

Ex-GDA leaders meet Bilawal
F.P. Report

KARACHI: Former Grand Democratic Alliance (GDA) leader Ali Gohar Khan Mehr, who joined the Pakistan People's Party (PPP), met with Party Chairman Bilawal Bhutto Zardari on Saturday. Ali Nawaz Khan Mehr, Raja Khan Mehr and Ali Anwar Khan Mehr, also met Chairman Bilawal Bhutto Zardari at Bilawal House after joining PPP.



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No wish for revenge, says Nawaz Sharif

— terms ‘good relations’ with neighbours vital for country’s development

F.P. Report

LAHORE: Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) supremo Nawaz Sharif said Saturday he had no intention of taking revenge on his political opponents and at the same time asked all constitutional institutions to join hands for the country's development, as the three-time prime minister ended four years of self-imposed exile in London. He has termed the ‘good relations’ with neighbours vital for development of the country.

The former PM who landed in Pakistan on Saturday after spending four years in self-imposed exile was addressing a historic homecoming rally organized by the PML-N at Minar-e-Pakistan ground to celebrate the return of their leader. The PML-N leaders from across the country along with contingents of enthusiastic supporters attended the rally at Minar-e-Pakistan ground which was adorned with dazzling electric lighting.

Nawaz Sharif while addressing the party leaders and activists said, “I am among you after several years but was proud of long-standing relationship with you and love you accorded to me.” The PML-N supremo noted that he had served the country with loyalty whenever he was given a chance, adding that he had resolved the issues of Pakistan and never hesitated from any sacrifice.

He recalled regretted the “false” cases against him, PML-N president Shehbaz Sharif, party's vice president and his daughter Maryam Nawaz and other party leaders. However, he said, no one abandoned the PML-N flag. “Who are they who separate Nawaz Sharif from his nation?” he asked, recalling making Pakistan a nuclear power and “ended” load shedding in the country during his time as the prime minister.

“Do you remember those 18 hours of loadshedding? Who ended it?” he asked, noting that it was under his leadership that the power issue was resolved. The former premier stressed that “some wounds never heal”, recalling how he couldn't pay the final respects to his mother, father or wife despite repeated requests in jail. He said that these women won't be there to receive him at his home like they did in the past. He then recalled the time when he was given the news of his wife's passing.

Referring to Pakistan's nuclear tests on May 28, 1998, the former premier said that then-United States president Bill Clinton and other world leaders pressured him not to conduct tests. “There will be record present in the

Foreign Office that Bill Clinton offered me \$5 billion in 1999 for not carrying out nuclear tests, but my conscience did not allow me to accept the thing which was against Pakistan's favour,” he claimed.

“If someone else would have been in my place, could he have said this in front of the American president,” he added. Nawaz Sharif maintained that they conducted the nuclear tests and gave India a befitting response. “Are our [PML-N] governments toppled down and verdicts are issued against us for refusing the US and taking stance for the interest of Pakistan?,” he asked.

Speaking of the inflation, the former premier compared how roti and petrol's costs way higher today than when he was in power. “Was I ousted for this reason? It was said that Nawaz Sharif was ousted for not taking salary from his son,” he said. “You are the public, you tell, do you agree with such decision?” he asked the charged crowd at Minar-e-Pakistan jalsa. He further said that no one in Pakistan would be unemployed if his party was allowed to continue the “1990s economic model”.

Unfortunately, he said, today, the condition was so bad that one has to think if they can feed their children or pay electricity bills. “People are committing suicide, and borrowing money to pay the bills,” “During my tenure, the poor had enough financial resources to at least to seek healthcare and get himself treated,” he claimed.

Meanwhile, Nawaz Sharif clarified that these tough economic conditions weren't created during the Shehbaz-led government but traced back to a long time. “During our tenure sugar was 50 rupees per kilogram, today it is at 250,” he said, adding: “Pakistan was on its way to becoming an Asian tiger, we were preparing to ensure Pakistan's inclusion in the G20.” Earlier, PML-N supremo Nawaz Sharif reached Islamabad from Dubai via a chartered flight.

After landing at Islamabad airport, Sharif proceeded to the airport's VIP lounge alongside party leader Ishaq Dar, to sign legal documents and complete biometric formalities. The PML-N supremo stayed at Islamabad International Airport for over one hour where he signed documents and held consultation with his lawyers. Notable leaders, including Maryam Nawaz, have already joined the rally, and Nawaz Sharif himself has arrived in Lahore from Islamabad, where he was warmly received by his brother, Shahbaz Sharif. A helicopter transported him to the historic Shahi Fort.

Lawyers to file Nawaz’s plea tomorrow

F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: Former prime minister Nawaz Sharif's application for restoration of his appeals against sentences in NAB references, will be filed on Monday. Nawaz Sharif's lead lawyer Amjad Pervaiz has confirmed that the plea for appeals' restoration will be submitted in Islamabad High Court on Monday after the court's working hours passed.

Sharif will request the court for restoration of his appeals against sentences in Avenfield and Al-Azizia accountability references. The PML-N supremo stayed at Islamabad International Airport for over one hour where he signed documents and held consultation with his lawyers. Nawaz Sharif's legal team was reached Islamabad airport ahead of his arrival.

Sharif held a meeting with his lawyers, comprises of former law minister Azam Nazeer Tarar, Amjad Pervaiz, Ata Tarar and Barrister Zafarullah. The IHC on Thursday granted protective bail to Nawaz Sharif in Avenfield and Al-Azizia cases until Oct 24. Earlier, an accountability court suspended permanent warrant of former PM Nawaz Sharif in Toshakhana case. The accountability court had awarded 10 years jail term with eight million Pounds fine to Nawaz Sharif in Avenfield case and 07 years sentence in Al-Azizia reference. The court had also disqualified Sharif for holding public office for 10 years.

‘My father has endured more hardships’

F.P. Report

LAHORE: Pakistan Muslim League – Nawaz (PML-N) Chief Organiser and Senior Vice President Maryam Nawaz said on Saturday that his father and party Qauid had endured more hardships than any other leader in the last 24 years.

Taking to microblogging website X (formerly Twitter), she said, “Today is perhaps the biggest day of my life, I am thankful to the Almighty. No one has endured as many hardships as Nawaz Sharif in the last 24 years. Some of his wounds will never be able to be filled. Yet Nawaz Sharif has experienced way many highs than anyone else. Pakistan is ready to witness another high of Nawaz Sharif. InshaAllah.” “Come, our eyes await you”. Welcome Nawaz Sharif.

Meanwhile, PML-N information secretary Marriyum Aurangzeb said Saturday that Nawaz Sharif will become the prime minister of Pakistan fourth time. The former federal minister said that Pakistan will write a new history today with the homecoming of Nawaz Sharif after four years.



LAHORE: Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz supremo Nawaz Sharif addressing party workers after arrival from London.

Trucks carry aid and coffins into Gaza

Israel tells citizens to leave Egypt, Jordan ‘as soon as possible’

RAFAH: The Rafah border crossing between Egypt and Gaza has opened to let a small amount of desperately needed aid flow to Palestinians running short of food, medicine and water in the territory that is under an Israeli siege. A convoy including 20 aid trucks entered the Gaza Strip on Saturday from Egypt, carrying medicine and food supplies, a statement from Palestinian group Hamas said.

More than 200 trucks carrying roughly 3,000 tonnes of aid had been positioned near the crossing for days ready to head into Gaza. “The relief aid convoy that is supposed to enter today includes 20 trucks that carry medicine, medical supplies, and a limited amount of food supplies [canned goods],” Hamas's media office said earlier. Martin Griffiths, the UN's emergency relief coordinator, welcomed the delivery, saying it followed “days of deep and intense negotiations with all relevant sides to make sure that aid operation into Gaza resumes as quickly as possible and with the right conditions”.

“I am confident that this delivery will be the start of a sustainable effort to provide essential supplies – including food, water, medicine and fuel – to the people of Gaza, in a safe, dependable, unconditional and unimpeded manner,” he added. Israel has repeated that the aid shipments entering Gaza on Saturday from Egypt would not include fuel. This is a major concern for the besieged enclave's population and the relief agencies providing essential services, as fuel is required to pump the water supply and power generators used for operating crucial facilities such as hospitals.

Residents traditionally need to fill up tanks to access water. Without fuel, they cannot operate trucks needed to transport water or pump it. On Sunday, Gaza's last functioning seawater desalination plant shut down due to fuel running out. Several hospitals are currently completely out of service while others are running on very low fuel supplies and have already had to shut down major health departments. Without fuel, thousands of patients including newborn babies in incubators are at immediate risk. Doctors say many patients, such as kidney and cancer patients, are already straddling a line between life and death. “Fuel is absolutely critical,” Juliette Touma, communications director at UNRWA, told Al Jazeera. “Fuel needs to come in. If we are expected, and we would like to, continue to deliver assistance to people, we will need fuel.”

For two weeks, Israel has blockaded the territory and launched waves of punishing air attacks following an October 7 rampage by Hamas fighters on towns in southern Israel. Al Jazeera's James Bays said that although the opening of the Rafah crossing is “significant” as it might lead to more aid being sent into Gaza, experts are saying more is aid needed.

“I have to say 20 trucks, given that Gaza used to get – in terms of aid coming into Gaza before this conflict started – about 100 trucks of aid a day ... so this really is a drop in the ocean,” he said. Many in Gaza, reduced to eating one meal a day and without enough water to drink, are waiting desperately for aid. Hospital workers were also in urgent need of medical supplies and fuel for their generators as they treat thousands of people wounded in the bombings.

Cindy McCain, the executive director of the World Food Programme, told Al Jazeera that 20 trucks of aid is not enough. “The situation inside Gaza is dire. Not only is there no food, there is no water, electricity, or fuel. And that combination is not only catastrophic but can lead to more starvation and disease as well,” she said. “We've got to get more trucks in.”

Israel has sealed off the territory, forcing Palestinians to ration food and drink filthy water from wells. Hospitals say they are running low on medicine and fuel for emergency generators amid a territory-wide blackout. Hamas's media office issued a statement on Saturday saying that expected truckloads of aid “will not change the catastrophic medical conditions in Gaza”.

Meanwhile, Israel has called on its citizens to immediately leave Egypt and Jordan, and to try and avoid travelling to other regional countries, as tensions flare over its war in Gaza.

“Israel's National Security Council raises its travel warnings for Egypt (including Sinai) and Jordan to level 4 (high threat): recommendation not to travel to these countries and for those staying there to leave ... as soon as possible,” the country's National Security Council said in a statement on Saturday. It also raised the threat level for Morocco to a “3” and advised Israelis to avoid non-essential travel. Local media said the council's announcement was due to fears that Israeli travellers would be targets of those angry at the continuing war on Gaza that began after a Hamas onslaught on October 7. — Aljazeera

Attack aimed to disrupt Israel-Saudi thaw: Biden

WASHINGTON: United States President Joe Biden has said he believes Hamas carried out its unprecedented attacks on Israel to derail a diplomatic thaw between the country and Saudi Arabia.

Speaking at a campaign fundraiser in Washington, Biden said Hamas carried out the October 7 attacks in part to disrupt his efforts to normalise Israel-Saudi relations. “Guess what? The Saudis wanted to recognise Israel. ... unite the Middle East,” Biden said, telling donors the Palestinian group knew he was “about to sit down with the Saudis”.

Biden last week told CBS's 60 Minutes that the prospect of normalisation was “still alive” but would take time, after Saudi officials reportedly paused talks with Israel in the aftermath of Hamas's October 7 attacks and the subsequent Israeli bombardment of the Gaza Strip. Riyadh has expressed concern about the fate of Palestinians in Gaza, which has been pumelled by Israeli air strikes that Palestinian officials say have killed at least 4,137 people.

Saudi Arabia backed the US-brokered Abraham Accords that saw the United Arab Emirates and Bahrain normalise ties with Israel in 2020, but has so far not recognised Israel itself. The Biden administration has pushed for the normalisation of ties between Israel and Saudi Arabia, Washington's two most powerful allies in the Middle East, and there had been signs of warming ties between the sides in recent months. Israel and Saudi Arabia were also among about two dozen countries that agreed to work together on a rail and shipping corridor announced by Biden at the G20 summit in India. — Aljazeera

Pakistan, China agree to strengthen cooperation

F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan and China have decided to further strengthen cooperation between the mainstream media of the two countries. The decision was made during a meeting of Chinese media delegation led by China's Political Counsellor Ms. Bao Zhong with the Caretaker Federal Minister for Information Murtaga Solangi, said a press release issued here on Saturday.

The two sides also decided to highlight Pakistan China Economic Corridor projects through PTV, Radio Pakistan and APP. Both the countries agreed to further strengthen practical cooper-

ation in joint reporting and exchange of media delegations. In his remarks, Minister for Information Murtaga Solangi said that Pakistan valued “Chinese President Xi Jinping's Belt and Road Initiative (BRI).”

“BRI project is a manifestation of bringing peace and prosperity through economic development”, Murtaga Solangi maintained.

The role of media in creating public awareness regarding the centrality of CPEC and iron friendship with China for economic development was indispensable, Murtaga Solangi opined. The minister said that Pakistan would strengthen ties and coopera-

tion with China in various fields in the new phase of high-quality development of CPEC.

The minister expressed Pakistan's desire to benefit from China's development experience. “We will benefit from China's achievements in poverty alleviation, research and development, information technology, media and other fields”, he added. Speaking on the occasion, Chinese Political Counsellor said CPEC will be made a corridor of love and friendship. She assured that China would increase cooperation with Pakistan in media, information technology, agriculture and industrial sector.

PM’s participation in BRF reaffirms Pakistan commitment to CPEC

ISLAMABAD (APP): Caretaker Prime Minister Anwaar-ul-Haq Kakar recently concluded his significant visit to China, which reaffirmed Pakistan's commitment to timely completion of China Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) projects, a flagship of Belt and Road Initiative, besides profusely advocating the need for collective efforts for regional connectivity and shared prosperity.

The prime minister had been to Beijing, China to participate and address the Third Belt and Road Forum for International Cooperation at the invitation of President Xi Jinping. Chinese President Xi opened the Forum with about 140 nations in attendance.

Besides PM Kakar, the dignitaries at the forum included Russian President Vladimir Putin, Ethiopian Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed, Sri Lankan President Ranil Wickremesinghe, Republic of Congo President Denis Sassou Nguesso, Papua New Guinean Prime Minister James Marape, Cambodian Prime Minister Hun Manet, Argentina's President Alberto Fernandez, Hungarian Prime Minister Viktor Orban, and Indonesian President Joko Widodo.

Addressing the High-Level Forum

of BRF titled 'Connectivity in an Open Global Economy', Prime Minister Kakar appreciated President Xi's vision for creating a global community with shared future and the Belt - and-Road Initiative which held immense significance for global connectivity, common development and shared prosperity. The visit coincided with another milestone in the bilateral ties as the two countries are celebrating the 10th anniversary of China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC).

In his address, the caretaker prime minister highlighted the crucial role of CPEC in generating new economic opportunities in Pakistan. Underscoring its salience for Pakistan's robust economic development, he endorsed the Chinese proposal for developing CPEC as a corridor of growth, innovation, livelihood, green economy, openness and inclusiveness. He also underlined the need for a united global response to address complex transnational challenges faced by humankind and to prevent backsliding on the gains achieved under UN Sustainable Development Goals and 2030 Agenda.

He emphasised the urgency of addressing infrastructure gaps in the developing world by investing in transportation, energy and digital

economy. On the sidelines of the Forum, he also met with the leaders of different countries including Russia, Kenya and Sri Lanka.

He also held meetings with Chinese President Xi Jinping and Premier Li Qiang as well as the senior leadership of the Communist Party of China and discussed the ways forward to deepen bilateral relations. During his meeting with the Chinese president, the two sides, discussed various dimensions of the multi-faceted Pakistan-China relationship, and reaffirmed their long-standing and steadfast friendship, all-weather strategic cooperation, economic and trade ties, and CPEC.

Caretaker Prime Minister Kakar, in a bilateral meeting with Chinese Premier Li Qiang, reaffirmed the time-tested and iron-clad friendship between Pakistan and China and agreed to further strengthen high-level dialogue and engagement. “In a warm and cordial atmosphere, leaders of the two countries had in-depth exchanges of views and reached extensive consensus on strengthening the China-Pakistan all-weather strategic cooperative partnership, practical cooperation in various areas, and international and regional issues of mutual interest,” a joint statement said.

The two sides reaffirmed that mutu-

al trust remained at the core of China-Pakistan relationship. During an interaction with the Chinese think tanks and scholars, the prime minister termed CPEC a manifestation of strategic relationship which proved as a “catalyst of growth, poverty alleviation and jobs creation”.

Caretaker prime minister also held a meeting with President of Russian Federation Vladimir Putin, on the margins of 3rd BRF. The two leaders reviewed bilateral cooperation with a special focus on trade, investment and energy and expressed satisfaction with the steady expansion of Pakistan-Russia relations. They also discussed the prospects of enhancing Eurasian connectivity and Pakistan's pivotal role in regional integration through rail, road and energy corridors.

On the sidelines of the BRF, the caretaker prime minister met President of Kazakhstan, Kassym Jomart Tokayev and President of Sri Lanka Ranil Wickremesinghe. He also met Secretary General of the United Nations Antonio Guterres on the sidelines of 3rd Belt and Road Forum and discussed the Gaza situation. Besides, the prime minister held meetings with the leading Chinese companies and encouraged their corporate executives to explore the vast investment poten-

tial of Pakistan. These included CEOs and executives of Chinese enterprises Minmetals, MCC, China Communication Construction Company (CCCC), China Road and Bridge Corporation (CRBC), COFCO, Amer International Group, Power China, China Energy and China Gezhouba Group. The prime minister appraised the Chinese businessmen of the Pakistan's initiatives for economic and financial stability. Sharing Pakistan's vision for sustainable and inclusive development, he outlined Pakistan's investor-friendly policies; including the establishment of Special Investment Facilitation Council, which would act as a one-window platform to facilitate foreign investment.

