade ago with the primary objectives of disabling Hamas' ability to launch rockets at Israel and eliminating the numerous tunnels used for infiltration into Israel. A subsequent UN report on the tragic conflict described the profound impact of the events of the summer of

2014 on both Palestinians and Israelis, highlighting the unprecedented scale of devastation in Gaza. The looming question lingers - what may come after an Israeli victory this time, should it come to pass? With an invasion fraught with risks, the conflict between Israel and Hamas follows a familiar script - ground incursions, heavy bombardments, and targeted strikes. Israel's military has always held an advantage, but Hamas has learnt to adapt, making Gaza's urban terrain their ally. The geography of Gaza will also play a pivotal role. Limited operational routes frame Israel's approach. From the rural north to the urban south, the terrain offers both challenges and opportunities. Hamas, armed with anti-tank weaponry and a stockpile of Kornet missiles, have honed its tactics. Drones have levelled the playing field.

As Israel's forces get set to venture into the heart of Gaza, they are faced with not just an adversary but a formidable battleground. A question looms large - could Israel reclaim Gaza? The cost, both in military might and civilian lives, hangs heavily on the balance. The fate of Israeli hostages too is a constant shadow. A full reoccupation of Gaza may be a Herculean task, raising doubts about its long-term viability. The battle is yet to begin, but with storm clouds gathered, the horizon over Gaza appears sombre.

Gulf News

"The ad hoc issuance of additional debt from the central government could provide extra policy support and more resources to re-engineer a stronger and faster recovery," Bruce Pang, at Jones Lang Lasalle, said.



In brief

Babar retains No 1 position

DUBAI (Monitoring Desk): Pakistan skipper Babar Azam continued to hold top spot in men's ODI batting rankings released by the International Cricket Council (ICC) on Wednesday. The right-armed batter retained the position despite his unimpressive performance in first two matches of the ongoing World Cup 2023 against Netherlands and Sri Lanka. Indian batsman Shubman Gill was close in on dethroning him but the fortune had some other plans as he could not take part in India's matches due to illness. Babar Azam is at the No1 slot with 835 points while Gill is standing at second spot with 830 points. Virat Kohli has improved one spot to secure seventh position with 715 points. Australian bowler Josh Hazlewood also retained the top position in ODI bowling rankings followed by India's Mohammad Siraj and Trent Boult at second and third spot, respectively.

Inter district Hockey League today

MULTAN (APP): Inter-district competitions of the Schools Hockey League organized by school education Department, South Punjab aimed at reviving sports tradition in educational institutions, discipline among students, promote sportsmanship and healthy activities will commence from October 12. According to official sources, the league will be played in two phases in Multan, Muzaffargarh and Bahawalpur and first phase will begin from tomorrow adding that the second will be knocked out stage. The teams have been divided into three pools which will face one another in Multan, Muzaffargarh and Bahawalpur, they concluded.

Alcaraz dumped out by Dimitrov

SHANGHAI (AFP): Grigor Dimitrov fought back to beat top seed Carlos Alcaraz in three sets and reach the quarter-finals on Wednesday in the latest upset at the Shanghai Masters. The 18th seed won 5-7, 6-2, 6-4 against an out-of-sorts Alcaraz as the Bulgarian steps up his pursuit of a first ATP title since 2017. He will next face the 22nd-seeded Nicolas Jarry after the Chilean defeated wild card Diego Schwartzman 6-3, 5-7, 6-3. The first Shanghai Masters since the pandemic has opened up for Dimitrov after the exits of Daniil Medvedev, Stefanos Tsitsipas, Holger Rune and Janik Sinner. Russia's Andrey Rublev is the highest remaining seed left in the draw at five. World number one Novak Djokovic is not in China. "I'm still here, I'm not going anywhere," the 32-year-old Dimitrov said after dismissing Alcaraz. Spain's Alcaraz, the world number two, was chasing a seventh tour-level title of the season but he uncharacteristically crumbled after winning the first set. The 20-year-old Alcaraz took time to find his range and Dimitrov broke for 3-2 in the first set with a vicious whipped forehand return. Dimitrov was broken back as he served for the set in a riveting 10th game involving two thrilling rallies that both times saw Alcaraz come out on top. Alcaraz held and then broke again to wrap the set up in just under an hour. But rather than power on to victory, Alcaraz let the match get away from him. The clean-hitting Dimitrov gathered himself to race into a 2-0 lead in the second set, then broke again for 5-2, before sealing the set when Alcaraz shanked his return.

Rohit's record ton powers India to World Cup win over Afghanistan

NEW DELHI (AFP): Captain Rohit Sharma on Wednesday surpassed compatriot Sachin Tendulkar with a record seventh World Cup century to lead India to a crushing eight-wicket win over Afghanistan.

Chasing 273 for victory in New Delhi, the hosts rode on Rohit's 131 to achieve their target in 35 overs for a second straight win in the 50-over showpiece event.

He brought the nearly packed house to its feet with his century off 63 balls to go past Tendulkar's record of six tons in World Cups.

Rohit's century was also the fastest by an Indian in a World Cup, quicker than Kapil Dev's hundred in 72 balls against Zimbabwe in 1983.

Rohit hit the ball to all parts of the ground as he reached 1,000 World Cup runs and then went past Chris Gayle's record of 553 sixes across all formats.

The dashing opener hit 16 fours and five sixes in his 84-ball knock before being bowled by leg-spin-

ner Rashid Khan.

His opening partnership of 156 with the left-handed Ishan Kishan, who made 47, extended the team's dominance after a good bowling show on a batting-friendly pitch.

Superstar cricketer and Delhi-born Virat Kohli soon took over to hit an unbeaten 55 and finished the match with a boundary.

Afghanistan posted 272-8 after electing to bat at the ground which witnessed a World Cup record 754 runs scored in the previous match when South Africa posted 428 and defeated Sri Lanka.

Pace spearhead Jasprit Bumrah stood out for the home side with his best World Cup bowling figures of 4-39.

Afghanistan slipped to 63-3 before skipper Hashmatullah Shahidi (80) and Azmatullah Omarzai (62) put on 121 runs to help Afghanistan recover.

Bumrah got Ibrahim Zadran caught behind for 22 and celebrated by pointing to his temple.

Rahmanullah Gurbaz, on

21, and Rahmat Shah, on 16, fell in the space of four balls with Hardik Pandya and Shardul Thakur taking the wickets.

Shahidi, a left-hand batsman, and Omarzai then rebuilt the innings in a century stand, prompting Rohit to rotate his bowlers.

Omarzai reached his second ODI fifty and soon Shahidi smashed Pandya for four to bring up his half-century and followed it up with a six.

Omarzai, who hit two fours and four sixes in his 69-ball knock, also attacked but was bowled by Pandya.

Shahidi kept up the attack with regular boundaries but fell lbw to Kuldeep Yadav in his attempt to reverse sweep the left-arm wrist spinner.

Bumrah struck twice including Rashid to keep Afghanistan down on a run-filled wicket.

The Afghans lost their opening match to Bangladesh while tournament favourites India began with a victory over five-time winners Australia.

Asian Games squash silver medalists warmly received

PESHAWAR (APP): The silver medal winners of the Pakistan squash team in the ongoing 19th Asian Games 2023 in China received a warm welcome here at Qamar Zaman Squash Complex on Wednesday.

Director General Sports Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Khalid Mahmood welcomed them with flowers on their arrival at Qayyum Stadium in Peshawar. A large number of officials and players including Director of Sports Merged Area Pir Abdullah Shah,

Deputy Operations Ameer Zahid Shah, District Sports Office Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Kashif Farhan, Squash Coaches Manoor Zaman and Tahir Iqbal were also present.

There were Doll Surna (drums and pipe) on which the players of squash exhibited their happiness by garlanding both Nasir Iqbal and Noor Zaman, the two played a key role in bringing Pakistan to win back silver medal wherein the Indian players defeat-

ing Pakistan in the final before losing the pool match in 19th Asian Games 2023 held in Hangzhou, China.

The Pakistan team performed well in the squash event by leading their group and even defeated India in the group match but unfortunately lost to India in the final. Two players from Khyber Pakhtunkhwa including Nasir Iqbal and Noor Zaman were part of the team along with Asim Khan from Punjab.



LUCKNOW: Marnus Labuschagne practises his reverse sweep ahead of the South Africa clash.

Cummins sees World Cup as 'physically taxing' for bowlers

LUCKNOW (AFP): Australia captain Pat Cummins described the World Cup as the "most physically taxing" format for fast bowlers as batsmen pile up record scores around India.

With just six of 45 days ticked off, the 2023 tournament has already seen South Africa score the highest ever World Cup total of 428. That came against Sri Lanka in New Delhi where the two innings produced a tournament record 754 runs.

Aiden Markram clubbed the fastest World Cup century in 49 balls in that game while, on Tuesday, Pakistan chased down a record target of 345 to beat Sri Lanka.