During the visit, the United Energy Group of China and Pakistan Refinery Limited signed a Memorandum of Understanding for the investment worth \$1.5 billion in the petroleum sector. The MoU will help increase the petrol production capacity of the refinery from 250,000 metric tons to 1.6 million metric tons and high-speed diesel from 0.6 million metric tons to 2 million metric tons.

During the visit, the two sides signed 20 agreements and MoUs, cov-

ering cooperation on the BRI, infrastructure, mining, industry, green and low-carbon development, health, space cooperation, digital , development cooperation and export of agricultural products to China. On the last leg of the visit, the prime minister visited Urumqi and met Member of Politburo of CPC's Central Committee Ma Xingrui besides addressing the students at Xinjiang University.

The two sides agreed to strengthen cooperation in the mining industry, including in the fields of geological survey, joint research on geology and minerals, training of talent, and planning of mining industrial parks, IT, industrialization and agriculture sectors as well. Earlier, the caretaker prime minister also attended a state banquet hosted by President Xi Jinping for world leaders attending the 3rd Belt and Road Forum in China. Held at the iconic Great Hall of the Peoples, the State Banquet was attended by the Heads of State/Government of Russia, Kenya, Ethiopia, Mongolia, Hungary, Sri Lanka, Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan, Papua New Guinea, Mozambique and Chile, among several other world leaders. At the banquet, the prime minister was welcomed by President Xi and First Lady Madame Peng Liyuan.



SAPM visits BoI offices

LAHORE (APP): Special Assistant to the Prime Minister (SAPM) on Investment Muhammad Tahir Javed visited the Board of Investment (BoI) offices, here on Saturday.

BoI Deputy Director Saba Ejaz briefed the SAPM about working of the board. Tahir Javed also visited different sections of the board. Later, he left for Expo Centre to inaugurate 77th Edition of 'Pakistan Lifestyle and Furniture Expo'.

322 ration bags distributed

KARACHI (APP): As many as 322 more ration bags were distributed among the poor people on the directives of the Sindh Governor Mohammed Kamran Khan Tessori on Saturday. The process of distribution of ration is continue under Taqatwar Pakistan Programme at the Governor House.

Over 0.1 million ration bags had been distributed among the needy persons so far, a Governor House spokesman said.

The Governor said that the distribution of the ration would continue with the help of philanthropists.

11 dead, 1,307 injured in Punjab road accidents

LAHORE (APP): At least 11 people were killed and 1,307 others injured in 1,219 road accidents in Punjab during the last 24 hours. As many as 673 people with serious injuries were shifted to different hospitals, while 634 with minor injuries were treated at the incident site by the rescue medical teams, according to a report released by Rescue 1122 here on Saturday.

The data analysis showed that 623 drivers, 34 underage drivers, 157 pedestrians, and 538 passengers were among the victims of road accidents. The statistics show that 253 accidents were reported in Lahore, which affected 269 persons, placing the provincial capital at top of the list, followed by 84 in Multan with 87 victims, and at third Gujranwala with 83 accidents and 82 victims. According to the data, 1,081 motorbikes, 66 auto-rickshaws, 96 motorcars, 23 vans, six passenger buses, 19 trucks and 117 other types of vehicles and slow-moving carts were involved in the road accidents.

Governor inaugurates Wedding Expo

KARACHI (APP): Sindh Governor Mohammed Kamran Khan Tessori on Saturday inaugurated the Wedding Expo at the Expo Centre Karachi Around 80 stalls have been established in it. The stalls of jewellery, makeup and wedding dresses have also been set up.

The Governor visited different stalls on the occasion. Later, talking to media persons, he said that all the political parties and stakeholders should be united for the country. He demanded to constitute a Commission titled Istehqam-e-Pakistan to strengthen the economy of the country.

CM inaugurates PHA nursery in Gulberg

LAHORE (APP): Punjab Chief Minister Mohsin Naqvi inaugurated the first commercial nursery of Parks and Horticulture Authority (PHA) at Gulberg, here on Saturday. He visited the nursery and witnessed flowers and plants placed in the nursery. He also inspected the flower shop and ordered to improve quality of bouquets.

The CM said the Parks and Horticulture Authority would establish more flower shops in Lahore. Flower shops on the pattern of Lahore will also be established in Multan, Gujranwala, Faisalabad and other cities. The PHA DG gave a briefing about various kinds of

plants and flowers in the nursery and said that people could buy plants, flowers and bouquets from the commercial nursery at cheap rates. Free delivery service of plants, flowers and bouquets at homes will also be provided. More than 400 kinds of plants and flowers will be available at the nursery. Local and foreign plants will be provided at the nursery. PHA will also provide landscape designing and planning services.

Secretary Housing, Secretary Information, Commissioner Lahore, CCPO, DGPR, DIG Operations, Deputy Commissioner and DG PHA were also present on the occasion.

Dutch Consul General discusses bilateral cooperation with Punjab governor

LAHORE (APP): Honorary Consul of The Netherlands in Lahore Asma Hamid called on Punjab Governor Muhammad Balighur Rehman at the Governor's House on Saturday and discussed matters of mutual interest, promotion of bilateral cooperation and the Palestine situation.

The governor said bombing and atrocities against innocent children and civilians in Palestine are painful. He said wherever there is injustice, voice should be raised against it. He said exchange of trade, educational, and cultural delegations between Pakistan and The Netherlands had cordial relations, adding that Dutch companies were investing in Pakistan in dairy, livestock, veterinary and other sectors.

need to boost trade relations with The Netherlands. Balighur Rehman said Pakistan was offering favourable business opportunities to the international companies in various sectors. He said Pakistan was providing foreign investment facilities in various sectors through Special Investment Facilitation Council (SIFC). He said the development of industry and foreign direct investment is vital to development of any country. Dutch Honorary Consul General Asma Hamid said Pakistan and The Netherlands had cordial relations, adding that Dutch companies were investing in Pakistan in dairy, livestock, veterinary and other sectors.

'International shows crucial for attracting foreign investment'

LAHORE (APP): Special Assistant to the Prime Minister (SAPM) on Investment Muhammad Tahir Javed Saturday stressed the need for organising more and more international standard exhibitions in Pakistan to attract foreign investment in the country.

Talking to the media

after visiting the 77th edition of Pakistan Lifestyle Furniture Exhibition and International Building & Construction Industry Exhibition at Expo Centre Lahore, he said that all possible measures were being taken to increase foreign investment in the country. The SAPM acknowledged the importance of the furniture industry, and expressed his optimism that foreign exchange could be earned by exporting furniture to other countries. He said that the government would provide all possible support to industrialist and business community for their revival as the authorities were committed to increasing exports of the country.

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HEADQUARTERS PAKISTAN RANGERS (SINDH)
MUSLIM JINNAH COURTS DR ZIA UD-DIN AHMED ROAD KARACHI-4

No. 1617/PRO/679/2023 Dated 19-October-2023

TENDER NOTICE

1. Sealed tenders are invited from the manufacturers or their sole distributors/ authorized dealers to provide different types / sizes of following items for vehicles of Pakistan Rangers (Sindh). Tenders will be opened on **15 November 2023 at 11:00 hours**:-

Ser	Tender No	Name of Items	Type	Tender Fee
a.	6011/EME/Filters/03/23	Filters	Different Type	Rs.3000/-
b.	6011/EME/Spare/04/23	Engine overhauled spare parts of vehicles (Package Deal)	Different Type	Rs.3000/-

2. Tender documents can be obtained on payment (non refundable) from **20 October 2023 to 14 November 2023** between 0900 to 1600 hours (on working days) from EME Branch, Headquarters Pakistan Rangers (Sindh), Muslim Jinnah Courts Building, Dr Zia Ud Din Ahmed Road Karachi - 4.

3. Tenders will be opened in the presence of representatives of the firms.

4. Tenders can be dropped in tender box by **15 November 2023** till 1030 hours.

5. Director General Pakistan Rangers (Sindh) has the right to accept or reject any or all tenders as per PPRA Rules 2004.

6. For further information please contact telephone numbers **021-99205263**, during office hours.

Lieutenant Colonel for Director General (Pakistan Rangers Sindh)

PID(K) 1217/23

HEADQUARTERS PAKISTAN RANGERS (SINDH)
MUSLIM JINNAH COURTS DR ZIA UD-DIN AHMED ROAD KARACHI-4

No. 1617/PRO/677/2023 Dated 19-October-2023

TENDER NOTICE FOR PROVISION OF MEDICINES / MEDICAL ITEMS FINANCIAL YEAR 2023-24

1. Pakistan Rangers (Sindh) invites sealed tenders from pharmaceutical companies, manufacturers, importers and their authorized distributors for purchase of medicines / medical items (for Men) during financial year 2023-24. List of required medicines / medical items can be obtained by paying **Rs.2,000/-** (Rupees two thousand only) non refundable for each tender from the office of Deputy Director Medical Services Headquarters Pakistan Rangers (Sindh) Jinnah Courts Building, Dr. Zia Ud Din Ahmed Road Karachi during office timing from **24 October 2023 to 09 November 2023** (within 15 days from date of publication of Advertisement) on submitting request form on firm's letter pad.

2. Tenders will be dropped in tender box on **09 November 2023 at 1400 hrs** placed at Headquarters Pakistan Rangers (Sindh) at Jinnah Courts Building, Dr Zia Ud Din Ahmed Road Karachi and same will be opened on **09 November 2023 at 1430 hrs** in the presence of bidder or their authorized representatives. Tender will be submitted on basis of **"Two Stage - Two Envelop Procedure"**.

3. This Headquarters has all the rights to approve or cancel any tender completely or partially vide Procurement Rule-2004.

Colonel for Director General (Muhammad Afzal)

PID(K) 1215/23 Telephone Number: 021-35631082



LAHORE: Governor of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Haji Ghulam Ali calls on Governor Punjab Muhammad Balighur Rehman at Governor House.

CM directs to study viability of plastic roads in Sindh

KARACHI (APP): Caretaker Sindh Chief Minister Justice (ret'd) Maqbool Baqar presiding over a meeting of the Works & Services department directed to study the viability of the concept of the plastic road by comparing the same with the world's best practices. This he said while reviewing the development portfolio of the Works & Services Department here at CM House.

The meeting was attended by Chief Secretary Dr. Fakhre Alam, Chairman P&D Shakil Mangnejo, PSCM Hassan Naqvi, Secretary Finance Kazim Jatoi, Secretary Works & Service Nawaz Sohoo, and other concerned officers.

Secretary Works Nawaz Sohoo briefing the CM said that in the ADP 2023-24 there were 956 schemes with an allocation of Rs 89,500.5 million against which Rs 39026.73 million have been released while the expenditures made so far come to Rs18089 million. The Secretary Works briefed the CM about the progress of inspections, its observations, and findings along with recommendations conducted by him and his office in various districts of Sindh. He also showed the CM a new inspection proforma, and its parameters developed by the department. The CM

directed the Works department to add a new column in the inspection report proforma to reflect the 'causes and details about the revision of the scheme/project.'

He also directed the works department to include a column in the inspection proforma about the performance of the contractor and officers involved in that project. For this purpose, the CM said that the services of any renowned engineering University could be hired for third-party inspection and validation of any chosen development scheme/project.

Baqar directed the works dept to take stern departmental action against the delinquent officers involved in corrupt practices and causing poor work of different development projects. He also directed the department to rationalize the proposed inspection mechanism, where the Secretary would visit schemes categorized as of high importance so that the efficiency and effectiveness of inspections may be increased.

He categorically told the works department that there would be zero tolerance for sub-standard work and those involved must be taken to the task. Secretary W&S briefed about the PWD Manual and mandate assigned to various field

formations/offices of the department. He also informed the CMN about the monitoring mechanism of various projects. At this, CM Baqar directed that for every major development project, there should be digital recordings, images, or videos at every stage of the project. The recorded data can be stored in the archives in the shape of DVDs or in USB form.

The secretary briefed the

CM about his field visits to inspect the development schemes of Road / Buildings Sectors of districts Badin, Tharparkar, Umerkot, Tando Muhammad Khan, Tando Allahyar, Matari, Hyderabad, and Sanghar.

To a question, he said the CM that his observations during the visit to the schemes included that no milestone was installed on the completed scheme.

PAKISTAN CIVIL AVIATION AUTHORITY (PCAA)
TENDER NOTICE

1. Tenders in sealed cover are invited on single stage single envelope basis as per PPRA rule 36 (a), from Contractors/Firms registered with Pakistan Engineering Council (PEC) in at least C-6 Financial Category or above and EE-04 & EE-06 specialization for the below mentioned work.

Name of Work	Earnest Money (Rs.)	Cost of Tender (Rs.)	Date & Time of Submission of Tender	Tender Opening date / time
Repair/rehabilitation of airfield ground lighting systems at Nawabshah airport	950,000/-	5000/-	08-11-2023 11:00 Hrs.	08-11-2023 11:30 Hrs.

2. Tenders can be obtained on written application from office of the undersigned during office hours on payment of prescribed tender cost (non-refundable) against Bank Challan/Deposit Slip/PO drawn in favour of Pakistan Civil Aviation Authority along with copies of valid PEC registration license, professional tax certificate, proof of relevant work experience, proof on being active Income tax payer list and electrical license of any region.

3. No tender shall be sold without pre-requisite documents.

4. No tender will be sold by post or on the date of opening of tender.

5. Pay Order/Bank Draft or any other financial instrument to be submitted by the bidders and contractors as Tender Cost, Earnest Money/Bid Security, and Bank Guarantee, if found fake or dishonoured by issuing Bank/Financial Institution at any pre/post contract stage of the case would call for Blacklisting and legal action as per law of the land.

6. PCAA reserves the rights to accept or reject any or all the tenders for sufficient and cogent reason which will be communicated to bidder on request.

Divisional Engineer ES E/M (Sindh/Makran), Jinnah Annexes, Old Soega Building, JIAP, Karachi
PID(K) 1232/23 Ph: 021-99071982/1604
www.caapakistan.com.pk

Properties Available for Rent

1. Sealed applications from well-reputed Parties/Companies are invited seeking to take the following buildings/plots on rent in different cities.

Sr. No.	Region	Site Name	Open sq ft	Covered sq ft	Sr. No.	Region	Site Name	Open sq ft	Covered sq ft
1	ITR	Adalya Road Telephone Exchange	10,000	3,048	17	NTR-II	Gloft	9,410	1,480
2	ITR	Chakri Road Telephone Exchange	10,000	1,430	18	NTR-II	Gulimam (Closed)	18,780	3,000
3	ITR	City Raja Bazar Rwp (1st Floor)	-	2,800	19	NTR-II	Industrial State (Nawala)	10,650	825
4	RTR	Choa Saidan Shah Telephone Exchange	9,200	-	20	NTR-II	Karak Gtr Open Space	5,154	-
5	RTR	Calony Dhakoo Road Chakwal	21,760	-	21	NTR-II	Kirri Khassoor Exch	9,410	1,480
6	RTR	Dhadhal Telephone exchange	5,440	-	22	NTR-II	Lochi	-	488
7	RTR	New Telephone Exchange Hazro	9,785	1,095	23	NTR-II	Lakki Marwat Guest House	4,225	1,200
8	NTR-I	Mathra Telephone Exchange	5,600	-	24	NTR-II	Panayala Exch	19,290	2,490
9	NTR-I	RTIS Peshawar	-	27,601	25	NTR-II	Pezu Exch	19,290	2,490
10	NTR-I	RTIS Swat	38,500	17,920	26	NTR-II	Pharapur Exch	18,780	3,000
11	NTR-I	Warsak Road Peshawar	13,605	10,548	27	NTR-II	Potha Telephone Exchange	10,065	825
12	NTR-II	Abdul Khel Exch	1,480	9,410	28	NTR-II	Shalozen Exch	9,410	1,480
13	NTR-II	Banda Daud Shah Guest House	6,724	4,166	29	NTR-II	Sheikh Chak Telephone Exchange	10,065	825
14	NTR-II	Billfong Exch	18,780	3,000	30	NTR-II	Tank Open Area	49,599	9,000
15	NTR-II	Ghazni Khel Exch	19,290	2,490	31	HTR	Kawal Telephone Exchange	10,505	955
16	NTR-II	Ghul Banda Exch	10,065	825					

- Open plots are best suited for marriage halls, service stations, workshops, restaurants & warehouses of prefabricated structure (permanent structure is not allowed).
- Covered areas are best suited for school, and academies.
- Documents can be collected from the office of the Manager (Estate Ops. & Financials) PTCL House, F-5/1, Islamabad, after making a non-refundable cash deposit of Rs. 200/- for each site; during office hours (09:00 AM to 04:00 PM). Regional Offices can also issue the documents located in Peshawar, Dera Ismail Khan & Abbottabad.
- Interested parties can visit the sites during office hours before **30th October 2023**.
- Sealed applications along with CDR/Demand Draft/Pay Order equal to two months quoted rent made in the favor of the Senior Manager Accounts & Payments PTCL PTCL NEST Office G-8/4, Islamabad. Applications without CDR/Demand Draft/Pay Order will not be considered.
- Unsuccessful bidders' CDR/Demand Draft/Pay Order will be refunded however incase the applicant withdraws from the offer PTCL reserves the right to forfeit the payment.
- Interested Parties/Applicants can deposit sealed applications before **30th October 2023** by 04:00PM, at the office of the Manager (Estate Ops. & Financials) PTCL House, F-5/1, Islamabad.
- Only shortlisted applicants(s) will be called/entertained.
- PTCL reserves the rights to accept/reject any or all applications at any stage without incurring any liability to the affected applicant(s) or any obligations to inform the affected applicant(s) of the ground for PTCL's actions.

Note: All Government Taxes will be applicable and will be paid by the winning applicant.

Head of People Experience (North)
PTCL House, F-5/1, Islamabad
Contact Number: 051-2270087/ 051-2273188

PAKISTAN ENGINEERING COUNCIL

TENDER NOTICE

FOR HIRING OF COURIER SERVICES

DOC NO: 10/R&I/ADMIN/PEC

Pakistan Engineering Council invites sealed bid/proposals for the provision of **Courier Services** under PPRA Rules (36b) on **"Single Stage, two Envelope"** for its HQ Islamabad and Regional/Branch Offices. Companies/firms registered with Income Tax, Sales Tax department, on Active Tax Payers list of FBR and authorized with relevant professional bodies are only eligible for provision of services to PEC. Tender document can be obtained from Purchase Section, PEC H.Q, Islamabad, during office working days (hours **10:00 am to 4:00 pm**) on payment of **Rs.2000/- (non-refundable)**.

Sealed bid/proposal should reach the following address on or before **20th November 2023, upto 2:30 pm** which will be opened on the same day at **3:00 pm** in the presence of bidders who wish to attend the same. The tender notice is also available at PEC (www.pec.org.pk) & PPRA (www.ppra.org.pk) websites.

PID(I) 2414/23

Director Administration
Pakistan Engineering Council,
Ataturk Avenue (East), G-5/2, Islamabad.
Email: purchase@pec.org.pk, Ph: 051-9219036 (Ext. 294)

Rents of Auqaf properties: SCCI warns to protest against 100% hike

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: Sarhad Chamber of Commerce and Industry president Fuad Ishaq termed recent hike by 100 per cent in rents of Auqaf properties was tantamount to economic murder for the traders and threatened to strongly agitate if the decision couldn't be withdrawn forthwith.

The matter of increase in rents of Auqaf properties was raised by trader leaders Ghulam Bilal Javed and Mian Jee Abu Muzaffar during a meeting with the SCCI's president Fuad Ishaq here at the chamber house, said in a press release here on Saturday.

The meeting was informed about traders' reservations and apprehen-

sion over 100 per cent increase in rents of Auqaf properties.

Fuad Ishaq while speaking on the occasion said instead of providing relief, removing economic owes, the government has adopted a policy to further add to miseries of terrorism and COVID lockdown affected traders' community.

The chamber president said it was reported that the provincial Auqaf department intimidated traders by issuing false statements, which is highly inappropriate, unjust and condemnable. He said rulers had taken every step for personal interests but government and institutions harassing the business community on pretext of enforcement rules/regulations and poli-

cies, asked that this practice should be halted immediately. The SCCI chief said the government has collected hefty amounts from the business community on the head of various taxes but in return, no relief was provided to them.

He noted the business community is highly perturbed owing to the government's unfriendly behavior and flawed policies and they have no other option but to start protesting against them.

He asked the provincial Auqaf department to withdraw this recent 100 per cent hike in rents of properties and capped at a maximum of 25 percent, every three years as per law, if not do so, the SCCI along with traders will take to streets

against this discriminatory decision.

Fuad Ishaq criticized that the government was only confined to paperwork and formation of committees, and this has exposed incompetence of all departments concerned, resultantly, miseries of the business community are increasing on a regular basis.

He was of the view that traders have played a pivotal role in the economic development of the country by paying various taxes.

Also, he added, the community has provided employment for many people so the government should provide them relief and special incentives and avoid multiplying problems of traders by enforcing unilateral policies.



PESHAWAR: Supporters of Pakistan Rah-e-Haq Party protesting against Israeli attack during a demonstration in solidarity with Palestinian people.

Police conducts operation

PESHAWAR (APP): The Peshawar police conducted a raid on the death of accused Shahsawar, who is in custody in the Edwards College student murder case, in the hope of arresting other accused involved in it.

According to details, the official said that during the raid, the accused started indiscriminate firing on seeing the police party, however, the police party also retaliated and as a result of the cross firing, the accused Shahsawar died on the spot after being shot by his co-accused.

During the cross firing, a policeman was hit by two bullets but luckily survived because he was wearing a bullet proof jacket, SSP Operations Kashif Aftab Abbasi told media men. He said during the encounter, the police vehicle was also hit by several bullets.

The accused escaped by taking advantage of the darkness of the night and densely populated area. It is worth mentioning here that Shaheswar's body was shifted to the hospital for post-mortem. A large-scale search operation is underway in the area after a heavy police force reached the spot, SSP Operations Kashif Aftab Abbasi said.

PDA launches campaign

PESHAWAR (APP): Peshawar Development Authority (PDA) here Saturday launched Clean and Green Peshawar campaign under which Hayatabad, Regi Model town and Jamrud Road would be cleaned with the help of students and civil society.

The launching of Clean and Green Peshawar was attended by Caretaker Local Government (LG) minister, Engineer Amir Durrani, Secretary LG, Daud Khan, Director General PDA, Muhammad Zubair, Additional Director General, Riaz Ali and Director Building Control.

The campaign was aimed to clean these areas besides creating awareness among people about benefits of healthy and clean environment.



PESHAWAR: Trader leaders Ghulam Bilal Javed alongwith Mian Jee Abu Muzaffar meeting with president Sarhad Chamber of Commerce and Industry Fuad Ishaq.

PCF, KP CA join Shaukat Khanam Cancer Hospital

PESHAWAR (APP): The Pakistan Cycling Federation (PCF) and KP Cycling Association, in collaboration with Shaukat Khanam Cancer Hospital, organized a remarkable cycle ride and walk to raise awareness about breast cancer among women. This meaningful event took place at Shaukat Khanam Cancer Hospital in Hayatabad, here.

The event was inaugurated by the esteemed President of PCF, Syed Azhar Ali Shah, who officially opened the cycle rally. A total of approximately 70 mature female cyclists from various women's colleges in Peshawar participated in the race, demonstrating their support for this vital cause.

The entire event was meticulously organized by the dedicated Nisar Ahmad, who played a pivotal role in ensuring its success.

After the cycling rally, an impressive ceremony was held, during which the Chief Executive Officer of Shaukat Khanam Cancer Hospital distributed shields and certificates to the participants, acknowledging their commitment to raising awareness about breast cancer.

This event carried an important message for all women, dedicating just five minutes each day to self-examinations can be instrumental in detecting breast cancer in its early stages, greatly improving the chances of successful treatment.

Distinguished guests, including the Director General of Sports, Captain (R) Khalid Mehmood, Syed Shayyan Ali Shah, President of KPCA (KP Cycling Association), Muhammad Ali, Secretary of KPCA, and others, were in attendance, further highlighting the significance of this event.

In the spirit of unity and compassion, we appeal to the generous people of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa to consider supporting Shaukat Khanam Cancer Hospital, a charity hospital at the forefront of the battle against this devastating disease. Donations can make a substantial impact in furthering the cause of cancer research, treatment, and support.



PESHAWAR: People buying fish from a vendor at Ghanta Ghar.

PHCBA 2024 polls: Malgry Wakeelan nominates cabinet

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: Malgry Wakeelan nominated Amin-ur-Rehman advocate and Barrister Amir Ullah Chamkani as presidential and general secretary for Peshawar High Court Bar Association (PHCBA) 2024 election, on Saturday.

This was announced by parliamentary board chairman Rafiq Mohmand and Malak Ishfaq advocates in the presence of board's members.

Malgry Wakeelan nominated Shaukat Afridi for vice president, Zahid Iqbal for joint secretary, Shahryar for finance, Sheikh Fakhar Ayaz for press secretary and Arif Firdous will contest election for library secretary PHCBA 2024 cabinet.

Advocate Adil Shah and Sherin Javeed will contest election as executive committee members while during announcement Malgry Wakeelan provincial president Ahmad Farooq along with general Zar Badshah and Tariq Afghan advocates were present.

Major operations conducted

PESHAWAR (APP): Upon receiving a tip-off, the Food Safety Team conducted a surprise raid on a tea leaf manufacturing factory in Mian Gujar Peshawar, Food Authority Spokesman said.

About 1000 kg of substandard tea leaves, 300 kg of gram straw, 6.5 kg of non-food grade color were seized from the factory and taken into government custody, the Food Department spokesperson said.

Gram straw and non-food grade color were being used in the preparation of tea, the spokesperson said.

The machinery used in the factory was seized while the manager was arrested and a case was registered against the owners, spokesperson said.

The team of the Food department set up a blockade on main Jahangiri Road Swabi and checked the vehicles carrying food items and during inspection seized 750 kg of fake food items besides recovering substandard and harmful ghee from a vehicle, the spokesman of the food department said.

KP govt releases Rs2b for health cards

PESHAWAR (INP): The Khyber Pakhtunkhwa government has released two billion rupees for health cards, which will be used to restore the health card service and make further reforms to improve it.

Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Health Advisor Dr. Riyaz Anwar said that the health card service was closed due to lack of funds, but it has now been restored on the special instructions of Chief Minister Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Azam Khan.

Dr. Anwar said that the government is also taking steps to improve the quality of care in MTI hospitals. He said that unnecessary development work in these hospitals has been banned, and the focus will now be on improving patient care and facilities.

The restoration of the health card service is a welcome development for the people of KP. The service provides free medical treatment to eligible individuals, and it has been a life-

saver for many people.

The government's commitment to improving the quality of care in MTI hospitals is also commendable. These hospitals provide essential healthcare services to a large number of people, and it is important that they are well-equipped and well-staffed.

The people of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa look forward to the benefits of the restored health card service and the improved quality of care in MTI hospitals.

Solidarity walk held with Palestinian people

PESHAWAR (APP): A solidarity walk was organized at Peshawar Medical College to denounce Israeli actions and atrocities in Palestine and to express support for Palestinian Muslims.

Students and teaching staff from Peshawar Medical College, Peshawar Dental College, Rufidah Nursing College, and Jinnah Medical College participated in the walk the other day.

The participants held placards bearing slogans condemning Israeli actions and expressing solidarity with oppressed Palestinian Muslims.

Following the walk, a protest meeting was conducted on the lawn of Peshawar Medical College.

The event featured speeches from various dignitaries, including Dean of Peshawar Medical College, Prof. Dr. Hafeez ur Rahman; Principal, Prof. Dr. Muhammad Aman Khan; Principal of Peshawar Dental College, Prof. Dr. Shamim Akhtar; Vice Principal of Jinnah Medical College, Prof. Dr. Mohammad Ishaq, and Prof. Dr. Shamsul Haq.

The speakers strongly

condemned Israel's barbaric acts against innocent Palestinians.

They characterized Israel's bombings of Palestinian settlements and hospitals as clear violations of human rights and international law.

They called on the international community to take notice of Israeli atrocities and take actions to halt them. The speakers appealed to the public to offer moral support to the Palestinian cause and provide financial assistance to the vulnerable Palestinian population.



PESHAWAR: Professor Ibrahim, Sabir Awan with others addressing a seminar. — F.P. photo by Ghulam Murtaza

Mobile snatcher arrested during police encounter

PESHAWAR (INP): An alleged mobile snatcher has been arrested in an injured condition during a police encounter in the limit of Town police station here Saturday. SSP (Operations),

Kashif Aftab Abbasi told the media that the accused Sirtaj son of Zareef, a resident of Afghanistan were arrested and a case was registered against him under different sections.

He claimed a pistol and 17 snatched mobiles were recovered from his possession. The SSP said the investigation was underway to arrest the other accused on his plantation.

Contours of Beauty: Unraveling the impact of cultural norms on mental health in Pakistan

Fatimah Saeed

Amidst the vibrant tapestry of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KPK) and Punjab, Pakistan, lie two patent ideals of feminine beauty, woven deeply into societal fabric. Yet, beneath the allure, lies a cost that transcends appearances-profound impact on psychological well-being. As a fourth-year clinical psychology student, I found myself on an unexpected journey, one that delved into the entanglement of physical appearance expectations and their emotional aftermath, illuminating the intricate interplay between cultural beauty norms and psychological well-being. In mere hours, two stories

emerged, casting light on the complex relationship between the battle for self-acceptance and societal expectations.

Traditionally, beauty ideals are passed down through generations as a part of communal values as well as cultural identity. In both regions, elders, especially mothers and grandmothers, play a pivotal role in imparting these standards to younger generations often through traditional rituals, storytelling, and community practices. Historically, in KPK, the roots of these beauty ideals can be traced back to the ancient traditions and lifestyles of the region, emphasising curvaceousness as a sign of fertility and strength, which can be

linked to the challenges of a harsh landscape and the need for robust health. Meanwhile, in Punjab, where trade, agriculture, and cultural exchanges have been prominent, the beauty standards have been influenced by a variety of external factors, including the Mughal and colonial eras. The continuity of these ideals throughout history also reflects the deep-seated nature of these values within the cultures.

The journey into these narratives commences with an encounter involving two young women, each 20 years old, and both having a BMI of 19, who stood at the crossroads of beauty and mental well-being. In KPK, a region where curves are synonymous with vitality, a

woman grappled with her husband's ultimatum: gain weight or face his remarriage. Meanwhile, in Punjab, another woman's pursuit of a lean physique became a battleground-a quest driven by unrealistic ideals. As they embarked on this journey, bouts of depression emerged, entwined with distorted self-esteem and the persistent hold of body dysmorphia.

The intricate interplay between intersectionality, cultural beauty norms, and psychopathology unveils a complex occurrence. For many individuals striving to meet specific beauty norms, the fixation on perceived flaws in their appearance can escalate into Body Dysmorphic Disorder (BDD). The pressure to

conform to cultural beauty standards may lead individuals to become preoccupied with perceived imperfections. The impact of intersectionality can exacerbate this disorder, as marginalised groups may face even more complex internal struggles due to the clash between prevailing ideals and their own self-image.

The pursuit of the "ideal" body type dictated by cultural beauty norms can predispose individuals to develop eating disorders. Particularly those with limited resources, may resort to extreme measures, leading to disorders like anorexia nervosa or bulimia. Socioeconomic status and cultural identity can exacerbate this, especially for individuals from lower

socioeconomic backgrounds who may already lack access to proper nutrition and healthcare, intensifying the risk.

The relentless pressure to conform to beauty norms can contribute to the development of Major Depressive symptoms and Anxiety Disorders. Constant comparison with societal ideals, coupled with a fear of not meeting societal expectations, can undermine self-esteem and induce chronic stress. The intersection of age further influences this dynamic, as younger individuals may face higher vulnerability due to their developmental stage.

In these stories, grounded in cultural beauty ideals, we witness the emotional perplexity of striving to

meet societal standards, whether curvaceous or slender-leading to an inner conflict, where self-perception collides with external pressures, echoing the experiences we all share. The impact of beauty norms on an individual's mental health is closely tied to the discussion of cultural identity. Dissonance from cultural identity can lead to feelings of alienation, anxiety, and Borderline Personality Disorder, causing an identity crisis along with disruption of interpersonal relationships. Individuals from marginalised ethnic backgrounds may experience feeling torn between conforming to prevailing standards or preserving their cultural heritage.

The nexus of intersectionality, cultural beauty norms, and psychopathology paints a multi-faceted portrait of the psychological challenges faced by women in different regions of Pakistan. Within its shadows dwell Depression, Anxiety, Eating Disorders, and the spectre of Body Dysmorphia, urging us to dismantle narrow ideals and nurture self-acceptance. Resilience and awareness emerge as the key elements of these tales. To explore the paradox of societal beauty norms demands inner strength. The journey to redefine beauty standards begins-an expedition illuminated by empathy, self-discovery, and the relentless pursuit of inner contentment.



In brief

Youth killed in road mishap F.P. Report

MANSHERA: A youth was killed in motorcycle accident in Sandesar area of Mansehra on Saturday, police said. According to details, a 17-year-old youth identified as Muh-ammad Naseem hailing from Attarsheesha was critically injured after he fell down bike. The injured youth succumbed to his wounds while being shifted to hospital. The body was handed over to heirs after legal formalities.

Robber killed in police encounter

KHAIRPUR (INP): One robber was killed while his accomplices managed to escape after exchange of fire with police here on Saturday. Arms recovered from possession of killed robber. According to details, the police on tip-off regarding presence of robbers conducted raid in jurisdiction of Pir Jo Goth police station in Karachi. Upon sight of police, the robbers started firing and in retaliatory firing one robber was killed on the spot while his cohort managed to escape. The police recovered arms from possession of killed robber and his body was shifted to hospital for postmortem.

3 motorcyclists killed in mishaps

FAISALABAD (INP): Three motorcyclists were killed while three others sustained multiple injuries in two road accidents in Faisalabad. Rescue 1122 spokesman said on Saturday that a speeding car hit a motorcycle on Jhang Road near Chak No. 70-JB Mansooran Saturday morning. As a result, 41-year-old Munawar Abbas of Jhang received injuries and died on-the-spot. Rescue 1122 shifted 30-year-old Amanullah to Allied Hospital in a critical condition. In another accident, 12-year-old Faizan Idrees and 15-year-old Hamzad Iftikhar of Chak No. 6-JB Gulshan Town were killed whereas 24-year-old Amir Boota and his brother Usman Boota (28) of Chak No. 64-JB were injured seriously when their motorcycles collided with each other while overtaking a trailer near Meeranwala Bungalow.