In a further bout of misery for bowlers, 10 centuries have been scored over the first eight games.

"It's actually quite a physical format. I find it probably the most physically taxing if you're playing two or three games in a week," said Cummins ahead of their second World Cup match against South Africa on Thursday.

"We're doing 15kms in a 50-over match. I think in

T20, if you bowl one really good over, that can be match-winning.

"In one-day cricket, that's not normally the case. And it's rare that the conditions are really in the bowler's favour, which is fine. It's just a challenge you've got to try and deal with." Sri Lankan bowlers have supplied a snapshot of the challenge described by Cummins. In their loss to South Africa, seamers Kasun Rajitha and Matheesha Pathirana conceded 185 runs between them.

Pathirana suffered again as Pakistan ran riot in Hyderabad on Tuesday, giving away another 90 runs in his 10 overs.

Five-time champions Australia suffered a six-wicket loss to India in their tournament opener, ironically in a rare low-scoring encounter at Chennai. After bowling the Aussies out for just 199, India reached their target inside 42 overs with Virat Kohli surviving a dropped chance on 12 to make a match-winning 85.

'Hard balance'

Cummins went wicketless in that match and took just two wickets in two

ODIs Australia played against India in the run-up to the tournament.

"I'm really happy where it is," he said of his form in ODI cricket where he has 126 wickets at an average of just over 28.

"I feel like it's in as good a place as it ever has been. I think early in my career, I found it a hard balance between Test cricket and T20, like getting too funky. "I always find with one-day cricket; your roles can be very different. It's a different kind of challenge to the other formats."

Cummins said his team will be ready for familiar foes South Africa. The Proteas won a recent series between the two teams 3-2 after trailing 0-2. "It always feels like it's a clash of two very similar teams," said Cummins.

"So yeah, no doubt it will be another great game tomorrow. We always match up quite similarly against them." Unlike Australia's struggles in their opener, South Africa had three centuries -- Quinton de Kock, Rassie van der Dussen and Markram -- firing against Sri Lanka.



NEW DELHI : Rohit Sharma smacked a 63-ball hundred.

Rizwan dedicates match-winning performance to Palestinians

HYDERABAD (NNI): In a crucial match of the ICC World Cup 2023, Muhammad Rizwan, a star wicketkeeper-batsman for Pakistan, not only played brilliantly but also showed compassion and unity.

He dedicated Pakistan's victory to the Palestinians in Gaza, who are going through tough times. Rizwan shared this message on X (formerly Twitter), saying, "This win is for our brothers and sisters in Gaza." This gesture was widely appreciated, showing how sports can support important causes.

Rizwan, in his dedication, didn't forget to acknowledge the valuable contributions of his fellow teammates, Abdullah Shafiq and Hasan Ali, for their hard work. They made difficult matches look easy, and their teamwork is a great example of unity.

"Happy to contribute in the win. Credits to the whole team and especially Abdullah Shafique and Hassan Ali for making it easier," He wrote.

In addition to the dedication to Palestine Rizwan also thanked the people of Hyderabad saying, "Extremely grateful to the people of Hyderabad for the amazing hospitality and support throughout."

This shows how sports can bring people together.

Over 260,000 people have been forced to flee their homes in the Gaza Strip, as heavy Israeli bombardments from the air, land and sea continue to hit the Palestinian enclave, the United Nations said.

'Born winner' Rooney hired as new Birmingham manager

LONDON (AFP): Former Manchester United star Wayne Rooney was hired as the new manager of Championship club Birmingham on Wednesday.

Rooney has agreed a three-and-a-half-year contract to replace John Eustace at St Andrew's after leaving Major League Soccer side DC United last week. Eustace, in charge for just 15 months, was sacked despite guiding Birmingham to sixth place in the Championship this season and Rooney will be expected to oversee a push for promotion to the Premier League.

"I am absolutely delighted to be joining Birmingham City at such an exciting time. It is very clear that they have a plan and are committed to realising their ambition for the club," Rooney said.

"We are fully aligned on what is expected. I have been building my managerial career, putting myself in challenging environments, to get me ready for this opportunity.

"It's a project that gives me a sense of purpose and I can't wait to get started." Joining Rooney on his Birmingham backroom staff are former England team-mate Ashley Cole, currently England Under-21s assistant coach, and John O'Shea, the assistant coach of the Republic of Ireland.

Zaka Ashraf travel to Ahmedabad for Pakistan-India clash

ISLAMABAD (Monitoring Desk): Pakistan's cricket chief Zaka Ashraf will travel to India tomorrow, Thursday, ahead of Pakistan's fixture against India at the Narendra Modi Stadium in Ahmedabad on Saturday, the PCB said in a statement.

In recent weeks, the Pakistan Cricket Board has repeatedly expressed its disappointment over a delay in visa clearance for Pakistani fans and media. On Thursday, the PCB said Ashraf's decision to travel to India came after it was confirmed that Pakistani journalists had been asked by Indian authorities to submit their passports for visas to cover the ICC

Men's World Cup 2023. Around 60 Pakistani journalists are expected to make the trip for the World Cup.

"I have delayed my travel to India, and I am traveling tomorrow after receiving confirmation that Pakistan's journalists have been asked to submit their passports to obtain visas to cover the mega event," Ashraf was quoted by the PCB as saying. "I am happy that my conversation with the foreign office helped in achieving a positive development regarding the visa delay."

"I am traveling to India to motivate the team, and my message to them before the India contest will be to

play fearlessly as they have been playing throughout the event," Ashraf added.

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.

Cricket has been a victim of a soured political relationship between the neighbors and bitter rivals, who play each other only in multi-team events like the World Cup.

Pakistan had plenty of local support for their World Cup fixtures against Netherlands on Friday and Sri Lanka on Tuesday but no member of their media contingent or fans were present.

All Pakistan Departmental Football Tournament Kohat

Sahibzada Afridi

KOHAT: All Pakistan Departmental Football Tournament Kohat starts.

DC Kohat inaugurates the Tournament. The First All-Pakistan Departmental Football Tournament Kohat jointly organized by the Regional Sports Office Kohat and District Administration Kohat started at Kohat Sports Complex on Tuesday evening which was formally inaugurated by the Deputy Commissioner Kohat Dr. Azmatullah Wazir by kicking off the football.

Assistant Commissioner Kohat Usman Ashraf, Regional Sports Officer Sajid Afridi, President Football Association Muhibullah Shinwari and a large number of football fans were present

on this occasion.

The opening match of the tournament was played between the teams of Jawaki Star and Municipal Kohat which was tied between the two teams.

It may be recalled that the said tournament would continue for a month which besides local teams, would also be participated by the Pakistan Army, Pakistan Police, Pakistan Air Force, Pakistan WAPDA, Pakistan Navy, Pakistan SA Garden, Pakistan DG Sports, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Kohat Region, Club Atesh, Kohat Cement Factory.

FATA Directorate Merger Area, Pakistan Asia Ghee, Pakistan KRL, Pakistan Popo Academy Islamabad, Baluchistan, Sindh, Punjab, Gilgit-Baltistan and Islamabad.

Speaking on this occasion, Deputy Commissioner Kohat said that we were trying hard to promote sports at all levels because it was important for maintaining peace. For mental and physical nourishment, holding of maximum sports activities were need of the hour, he added.

Dr. Azmatullah Wazir said that the visiting teams would be treated well so that they leave Kohat with good wishes and memories.

Earlier, Regional Sports Officer Kohat Sajid Afridi gave away trophies to the winner team Young Star Akhoral and the runner-up team Atari Wal of Dara Adam Khel Tehsil Football Tournament. 24 teams of Dara Adam Khel were participated in the said tournament.

Nadal to return at Australian Open, say organisers



LONDON (Agencies): Rafael Nadal will make his return to Grand Slam tennis following hip surgery at the 2024 Australian Open, says tournament chief Craig Tiley.

Spain's 22-time Grand Slam champion has been out of action since January and underwent surgery in June. Nadal, 37, has said he plans to retire at the end of the 2024 season.

According to Tiley, former women's champions Naomi Osaka, Angelique Kerber and Caroline Wozniacki also plan to return after maternity breaks.

Nadal has been sidelined since injuring his hip flexor in a second-round defeat by Mackenzie McDonald at January's Australian Open.

In announcing he would miss the French Open for the first time in 19 years - the tournament where he has won 14 of his majors - Nadal said next year will "probably" be the last year of his career.

"We can reveal exclusively here that Rafa will be back," Tiley said. "He's been off for most of the year and in talking to him over the last few days he confirmed he will be back, which we're really excited about, the champion of 2022. That's awesome."

While Nadal is back on court, those close to him say that it is too early to confirm whether he will be in Melbourne in January.

His representative Benito Perez-Barbadillo confirmed Nadal is back

practising but added "there is no date confirmed, scheduled or programmed yet for his comeback".

Two-time Australian Open champion Nadal claimed his most recent Slam at Roland Garros in 2022. Novak Djokovic has since taken his leading men's tally to 24.