AKF collects Rs5m donation F.P. Report

TIMERGARA: Al-Khidmat Foundation Lower Dir collected 5 million rupees to help the Palestinian brothers, Al-Khidmat Foundation Lower Dir has started a special donation campaign throughout the district to help the injured and homeless oppressed Palestinian brothers. Al-Khidmat Foundation Lower Dir President Hafizullah Khaksar told the media that so far the volunteers of Al-Khidmat Foundation have collected five million rupees. The bodies are increasingly participating in the aid of the Palestinian brothers and have collected five million rupees so far. According to the Al-Khidmat Foundation, this series of aid camps will continue.

3 drug peddlers arrested F.P. Report

D I KHAN: Dera police during a successful operation against drug dealers recovered 2200 grams of hashish and 340 grams of heroin from three drug peddlers in the limits of Cantt police station on Saturday. According to the police spokesman, under the leadership of SDPO City Circle Muhammad Adnan along with SHO Cantt police station Gul Sher Khan conducted a successful operation against drug dealers and recovered 2200 grams of hashish from the possession of Nawaz son of Qayyum Nawaz resident of Grid Road.

Dir teachers to observe class boycott on 26th

F.P. Report

LOWER DIR: The Lower Dir teachers' organizations on Saturday announced to stage a protest rally against the government for acceptance of their demands in front of the Timergara press club on Oct. 26. Talking to local journalists the district president of Ittihad e Asateza Muslim Khan condemned the arrest of government school teachers in Punjab and said the teachers were protesting for their rights but police mishandled them.

He said that police beat and charged the innocent teachers and arrested them. He demanded an immediate release of all school teachers in Punjab. He said the government school teachers would observe a complete class boycott and stage a protest rally on Oct 26 against the government for amending pension rules.

Tehsil Chairman: The village council chairmen affiliated with the Jamaat-i-Islami in Balambat on Saturday said the Pakistan Tahreek Insaf tehsil chairman Asim Shuiab had gone underground after the May 9 and 10 riots and the council had been without its chair for the last five months. He said the tehsil chairman was wanted by the police and anti-terrorism department in several cases.

The village council chairmen who are also members of the tehsil council demanded of the election commission of Pakistan to announce a fresh schedule for electing a new tehsil chairman as the council's members and staff were suffering due to

his absence. They said the tehsil chairman had been absconder instead of surrendering to police for facing charges against him.

Meanwhile former tehsil nazim Balambat Imran ud Din while talking to local journalists demanded the government and district administration to stop the ongoing crackdown against the non-custom paid vehicles in the district. He said the caretaker government had no mandate to impose custom acts and taxes in the former federally and provincially administered tribal districts. He said the government should reverse its decision regarding the NCP vehicles.

Road accident: Five people were injured when a car and a Suzuki pickup collided head on at Shobaba area in the jurisdiction of Talash police station here the other day, residents and police said. They said the injured including Ikramullah 32, Asmat 30, Naik Muhammad 25, Suliman 36 and Ziaul Haq, all residents of Chakdara, were taken to the nearby hospital. The Talash police registered a case and started investigations.

Crack down against power theft carried out: The Pesco officials and local police cracked down against power theft in different areas of Lower Dir here on Saturday. More than Rs 400,000 were recovered from the defaulters.

The action was taken on the instruction of local administration against hook mafia, electricity thieves and defaulters across the district and arrears of Rs 452,193 were recovered

from the defaulters. A fine of Rs 218,546 was imposed on some of the power consumers who used illegal electricity. Letters against three persons were sent to the respective police stations for further actions.

Palestinians solidarity rally: In solidarity with the Palestinians and against Israel's barbaric atrocities, the young students of the Dir Learning Academy Chamanabad Dir Lower staged a protest. The students chanted Labek or Al-Aqsa slogans.

In this regard, under the leadership of the Principal Rahim Shah of Dir Learning Academy Chamanabad Lower Dir, the young students came out on the road to express solidarity with the oppressed Palestinians and protest against the barbaric atrocities of Israel. Principal Rahim Shah and others addressed the occasion. While saying that Israel has broken the mountains of oppression on the oppressed Palestinians, Israel seriously violated the basic principles of human rights during the war and killed thousands of men, women and children by bombing residential houses, hospitals, mosques and displaced persons.

The speaker said that there is a severe shortage of water, food and other facilities in Gaza and the Muslim Ummah has become a silent spectator. Should emergency measures be taken to stop the genocide of the Palestinians and the Muslim Ummah should move forward to help and protect the Palestinians.

Rally to support Palestinians arranged

F.P. Report

HAFIZABAD: Teachers, students and lawyers of Hafizabad tool out a rally against brutality of Israel on the people of philistine from Ali Pur Road. Prominent Educationist Rana Maqsood Ahmad and president District Bar Hafizabad Malik Waqas Raza Awan, General Secretary Muzammal Azizi Gujjar and Khazar Hayyat Hanrja Advocate led the rally.

The participants of rally were shouting slogans against Israel and America. Addressing the patricians of the rally, speakers stressed the rulers of the Muslim countries to support the philistine against cruelty of Israel.

DC directed cleanliness of drainage system:

Deputy Commissioner Hafizabad Sundas Irshad has directed the officers of Municipal Committee Hafizabad to improve cleanliness in the city significantly, ensure hundred percent attendance of sanitary workers, supervisors and other staff and lifted piles of garbage from streets and bazaars as well as clean all deranges.

She issued these directions while visiting different areas of the city, on Friday. Administrator MC/ADCR Intiaz Ali Baig and other officers were accompanied her. During the visit of Slaughter House, DC Sundas Irshad reviewed arrangements for slaughtering animals and cleanliness. She directed the veterinary officers to improve standard of

hygiene and to ensure slaughtering of healthy animals only.

Meanwhile, DC visited fruit and vegetable market and witnessed auctioning of fruits and vegetables as well as prices and demand and supply of fruits and vegetables. She directed the officers of Market Committee to get auction of fruits and vegetables under their supervision and issued price list in view of auctioning of fruits and vegetables so that not only to ensure provision of fruits and vegetables to consumers on reasonable prices but farmers also be earned justly return of their hardworking. She also directed special price magistrates to monitor prices, supply of edibles items to protect rights of consumers.

Two brothers critically injured over property dispute

F.P. Report

KARAK: Tehsil Takht Nusrati area of Kari Dhand, an exchange of fire over a property dispute, as a result of the firing, two brothers were seriously injured, they were shifted to the district headquarters hospital in a

critical condition.

According to the details of the case filed against the opposing party in the case of the injured, the tehsil Shinwah Gudi Kari Dhand area of Takht Nusrati, there was an exchange of fire between the cousins over a property dispute, as a result

of the firing, Hanifullah, Shafiuallah, the children of Muhammad Nawaz were seriously injured and they were shifted to Tehsil Headquarters Hospital after receiving first aid. Police has registered a case against the opposing side and started investigation.



QUETTA: Caretaker Federal Minister for Education Madad Ali Singh talking to media persons during his visit to Central Jail.

Siraj opens expansion project of Jamia Goldur F.P. Report

CHITRAL: Ameer Jamaat-e-Islami Pakistan Sirajul Haque Friday inauguration the completion of the expansion project of the Jamia Al-Muhassanat Goldur Chitral with people from different walks of life attended the ceremony.

The expansion project of Jamia Al-Muhassanat Goldur Chitral was completed in the 18 months' time. Jamia Al-Muhassanat Goldur Chitral has great contribution in educating the students. On this occasion, Abdul Akbar Chitrali, former member of National Assembly, Amir District Jamaat Islami Khyber Pakhtunkhwa also participated.

Ameer Jamaat congratulated Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Constituency and Naib Qeima Pakistan Samina Saeed on the completion of the expansion project. On this occasion, Ameer Jamaat-e-Islami Sirajul Haq, while addressing the women and students, praised the training, academic and practical services provided by Muhsanat for the construction and refinement of the generational thoughts.

After the inauguration ceremony, Qeima Pakistan Dardana Siddiqui Naib Qeima Ms. Sakina Shahida, Saeed Nazima, Bilqis Murad former member of Provincial Assembly of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province Humira Bashir, District Nazim Samira Taj, Inayat Jadoon Naib Qeima Pakistan, Balqis Murad Nazima, Women of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Maulana Khaleeq Ahmad Khan, Mahmud Jamiat Al-Muhsanat, Principal Zakia Minhas Jamiat Al-Muhsanat, Maulana Jamshed Ahmad Ameer of Lower Chitral District and former District Nazim Mangham Shah were also present.

Residents demand release of two abductees

F.P. Report

MARDAN: Two individuals from Mardan, 40-year-old Sher Faraz and his 24-year-old neighbor Bilal went to Rahim Yar Khan, Punjab, under the pretext of a budget-friendly car deal. Instead, they found themselves in the clutches of the Salti and Umar group of Kashmir region of Sindh, who have allegedly taken them hostage and demanded a ransom of two crore rupees from their families.

According to Ali Sher, Sher Faraz's father, the two set off to Rahim Yar Khan on September 21 to purchase a car. However, upon arriving, they encountered the Salti and Umar group. The group attacked them and subsequently held both Sher Faraz and Bilal captive.

After the initial contact made in Rahim Yar Khan, all communication ceased. Despite numerous attempts to reach them, their mobiles remained inaccessible. The abductors affiliated with the Umar and Salti groups are situated in the rural Kashmir area of Sindh, where they demanded the heavy ransom for the safe return of the youths.

Condemning this inci-

dent, leaders of the Sudhum Loya Jirga, local residents, and Tehsil Mardan Mayor, Himayat Ullah Mayar, led a protest in front of the Mardan Press Club. The Sudhum Loya Jirga leaders urged a swift recovery of the two Mardan residents abducted last month from the clutches of their Sindh captors. Himayat Ullah Mayar underscored the need for federal and provincial governments to take special action to secure the safe return of the victims. He expressed his concern over the emergence of a 'state within a state' that operates against Pakistan's constitution, underlining the urgency of government intervention.

Ali Sher said that a formal report about the two abductees was filed at the Rustam Mardan police station on September 21, stating that Sher Faraz and Bilal had gone missing. Regrettably, no substantial progress has been made in their recovery, and they remain in the clutches of their kidnappers.

The Sudhum Loya Jirga Masharan criticized the lack of police action in the case, highlighting that it is the police's responsibility to safeguard citizens' lives and property. Failure on their part is ultimately the state's failure. The leaders warned that if swift action is not taken they may resort to highway protests, disrupting all traffic.

Following the protest, a delegation led by City Mayor Himayat Ullah Mayar met with Commissioner Mardan Division Shaukat Ali Yousafzai. The delegation included political and social workers, lawyers, and business community representatives from Rustam, explained the commissioner of the situation. In response, Commissioner Mardan immediately contacted the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Home Department and Sindh Chief Secretary Dr. Fakhr Alam Irfan about the case. He assured the delegation of utilizing all available resources to rescue the two abducted individuals from Rustam. The Chief Secretary of Sindh also extended assurances of cooperation in this matter. The delegation expressed their gratitude for Commissioner Mardan Division Shaukat Ali Yousafzai's unwavering support.

Price controller reduced prices of edible items

F.P. Report

BANNU: The district price review committee has reduced the prices of edible items in Bannu after a major decrease in the rates of oil commodities by the government. The committee met in the office of the deputy commissioner with DC Muhammad Nawaz in the chair.

Among others, officials of the district administration and food department and representatives of traders and consumer bodies were in attendance. District food

controller Sohail Habib told the meeting that after reduction in oil prices a major cut in the prices of food items was inevitable to provide maximum relief to people.

The impact of the decrease in prices of oil products should reach the people at the grassroots level", he maintained. After a comprehensive discussion and in consultation with all stakeholders, the district administration fixed new prices of the food articles.

Nawaz asked the price magistrates to pay frequent visits to bazaars and ensure

implementation of the new rate list in letter and spirit. He said that his administration would take all possible steps to provide the people with maximum relief. The deputy commissioner warned that the traders involved in fleeing consumers and violation of the official price list would face stern legal action. He also said that special instructions had already been issued to assistant commissioners, additional ACs and food authorities to initiate action against hoarders and profiteers.

Turning the tides with NASTP

M Z Faisal

IT is said that seeing is believing, and rightly so. Words cannot replicate my incredibly inspiring and reassuring visit to the National Aerospace Science & Technology Park (NASTP) Alpha at PAF Base Nur Khan. Despite spending hours, the entire charismatic splendour of NASTP Alpha couldn't be captured. It was one of my retired life's most rewarding and memorable moments. In these testing times, this visit provided a glimmer of hope and optimism that I feel compelled to share to boost national spirits and reinvigorate a much-needed sense of hope.

The PAF is renowned for its young, dynamic leadership undertaking innovative, bold and futuristic projects. The NASTP is one such excellent initiative of strategic national importance conceived and spearheaded by the Chief of the Air Staff ACM Zaheer Ahmed Baber Sidhu. Its main objective is to create an innovation

ecosystem nationwide, bringing together industry, academia, and the armed forces to strengthen the PAF by advancing the local aerospace industry.

On the broader canvas, NASTP Kamra is the flagship Headquarter encompassing "Design, R&D, manufacturing, Product Lifecycle Management (PLM), Training, Maintenance / Repair/ Overhaul (MRO), Aviation Logistics, along with global supply chains of strategic industries like Aerospace, IT and Computing". NASTP Kamra is then connected to three regional NASTP centres at Rawalpindi, Lahore and Karachi that would "create regional level eco-systems to be ultimately connected at the national level with NASTP Kamra". To put it simply, NASTP is a comprehensive initiative aimed at assembling the most brilliant minds, cutting-edge technologies, and diverse experiences to develop and transform futuristic concepts for the aerospace industry in collaboration with national and international partners.

Future wars will be fought in

black and white, but much will also be fought in the grey zone. Non-kinetic methods of warfare, such as electronic warfare, cyber-attacks, artificial intelligence, and quantum computing, will be significant game-changers, tipping the scales against adversaries. Securing superiority in space will be crucial for both offensive and defensive operations. Unmanned Aerial Vehicles (UAVs) powered by sophisticated Artificial Intelligence (AI) will be lethal and give a new balance between qualitative edge and quantitative depth. With emerging technologies rapidly reshaping the future and making current operational concepts obsolete, the NASTP is a world-class setup, intelligently designed and artistically furnished to explore and harness the potential of such game-changing technologies. It is perhaps the largest design and R&D setup of the Pakistan Air Force in "Aircraft, Space, Radar, Wireless and Communications Systems, Simulators, Cyber, IT, Computing & Big Data, Software Development, and

Artificial Intelligence domains".

It was heartening to note the Turkish Aircraft Industry (TAI), known for aircraft manufacturing, and leading Turkish UAV company 'Baykar', best known for its TB2 and Akinci drones, set up their offices in NASTP. This strategic collaboration holds great promise for both nations. Expanding on the experience of JF-17 and deepening defence ties with Turkey, PAF is currently working on another fighter program called 'PFX'. The program is in the advanced design stage and will incorporate all futuristic capabilities being developed at different NASTP centres. Already, the PAF 4.5 Gen J-10C, with the advanced avionic package, is ahead of its rival, the Rafale, and when the time comes, it could surprise the formidable S-400 with few undisclosed weapons.

It was deeply inspiring to physically find in the NASTP the PAF's recently inducted Turkish and Chinese drones and UAVs in the Medium-Altitude Long Endurance (MALE) and High-Altitude Long Endurance

(HALE) categories, some of which have already demonstrated their combat worthiness in the Azerbaijan-Armenia and Russian-Ukraine conflicts. These drones and UAVs are the present and the future of modern warfare and shall deeply augment the offensive punch of PAF in kinetic and non-kinetic roles. These can be of great operational efficacy against the fresh hybrid war being fought along the border regions of Pakistan. Another indigenous invention of particular interest was the low-cost airborne loitering munition, which can autonomously engage any high-value target with precision. A barrage of fire can unleash a deadly rain of destruction from the sky.

The Pakistan Air Force (PAF) is acutely aware of the increasing gap with India in the space domain and has developed an effective strategy to deny India any offensive space advantage in the event of a contingency. The PAF's exceptional focus on cyber warfare, electronic warfare (EW), and quantum com-

puting from offensive and defensive perspectives is praiseworthy. These advanced capabilities, particularly in the domains of EW and cyber warfare, can cause significant damage to adversary by disrupting and destroying command and control systems, satellite networks, tactical data links, missile guidance systems, avionics, targeting pods, and other critical systems.

Pakistan's aerospace industry is set to receive a major boost with the inception of the NASTP. The project will fortify the country's aerospace sector, boost economic growth, and augment Pakistan's reputation globally. ACM Zaheer Ahmed Baber Sidhu and the entire PAF leadership deserve commendation for their foresight in conceiving a project of immense national significance and multiple strategic dividends.

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Gaza’s doctors work despite Israel’s war

GAZA STRIP (Agencies): Khalil al-Degran has not gone home for 12 days, working non-stop in the accident and emergency department at the al-Aqsa Martyrs Hospital in Deir al-Balah, the central Gaza Strip. “We get dozens of wounded people at a time, which is overwhelming,” he said. “All the hospital’s beds are full, so we’ve resorted to treating the injured on the floor or in the courtyard.”

Israel began bombing the besieged territory on October 7, after a surprise attack from Hamas on Israeli military bases and towns near the Strip killed 1,400. Since then, more than 4,200 Palestinians have been killed by Israeli air attacks, and 12,000 others wounded. At least 1,524 of the dead are children, with one child being killed every 15 minutes. Al-Degran’s family comes to see him at the hospital sometimes, but he says many other doctors and nurses have been unable to go home for days on end.

Not only are all the still operational hospitals in the Gaza Strip frantically busy, but they also have a severe shortage of medicines and supplies, and both electricity and water are scarce after Israel cut off fuel supplies that kept the power and desalination plants running. The director of al-Aqsa Martyrs Hospital, Iyad al-Jabri, said the hospital’s “strategic stock of medicines and medical supplies is gone” and that there was a staff shortage. “There is not enough equipment in the operating room or intensive care,” al-Degran said. “We have patients with serious injuries, but we cannot treat them properly.”

Patients cannot be transferred to other hospitals, because they also are also at breaking point. The World Health Organization called for immediate humanitarian access, pointing out that each lost hour puts “more lives at risk”. Gaza has about 30 hos-

pitals, 13 of them operated by the health ministry and others privately run. Israel has warned 24 hospitals to evacuate, including the largest one, al-Shifa Hospital in Gaza City.

Gaza’s health ministry said four hospitals – Beit Hanoun, Hamad, Karama and Durrah – are out of service after being bombed by Israel, while 25 others have sustained damage from the bombings. “The Israeli strikes have led to the death of 44 and the injury of 70 medical personnel,” said health ministry spokesman Ashraf al-Qudra. He earlier said 14 health facilities had stopped operating after running out of fuel for their power generators. “All the remaining facilities are operating at 150 percent capacity,” al-Qudra said. “As a result, we’ve been forced to carry out surgical operations on the floor. We’ve totally run out of fuel, medical supplies and medicine across all hospitals in Gaza. We are expecting the number of fatalities to rise.”

According to Dr Muhammad Zaqout, the general director of hospitals in the Gaza Strip, the facilities were already suffering a major shortage of medical supplies, amounting to 40 percent of requirements, before October 7. “During this war, 70 percent of the medical supplies and medicines have already been consumed,” he said. “What we usually use in one month we have used in one day due to the number of cases. “The Israeli occupation is tightening its noose on Palestinians here by closing the crossings,” Zaqout said. “Rafah is the only crossing where lifesaving medical supplies can get in,” he added, referring to the land crossing between Gaza and Egypt that Israel has bombed several times during its assault.

Defying Israeli military orders to evacuate and repeating that bombing

hospitals is a crime against humanity, doctors in Gaza have taken a firm stance and refused to leave their patients behind. “Everyone is determined that they will not evacuate,” al-Degran said. “It’s not even possible. How can we transfer patients in intensive care or those undergoing surgery? If the Israelis want to bomb the hospitals then it will be over our heads as we stand by our patients.” The WHO has called Israel’s evacuation orders a “death sentence” for the sick and injured.

“Overwhelmingly, caregivers have chosen to stay behind and honour their oaths as health professionals to ‘do no harm’, rather than risk moving their critically ill patients during evacuations,” the WHO said in a statement. “Health workers should never have to make such impossible choices.” One of the most difficult situations that doctors experience during times of crisis is discovering family members among those injured or killed.

This is what happened to Dr Fadi al-Khoudari at the al-Shifa Hospital on Monday when he found his brother and father among those killed in an Israeli attack in Gaza City. The doctor collapsed on the floor in shock, crying out as the doctors around him tried to console him. This scene was repeated the same day for Dr Hamid Abu Musa at Nasser Medical when he discovered that his son had been killed as the result of an Israeli warplane targeting his house west of the southern city of Khan Younis.

Zaqout, the general director of hospitals, said medical staff are close to exhaustion due to the relentless Israeli air strikes and the hundreds of casualties arriving in hospitals every day. “The continuation of the indiscriminate bombing of the Gaza Strip will not only exhaust the medical teams,



but it will also prevent them from being able to work and deal with treating the wounded,” he said. In addition to physical exhaustion, other factors are preventing medical staff from providing care and services to the wounded, he added, such as the trauma of learning of the death of family members, the bombing of some of their homes and the displacement of their families.

“No doctor can bear to see the sev-

ered body parts of children,” al-Degran said. “Is it reasonable for us to have to pick up their remains in this way – a decapitated head, a severed hand ... It hurts my heart very much.” He added that he struggles when hearing the screams of injured children, men and women, shell-shocked and covered in blood, “thinking they were safe in their homes before a missile dropped over their heads”. “What we are experiencing as doctors in hospi-

tals is a million times more than we can handle,” al-Degran said. He called on the world to stand with Gaza and “not forsake it”. “There is no electricity or water in the hospitals, and we rely on using generators in the operating room, intensive care and nursery, in addition to the dialysis room,” he said. “Stop this war on Gaza, where entire families have already been wiped off the civil registry. This death and destruction is enough.”

‘We will not give away our land’: Armenians near Azerbaijan exclave

MEGHRI (Agencies): One week after Azerbaijan seized Nagorno-Karabakh, Margo, a 74-year-old retired piano instructor, sat in a cafe and wondered if her hometown of Meghri, in southern Armenia, would soon share Karabakh’s fate. In Armenian, Meghri means the town of honey, but life is rarely sweet, Margo said, not least now.

She believes that following Baku’s recent victory, Azerbaijan, emboldened, will now seek to seize parts of her native region, a strategic strip of land which separates Azerbaijan from its exclave of Nakhichevan. “We worry every day. Every hour. We even know where their troops are located at our borders,” said Margo. “We will not give away our land, not a chance. We will fight till the end. But if they seize it, they will force all of us out of here, too.”

Back in the Soviet days, Meghri, a mountainous town of about 4,000 residents near Iran’s border, lay on a train route connecting Azerbaijan with its exclave. But following years of conflict between the neighbours over Nagorno-Karabakh, and mutual acts of violence, the route fell into oblivion. Armenia and Azerbaijan have fought two wars over Nagorno-Karabakh, in the nineties and in 2020. But this year, after Azerbaijan’s lightning offensive, Baku took total control of the region, which lies within its borders. Until a few months ago, it was dominated by ethnic Armenians. Now, it resembles a ghost town, as most have fled to Armenia.

After the second Karabakh war, which ended with an agreement facilitated by Russia, Armenia agreed to allow a land connection between Azerbaijan and Nakhichevan. While Azerbaijan and Russia claim that the road was meant to be outside of Armenia’s control, overseen by the Russian Federal Security Service, or FSB, Armenia rejects this interpretation. In Yerevan’s view, the agreement was made at the time when

Azerbaijan was blocking Armenia’s only land connection to Nagorno-Karabakh and was meant as part of mutual concessions.

But as Azerbaijan began a nine-month blockade of the area in December 2022, effectively cutting ethnic Armenians off the outside world, and eventually recapturing the area, Armenia does not feel obliged to meet its part of the agreement. And that is despite Azerbaijan’s claim that it can only benefit from the deal. “Armenia will be able to benefit from the developing trade in the region and all trade projects that are likely to be realised in the future,” Kanan Heydarov, a political analyst from Azerbaijan, told Al Jazeera.

“It will be able to make great economic gains. As it is known, Armenia has not been able to benefit from many big trade projects developed in the region so far.” In recent years, Azerbaijan’s president, Ilham Aliyev, began to refer to Armenia as “Western Azerbaijan”. He also started calling for the creation of the “Zangezur Corridor”, a highway linking Azerbaijan with Nakhichevan along the former Soviet rail track. “The Zangezur Corridor is a historical necessity,” Aliyev said last January adding that it will be created whether Armenia wants it or not. Earlier, in 2021, the president threatened to establish it by force.

Following Azerbaijan’s victory over Nagorno-Karabakh, which led to an almost full exodus of its Armenian population, locals like Margo – and some experts – fear that Azerbaijan might bring its plan to life by force. “I think Aliyev is careful not to burn bridges behind. He likes to appear at Davos, the Munich Security Conference and other global forums, and he wants to continue serving gas to Europe,” David Akopyan, former United Nations diplomat and Armenian analyst, told Al Jazeera.

“But he is going to take as much as he is allowed to take, so we have to

be mindful and prepared. It’s important that when it happens, we have measures to respond to the aggression.” Russia, Armenia’s traditional ally, whose troops were responsible for protecting Nagorno-Karabakh’s population, failed to prevent Azerbaijan’s military offensive. Analysts said Moscow might not stand against the creation of a corridor that would connect not only Azerbaijan with Nakhichevan but also Central Asia – a region in its backyard – with Turkey and further with Europe.

Many Armenians, who have little faith in Russia now, have also turned against Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan, blaming him for jeopardising Armenia’s security by antagonising Russia. Russia has a significant military presence in Armenia, while the FSB controls some of Armenia’s borders. It is also Armenia’s largest trading partner which controls the country’s energy sector. “Russia’s ultimate goal here is to change the Armenian government since Pashinyan is trying to effect a geopolitical shift in the region,” claimed Karen Harutyunyan, editor in chief of Armenian news site CivilNet.

“But my fear is that in the end, Pashinyan’s actions will only increase Russia’s influence on Armenia, despite the growing anti-Russian sentiment among the public.” Armenia receives continued support from the United States and France. During a visit to Yerevan earlier this month, French Foreign Minister Catherine Colonna agreed to deliver military equipment to Armenia. Meanwhile, Azerbaijan is a close ally of Turkey, a NATO member, whose influence in the South Caucasus has risen prominently in recent years. “An Azerbaijani invasion is a realistic scenario,” Harutyunyan said. “If it happens, no one is going to stop it: neither the European Union nor the United States.”

Sudan facing humanitarian crisis

KHARTOUM (Agencies): As Sudan’s civil war enters its sixth month, civilians are facing a colossal humanitarian crisis as relief funding dwindles and army-imposed restrictions strangle its delivery, aid groups and activists told Al Jazeera.

Duaa Tariq, a Sudanese activist still in the capital Khartoum, told Al Jazeera about the perceptible change as the lack of adequate nutrition sets in, saying that many people can only eat one meal a day. “People’s faces are becoming very pale and the hunger is striking,” she said. “And there is no news of aid [coming]. INGO [international non-governmental organisation] support is also very low and it has killed the spirit of our volunteers.” Along with rising hunger, Doctors Without Borders, also known by its French acronym MSF, warns that Sudan’s medical sector is on the verge of complete collapse. MSF provides five hospitals across Khartoum with either medical supplies or international specialists, or both.

The war between the Sudanese army and the paramilitary Rapid Support Forces has fractured the country and put at least 24 million people – more than half the population – in dire need of assistance, according to the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA). Nearly six million people have been uprooted from their homes and are now internally displaced or have fled the country.

As soon as the fighting began in April, Sudan’s resistance committees – a network of neighbourhood groups at the heart of the pro-democracy movement – established makeshift clinics. These “emergency rooms” are staffed by volunteers who administer first aid, find medications and transport the wounded and sick to the few hospitals still operating in the capital Khartoum. The volunteers at first relied on friends and relatives in the diaspora to fund their activities, as well as money from international relief groups. But as funding dries, up some local activists are fleeing Khartoum – where fighting intensified in recent weeks – after losing hope that aid groups will support their efforts.

“Only a third of the overall humanitarian appeal has been funded and we’re in the final weeks of the year,” NRC’s Carter said about aid funding. “Many resources are already exhausted ... front-line responders and operational organisations simply don’t have resources,” he added. Many of Sudan’s displaced fled to army-controlled cities in the east where some aid is available, but those living under the RSF have been abandoned, three aid workers told Al Jazeera.

EU-US summit to stress unity

W A S H I N G T O N (Agencies): US President Joe Biden will host European leaders Charles Michel and Ursula von der Leyen in the White House at a summit set to deliver a message of unity on conflicts in Gaza and Ukraine. EU-US summit was initially set to focus on testing trade issues. However, the leaders are expected to stress their strategic partnership against a backdrop of global crises.

As fighting rages on in Ukraine, Israel’s war against Hamas, the armed group that rules Gaza, threatens to spill over across the Middle East. Drawing parallels between Russia’s invasion of Ukraine and Hamas’s assault, European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen said in a speech that “these two crises, however different, call on Europe and America to take a stand together” in order to “shelter our democracies”.

Washington and Brussels hope to avoid a potential second front in the Israel-Hamas conflict that would see the involvement of the Hezbollah movement in Lebanon – or a regional escalation with unpredictable ramifications. “It’s particularly important that we redouble our efforts on

both sides of the Atlantic to ensure that this conflict does not spill outside of its borders,” said an EU official on condition of anonymity. The summit will be an opportunity “to send clear unified messages to all parties in the conflict”, the official told reporters.

The leaders’ ability to show strong, ongoing support for Ukraine will be a key issue. Biden, who has just returned from a visit to Tel Aviv, addressed Americans in a bid to unite them behind the defence of Israel and Ukraine – and secure the political consensus he needs to fund both causes. Amid paralysis in Congress, the president said he would lodge an urgent request that the lower house support a security package of up to \$100bn for Israel and Ukraine.

“Hamas and Putin represent different threats but they share this in common; they both want to annihilate a neighbouring democracy,” he said. Hamas fighters stormed into Israel on October 7 and have killed at least 1,400 people, mostly civilians on the first day of the raid, according to Israeli officials. More than 3,700 Palestinians, mainly civilians, have been killed across the Gaza Strip in

Israeli bombardments in retaliation, said the Palestinian health ministry in Gaza.

British Prime Minister Rishi Sunak and Qatar’s Emir Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad Al Thani agreed in a meeting on the need to prevent the war from spilling over across the Middle East and to provide humanitarian aid to Gaza. “They underlined the imperative of avoiding any escalation in the violence across the region and agreed that leaders had a responsibility to do everything possible to prevent it,” Sunak’s office said in a statement. “They agreed on the urgent need to get food, water and medicine to civilians who are suffering.”

Sunak will travel to Egypt to stress “the imperative of avoiding regional escalation and preventing the further unnecessary loss of civilian life,” his office said. The UK premier visited Jerusalem in a show of support for Israel. There he sought to help negotiations on the release of captives held by Hamas and to ease the provision of humanitarian aid to Gaza. He also met Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman, during which he encouraged the Saudi Arabian leader to use his country’s regional leadership to support stability.

How Israel will stage its land incursion into Gaza

GAZA (Agencies): Israel is getting ready to attack and Palestinian fighters are preparing to defend Gaza. Both sides are determined and experienced and both have announced that they will ultimately prevail. Leaving aside for the moment the very important question of what would constitute victory for either of the warring sides, it is pertinent at this point to examine their respective approach to the looming battle.

Every commander tries to make best use of his strengths and enemy’s weaknesses, the Israeli army and Hamas are no different. They know each other from past clashes, and both have extensive combat experience. It is almost certain that both were given access to intelligence and recent experiences by their friends and allies. What are Israeli forces’ strengths? First and foremost an overwhelming superiority in trained and well-equipped manpower, with half a million currently in uniform and deployed all over Israel and the occupied West Bank.

Palestinian resistance in Gaza can probably only muster 10,000 fighters with proper training and weapons suited to the specialised tasks their groups

will perform. That could easily grow up to 100,000 volunteers willing to fight but, without proper tactical training and equipment, they will lean heavily on their will and determination. The Israeli army will rely on superiority in quantity and quality of equipment, better and more specialised training, discipline, clearly defined lines of command, combat flexibility and coordination in all sections of the battlefield and tactical surprise by employing new approaches and new weapons.

Against them, the Palestinian resistance looks much weaker on paper, but they may possess intense perseverance and dedication to defend their homeland. What also counts in their favour is the fact that they are fighting on home ground where they know every corner, building, roof and heap of rubble. Finally, tunnels that Hamas dug over the years under Gaza are an extremely strong defensive asset.

Only Israeli top military and civilian commanders know the details of the attack plan and the timing, but it is possible to predict the main lines of Israeli action: The all-out attack is almost certain to start at night. Most Israeli soldiers

have been issued night-vision goggles and have trained to use them to see in the dark. Much more importantly, Israeli aerial assets, manned aeroplanes, helicopters and pilotless drones can also operate in total darkness. Palestinian defenders certainly have some night-vision equipment but not the capability to target and hit flying assets at night except possibly for an odd lucky shot at a low-flying helicopter. Due to the narrowness of the Strip, most Israeli bombers will be able to launch their deadly payloads from outside Gazan airspace – above Israeli territory on the eastern side and above the Mediterranean Sea on the western side.

Smart bombs can glide for distances sufficient to keep the aircraft out of reach of very few, limited-capability, anti-aircraft launchers that defenders are believed to have. The horseshoe-shaped airspace on the west, north and east of the Gaza Strip will be brimming with Israeli aircraft. Minutes before forces move in, converted civilian Gulfstream and Super King Air aircraft of the Israeli air force will start blocking communications with electronic counter-measures.

Lampedusa caught between solidarity and survival as migration rises

ROME (Agencies): Fishing, a quintessential Mediterranean industry, has been a historic lifeline for Lampedusa, the touristy Italian island famed for its picturesque beaches and now, Europe’s latest migration crisis. In the 19th century, sponge diving brought economic security to locals. Business then flourished to produce the island’s famed canned amberjack, tuna, anchovies, mackerel and swordfish, as well as a multitude of fresh fish.

Pietro Riso, a fisherman, feels blessed to have passed on to his two sons “the best job in the world”, but recent dark developments weigh on him. “We find people at sea – on boats and in the water – and we rescue them,” Riso told Al Jazeera. “At times, we find bodies in our nets.” In mid-September, a slow procession of rickety vessels entered Lampedusa’s Favalaro pier, each overflowing with refugees and migrants from across the Mediterranean Sea.

Over four days, about 11,000 asylum seekers docked at Italy’s southernmost island – almost double the number of local residents. Then, the pods on the carob trees disappeared, as did the Indian figs and even the prickly pears. The only hanging fruits sat at the top of the trees, beyond arms’ reach. Antonio Di Malta, a firefighter and resident of Lampedusa, was leaving for a night out when he

spotted a group of men on his field. “One of them gestured that he was hungry and fell to his knees,” Di Malta said. “His eyes were full of fear – not that I or anyone would hurt him, but fear of I don’t know what. Of hunger, maybe.”