On the expected return of Osaka, Kerber and Wozniacki, Tiley added: "We'll welcome them - and their families - back to Melbourne with open arms and can't wait to see what their next chapter brings."

However, speaking in 2017, Tiley had said there was "no question" Serena Williams would be ready to feature at the 2018 tournament, despite having only had a baby that September, and she did not play.

The Australian Open will become a 15-day event for the first time in 2024 in an attempt to reduce the number of late-night finishes at Melbourne Park.

At the 2023 tournament, Novak Djokovic won a record-extending 10th title and Aryna Sabalenka won her first Grand Slam singles title.



In brief

Admin rounded up 13 beggars

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Islamabad Capital Territory (ICT) administration on Wednesday launched a massive crackdown on professional beggars, arresting 13 people in different areas of the city. The operations were carried out under the supervision of Assistant Commissioner C o m m i s s i o n e r Secretariat Aneel Saeed and assistant director civil defence. The professional beggars were arrested and transferred to the police station, while the remaining minor children were sent to the Edhi Center. The ICT administration has been carrying out operations against beggars on a daily basis under the supervision of assistant commissioners.

Power suspension programme

ISLAMABAD (APP): Islamabad Electric Supply Company (IESCO) on Wednesday issued a power suspension programme for Thursday for various areas of its region due to necessary maintenance and routine development work. According to the IESCO Spokesman, the power supply of different feeders and grid stations would remain suspended for the period from 07:00 AM to 12:00 Noon, Islamabad Circle, SES, Fazal Ghi, NDC.1, H-11/4, I-10/2, New Exchange, Kidney Centre, Dr. A.Q. Khan, Islamic University, Bahria University, G-10/1, G-10/2, G-10/4, G-9/1, CWO, Dhok Najo, Raja Sultan, Eid Gah, Upper Topa, Patriata, TDCP, I-10/1, I-11/1, Feeders, Rawalpindi City Circle, Fazahiya.1&2, Top City, Mumtaz City, Bajnyal, F-17/1, F-17/2, Nogzi, Amin Town Feeders, Rawalpindi Cantt Circle, Major Riaz, Lala Zar, Jhawara Feeder, Chakwal Circle, Miani, Dhadyal City, Medina Town Feeders, Attock Circle, Kamra Rural, Mansar, Gondal, Haji Shah, Hameed, Bohi Ghar, Salargah, Ghori, Bahlot, Dheerak feeders and surrounding areas.

Tauseef Tabassum remembered

ISLAMABAD (APP): Renowned poet Tauseef Tabassum was remembered in an obituary reference, organized by the Pakistan Academy of Letters (PAL) here on Wednesday. The poets, scholars, and admirers alike spoke of Tauseef Tabassum's unique talent and the profound impact of his poetry on contemporary and classical genres. Poet Ifthikhar Arif emphasized Tauseef Tabassum's significant connection to the written word, highlighting his extensive work related to Munir Shikohabadi and his ability to artfully meld modern themes with classical styles. Dr. Najeeba Arif, Chairman PAL, recognized the late poet's enduring legacy, thanking all the speakers and the poet's family for their contributions. The gathering shed light on his unfulfilled desire to publish his work, including "Noah's book," and a collective hope for its posthumous release.

107 vehicles issued challan tickets

RAWALPINDI (APP): Following the orders of City Police Officer (CPO) Rawalpindi Syed Khalid Hamdani, City Traffic Police (CTP) is taking prompt action against the encroachment in a bid to maintain the flow of traffic. City Circle Traffic carried out operations in Bara Market, Imperial Market, Liaquat Road and adjoining areas against encroachment to smooth the flow of traffic. DSP Traffic City Circle Faisal Manzoor along with traffic staff issued challan tickets to 107 vehicles and motorcycles at different places of Raja Bazaar including City Saddar Road, while, goods were also seized for obstructing the flow of traffic.



ISLAMABAD: Mr. Simon J. Stolp, Practice Manager (Energy & Extractives), World Bank South Asia Region along his WB team called on Federal Minister for Privatisation Fawad Hasan Fawad.

Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) paid rich tribute

RAWALPINDI (APP): The Department of Auqaf and Religious Affairs Division organized a conference here to pay rich tribute to Prophet Muhammad (P.B.U.H) here on Wednesday. Secretary Auqaf Punjab, Syed Tahir Raza Bukhari chaired the Seerat-un-Nabi conference which was attended among others by Deputy Commissioner Mujahid Abbas, Administrator Zonal Ayaz Mahmood Lashari, and religious scholars Mujtaba Farooq Gul Badshah, Hafiz Iqbal

Rizvi and Allama Zaid Abbas Kazmi.

In the event, the importance of maintaining peace, interfaith harmony, and following the life of the Prophet Muhammad (P.B.U.H) in practical life was emphasized.

Secretary Auqaf Punjab highlighted that adhering to the Prophet's teachings in our daily lives is essential for both world and hereafter success. Islam suppresses the importance of brotherhood, peace and tranquillity, he said.

He pointed out that we

should follow the set principles of Islamic teaching in real spirit.

It was stressed that upholding the standards of honesty and trustworthiness is crucial, he added. The state of Madina was cited as a model for establishing peace and economic stability within the country.

In conclusion, it was reiterated that the teachings of the Islamic system, inspired by the principles of the state of Madina, are fundamental for bringing peace and economic stability to the nation.

Bahraini minister appreciates Pakistani immigrants role in various fields

ISLAMABAD (APP): Minister for Health, Kingdom of Bahrain, Dr. Jaleela bint Alsayed Jawad Hasan on Wednesday appreciated the role of Pakistani immigrants in Bahrain in various fields.

She was talking to Caretaker Federal Minister for Health, Dr. Nadeem Jan during meeting in Cairo.

Both the ministers mentioned the enthusiastic and active cooperation between the people and the leadership of the two countries. Both the health ministers expressed their determination to fully cooperate for the improvement of the health sector. The Bahraini Minister for Health endorsed the decision of exchanges of nursing and physiotherapy staff between the two countries. Pakistan is keen to benefit from the expertise and experiences in nursing and physiotherapy with Bahrain, Dr Nadeem Jan said.

Fawad vows to privatize all loss making SOEs to reduce financial burden

ISLAMABAD (APP): Minister for Privatization Fawad Hassan Fawad here on Wednesday reiterated his government's commitment to privatize all loss-making State-Owned Enterprises (SOEs) to reduce financial burden and enhance capabilities, and efficiencies for the sustainable economic development of the country.

He said that current economic conditions were not able to bear further losses of these SOEs, adding that the other objective of the privatization of such enterprises was to attract potential foreign investment for the development of these enterprises. Addressing a news conference along with Minister for Information and Broadcasting Murtaza Solangi, he said that the Caretaker Prime Minister Anwaar-ul-Haq Kakar was also briefed about the privatization of such loss-making enterprises including Pakistan International Airlines (PIA).

He said that these permanent loss-making enterprises were not only wasting the financial resources of the government but also enhancing the burden on the

common man and increasing inflation.

He said that the accumulated losses of PIA were recorded at Rs713 billion out of which Rs263 billion comprised of debt, besides an additional amount of Rs13 billion was provided by the banks on government guarantee, he added the government also provided Rs150 billion from its own resources. The minister said another objective of the privatization of PIA was to regain the maximum value and avoid unbearable losses to the national exchequer, which stood at Rs12.70 billion per month. Fawad Hassan Fawad said that the other objective of the divestment of PIA was to attract foreign investment in the aviation industry and turn it into a hub of investment.

He said Pakistani pilots were highly skilled and capable of landing and taking off in difficult areas; similarly "our engineers and supporting staff are also of international standards."

Currently, he said the PIA fleet consisted of 34 aircraft, out of which 15 were grounded and 19 were oper-

ational and their accumulated losses were recorded at Rs 713 billion. He informed that PIA was suffering Rs 500 million loss per day.

Minister for Privatization said that the caretaker government is working on the privatization process which was started by the previous governments adding that no new entity was added to the privatization list.

He said that the government committed to protecting employee rights and benefits for those who were working in these entities.

He said that the previous experiments of privatization witnessed remarkable success in sectors like telecommunication, finance and banking, and cement sectors and revenue collection also increased by manifold from these sectors.

The minister said that the telecom sector had around 197 million subscribers while covering 98 per cent of the country's total population. "The telecom sector contributes 2.7% to the GDP." However, he reaffirmed the caretaker government's commitment to fulfilling the responsibilities entrusted to it.

Urban development issues transcend federal govt mandate, equally vital to engage local govts: Amin

ISLAMABAD (APP): Former Federal Minister for Climate Change, Malik Amin Aslam on Wednesday said addressing urban development issues transcends the responsibilities of just the federal government; it is equally vital for local governments to engage actively in the effort.