Di Malta and his mother put two large pans on the stove and cooked some penne, a tube-shaped pasta, for their unexpected guests. They hailed from Burkina Faso, where two military coups last year left a trail of unprecedented violence. “When he finished eating, the man took the last penne with his fork and raised it to the sky, as if to thank God,” Di Malta said.

According to the International Organization for Migration (IOM), the number of arrivals was the highest since 2011. Most boats hailed from Tunisia, despite a new deal signed with Tunis by the far-right government of Georgia Meloni. “Tunisia was once a country of destination for many sub-Saharan Africans, but the economic crisis and the mistreatment of Black people have turned it into a transit country,” Flavio Di Giacomo, IOM spokesperson, told Al Jazeera. Lampedusa, located closer to Tunisia than to inland Italy, has been the preferred port of call for boats departing from the coastal city of Sfax.

According to the IOM, in 2016 – when most boats departed from Libya

– about 8 percent of arrivals disembarked in Lampedusa, compared to 70 percent this year. For local residents, whose proud solidarity earned the island a nomination for the Nobel Peace Prize in 2016, the surge is worrying. Many open their homes to the hungry, while restaurants in the island’s main street – the buzzing Via Roma – serve food at no charge, but there is a sense the central Italian government has abandoned Lampedusa as it is again thrust in the midst of a phenomenon much wider than its 20 square kilometres (7.7 square miles). “Migration is not a problem if managed well, but if it’s not managed it spirals out of control – as it did,” Di Malta said. “And we are all tired.” At the same time, islanders are angered by high fuel prices, which are more than in mainland Italy.

To add to their woes, commercial ships used to transport their produce to Sicily are increasingly tasked with transferring thousands of migrants and refugees to the peninsula, causing delays in departures. “If the ship arrives the next day, my produce is devalued by 50 percent,” said Riso, the fisherman. “If the delay is longer, my fish is good to feed stray cats.” At times, a whole day of work ends in financial loss if the nets – which cost up to 3,000 euros (\$3,170) – are torn apart by sunken refugee boats that lay on the seabed.

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The Sane idea of Afghan rulers

ACCORDING to the media, the Afghan interim government is preparing to formally join China's huge 'Belt and Road' infrastructure initiative and an Afghan technical team will visit Beijing for talks, and access scopes for Afghanistan's inclusion into multi-billion connectivity, growth and development initiative. The Afghan commerce Minister said that the Islamic Emirate will officially request China to allow the Afghan side to be a part of the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC), a flagship project under President Xi's Belt and Road Initiative.

Nature has strategically placed the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan on the junction of South, Central and Western Asia. The landlocked Afghan territory has been deprived of the huge dividends attached to ocean waters and the blessing associated with coastal shores yet the Afghan nation has been gifted with tremendous mineral deposits, copper, iron ore, oil and gas reserves along with forest and vegetation. The Afghan nation largely could not exploit its human and material resources, due to unceasing domestic rivalries, foreign invasions coupled with political instability and natural disasters throughout the past. There had been a little calm in the country's volatile landscapes after the Taliban took over the government in mid-2021, however, the internal situation was still marred by the controversial governance and political exclusion. So far, the foreign front remained hostile to the Islamic Emirate due to domestic policies and no formal recognition from the rest of the world including friends and foes.

Historically, Afghanistan plays a crucial role in regional connectivity between South and Central Asia due to its strategic location. Its position as a land bridge between these two regions has the potential to facilitate trade, energy transit, and cultural exchange. Afghan territory can serve as a vital transit route for goods moving between South Asia, particularly India, Pakistan, Central Asia and the Middle East through Karachi and Gwadar ports and CPEC road/ railway infrastructure, whilst Iran's Chabahar Port also connects Afghanistan with the rest of the world. Afghanistan can act as a conduit for the transport of energy resources, such as oil, gas, and electricity from Central Asia to South Asia and beyond. The regional nations including Pakistan, China, Iran and Central Asian Republics have endured an unceasing wait for a resolution to the Afghan issue and improvement in the security situation to implement their multi-billion infrastructure and energy projects such as Central Asia-South Asia (CASA)-1000 electricity transmission line, TAPI gas pipeline, extension of the CPEC, and Uzbekistan, Afghanistan and Pakistan railway line projects. In fact, continued conflict and security concerns seriously hindered all those projects as the political stability and peace in Afghanistan are of utmost importance for the smooth and successful implementation of all those endeavors.

Currently, the Afghan authorities have decided to join the race for economic development and regional integration to build their national capacity, establish industrial infrastructure and realize their dream for a peaceful and prosperous future. Recently, Afghanistan and 34 other countries agreed to work together on the digital economy and green development on the sidelines of the Belt and Road Forum, while Kabul's inclusion into CPEC and the wider Belt and Road Initiative would open up more avenues for bilateral and multilateral cooperation within the region and beyond. In fact, Peace and cooperation are the prima facie for seizing opportunities and unlocking potential, so the Afghan rulers must focus on these aspects which would be the main pillar for consolidating their rule, realizing peace and peddling economic activities in war-torn nation.

Amini's award and EU's morals

THE European Union has awarded its top human rights award to 22-year-old Kurdish-Iranian girl, Mahsa Amini whose death in police custody sparked a wave of women's rights across Iran. The European Parliament President has announced that the committee has decided to honor the EU's Sakharov Prize for Freedom of Thought to Ms. Amini, along with Iran's Women, Life and Freedom movement that has emerged as an agent of change following the death of a young woman activist.

The young Mahsa Amini has shaped into an icon of resolve, commitment and struggle for human rights defenders, social activists and advocates of democracy around the globe. She triggered a historic women-led movement against the repressive cleric regime and shattered the Iranian government along with igniting a ray of hope in political and liberal forces in that nation. For the first time, after the Iranian revolution, the world has heard the slogans of 'Women, Life, Liberty and witnessed that the entire Iranian setup failed to curb the anti-government protests and cool down the insurrection against the current system.

The European Union has rightly acknowledged the sacrifice of the young woman activist and an agent of change in their staunch opposing nation. The European Union (EU) has Introduced multiple modern legacies, and democratic values in the comity of nations after Europe came out of the dark ages. From Nobel Peace Prizes, to awards for freedom of journalism, democracy and human rights stewardship had been coined and often conferred by the western nations upon individuals, groups and organizations who serve their purpose/ interest. Historically, this distribution had always prompted criticism and remained debatable throughout history. These awards had always been given to highlight positive aspects of western system and expose grey areas of their opposing nations/ communities.

The west always turned a blind eye toward ongoing human rights struggles and freedom movements in certain territories such as Indian illegally held Kashmir, Indian Punjab, Palestine, and several other destinations around the globe, where thousands of Aminis have been raped, lost lives, or became disabled, hundred of thousands of people have been killed but EU has no courage to say a word, acknowledge that sacrifices or pay tribute to their struggle. Afterall, politically motivated nominations neither have credibility nor could be an alternative to true humanism and trustworthiness.

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Way to go

Erik Solheim

ON Oct 2, Indonesian President Joko Widodo opened the Jakarta-Bandung High-Speed Railway, Southeast Asia's first high-speed railway. It is a landmark project backed by China under the Belt and Road Initiative.

The \$7.3 billion 142-kilometer project connects Indonesia's capital city of Jakarta with the country's fourth-largest city Bandung at a speed of 350 km per hour, drastically reducing the travel time from over three hours to 40 minutes. President Widodo paid tribute to the high-speed line as it marks the modernization of Indonesia's transportation system. And in the eyes of Indonesian people, the high-standard, high-tech and high-quality railway has become a thing of national pride.

An extension of this railway line has the potential to reach Surabaya in East Java, the second-largest city of Indonesia, cruising through wonderful landscapes and historical sights. This potential extension will lead to a future with more job opportunities and rapid economic growth. It will make life better for Indonesians and become a draw for tourists. This December, the China-Laos Railway will celebrate its second full year in service. The 1,035-kilometer cross-border railway, linking the Lao capital of Vientiane with Kunming in China's Yunnan province, has greatly improved the economic and social development of one of the least developed countries in Asia. Laos had only 3.5 km of railroad to Thailand two years ago. The China-Laos Railway has set the country on a new development journey, having, till today, delivered more than 20 million passengers and 26 million tons of cargo, significantly linking landlocked Laos to global markets in China and Europe.

The Belt and Road has already contributed significantly to connectivity in Southeast Asia, and in the next decade I am certain we will see a pan-Asian high-speed railway network, connecting China, Thailand and Malaysia all the way to reach Singapore. This rail web will have a tremendous impact on the region's stability, development and prosperity. As we come together in Beijing for the third Belt and Road Forum for International

Cooperation, we can declare the first decade of Belt and Road a huge success. The 10-year fruitful journey demonstrates that it serves as the most important global cooperation platform to reshape global development. Looking ahead, China may need to consider new steps to further promote connectivity and green development to ensure the Belt and Road's sustainability and continued progress.

First, people-to-people bonds should be enhanced.

The name Belt and Road comes from the old Silk Road which was a trade network for commerce in products such as silk, tea and spices and was a road of friendship, development and prosperity. To establish such a road in modern times, it's of course about making good connectivity and infrastructure. The new connectivity in Southeast Asia links up China with its now largest trade partner - the Association of Southeast Asian Nations.

The COVID-19 pandemic has brought an unprecedented challenge to relationships and connections. The texture of global connectivity has suffered a breakdown. Belt and Road can play a significant role in creating a better global atmosphere and fighting against the zero-sum game or decoupling. The Belt and Road can serve as a forum to strengthen people-to-people exchanges, bridging cultural gaps and promoting understanding among peoples. The curtain has just been brought down on the biggest-ever Asian Games after more than two weeks of intense competition by athletes from 45 countries and impressions shared by billions of people on the continent. The wonderful event is about much more than sport, as it helps enhance connectivity and friendship on the continent and brings together the diverse civilizations of the region. As the slogan "Heart to Heart@Future" emphasized, the goal of the Asian Games is to bring people together and high-light unity within diversity.

I recently worked with Zhejiang province to open

its tourist office in Europe. The office will offer a window into the splendid Song Dynasty (960-1279), one of the high points of the Chinese civilization when Hangzhou was by far one of the biggest cities in the world. The tea and silk culture of this historical province will be on display. Tea and sports are great catalysts to unite people from diverse regions and backgrounds.

Second, it is important to designate the Belt and Road as a major vehicle for green

modern times, it's of course about making good connectivity and infrastructure. The new connectivity in Southeast Asia links up China with its now largest trade partner - the Association of Southeast Asian Nations.

And as a flagship project, the Mombasa-Nairobi Railway can in the future connect East Africa all the way to Uganda, Rwanda and Burundi, landlocked countries that have beautiful landscapes and long to create more jobs in tourism. Even more importantly, a modern railway would link inland Africa to the coast and thus the global markets, opening up new space for development and making Africa a bigger part of global trade. Fourth, the Belt and Road should become a platform dedicated to exchanging best practices for nature protection. In recent years, the relationship between China and the Middle East has been cemented. Following the entry of several Middle Eastern states into the Shanghai Cooperation Organization in 2022, Saudi Arabia, Iran and the United Arab Emirates will join as full members of the BRICS on Jan 1, 2024.

China's peace efforts have brought huge dividends to the Middle East, even if the current situation between Israel and Palestine is violent and critical. There is huge space for cooperation between China and the Middle East on desert control and water management. I attended the Kubuqi International Desert Forum in Inner Mongolia in August. Lots of discussions emphasized that China's best practice of desert control can be shared with the peoples of the Middle East. By the same token, presidents of five Central Asian nations met with President Xi Jinping in Xi'an, Shaanxi province, in May at the China-Central Asia Summit. It resulted in an inspiring declaration on environmental cooperation. China's success in tree planting, water management and protecting wild animals such as giant pandas, Tibetan antelopes and snow leopards shows the way for nature protection beyond its borders.

The BRI has in its first decade been a game changer in many developing countries and marked a turning point of global development. Let's wish for robust momentum as it sails over the next decade.

Climate agenda offers route to deeper EU-China ties

Andrew Hammond

IN the UK, there is a saying about buses that states you usually have to wait for what seems like hours for one to come along, and then two or three come at once. While the UK public transport sector may seem far removed from the high politics and economics of China-European bilateral relations, there may be some parallels. Top EU officials have in recent weeks been traveling from Brussels to Beijing in significant numbers after a hiatus of several years, in part because of the COVID-19 pandemic.

In the last month alone, the EU's High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy Josep Borrell, Energy Commissioner Kadri Simson and Economy and Trade Commissioner Valdis Dombrovskis have all visited China's capital. This builds on the trip made earlier this year by European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen. Amid the many tensions in bilateral relations, especially since the pandemic, what this intensive travel schedule appears to show is that Brussels is doubling down on diplomacy with Beijing. The goal appears to be to try to seize any remaining window of opportunity that may exist to prevent ties staying largely in the deep freeze for years to come.

Last week's visit by Simson was a good case in point, as the EU energy chief attended a high-level annual bilateral energy dialogue in Beijing - the first in-person version of the event since 2019. She said that "China can play a great part in the climate battle" after signing a new agreement that commits to closer cooperation. Ahead of the November-December COP28 climate summit in Dubai, Simson asserted that it was in the best interests of both Brussels and Beijing to stabilize international energy markets. She also urged China to join wider global pledges to cut methane emissions and triple renewable energy capacity, both by 2030.

On balance, Simson's visit produced an overall positive dialogue on an agenda where Beijing and Brussels have generally had fruitful relations for many years. To be sure, there are some bilateral disagreements even on this agenda. For instance, the EU has recently launched an anti-subsidy investigation into Chinese electric vehicle imports; Brussels has concerns over the major surge in coal power approved this year by Beijing, with the fear that it is prioritizing energy supply over reducing greenhouse gas emissions; and China has also objected to the EU's new carbon border adjustment mechanism that will set tariffs of 20 percent to 35 percent on goods with a high carbon price, such as steel and iron ore.

However, many EU officials have long believed that, fundamentally, Chinese policymakers endorse a vision, along with Europe, of a prosperous, energy-secure future in a stable climate and that they recognize the need for bilateral collaboration. After all, global warming poses a massive environmental threat to China, from record-setting heat waves to flooding.

Yet, for all the warmth in bilateral ties on much of this and the wider green economy agenda, there remain real challenges elsewhere. This was voiced during Borrell's trip to China last week, when he highlighted a decline in bilateral trust and respect. He said that Brussels takes Beijing seriously and expects the same in return on geopolitical issues and trade, so that the EU is "considered not through the lens of our relationship with others, but in ourselves ... Since the war in Ukraine, Europe has become a geopolitical power. We want to talk to China with this approach."

His comments reflect a widespread view in Brussels that the 27-member bloc does not receive sufficient attention from Beijing, particularly compared to the US. Moreover, there is a belief that China does not sufficiently appreciate Europe's sovereign independence on global affairs. One of the key issues Borrell raised in Beijing was the huge - approximately 400 billion (\$423 billion) - trade imbalance between the bloc and China. He highlighted the major difficulties faced by many European companies in accessing the Chinese economy, saying that "it affects sectors in which we (Europe) enjoy a comparative advantage ... we believe that the problem is not rooted in a simple difference in productivity."

So, Borrell urged China to address these economic imbalances, warning that Europe may reduce its dependence on China with "de-risking ... accelerating far more than is good, as the (European) public opinion will increase its pressure on political leaders to disengage more." In Beijing, Borrell also sought to address two further vexed issues. Firstly, Ukraine, as that war has now lasted more than 600 days. He stressed to his Beijing counterparts that "we are not asking China to adopt the same standpoint as the EU. But we consider it essential that China makes a major effort to convince the people of Ukraine that China is not Russia's ally in this war."

While Beijing appears to have significant concerns about the war in Ukraine, the EU's attempt to prise China from Russia is unlikely to succeed, not least because of the long-standing warm relationship between President Vladimir Putin and Xi Jinping, who met this week in Beijing. Secondly, the EU foreign policy chief stressed, on Taiwan, that the EU opposes the use of coercion and that the tensions between Taipei and Beijing must be resolved via dialogue, not force. While the EU does not formally recognize the self-governing island as an independent country, Brussels and multiple member states have economic and wider ties with Taiwan.

EU-China relations are at a key crossroads and EU officials are seeking to double down on diplomacy. Amid the tensions over security and economic issues, there may yet be a window of opportunity to deepen relations on climate and the green economy.

Iraq making progress thanks to constructive reforms

Dr. Majid Rafizadeh

IRAQ has undoubtedly been facing several challenges involving economic, security and environmental issues. But the latest developments highlight the fact that Baghdad is making progress in tackling these underlying problems and that the country appears to be moving in the right direction under the leadership of Prime Minister Mohammed Shia Al-Sudani.

Al-Sudani is putting his words into action, as he has shown that he is determined to implement several critical and positive initiatives alongside fundamental reforms. First of all, the Iraqi government's ambitious budget plan for the next three years will likely be instrumental in creating jobs and reducing unemployment, as it is expected to add more than half a million new public sector jobs. Such an ambitious budget plan, if fully and successfully carried out, will also help enhance the nation's social welfare and safety net.

The second promising move is related to Iraq's new social security law, which has introduced significant reforms to the social security system for private sector workers. The new Social Security Law for Private Sector Workers is critical because more people in Iraq, including self-employed and informal workers, are now eligible for the social security system. In addition, the law will cover maternity and unemployment benefits, as well as provide health insurance through various providers, including both the public and private sectors. The third positive development is linked to Al-Sudani's launch of long-overdue reforms in the banking and finance sectors. These fundamental reforms are vital due to the fact that they will tackle corruption in the financial and banking systems and lead to financial and economic growth.

The prime minister is taking the issue of corruption seriously, including by this week giving detailed direc-

tions in order to "simplify all banking procedures and to prepare a proposed list of facilities and simplified procedures to be presented within a week, in addition to providing a summary of the obstacles obstructing the banking reform process, and proposing effective and implementable treatments for it, in a way that helps in overcoming the approved traditional contexts, which prevent the achievement of the government's goal of developing this important economic and service sector." Iraq has also been taking several other steps that will most likely lead to economic growth. It was a step in the right direction when, in June, Iraq signed several memorandums of understanding with Egypt covering a variety of sectors, including tourism, finance, administrative development and diplomacy. In addition, Baghdad has entered into a multilateral cooperation agreement with Jordan and

Egypt, which focuses on deeper economic integration. This alliance will definitely yield gains in various fields, such as the commercial, security and financial sectors.

Furthermore, a multibillion-dollar agreement was in July signed between the Iraqi government and France's TotalEnergies. This will help address Iraq's long-standing electricity shortage. The \$27 billion agreement is considered to be the largest foreign investment in Iraq's history. As part of the project, Saudi Arabia's ACWA Power will build a 1,000 megawatt solar power plant in central Iraq. This will reduce Iraq's dependence on gas imports from Iran and alleviate tensions between Washington and Baghdad over Tehran. The Iraqi government must continue to ensure that division and corruption do not prevent such an invaluable and critical project from materializing.

Iraq can take several other

steps in order to tackle its multifaceted challenges. It ought to attract foreign investment and spend on rebuilding its infrastructure to create more jobs and further improve its economic situation. It is estimated that Iraq's population will double by 2050, meaning more people will be in need of jobs. It is worth noting that Iraq has great potential for attracting foreign investment. This can be partially accomplished by further strengthening the country's bilateral and multilateral economic and political ties.

In addition, it is vital for the government to diversify its economy. Iraq, OPEC's second-largest oil producer after Saudi Arabia, unfortunately heavily relies on oil exports for its revenues. They account for nearly 92 percent of Iraq's federal budget revenue. Such dependence on oil puts the country at great risk when prices plummet, as occurred in 2020. Economic diversification can be accomplished by strengthening the private sector, investing in

infrastructure and other industries, promoting tourism and, most importantly, investing in renewable energy. Finally, Iraq is being significantly impacted by climate change. In fact, it has been identified as the world's fifth-most vulnerable country to climate change. That is why it is extremely important to find sustainable solutions to combat the environmental problems in Iraq.

It is a positive development that Al-Sudani is making it a priority to tackle climate change through sweeping measures he hopes will be implemented by 2030. Iraqi leaders have also been taking constructive steps, such as implementing policies to combat climate change and participating in key global and regional events related to the environment. In a nutshell, although Iraq is facing several key problems, it is moving in the right direction and gradually making progress in tackling its financial, political and environmental challenges.

We must protect the children caught up in conflicts

Sara Al-Mulla

ARAB children are facing an unprecedented assault on their young lives. In the Middle East and North Africa, UNICEF estimates that more than 61 million children reside in countries impacted by conflicts, meaning a shocking one in every three Arab children experiences the ravages of violence. And Defense for Children International - Palestine, an independent, locally based Palestinian child rights organization, estimates that 1,200 Palestinian children have lost their lives during this month's eruption in the Israeli war on Gaza.

Dire humanitarian settings can have multifold detrimental effects on children. At their core, deep psychological traumas can damage the lives of children, having long-lasting harmful effects on their emotional and mental well-being. Young victims commonly experience symptoms such as anxiety, depression, reduced self-worth, sleep disturbances, post-traumatic stress disorder, social isolation, separation anxiety and profound feelings of grief for the loss of family and friends.

Conflicts often compel children and their families to abandon their hometowns, resulting in forced displacement and the erosion of community ties, leaving them without a support system and having to face an uncertain and precarious future on their own. Forced displacement also leads to a disruption in the education pathways of school students, which reduces their chances of gaining the skills essential to securing employment in the future. At the same time, some children may be forced to engage in child labor as a means of survival, possibly exposing them to

exploitation. Children living in conflict zones can also suffer from debilitating physical injuries or long-term disabilities, drastically reducing their quality of life. The disruption of food supplies in conflict zones can lead to famine and malnutrition, which take a heavy toll on children's health in the form of stunted physical and cognitive development and developmental delays. At its worst, child mortality rates are higher in conflict zones due to ongoing violence, malnutrition and a lack of access to health services to treat illnesses or injuries.

Protecting and supporting Arab children affected by conflicts is a crucial humanitarian and policy challenge that must be urgently tackled. Multifaceted policy solutions, when implemented comprehensively and collaboratively, can significantly contribute to protecting children in conflict zones and ensuring their rights and well-being are safeguarded. Priorities must bear in mind a number of essential areas that address the needs for shelter, psychosocial support, health and nutrition, education, safety and security, family reunification and child protection mechanisms. Child monitoring systems must be established to track the status of children in all these areas. For a clearer picture, the registration of children at birth must be adhered to, in addition to collecting multifaceted, comprehensive data on children. Humanitarian crises usually affect the livelihoods of families, which is why assistance programs must be set up to provide support for families with children in order to reduce economic pressures. These can be in the form of housing or shelter, food

vouchers, clothing, healthcare or childcare subsidies so parents are able to work. Child-friendly spaces must be built so that children can safely play and interact with local communities. Such spaces could also serve as bases for providing a range of vital family-related services and resources, such as parenting classes, counseling, child development support, youth mentoring programs and legal aid clinics.

Access to competent, timely healthcare services will remain paramount to the well-being of children living in conflict zones throughout their early years and through adolescence. The spectrum of services must include regular checkups to monitor their development milestones, the administration of compulsory vaccinations and treatment for various pediatric illnesses. Humanitarian settings are fraught with high risks for physical injury or death, necessitating the provision of prompt emergency services for the treatment of injuries in order to minimize the risk of permanent disabilities or child mortality. Education must be on the agenda of any humanitarian strategy in order to safeguard the well-being of children and improve their prospects for the future. Primarily, safe and temporary learning environments should be established in various suitable locations so children can continue their education. Classes could be scheduled at flexible times and access to online classrooms and e-learning resources could be a transformational solution, considering the number of volatile situations in the region. Support will be needed to distribute books and school supplies for chil-

dren, in addition to setting up mobile libraries to travel around and distribute books.

There is no doubt that conflicts can have a resounding impact on children's well-being. As such, it is of paramount importance to garner the specialized assistance of social workers, teachers and psychologists to equip children with the resilience to face various emotional and mental challenges. Integrating trauma education, stress-reduction techniques and coping strategies for anxiety or fear can help alleviate some of the effects of conflicts and enhance resilience. Moreover, children should be informed about what steps to take in the case of further emergencies in order to protect themselves. Amid the chaos of warfare is the potential for the separation of children from their families, making them particularly susceptible to experiencing violence, abuse, exploitation and neglect. To adeptly address and respond to this challenge, it is vital to put in place robust interventions that tackle the issue of separation itself, offer temporary or alternative care solutions and ultimately lead to the reunification of separated children with their families through family tracing programs. In light of these significant challenges, it is imperative to maintain communication channels so children can seek assistance from specialized and dedicated child protection teams. Vitality, deploying grassroots community-centered child protection networks will help detect and address child protection concerns when they arise. Considering the formidable challenges that children have to face, it is critical that global, regional and local stakeholders work together to ensure their safety and well-being.

After 10 years of China's BRI projects in Cambodia, benefits up for debate

Sun Narin

IN Cambodia's capital of Phnom Penh, 62-year-old produce seller Sok Ul is sanguine, despite the threat that a Belt and Road project could uproot him from his neighborhood. Construction will soon begin on a \$60 million bridge that spans two of the city's bustling southern sections along the Tonle Sap river, and Sok Ul's modest vegetable farm may need to go.

"I am happy to see a bridge to ease traffic congestion," he said, speaking with VOA's Khmer Service from his roadside stall, where he sells cabbages and other produce. If he's forced to move, he just wants a fair deal for his land. The bridge is among dozens of projects across the country being funded by China as loans under Beijing's Belt and Road Initiative, or BRI.

Prime Minister Hun Manet is leading a Cambodian delegation to join representatives from more than 150 countries in Beijing for a two-day forum to mark 10 years of China's BRI on October 17 and 18. The initiative has invested billions of dollars globally, with many low-income Asian countries such as Cambodia seeing an out-sized windfall, but BRI projects also account for a healthy chunk of Phnom Penh's foreign debt.

The initiative is the central component of Chinese President Xi Jinping's economic diplomacy as the communist party seeks to make China a global counterweight to the United States. The US, locked in a global rivalry with China, has warned countries against taking on large debts under China's BRI infrastructure strategy. Some critics warn about a debt trap where China would gain economic and political leverage by lending more than what a country can pay.

"The big risk arising from Cambodia's engagement in the BRI is overreliance on Chinese investments and loans which might potentially induce Cambodia to fall into a debt trap," say political scientists Vannarith Chheang and Heng Pheakdey in their 2021 paper "Cambodian Perspective on the Belt and Road Initiative." That, they warn, could result in "the loss of trust and autonomy as a sovereign state and the deterioration of its relations with other ASEAN member states."

However, Jayant Menon, a former lead Asia Development Bank economist now at Singapore's ISEAS - Yusof Ishak Institute, came to a different conclusion in his March paper, "The Belt and Road Initiative in Cambodia: Costs and Benefits, Real and Perceived." "In the case of Cambodia, concerns over possible debt traps and debt diplomacy associated with the BRI appear to be misplaced, even after factoring in the effects of the pandemic," he wrote.

While recognizing the short-term damage to local communities and the environment, Menon said the costs of BRI projects were more than justified. "This infrastructure development has

increased the competitiveness of the tradable goods sector, boosted exports and lowered prices to consumers and producers in Cambodia," he wrote.

Hun Manet has also been optimistic about Chinese investments since taking the reins from his father in August. "For Cambodia, BRI has provided many benefits to people, especially in the field of transportation and logistics," he said while addressing the 26th ASEAN-China Summit in Jakarta, Indonesia in September. BRI benefits and pitfalls have sparked heated debates in many BRI member countries.

"I acknowledge that China has helped build a lot of roads, but the quality is still limited," Em Sovannara, a political science professor in Phnom Penh, told VOA Khmer. "Some roads are just built and then broken and need to be repaired." The BRI "has provided benefits to Cambodia, but it is not like what politicians brag about," he said. The Phnom Penh-based Future Forum estimates as of June 2021, China had built eight bridges and 3,287 kilometers (2,042 miles) of roads totaling more than \$3 billion in Chinese concessional loans, which are loans with more favorable terms such as lower interest rates when compared to those available on the market.

Cambodia's total foreign debt stands at almost \$10 billion, 41% of which is owed to China, according to a bulletin from Cambodia's Ministry of Economy and Finance in December. China's loans and investments have transformed the Cambodia skyline, with a major expressway from Phnom Penh to Sihanoukville, a sprawling special economic zone in Sihanoukville with an energy plant to power it, a new airport in Siem Reap and dozens of smaller projects.

The projects have benefited the ruling Cambodian People's Party, offering tangible proof that it is modernizing the country, Vannarith Chheang and Heng Pheakdey wrote. "The BRI helps strengthen the material capabilities as well as the legitimacy of the regime in Cambodia, which has greatly benefited from the influx of Chinese investment capital and development assistance," they wrote. However, the Cambodian academics noted the economic benefits don't always reach the population these projects are built for.

"Even though Chinese investment is bringing wealth to Cambodia, this wealth is mainly kept within Cambodia's Chinese community. Chinese residents and visitors in Cambodia buy from Chinese businesses, eat at Chinese restaurants and stay in Chinese hotels. The trickle-down effect to local businesses is minimal," they wrote.

Sihanoukville has become a symbol of the risks and rewards of Chinese investment. While development and construction have skyrocketed, crime and casinos are also on

the rise. The rapid development has also pushed up property costs, forcing many residents and business owners to move outside the city. "The BRI needs to take into account the 'people' rather than solely focusing on 'elites' if it is meant to achieve a meaningful impact in Cambodia," Chhay Lim, a visiting fellow at the Center for Southeast Asian Studies at the Royal University of Phnom Penh, wrote in an email to VOA Khmer.

He said the expected return on Chinese investment has been clear. "We have observed that Cambodia has been offering support for key Chinese foreign agendas as well as the newly proposed narratives and slogan politics, including those of the Community of Shared Future, Global Security Initiative, Global Development Initiative, and Global Civilizational Initiative." Hun Manet visited Beijing last month to strengthen ties with China, picking up where his father Hun Sen left off. Hun Manet said Cambodia's new government will maintain an "unchanged stance" on Beijing's "One China" policy, and a "noninterference policy" toward China.

China's leaders affirmed continued support for economic development and the improvement of people's livelihoods in Cambodia through projects such as rural roads, bridges, water supplies, schools and hospitals, according to a joint statement out of the meeting. Menon said there was also evidence that China was becoming more mindful of the social and environmental impact of its projects, perhaps to correct for local pushback over the past decade. Menon and Chhay Lim agreed Hun Manet's government would be well advised to ensure that it does not become overly reliant on China in the years ahead.

"The increasing reliance on a single country for both its economic and noneconomic needs carry obvious risks," Menon wrote. "As the China growth juggernaut starts to slow, diversifying trade and investment partners can spread risk by reducing vulnerability to country-specific shocks." That may not be an easy feat, given Phnom Penh's strained relations with the West over its democratic backslide in recent years, said Chhay Lim. "It's significant to note that Cambodia must ensure diversification and avoid sole reliance on China while simultaneously enhancing relations with the West without antagonizing China," he said. "To achieve this balance, Cambodia must formulate both a robust China strategy and a Western strategy, which, in my opinion, Cambodia has not yet fully developed."

Sok Ul, the vegetable farmer in Phnom Penh, is confident that China will not pressure Cambodia to repay its debt. "We can pay it back when we have it," he said, adding his belief that Beijing will forgive Phnom Penh if his country cannot pay on time.

VOA

Russia's 2024 budget shows it's planning for a long war in Ukraine

Pavel Luzin & Alexandra Prokopenko

THE Russian government has announced its proposed budget for 2024. For the first time in modern history, the country is set to spend 6% of gross domestic product (GDP) on the military, and defense spending will exceed social spending. The war against Ukraine and the West is not only the Kremlin's biggest priority; it is now also the main driver of Russia's economic growth.

The record defense spending shows that the Kremlin has no intention of ending its war against Ukraine anytime soon: on the contrary, Even if the fighting becomes less intense or the conflict becomes frozen, the money will go toward replenishing Russia's depleted military arsenals. Likewise, it has enough cash to fund an escalation such as the imposition of martial law or full mobilization.

The new budget, which is awaiting approval from the State Duma, envisages that revenue will grow by more than a third in 2024, reaching 35 trillion rubles (\$349 billion). Of that, 11.5 trillion rubles is expected to come from the oil and gas sector. Planned expenditure is 36.6 trillion rubles (a 26.2% rise in this year). This means that the budget deficit next year, at least according to the government's plans, should significantly decrease from a planned 2% of GDP in 2023 to 0.8% of GDP in 2024. Social spending is forecast to increase by approximately 1 trillion rubles to 7.5 trillion rubles in 2024. Expenditure on national security (including on agencies like the National Guard internal military force and the Federal

Penitentiary Service) will rise from 3.2 trillion rubles to 3.5 trillion rubles. Spending on education and healthcare, in contrast, will remain at this year's level, meaning a real-term reduction in 2024.

Despite these spending commitments, the Economic Development Ministry sees inflation increasing by just 4.5% in 2024. GDP growth is expected to be 2.3%, and Urals oil is forecast to average \$71.30 per barrel (despite the price cap of \$60 imposed by the G7). The average ruble-US dollar exchange rate is expected to be 90.1 rubles. In other words, the soaring defense and social spending in the budget will be largely financed through the gradual devaluation of the ruble, a process that is already well under way. A moderate budget deficit may, indeed, help restrain inflation.

Defense spending in 2024 will almost double compared to this year. While that is less than the 12-17% of GDP that the Soviet Union was spending on defense at the height of the Cold War, it is comparable to US military expenditure in the 1980s. The current peak in spending has its origins in 2011, when the Kremlin embarked on a nine-year rearmament program worth about 20 trillion rubles. Most of Russia's defense spending will go toward producing military equipment, as well as payments to those wounded in Ukraine and the families of those killed. However, the growth in spending will also be eaten up by the sector's long-standing inefficiency and the unprofitability of many of its companies.

Since Russia's full-scale invasion of Ukraine in 2022, many of these problems have only gotten worse.

For example, despite rising defense spending, the state-owned defense conglomerate Rostec made less income from the sale of weapons and military equipment in 2022 than it did in 2020. Roscosmos, the Russian space agency, ended 2022 with losses of 50 billion rubles, compared with losses of 31 billion rubles the year before. And the state-owned United Shipbuilding Corporation saw a loss of 20 billion rubles in 2022, compared with a loss of several billion rubles in 2021 and a net profit in 2019. All of this suggests that the growth in military spending this year is largely an attempt by the government to keep pace with these costs. A similar process is likely to occur in 2024, given Russia's defense sector's dependence on imports. Western sanctions, the devaluation of the ruble, and the cost of import substitution mean a radical increase in the price tag of military equipment.