The Green Urban Development Program (GUD), a two-year initiative, by Institute of Urbanism (IoU) & School of Leadership Foundation (SoLF), with the support of the US Embassy, organized an event titled "Rethinking Urban Development: A Dialogue on Green Urban Development in Pakistan" here.

The dialogue served as a platform for stakeholders, experts, and leaders to come together, exchange insights, and explore innovative solutions to the pressing challenges of sustainable urban development in Pakistan, fostering a collaborative environment aimed at reshaping the urban landscape for a greener and more sustainable future. Malik Amin Aslam underscored the critical role of urban development within the broader context of climate change, emphasizing that it constitutes a significant component of this global challenge.

He highlighted various steps and initiatives undertaken by the government in this regard. Kelly Rayan, representing the US Embassy Islamabad, expressed heartfelt gratitude to the Institute of Urbanism (IoU) and the School of Leadership Foundation (SoLF) for their commendable

efforts in organizing the dialogue.

He also acknowledged the participation of QAU (Quaid-i-Azam University) in the event, underscoring the importance of a collaborative approach in addressing urban development challenges. Emphasizing the gravity of climate change as a pressing issue, Kelly Rayan called for collective action and actionable solutions to be produced during the event.

He stressed the need to collaborate closely with both government entities and the public to find sustainable solutions, aligning with the urgent call to address climate change. Kelly Rayan's remarks resonated with the event's commitment to fostering partnerships and discovering pathways towards a more sustainable future while acknowledging the valuable contributions of institutions like De Paul University of Chicago. Ms. Hiba Zakai, representing De Paul University in Chicago, delivered a compelling message on the significance of cross-learning and collaborative partnerships. She highlighted the transformative power of knowledge that transcends geographical boundaries. Ms. Zakai emphasized the importance of forging connections and alliances with institutions like De Paul University for the Green Urban Development School (GUDS). Her words underscored the notion that when it comes to addressing global challenges like sustainable urban development, the exchange of ideas and expertise knows no borders, fostering a brighter and more sustainable future for all.

‘BRI key element to understand people-centric governance for uplifting citizens’ well-being’

ISLAMABAD (APP): Chairman of Senate Standing Committee on Defence, Senator Mushahid Hussain Sayed Wednesday said the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) was an important element in understanding people-centric governance as China had advanced a Chinese solution to global development issues based on inclusivity, respect for diversity and equality based on the concept of win-win cooperation and mutual benefit.

He was addressing the webinar titled 'Dialogue For People Centric Governance' organized by Asian Institute of Eco-Civilization Research and Development (AIERD), which was attended by a number of academics, diplomats, students, and senior government officials.

Mushahid Hussain said that the State Council of the People's Republic of China had recently issued a white paper on BRI, in which it said that the initiative was one of the key pillars of the shared community for the future, adding that its living example was the China Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC). He said the people-centric governance in China was based on the ethos of the Communist Party of China and the Chinese historical context. Under the Chinese leadership, the key bottom line has been that the party springs from the people as it has 95 million members, he said, adding that Chairman Mao Zedong had stressed on serving people in different capacities, he added.

Deputy Head of Mission and minister at the Chinese Embassy, Pang Chunxue said people-centric governance was important in Chinese philosophy.

China had always adhered to this philosophy which was rooted in Chinese history, she said.

Chunxue said people were the foundation of a country, and that people-centred governance served as a guiding compass for China's overall development. She added that the improvement in social security, health and education systems were vital for efficient public service. Speaking about CPEC, she said China had injected \$25.4 billion in direct investment in Pakistan. Deputy Dean, the Institute of Community with Shared Future, Communication, University of China, Prof Zhang Yanqiu, in her presentation, said it was not feasible for China to copy the political systems of other countries.

She referred to China's whole-process people's democracy, saying that democracy was not an ornament to be used for decorations rather it was meant to solve the problems that people wanted to be solved. She said the whole-process people's democracy served the interests of the people, and quoted Chinese President Xi Jinping as saying, "China's people's democracy is a type of whole-process democracy". "Governance is the art of satisfying the needs of the people and serving the interests of the people," said Shakeel Ahmad Ramay, CEO, of AIERD, while opening the webinar.

South African High Commissioner Mthuzeli Madikiza said the World Bank defined good governance as the one epitomized by predictable, open and enlightened policymaking. Good governance is a pivot and pillar of human prosperity but yet elusive. It swings like a pendulum, he said. He said in South Africa, the notion of good governance through representatives of the majority was new and young in practice but mature in conceptualization.

Afghan Deputy Minister of Economy Abdul Latif Nazari said Afghanistan was in an important and historic situation. He said people stood with the Islamic Emirate and did not support warmongers. The Afghan government was striving to serve its people, and therefore the Ministry of Economy invited all countries to play an active role in development projects in Afghanistan. He assured them that the ministry was committed to the safety of all investors and was ready to attract domestic and foreign investors.

"We expect investment in trade, agriculture and social sector as it would help reduce poverty and food insecurity in Afghanistan," Nazari said. "Sanctions have led to an increase in poverty, he said, adding that he hoped that they would be lifted and interaction between Afghanistan and the world would increase. He further added that Afghanistan had a geo-strategic, geo-politics and geo-economic position in the region.

"It has always attracted the attention of great world powers and has been a connecting link between South and Central Asia. A stable Afghanistan can lead to economic growth and development in the region," Nazari said.

Nilofer pledges to forward agenda of ending child marriage

ISLAMABAD (APP): Chairperson National Commission on the Status of Women (NCSW) Nilofer Bakhtiar on Wednesday pledged to take forward the agenda of ending child marriage—a menace that is badly affecting many generations—with all her supporting hands to break the heinous cycle of discrimination. "It was a misfortune that the bill restraining child marriage in the country moved almost six times in the legislature but could not get through," she regretted. This bill promises the right to education and health for every young girl but became a failure of our institutions.

Nilofer was addressing a two-day National Stakeholders' Conference on Ending Child Marriage organized by NCSW in collaboration with UNICEF, UNFPA, UN Women, FCDO and UKAid. It was held in connection with international Girl Child Day, marked on October 11.

She said that it was a tragedy that millions of girls were out of school in Pakistan due to prevailing social and economic circumstances. They deserved the right kind of atmosphere and the right kind of support from their family and society.

The biggest irony was the difference in the legal age for marriage in all four provinces, demanding immediate attention from policymakers and implementers. She further said that she had a strong faith in civil society; when they stood together, things happened.

At this occasion, Laktika Maskey Pardhan, Deputy Country Rep of UNFPA said that the adolescent fertil-

ity rate in Pakistan was high at 46 per 1,000 adolescent girls aged 15-19.

The primary school dropout rate was 22.7 per cent, which was one of the highest in the region where 32% of married adolescents (15-19 years of age) experienced gender-based violence. She added that the overall need for this framework was to ensure that proactive measures were put in place that were comprehensive and holistic to prevent eliminate and respond to child marriage, thereby enabling all children to realize full childhood development and the necessary protections. For that, a targeted, collective approach was the only solution to move forward.

Daniela Luciana, Chief Child Protection UNICEF observed that leadership and commitment to enacting policies and enforcing laws that protect children were crucial. There was a need for a robust legal framework that not only prohibits child marriage but also ensures accountability for those who violate these laws. Deputy Country Rep UN Women Franklin Okumu said that beyond individuals, families and communities, child marriage had high economic cost. A national costing study by NCSW and UN Women found that the total cost of child Marriage in Pakistan is \$.8 billion or 0.42% of GDP.

Child brides were deprived of their fundamental rights to health including life itself. Globally complications in pregnancy and childbirth were the leading cause of deaths in girls aged 15-19. He ended his remarks by utter-

ing strong words, "Please don't mess with my baby girl".

She further said that the timing of this piece of work was opportune as it would lay the ground for securing the support of the new government after elections to advance reforms.

Jo Moir Development Director FCDO in her closing remarks said that child marriage was a harmful practice with severe consequences that impact generations and impede equality. The objective of the conference was to build a national framework for Ending Child Marriage after reviewing the inputs from all relevant stakeholders. Following the National Consultation, partners will conduct provincial consultations to discuss at length the action plans during this conference. Later, a girl child Malaika Arif, a student of grade nine in a government school shared her thoughts and dreams with the audience. She presented how she desired to fulfil her ambitions with hard work, innovative ideas and distinctive colors but social patterns and mindsets might become a hindrance in the way of her dreams to be realized.

Afterwards, a proposed framework was presented with suggestions to implement in different areas that was followed by a detailed discussion on the health and social consequences of child marriage and ended with an outcome that changed minds, social and behavioural perspective was as essential as legislation in Pakistani society. And it was the only tangible solution to end child marriage in the country.



ISLAMABAD: Chairperson National Commission on the Status of Women (NCSW), Nilofer Bakhtiar addressing national conference on ending child marriage.

Deputy PM arrived Balkh

KABUL (Agencies): Mullah Abdul Ghani Baradar Akhund, Deputy Prime Minister for Economic Affairs, arrived in Balkh to inaugurate the first phase and commence the second phase of Qosh Tepa Canal. Accompanied by a group of officials from IEA, Mullah Abdul Ghani Baradar Akhund's visit was announced in a statement by PM's office. The purpose of his visit was to participate in inauguration ceremony marking completion of first phase and start of second phase of Qosh Tepa Canal.

The Frontier Post

Rabi-ul-Awwal 25, 1445 — Thursday, October 12, 2023

Kazakh diplomat visit Herat

HERAT (Agencies): Deputy Ambassador of Kazakhstan Bakhtiar Sarsinbai arrived in Herat with a rescue team and aid cargo to assist survivors of victims. During his visit, Sarsinbai met with Governor of Herat Sheikh Mawlana Nur Ahmad Islam Jar and expressed his sympathy for devastating disaster that resulted in thousands of casualties. He affirmed Kazakhstan's readiness to cooperate in any way necessary to assist people affected by earthquake in Herat.

‘Amu River’s water right of Afghanistan’

KABUL (TOLOnews): Sher Mohammad Abbas Stanikzai, Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs, said at the ceremony of the completion of the first phase and the start of the second phase of the Qosh Tepa Canal that throughout the history of Afghanistan, the water of the Amu River has not been used, and the use of the water of the river is the right of Afghanistan.

Stanikzai said that if Turkmenistan, Tajikistan, and Uzbekistan are worried about the use of Amu water by Afghanistan, the Islamic Emirate is ready to find diplomatic solutions.

According to Stanikzai, the Islamic Emirate is trying to bring the water that is the right of Afghanistan into the country in the right



way that does not violate the rights of the neighbors along the river.

Also, referring to the recent situation of migrants and their treatment in Pakistan, Stanikzai said that Islamabad deports Afghan migrants to put political and economic pressure on the Islamic Emirate.

The Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs asked the

Islamic countries and the United Nations to stop Israel's attack on Palestine.

In the ceremony, acting Minister of Defense Mawlawi Mohammad Yaqoob Mujahid, the Acting Minister of Interior Sirajuddin Haqqani, and Mullah Abdul Ghani Baradar, the deputy prime minister for economic affairs, also participated in the ceremony.

Another earthquake hits Herat

HERAT (AP): Another strong earthquake shook part of western Afghanistan on Wednesday morning after an earlier quake killed more than 2,000 and flattened whole villages.

The latest 6.3-magnitude earthquake was about 28 km outside Herat, the capital of Herat province, and 10 km deep, according to the US Geological Survey.

The epicenter of Saturday's quake was about 40 kilometers (25 miles) northwest of the provincial capital, and several aftershocks have been strong, including another 6.3 magnitude Saturday.

Taliban officials said more than 2,000 had died across Herat after the earlier quakes. They subsequently said the quakes killed and injured thousands but didn't give a breakdown of casualties.

Information on casualties and damage from the latest tremor was not immediately available from authorities. But there is little left of the villages in the region's dusty hills besides rubble and funerals.

In Naib Rafi, a village that previously had about 2,500 residents, people said almost no one was still alive besides men who were working outside when the quake struck. Survivors worked all day with excavators to dig long trenches for mass burials.

On a barren field in the district of Zinda Jan, a bulldozer removed mounds of earth to clear space for a long row of graves.

"It is very difficult to find a family member from a destroyed house and a few minutes to later bury him or her in a nearby grave, again under the ground," said Mir Agha, from the city of Herat, who had joined hundreds of volunteers to help the locals.

Nearly 2,000 houses in 20 villages were destroyed, the Taliban have said. The area hit by the quakes has just one government-run hospital.

On Tuesday, UN deputy spokesman Farhan Haq said Zinda Jan is the worst-affected area, with more than 1,300 people killed and nearly 500 people still reported missing.

ARA signs accord with Iranian counterpart

— to operate Khaf-Herat railway line

KABUL (Agencies): The Afghanistan Railway Authority (ARA) said this week on X that it has signed an agreement with the Iranian Railway Consortium to operate the Khaf-Herat railway line.

According to ARA, Iran will send 100,000 tons of goods via this railway line in the first year of operation. From then on, the volume will increase by 100,000 tons per year.

Bakhtur Rahman Sharaf, the head of the railway authority, said that the construction of the first phase of the 4th section of Khaf-Herat Railway Project will start next week, ARA reported.

Also, with the signing of this contract, transfer of goods will continue normally through Khaf-Herat, while work is done on the 4th section. This line is connected to Turkey and European countries through Iran and the Iranian railway network.

Earlier this year, the first trial run of cargo from Iran to Afghanistan via the Khaf-Herat railway was completed.



This shipment included 17 wagons that transferred 655 tons of railway equipment for the further construction of the rail line.

The Khaf-Herat railway is 225 kilometers long, with 140 km of the railway track traversing Afghanistan and the remaining 85 km running through Iran. The construction of the Khaf-Herat railway line, which links Khaf in eastern Iran with Herat in western Afghanistan, started in 2007. The project has a reported value

of \$75 million and is being funded by Iran.

Nooruddin Azizi, Minister of Commerce and Industry, says that currently the amount of trade between Kabul and Tehran totals \$2 billion per year but they want this trade to grow to \$10 billion dollars per year.

A number of members of a visiting Iranian delegation also say that considering the opportunity that has arisen, Afghanistan and Iran should make the most of it for the expansion of

trade relations.

Amir Khan Muttaqi, Acting Minister of Foreign Affairs, also met with the Iranian delegation.

In this meeting, the two sides emphasized the need for more cooperation between the two countries as neighbors.

Muttaqi said that drug production in Afghanistan has been eradicated and the conditions for commercial and economic cooperation are more favorable than before.

Vice at Kabul wedding halls declined to zero

KABUL (TOLOnews): The Ministry of Vice and Virtue claims that the number of vices, a religious term for sins/crimes or any act against Islamic Shariah in Kabul's wedding halls has dropped to zero.

Speaking at a gathering in Kabul that was attended by government officials, clerics, members of the ministry and common Afghans, the acting minister of Vice and Virtue said virtue in wedding halls was now "100 percent" ensured.

"Thank God, currently in the 150 wedding halls of Kabul, the scale of vice has been reduced to zero while the scale of virtue is hundred percent ensured," said Khalid Hanafi, the acting Minister of Vice and Virtue.

Sarajudin Haqqani, the acting minister of Interior, at the gathering said that members of the Ministry of Vice and Virtue should behave gently while dealing with common Afghans.

The acting minister said that Afghans should not be ungrateful of having the current government.

"We respectfully ask the employees of the Ministry



of Vice and Virtue to eliminate the fear of the people for the ministry's employees by meeting with Imams, society leaders and clerics," said Sarajudin Haqqani, the acting Minister of Interior.

In the meantime, the Kabul governor expressed the Islamic Emirate's support for Palestinians against Israel.

"People of Afghanistan and the Islamic Emirate are concerned about the current situation of Palestine, and the Islamic Emirate expresses its support for the Palestinians," said Muhammad Qasim Khalid, the Kabul governor.

The Kabul residents have some requests from the Islamic Emirate.

"When someone is referring to government administrations to lodge a complaint, he is asked to make contact while the complainee has no contact and connection with government officials," said a society leader in Kabul.

Over three thousand people had taken part in the gathering, among them religious scholars, employees of the Ministry of Vice and Virtue, society leaders of Kabul, representatives of the private sector, representatives of Kabul's districts and local officials of Kabul.

Exhibition of women's handicrafts organized in Kabul

KABUL (TOLOnews): Businesswomen in the capital have held an exhibition for the purpose of marketing their handicrafts.

These women want the authorities of the Islamic Emirate to provide them with opportunities in the

trade sector and to organize exhibitions abroad.

"For eighteen years, I have been doing the same crafts, such as beadwork, leather embroidery, Afghan cloths," said Awlia Muhraban, a businesswoman.

"This is to showcase the

works of women who were less seen and did not have such a role," said Zuhail Ataye, a businesswoman.

Visitors said they consider such exhibitions to be beneficial for the growth of the country's business.

"I think that holding

such exhibitions, on the one hand, makes the society more dynamic and empowers the women and men of the society, those who are entrepreneurs..." said Jawed Ahmadi, a visitor.

"Our request from the Islamic Emirate is that everyone should support us in the field we are in so that we can build a good future for our dear Afghanistan," said Shugofa Ayani, a visitor.

Meanwhile, the Ministry of Information and Culture said that they support businesswomen in the country.

"Our brothers and sisters and compatriots who work in the sector, we appreciate their work and support... them," said Muhajir Farahi, deputy of the ministry.

Earlier, the Ministry of Industry and Commerce said that after the establishment of the Islamic Emirate in the country, they have distributed work permits to more than a thousand women.

Crimes drastically decreased in Afghan Capital city: Kabul Police

KABUL (TOLOnews): Kabul police headquarters said that arrests of serious criminals continues, and the Kabul police have arrested over 81 people accused of various felonies in the past month.

According to Khalid Zadran, the spokesman to the Kabul police chief, the scale of crimes have declined recently, and added that headquarters is striving to further tighten security in the Afghan capital, Kabul.

"In the last one month, Kabul Police arrested 42 people accused of theft, 17 people accused of car robbery, 9 people accused of armed robbery and 13 others accused of burglary in Kabul," said Khalid Zadran, a spokesman for the Afghanistan's Kabul police chief.

Security analysts believe that professional people will play a key role in ensuring security in the country.

"The presence of specialists and committed people is the key to ensuring security. I hope that the government will employee professional



people in the security sector," said Said Afghanyar, a military analyst.

"Professional people should be employed in the security sector and the process of attorneys should be transparent. The courts should act based on law not on bribery and reference," said Asadullah Nadim, a military analyst.

Meanwhile, Kabul resi-

dents are worried about the existence of crime in the city and urged the authorities to pay further attention to the issue.

"There are still some serious crimes occurring in some areas of Kabul. We ask the Islamic Emirate to eradicate the crimes," said Abdul Mobin, resident of Kabul.

"There are still some

felonies happening in Kabul but not as much as in the past. We want these felonies to be come to zero," said Muhammad Nasir, a resident of Kabul.

According to Kabul police headquarters, nearly 400 people who were professionally trained are employed in different police districts of Kabul.

Afghan rescuers still digging as hope fades for quake villagers

SlAH AB, Afghanistan (Agencies): Rescue workers scrambled through rubble for villagers buried in their homes by a series of earthquakes that killed more than 2,000 people in rural western Afghanistan, but hope of finding survivors was fading fast.

Volunteers have worked non-stop with spades and pickaxes in Herat province since Saturday's deadly magnitude 6.3 quake struck — followed by a series of powerful aftershocks — but some were turning to digging graves instead.

Afghanistan is frequently hit by deadly earthquakes, but the weekend disaster is the worst to

strike the impoverished country in more than 25 years.

Strong tremors were still shaking the area on Monday.

"There are families who don't have anyone left alive," said 50-year-old Ali Mohammad in Nayeef Rafi village, once home to 2,000 people.

"No one is left, not a woman nor a child... no one."

In nearby Siah Ab, a mass funeral ceremony was held Monday for more than 300 victims collected from nearby communities.

White-shrouded bodies were unloaded from a fleet of vehicles and laid in ranks

as a crowd of men solemnly crossed their arms in Islamic prayer.

"I thought I must have been dreaming; all the places were razed," said 30-year-old Ismail, who goes by only one name.

"No one is left."

The United Nations says "100 percent" of homes were destroyed in 11 villages of rural Zenda Jan, a hard-to-reach district just 30 kilometres (19 miles) northwest of Herat city, the provincial capital.

'Families in debris' Disaster management ministry spokesman Mullah Janan Sayeq said late Monday that desperate villagers were still searching

to "get their family out of debris".

But reports from the field described "a very bad situation" he told a news conference in the capital.

Local and national officials gave conflicting counts of the number of dead and injured, but the disaster ministry said Sunday that 2,053 people had died.

"We can't give exact numbers for dead and wounded as it is in flux," Sayeq said.

More than 11,000 people had been affected from 1,655 families, the World Health Organization says.

Trucks packed with food and blankets have arrived

in the area, with blue tents popping up among the ruins of villages.

As winter draws in, providing shelter for residents will be a major challenge for Afghanistan's Taliban government, which seized power in August 2021 and has fractious relations with international aid organisations.

'Crisis on top of crisis' 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, built around wooden support poles, with little in the way of modern steel reinforcement.

Multi-generational extended families generally live under the same roof, meaning disasters such as Saturday's quake can devastate local communities.

Afghanistan is already suffering a dire humanitarian crisis, with the widespread withdrawal of foreign aid following the Taliban's return to power.

Save the Children called the quake "a crisis on top of a crisis".

"The scale of the damage is horrific. The numbers affected by this tragedy are truly disturbing," said the group's country director Arshad Malik. Herat province — home

to around 1.9 million people on the border with Iran — has also been hit by a years-long drought that has crippled many hardscrabble farm communities.

Afghanistan is frequently hit by earthquakes, especially in the Hindu Kush mountain range, which lies near the junction of the Eurasian and Indian tectonic plates.

More than 1,000 people were killed and tens of thousands left homeless last June after a 5.9-magnitude quake struck the impoverished province of Paktika.

More than 4,000 people died in a magnitude 6.5 quake that struck Takhar province in 1998.

KP cabinet approves soft loans for youth, SMEs

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: The government of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa has given in-principle approval for the provision of concessional loans for youth, small and medium enterprises (SMEs) of the province.

Further concessions will be given by Bank of Khyber on the loan schemes on easy terms, the cost of which will be borne by the provincial government. This approval was granted by the caretaker provincial cabinet in a meeting held the other day with Caretaker Chief Minister Muhammad Azam Khan in the chair, said an official handout issued here on Wednesday.

In addition to the members of the caretaker cabinet and chief secretary Nadeem Aslam Chaudhry, the concerned administrative secretaries also participated in the meeting. On this occasion, the representatives of Bank of Khyber gave a detailed briefing to the Cabinet about State Bank of Pakistan loans for SMEs and youth and the benefits of the province's participation in such schemes and the benefits of this initiative of the provincial government. The interest rate will be reduced to zero on the youth and institutions taking loans.

The caretaker provincial cabinet also approved the transfer of 2 kanal and six marla of land for the establishment of a public library in Upper Karam, while it also approved the construction of a judicial complex on 13.5 kanal of land in Sarai Naurang (Lucky Marwat). The provincial cabinet did not approve the at-source deduction of the 88.673 million dollar debt owed by Khyber Pakhtunkhwa in the funds received from the federal government for the eradication of polio and the payment of the provincial government's share of the 155 million dollar loan for the future. It should be noted that the Punjab province has already opposed such conditions of the federal government.

In the meeting, the provincial cabinet approved the review of the budget estimates allocated to the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Housing Authority for the year 2022-23 and the budget estimates for 2023-24 while the cabinet approved all Tehsil Municipal Administration (TMA's) enforcement officers and delegation of Controlling Officers to concerned Assistant Commissioners.

JI to hold rallies tomorrow

F.P. Report

LAHORE: Ameer Jamaat-e-Islami (JI), Siraj-ul-Haq has asserted that the two-state solution to the Palestine issue contradicts the vision of Quaid-e-Azam and the state's official policy.

Addressing a press conference held at Mansoorah on Wednesday, he announced nationwide rallies in solidarity with the Palestinian people, scheduled for Friday. Sirajul Haq said Aqsa March in Karachi would be held on Sunday and also the JI would host a national conference on Palestine issue in Islamabad on October 17, focusing on the evolving situation in Gaza.

SOEs running into losses add to economic woes: PM

F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: Caretaker Prime Minister Anwaar-ul-Haq Kakar on Wednesday said that the country was facing financial problems and those state owned enterprises (SOEs) which had been incurring losses, were adding to these economic woes.

The prime minister chaired a high-level meeting over the affair of Pakistan International Airlines (PIA). The meeting was given a detailed briefing over the different issues of PIA.The meeting was attended by Caretaker Minister for Privatization Fawad Hassan Fawad, Adviser to PM Ahad Cheema and other relevant authorities, PM Office Media Wing said in a press release..

During the meeting, the prime minister expressed his concerns over the delayed decision making with regard to issues of PIA. He stressed upon expediting the privatization process of PIA and other SOEs running into losses, adding that their losses could not be met with the public tax money.

The caretaker prime minister said that reforms in the aviation sector could bring better facilities to the public. Transparency in the privations process should be ensured, he emphasised, adding fixing of responsibility for the losses was requisite so that necessary steps should be taken to avoid further losses. The meeting was apprised of the progress on the financial situation of PIA and its privatization process.

All the hurdles in its privatization process were removed, it was further added. The prime minister directed for accelerating privatization of the national flag carrier to avoid further burden on the national exchequer.

PM reassures timely completion of CPEC projects: Caretaker Prime Minister Anwaar-ul-Haq Kakar said that Pakistan and China were fully committed to ensuring the success of China Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) and the government would continue to work closely with the Chinese authorities to ensure timely implementation and completion of various projects envisaged under CPEC.

The prime minister was talking to Ambassador of the People's Republic of

China Jiang Zaidong who called on him, PM Office Media Wing said in a press release. The caretaker prime minister said that Pakistan and China enjoyed a unique relationship as 'All-weather Strategic Cooperative Partners, Iron Brothers' and trusted friends.

He lauded the vision and leadership of President Xi Jinping, particularly the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI). Prime Minister Kakar also noted the centrality of CPEC in enhancing economic, trade and technological ties between the two countries and highlighted its role as the flagship project of BRI.

This was Ambassador Jiang's first meeting with the caretaker prime minister since presenting his credentials as China's Ambassador to Pakistan. The prime minister congratulated Ambassador Jiang on assuming ambassadorial responsibilities in Islamabad and hoped that he would play a key role in further strengthening relations between the two countries.

Ambassador-designate to Morocco calls on Caretaker PM: Pakistan's Ambassador-designate to Morocco Sami Malik called on Caretaker Prime Minister Anwaar-ul-Haq Kakar.

The prime minister felicitated the ambassador-designate on his new assignment and expressed his good wishes, PM Office Media Wing said in a press release. The caretaker prime minister directed the ambassador to make efforts for further strengthening Pakistan-Morocco bilateral ties and taking the steps to increase bilateral cooperation between the two countries in diverse fields.

Meanwhile, a delegation from Balochistan headed by former Chief Minister Dr Abdul Malik called on Caretaker Prime Minister Anwaar-ul-Haq Kakar here. In the meeting, they discussed the issues faced by Balochistan province and the steps for their resolution, under the prime minister's leadership. The participants of the meeting viewed that the foreign investment in the mining sector of Balochistan under the Special Investment Facilitation Council was welcoming. Dr Abdul Malik appreciated the prime minister for taking the initiatives on priority basis for the uplift of Balochistan.

PPP torchbearer of human rights, uplifting voiceless, says Bilawal

F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: Chairman Pakistan People's Party (PPP) and former Foreign Minister of Pakistan, Bilawal Bhutto Zardari addressing a seminar on 'The Urgency of Action: Climate Change and its implications on Human Rights in Pakistan' hosted by the PPP Human Rights Cell via video-link said that following the catastrophic nationwide floods in 2022 and the recent floods in Punjab, climate change is a timely topic.

Chairman Bilawal said that as he speaks before the audience, he is reminded of the gravity of our shared responsibility. While we represent our party, these challenges transcend party lines. They resonate with every person who calls Pakistan home and in many ways, every inhabitant of our planet. We are living in an age of unparalleled change and nowhere is this change more palpable than in the realms of climate and societal structures. These two might seem distinct at the outset but they are intrinsically linked, forming the very fabric of our current challenges.

Pakistan, with its vast landscape and rich history is sadly an epicenter of the climate crisis. The evidence is clear and cannot be ignored, Chairman Bilawal said. The glaciers of the north are receding at alarming rates. The south's fertile land is giving way to desertification. These are not just climate calamities but stories of families and communities of the nation's fabric being torn apart, where erratic

weather spells destroy harvests, relentless floods ravage our homes. It is the heartbeat of our nation, of the common man and woman that suffer the most.

Let us pause and consider, is it not rather limiting to view this issue as that of melting ice and shifting sands, when this crisis at its core is about the countless people who stand to lose their rights, hopes and futures, the same goes for the marginalised communities who have been pushed further into the peripheries as well as the youth which is inheriting a world that is vastly different.

Our party, the Pakistan Peoples Party has a proud history of being the torchbearer of human rights. Today, I implore you to expand your understanding of these very rights. Access to clean air, safe drinking water and a stable are not luxurious but basic human rights as essential as the freedom of speech, the promise of a good education and the assurance of a fair trial.

With this expanded understanding, the Pakistan Peoples Party makes the following commitments:

Harmonizing climate policies with human rights: We will not just draft policies but create holistic solutions. Every environmental measure will inherently prioritise the well-being and rights of the people.

Empowering the voiceless: No longer will the most vulnerable communities be passive observers but will play an active and important role in shaping decisions and charting the path forward.

Driving the Green Revolution through jobs: As a pivot to a greener and more sustainable future, we pledge to ensuring that the youth is at the forefront of this transformation. They will play an important role in shaping decisions and charting the path forward.

Our vision does not stop here. We must invest in education that emphasises the importance of sustainability. We need infrastructure that is resilient to the challenges of the future. We must foster international partnerships because the battle against climate change is not one nation's fight but collective endeavour.

We envision a nation where the well-being of its land and people are given equal importance and opportunity to live their lives to the fullest possible extent. Let's shape the future of Pakistan and by extension, our world, together, Chairman Bilawal resolved. This is our message on the issue of human rights and climate, but while we speak, we do not just speak of a rhetoric. We have an example to show the people of Pakistan where we have delivered on this rhetoric in the shape of projects. We have the Sindh's 'Apni Zameen Apna Makaan' programme which is reconstructing the 2.1 million homes destroyed due to climate catastrophes.

We are not only providing homes but also ownership of the land to the women of the households to empower them. Hence, we are not only providing shelter to these families but also empowering them.

Israel pounds Gaza

(Continued from Page 1)

Fears have been intense in Israel for the fate of at least 150 hostages — mostly Israelis but also including foreign and dual nationals — being held in Gaza by Hamas. The militant group has claimed that four of the captives died in Israeli strikes and has threatened to kill other hostages if civilian targets are bombed without advance warning from Israel. Concern has mounted over the worsening humanitarian crisis in war-torn Gaza, where Israel had levelled over 1,000 buildings and imposed a total siege, cutting off water, food and energy supplies for 2.3 million people.

More than 260,000 Gaza residents have been forced from their homes, a UN aid agency said, while the European Union called for a "humanitarian corridor" to allow civilians to flee the enclave's fifth war in 15 years. Israel appeared to be readying for a possible ground invasion of Gaza, but faces the threat of a multi-front war after also coming under rocket attack from militant groups in neighboring Lebanon and Syria.

Israel again struck targets Wednesday in southern Lebanon,

an area controlled by Hezbollah, an ally of Israel's arch enemy Iran. Israel has been badly shaken by the deadliest attack in its 75-year history and the intelligence failure that allowed more than 1,500 militants to storm through the Gaza security barrier in their coordinated land, air and sea attack on the Jewish Sabbath. Hamas gunmen swept into small towns and kibbutzim and indiscriminately killed residents who hid in their homes or died defending their communities. Israeli forces have retaken more than a dozen southern towns near Gaza after days of grueling street battles that have left the bodies of at least 1,500 Hamas militants strewn in the streets.

"We are discovering bodies of dead Israelis in the various communities that Hamas infiltrated and where they conducted their massacres," said army spokesman Jonathan Conricus. "The death toll is a staggering 1,200 dead Israelis ... the overwhelming majority of them" civilians, he said, with the army later also reporting 169 fallen Israeli soldiers so far.

Troops have encountered and killed several holdout Hamas militants, said Israeli military spokesman Daniel Hagari, who told reporters Wednesday that "over the past day, we've killed 18 terrorists." The Israeli army has called up 300,000 reservists for what Netanyahu has said will be a "long and difficult" war.

Heavy fighting raged again Wednesday in Gaza, where the sky was blackened after the air force launched hundreds more strikes overnight and Hamas said at least 30 people were killed. Rubble, burnt out cars and broken glass covered roads in Gaza City, where bombs struck the Hamas-linked Islamic University. Also targeted were residential buildings, mosques, factories and shops, said Salama Marouf of the Gaza government's media office.

One Gaza resident, Mazen Mohammad, 38, said his terrified family had spent the night huddled together on the ground floor as explosions shook the area, before emerging in the morning to assess the total devastation of their neigh-

borhood. "We felt like we were in a ghost town, as if we were the only survivors," Mohammad said. The Israeli army said fighter jets also destroyed a Hamas anti-aircraft detection system and 80 Hamas targets in the northern Beit Hanoun area, including two banks used to "fund terrorism."

Medical supplies, including oxygen, were running low at Gaza's overwhelmed Al-Shifa hospital, said emergency room physician Mohammed Ghoniem. Unrest has flared in the occupied West Bank, where 15 Palestinians have been killed since Saturday and protest have been held in solidarity with Gaza.

"My entire life, I have seen Israel kill us, confiscate our lands and arrest our children," said Ramallah coffee vendor Farah Al-Saadi, 52, who praised the Hamas assault. Israeli cities have been eerily quiet and tense, with some residents noting a growing sense of fear and distrust between Jews and members of the Arab-Israeli minority. "Israeli people are scared of the Arabs and the Arabs are scared of the Jews... everybody is scared of each other," said Ahmed Karkash, a shopkeeper in the Old City of Jerusalem.



ISLAMABAD: Caretaker Prime Minister Anwar-ul-Haq Kakar chairing meeting of Federal Cabinet.

Chief of Staff Qatar Armed Forces visits Air HQs

F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: A high level delegation, led by Lieutenant General (Pilot) Salem Hamad Eqaif Al-Nabet, Chief of Staff, Qatar Armed Forces, called on Air Chief Marshal Zaheer Ahmed Baber Sidhu, Chief of the Air Staff, Pakistan Air Force at Air Headquarters, Islamabad on Wednesday.

During the meeting, evolving regional security and geo-strategic environment, avenues of defence cooperation in the field of technology sharing and development alongside key areas of mutual interest were discussed. On his arrival, a smartly turned out contingent of Pakistan Air Force presented him guard of honour following which he was introduced to the Principal Staff Officers of Pakistan Air Force.

Later, the visiting dignitary called on Air Chief Marshal Zaheer Ahmed Baber Sidhu, Chief of the Air Staff, Pakistan Air Force in his office. During the meeting, Chief of the Air Staff shared broad contours of his vision concerning PAF's modernization drive to further augment current operational capability necessitated in contemporary hybrid warfare especially in Artificial Intelligence, Niche technologies, Cyber and Space domains. He also discussed about various ongoing projects of Pakistan Air Force's operational construct, force goals and plans for the force structure with a keen focus on future warfare.

Appreciating the participation of Qatar Air Force contingent in Exercise Indus Shield at an operational air base of PAF, the Air Chief highlighted that both the countries enjoy historic and unprecedented brotherly relations and reiterated his resolve to further enhance the existing bilateral ties in military to military cooperation and training domains.

The Chief of Staff, Qatar Armed Forces, praised the professionalism of Pakistan Air Force personnel and the exceptional progress made by PAF over the years, especially through indigenization. He also appreciated the dynamic efforts of Air Chief in steering PAF towards modernization. Both sides concurred to further optimize the existing military ties between the two countries, with a specific focus on advanced tactical training, emerging technologies and strengthening operational competencies especially in the spheres of electronic warfare and cyber technology. The dignitaries also discussed the potential for joint military exercises and exchange programs with an aim to facilitate the exchange of expertise, enhancing interoperability and fostering closer ties between Air Forces of both the brotherly countries.

Police to obey law otherwise no one will be safe: PHC CJ observed

Humayun Khan

PESHAWAR: Chief Justice Peshawar High Court (PHC) Justice Muhammad Ibrahim Khan remarked that police must obey the law otherwise no one will be safe while adding the court asked from Inspector General of Police (IGP) that what this is as summoned for next week, on Wednesday.

PHC's Chief Justice made the remarks during hearing of Noor Khan disappeared from Hayatabad and added that police may arrest and impose non-bailable section but never do this otherwise your officers can't protect you.

During hearing the counsel for petitioner, Station House Officers of Hayatabad and Tatarapoli police station appeared before the court. The counsel for petitioner argued that applicant Noor Khan is resident of Iqbal Town university road and disappeared from Hayatabad. He added that police showed unawareness regarding disappearance of the petitioner as they were approached in this regard.

The counsel further argued that if police didn't detain the petitioner then who had disappeared Noor Khan, however, Chief Justice observed that PHC had summoned IGP for next and would ask that what is happening. Chief Justice PHC Justice Muhammad Ibrahim Khan remarked that police had made great sacrifices for this country and province while observing that never disgrace it otherwise your officers can't protect you and ordered DSP

Hayatabad to appear after break.

On appearance DSP Hayatabad informed that Noor Khan is recovered from Hassanabdal and kidnapper is also arrested. PHC had dispose of the writ plea after recovery of applicant. PHC's divisional comprised Justice Ishtiaq Ibrahim and Sahibzada Asadullah accepted appeal against the acquittal of two alleged murders while issuing notices to the respondents.

The counsel Nauman-ul-Haq Kakakhel argued that alleged murderers named Shafi-ur-Rehman and Khalil-ur-Rehman along with Fazal-ur-Rehman shot killed Razi Aman and Malak Aman over hen dispute in 2009 in the premises of Risalpur police station. The counsel added that four pedestrians were injured including a woman while all three culprits were absconders in which Fazal-ur-Rehman was died during absconding while two others were arrested in 2019.

The counsel argued that trial court had neglected serious points including evidences as declared by the court as contradictory and added that the alleged murderers had brutally killed two persons while arguing that liable for maximum punishment. PHC's divisional bench accepted appeal against acquittal of murderers after initial arguments and issued notices to the accused.

Moreover, PHC's divisional bench comprised Justice Ishtiaq Ibrahim and Justice Sahibzada Asadullah ordered federal government for submission

of reply for enlisting former provincial minister Riaz Khan in Provisional Identification List (PIL). The counsel Muhammad Inam Yousafzai argued that former provincial minister enlisted Riaz Khan in PIL to stop him from going aboard.

LHC turns down de-sealing of Lal Haveli

F.P. Report

RAWALPINDI: The Lahore High Court on Wednesday turned down the request for an immediate de-sealing of the Lal Haveli whose ownership has been claimed by Shaikh Rasheed Ahmad. LHC Rawalpindi bench Justice Mirza Waqas Rauf heard the case.

The ownership dispute case was heard in the high court. Advocate Sardar Abdul Raziq represented Sheikh Rasheed and his brother Sheikh Siddique, ETPB Deputy Administrator, and Additional Advocate General Siddique Awan attended the hearing. Sheikh Rasheed's lawyer contested the decision of the ETPB Chairman, asserting that all positions including Secretary and DG were concentrated in the Chairman's office. They claimed their appeal went unheard.

The court granted an additional half-hour to the Additional Advocate General to provide information about the Chairman's authority over the board and adjourned the hearing.

SC Practice and Procedure

(Continued from Page 1)

replied. He added that the Parliament not amending Article 191 does not mean it is surrendering its authority. "Article 191 contains the word law under which the Practice and Procedure Law is made." Justice Ahsan remarked that the SC law has impacted the independence of the judiciary. "The word law is used 200 times in the Constitution, will it have the same meaning?" he said, questioning Awan. Responding to the judge, the AGP said that laws are either made by the Parliament or by judges. Justice Akhtar remarked that there cannot be any legislation that takes away fundamental rights as per Article 8.

The AGP, however, said that the Parliament has the power to legislate under Article 191. "Parliament cannot legislate against independence of judiciary," he said. "The real question is the independence of the judiciary." Justice Ahsan asked, Justice Mandokhail asked whether the act is weakening or increasing the independence of the judiciary. "I will answer these questions based on the principle of separation of powers and the independence of the judiciary," the AGP replied, maintaining that the law is not against the independence of the judiciary. "Mr. Attorney General, these words are not only law, but subject to law," Justice Minallah said.

Article 191 is different and the rest of the articles you are referring to are different, remarked Justice Akhtar. "The articles you have referred to are fundamental rights." The AGP, in response, said that the demand not to exercise the power cannot be construed as the termination of the Parliament's power. Justice Akhtar asked the AGP why the provincial assembly cannot enact laws. The CJP raised a

question about Constitution makers deliberately using the word Parliament or Law. He added that they have created the Constitution as a strong book that can be used when needed. Justice Mazhar asked the AGP about the usage of the word "law" in Article 191. "In Article 191, law shall mean an act of Parliament," Awan replied.

Justice Ahsan remarked that the framers of the Constitution could also have said that the SC would make its own rules until any legislation was passed. "It is not clear from the intention of the framers that the SC rules can be changed by legislation," he added. Justice Ahsan said Article 191 has nowhere written that a law will be made under it. "The word law in Article 191 does not include the 1956 rules," the AGP said. CJP Isa asked where the Constitution mention that court decision will also be law.

"Adherence to court decisions and their implementation is essential," he remarked. "The power to make rules has been given by the constitution to the executive, judicial and Parliament. Are the rules of the executive and Parliament laws?" Justice Ahsan asked. The AGP, later, stated that the rules of the executive and Parliament have the status of law. "Rules are laws but they shall not be called laws as used in Article 191."

"The last rules of the Supreme Court were made in 1980, this means the Parliament was sleeping for 43 years?" Justice Naqvi asked. Awan said it is possible that if the pending cases increase in the Supreme Court, Parliament will have to make another law.

Justice Afridi said there are mistakes in both the Supreme Court and the Parliament. "The SC is an establishment and a Titanic,

how can it be turned around here and there at once?" he remarked. "Why did Parliament remember to enact this legislation after so many years? Was the purpose of the Parliament's legislation intended to divide the power of an individual?" Justice Mandokhail asked the AGP. He added that the Constitution does not mention who will make the bench.

Justice Ahsan asked what would happen if the SC decided not to implement the law. "You are bound by the Constitution and the law according to your oath," the AGP replied. Justice Mandokhail if the judges will violate their oath if they don't follow the SC law. "Adherence to the practice and procedure act is mandatory," Awan said in response. Justice Akhtar questioned why to give authority to three judges when it is not being given to one. "We respect the Parliament and want the Parliament to respect the SC," the CJP said.

He added that the SC's job is to praise the Parliament if it makes good laws. "It can be debated whether the law is good or bad." Responding to the judges about the powers of the Parliament, the AGP said: "The Parliament can directly legislate to extend the jurisdiction of the SC. It doesn't have the power to legislate directly on high courts and the Federal Shariat Court." "In other words, the constitutional ban is for the high courts and sharia court, but not SC?" Justice Akhtar asked. Following the resumption of the hearing after a break, the AGP continued to respond to the questions of the full-court judges. The CJP, during the hearing, remarked that the judges should have the courage to hear criticism. "The attorney general is only showing us a mirror," the chief justice said.