The Kremlin isn't just gearing up for a prolonged war in Ukraine, but apparently sees certain economic benefits from such a scenario. Unlike oil, guns drive industrial growth: economic growth reached 4.9% in July. Industries directly related to the war have seen spectacular growth: production of transport is up 66.7% from last year, computers and electronics are up 42.6%, navigation devices 72.4%, electrical equipment 29.5%, and protective clothing 40.4%. Industries indi-

rectly linked to the fighting are also experiencing abnormally high growth rates: equipment repair and installation is up 8.5%, while the food industry saw 11.3% growth. Defense production is operating at full capacity, and most civilian sector industries have returned to their pre-war production levels. As a result, Russia has a record low unemployment rate of just 3%.

It seems the government is unconcerned about workforce and production limitations, and is increasing spending regardless, thereby stimulating internal demand. Yet this is a risky approach. A shortage of personnel together with Western tech sanctions mean productivity is unlikely to increase. In addition, spending that is so skewed toward military and social needs can only be sustainable if the state is at war. A wartime economy dependent on imports is destined for high inflation, which means that interest rates will likely remain high. This, in turn, poses a risk to investment levels.

By staking everything on rising military expenditure, the Kremlin is forcing the economy into the snare of perpetual war. On the one hand, that means it will be increasingly difficult for the state to continue financing the fighting in Ukraine without causing living standards to deteriorate. On the other, if there is a reduction in military spending, it will inevitably lead to a significant structural shock that will take considerable time to overcome. Either way, it will be ordinary Russians who pay the price.

Australia has given us a masterclass in how to defeat identity politics

Fraser Nelson

FOR a Brit to visit Australia at the moment is to step back in time to the aftermath of the Brexit vote. The mood here is one of political shock and disorientation after a referendum on whether to create a group representing Aboriginals was rejected by 61 per cent of voters. The Yes campaign outpost No by five to one. It had sports stars, companies and the whole establishment on its side, yet still lost every Australian state. Stunned, it blames its defeat on racism, ignorance, misinformation and general black magic. How, otherwise, could No have prevailed?

Normally, the machinations of Australian politics would not have much read-across to Britain but, on this issue, politics down under is moving ahead of ours. Australia has just had the world's first referendum on identity politics, a creed so established among its elites that Anthony Albanese, the prime minister, wanted it embedded in the constitution. Rather than all voters being equal, Aboriginals would be given a special (but undefined) "Voice" heard by parliament. It was pitched as a battle between compassion and cruelty.

Pupils were given Yes badges to wear in schools, employees urged to vote Yes by their boss. Cities were draped in "Yes" flags by local authorities. Only one publication advocated a No vote: the Australian edition of The Spectator. At times, it seemed as if the aim was nothing short of atonement for the original sin of colonisation. "We can't change our history," the Melbourne city council proclaims in still-showing Yes posters. "But we can move forward together."

What makes this referendum fascinating was that, with no one saying large, looked on bewildered. At first, it seemed harmless: who would deny that gender dysphoria deserves to be treated with compassion? Who would not treat minorities with respect? But this quickly mutated into a new authoritarianism, with visible displays of support required and dissent seen as bigotry. Women's rights campaigners ended up hounded as transphobes. Police were asked to identify transgressors as hate criminals.

I didn't take this seriously until shamefully late on. I stumbled across a protest in Glasgow where an activist going by the name of Posie Parker had gathered crowds to chant slogans, daring nearby police to arrest them. "Women don't have penises," they said. "No rapists in women's prisons." When she took her protest to Melbourne, the reaction was incendiary. A local MP was expelled from her conservative (Liberal) party for attending Parker's rally. Identity politics had suddenly become a secular religion, with apostates denounced. This was the backdrop for Australia's referendum. It was an Aboriginal politician, Jacinta Nampijinpa Price, who led the No campaign. No one, she said, could explain how "the Voice" would actually work - or help. Australia is not racist, it's the greatest country in the world and made so by belief in equality, she said. Aboriginals differ, speak 300 languages and middle-class ones are doing very well. Why treat them all as one? Surely that's the real racism. The true divide in Australia, she said, is between the wealthy and

of emails. Conservatives, by and large, looked on bewildered. At first, it seemed harmless: who would deny that gender dysphoria deserves to be treated with compassion? Who would not treat minorities with respect? But this quickly mutated into a new authoritarianism, with visible displays of support required and dissent seen as bigotry. Women's rights campaigners ended up hounded as transphobes. Police were asked to identify transgressors as hate criminals.

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the marginalised - of all colours.

To watch Price speak is a masterclass in how to respond to identity politics. Her tone is not an angry "war on woke" but humorous and optimistic, emphasising social cohesion. When challenged about the "inter-generational trauma" of the Aboriginals, she responded that, being of mixed race, she suffers double trauma: her white ancestors had been deported in chains from Wales and dumped in a penal colony on the other side of the world. So it all evens out. In fact, she said, colonisation has benefited Aboriginals.

The reaction to her final point was almost as furious as that when Kemi Badenoch said Britain was the best country in the world to be black. Both use the same word to attack identity politics: an attempt to "re-racialise" society. Both see conservatism as the natural antidote: colour-blind and the natural inheritor of Dr King's message about character over colour. But both Price and Badenoch serve party leaders who have tended to be ambivalent about identity politics. Unsure whether to take a stand or steer clear. Rishi Sunak could, of course, be just as powerful an advocate. He may be more comfortable talking about bond yields or smoking bans, but this is the curse of those on the Right. Slow to recognise new dividing lines, slow to decide which side to join. As Australia discovered last weekend, modern conservatism has been given a new cause and a message: "Vote no to the voice of division." We have seen the cause, the language and the votes. The dots are there, waiting for the Tories to join them.

The Telegraph

‘In the past decade, we have completed 1.0 version of the Belt and Road Initiative, from today, we are entering 2.0, with the focus on developing the economy, new energy, digital economy, etc. Those new industries will continue to promote the economic development of countries involved in the initiative. This is the original aspiration of China,’ said Zheng Yongnian, a professor of politics at the Chinese University of Hong Kong (Shenzhen) while attending the opening ceremony of the Third Belt and Road Forum for International Cooperation in Beijing.

More than 20 heads of state and senior government representatives as well as heads of international organizations attended the opening ceremony.

Zhao Manfeng

"The success of the Belt and Road Initiative has been phenomenal.

The fact that over 150 countries and 30 international organizations have signed up to join is a clear indicator of success," said Kishore Mahbubani, former Singapore ambassador to the UN, at the ceremony. "The concern for people and the concern for the environment is very much part of the Chinese tradition. I think that is what maybe helps to distinguish China's development from what happened in the Western industrial revolution," he added.

"It'll continue to be the most successful development project in the world. It has been for the last 10 years and as it's got very good basis both practically

and from the point view of its concepts and ideas," said John Ross, former director of economic and business policy for the mayor of London. "BRI has provided the world with a viable alternative, particularly to the Global South where investment in infrastructure has been a bonding task," said Ong Tee Keat, president of Belt and Road Initiative Caucus for Asia-Pacific.

Based on the principle of "planning together, building together, and benefiting together", Belt and Road cooperation has extended from the Eurasian continent to Africa and Latin America. It transcends differences between civilizations, cultures, social systems, and stages of development and calls for an open, inclusive and interconnected world for common development.

Structural reforms vital to tackle economic challenges

ISLAMABAD (INP): The All Pakistan Business Forum (APBF) has termed the implementation of structural reforms vital for good governance, curbing unproductive state expenditures, expanding the tax base, fostering public-private partnerships, and real-locating resources to critical sectors to stimulate sustainable growth, as the country is facing with daunting economic challenges, posing a serious threat to the viability of the industry.

President APBF Syed Maaz Mahmood observed that it was imperative to understand that fiscal discipline cannot be achieved and sustained without initiating structural reforms.

He said the focus of the caretaker government to date was not on implementing structural politically challenging reforms but on heavy reliance on realizing pledged foreign direct investment and crackdowns on markets infected by widespread speculations/smuggling with a view to taking the economy out of its ongoing deepening economic impasse.

While one would no doubt support these measures yet economic reforms

as well as improving governance were critical to ensuring that the economy moves out of the continuing logjam that successive administrations have pushed it into.

The APBF Chief said that we must maintain fiscal discipline and establish controls to create fiscal space to extend relief to the masses.

Quoting the reports, he said that the budget deficit continues to grow, entangling Pakistan in an unrelenting cycle of debt. Even if we exclude the impact of debt servicing, our revenues fall short of covering other expenses, implying that all these were met from borrowed funds.

At the close of the fiscal year, Pakistan recorded a budget deficit of Rs 6.52 trillion, equivalent to 7.7% of the GDP, a slight decrease from the previous year's 7.9% of GDP. However, in absolute figures, the budget deficit surged by a substantial 24%, or Rs 1.26 trillion, within just one year.

Due to this bleak scenario, Maaz Mahmood said and added that the primary balance registered a negative Rs 690 billion in FY 2023. Encouragingly,

Pakistan achieved a noteworthy reduction of Rs 1.3 trillion or 67% year-on-year in its debt portfolio at the primary balance level during FY 2023.

According to the Fiscal Operation report the primary deficit, which stood at 3.1% of GDP in FY2022, was reduced to a more manageable level of 0.8% of GDP in FY 2023.

This improvement has created some fiscal room, and with continued efforts we can attain a primary surplus, representing the fundamental level of financial discipline.

It was encouraging to note that at the consolidated level, the government successfully attained an overall primary surplus of Rs 503 billion. However, by end of the third quarter of FY 2023, overall budget's balance showed a negative figure of Rs 3.07 trillion. Yet, in the last quarter of FY 2023, primary surplus turned into primary deficit, with latter recording a primary deficit of Rs 1.1 trillion.

The budget deficit in last quarter of FY 2023 surged to nearly 112% of the cumulative figures from July 2022 to March 2023. Pakistan's budget deficit

for the initial nine months amounted to approximately Rs 3 trillion, but in Q4 FY23 alone, it registered a substantial increase of Rs 3.4 trillion. It's worth noting that in the latest budget documents released in June 2023, revised estimate for primary deficit in FY23 was Rs 421 billion.

However, there was a primary balance overrun of Rs 690 billion, marking an increase of Rs 269 billion, which is 64% higher than the revised estimates for FY 2023 shared earlier in June of the same year.

Contrastingly, according to the budget document from the previous year, a surplus of Rs 153 billion was projected. This highlights the inadequacies in financial planning at ministerial level.

While many countries were implementing privatization policies for SOEs, Pakistan remains in debate over the issue without officially announcing any plans for disinvesting in such entities.

Meanwhile, the government continues to inject substantial sums of money in the form of subsidies and grants each year to sustain the operations of these unprofitable entities.

PG felicitates new body

LAHORE (APP): The Progressive Group here Saturday felicitated the newly-elected office-bearers of Pakistan Association of Printing and Graphic Arts Industry (PAPGAI). PAP-GAI members elected Saad Haleem Khan and Abdul Wadood Alvi as the chairman and vice chairman, respectively for the second term to lead their industry.

In a media statement, Progressive Group President Khalid Usman, Deputy Secretary Muhammad Ejaz Tanveer, Haji Riaz-ul-Hassan, Chaudhry Wajid Ali, Tauqeer Malik and others hoped that both the gentlemen would leave no stone unturned to contribute for economic prosperity of the country and solution to the problems being faced by the printing and graphic arts industry.

Business Facilitation Centre to remove hurdles

LAHORE (APP): Caretaker Provincial Minister for Industries and Commerce SM Tanveer said on that establishment of a Business Facilitation Centre (BFC) in Lahore would help remove every obstacle in the investment process, as the officers of the relevant provincial and federal departments would provide all facilities to investors under one roof.

In a consultative meeting with presidents of chambers of commerce and Industry (CCIs) here at TEVTA Secretariat, he said that an effective digital system had been evolved through BFC for immediate redress of complaints of investors and industrialists. "The Business Facilitation

Center is an important initiative towards ease of doing business and the elimination of slowness in the investment process," he remarked.

SM Tanveer said that the one-window BFC would start functioning within next two months, asserting that all kinds of information regarding investment would be available in the knowledge hub of BFC.

He mentioned that performance of the Business Facilitation Centre would be monitored at all levels and the investor would be updated about the application process through the mobile app, he concluded.

Lahore Chamber of Commerce and Industry (LCCI) President Kashif

Anwar said that business community is satisfied and grateful to the caretaker government.

Gujranwala CCI President termed the BFC a positive step by Provincial Commerce and Industry Minister and his department.

Punjab Industry and Commerce Department's Secretary Ehsan Bhutta briefed the meeting about the business facilitation centre highlighting its aims, objectives and importance.

CCIs Presidents of Faisalabad, Sialkot, Multan and Rawalpindi, and DG Industries, officers of Punjab Information Technology Board (PITB) and other related departments attended the meeting.

Dr. Gohar conducts meetings with Chinese Business Leaders

ISLAMABAD (APP): Federal Minister for Commerce Dr Gohar Ijaz concluded a series of highly productive meetings with China's prominent business leaders and investment groups on the sidelines of the 3rd Belt and Road Forum in Beijing.

These meetings were aimed at strengthening economic ties between Pakistan and China and exploring various investment opportunities in Pakistan, said a press release issued here.

Dr. Gohar Ejaz met with Wang Zihai, Director of China-Pakistan (Qingdao) International Cooperation Hub.

The discussions centred on investment opportunities in Pakistan, including areas such as Civilian and Defense equipment, EV Lithium Batteries, Solar Panels, and Semiconductors.

The role of the Special Investment Facilitation Council (SIFC) in facilitat-

ing these opportunities was a key point of conversation. In a meeting with Li Yiman, Chairperson of Eman Logistics, the focus was on expanding Pakistan's presence on Chinese digital platforms.

Eman Logistics plans to launch "Pakistan National Pavilion" display centres in China, demonstrating a commitment to digital diplomacy.

The Minister assured full support and facilitation for this endeavour.

Dr. Ejaz also engaged with Jin Weidong, President of Wellhope, a leading Chinese agri-producer.

The Minister highlighted the significant opportunities within Pakistan's agricultural, poultry, and meat sectors. Wellhope's global leadership in smart farming and meat processing can pave the way for a mutually beneficial partnership.

The Minister met with Wang Guidong of Donghua Group, emphasizing Pakistan Steel Mills' privatization and the government's dedication to the process.

The establishment of SIFC is set to bolster these efforts, and all possible facilitation for the partnership was assured.

A productive working lunch was held with representatives from MCC, China's metallurgy giant, a key player in the Saindak Copper-Gold Project.

The discussions revolved around expanding collaboration and tapping into MCC's expertise to foster partnership growth.

The minister also visited COFCO, a leading global food procurement agency, to discuss the possibilities of enhancing Pakistan's grains and food exports to China.

Dr. Gohar invited them to establish their regional office in Pakistan to procure more Pakistani products invest in Pakistan and make it a hub of its global value chain and storage network with support from SIFC.

Dr. Gohar also urged the COFCO to establish a Joint Working Group between the COFCO, Pakistani Businessmen and the Ministry of Commerce.

Dr Ejaz met with several other prominent Chinese enterprises and organizations, including Shandong Xinxu Group, ADM Group, China National Agriculture Development, China National Fisheries Corp, Tianjin Meat Association, and CNAGS.

These discussions explored collaboration in various sectors, such as mining, trade, hospitality, construction, EV infrastructure, agriculture, and rice sourcing.

Dr Ejaz underscored Pakistan's commitment to meeting China's export standards and promised rapid processing plant setup if exports to China are green lit.

In a separate meeting with BYD, a global leader in electric vehicles (EVs), discussions focused on investment opportunities in Pakistan and the government's supportive policies, including the role of SIFC.

Dr. Gohar Ejaz's meetings with business leaders reflect Pakistan's commitment to fostering economic cooperation and development with China.

Court Notice

In the Court of Jauhar Ali Safi Civil Judge I /Alaqa Qazi Buner at Daggar.Suit No 245/1. Institution 8/2/2023. Date of hearing, 12/11/2023.Mst Gul ehtc VS Mutabar Khan etc. Notice to no 3.Sabz Ali Khan.6.Shagi sons of Merdullah Khan.12.Laiq Zar son of Abuzar.27. Sher Ali Khan son of Amenulah Khan residents of Cheena tehsel Gagra district Buner.Whereas in the above mentioned case the mentioned defendants can not be served in the ordinary way, it is, therefore, proclaimed that if the said defendants will/shall not appear personally or through dually authorized agent or pleader in the court at 8.30 am dated 11/11/2023 the proceeding will be taken ex- parte. Given under my hand and seal of this Court.

Global stocks retreat further on ME fears

NEW YORK (AFP/APP): Global stock markets slid Friday on worries that an expected ground invasion of Gaza by Israel would spark a wider conflict in the Middle East.

Wall Street stocks declined Friday, as investors looked to lower their risk going into the weekend.

The Dow Jones Industrial Average lost 0.9 percent, while the S&P and Nasdaq indexes fell over one percent.

The yield on the 10-year US Treasury, which briefly rose this week to levels not seen since 2007 amid concerns the Fed is entering a long period of high interest rates, slipped

slightly.

The Federal Reserve has been raising its benchmark lending rate to cool demand and bring down stubborn inflation, with some success.

Nevertheless, rates remain stuck above its long-term target of two percent.

At the same time, markets are warily eyeing ongoing conflict in the Middle East, for signs it could spread to other countries.

"Going into the weekend there is a downward trend as short-term investors try to square positions," Jack Ablin, Cresset Capital's chief investment officer, told AFP.

"There is an unwillingness from certain investors (to) hold risk positions over the weekend," he added.

Major stock markets in Europe closed down more than one percent, while those in Asia also saw declines.

Oil prices finished slightly slower.

The US Federal Reserve warned Friday that the recent attack on Israel and the ongoing Ukraine conflict could cause harm to the world economy and boost global inflation.

Hamas carried out a deadly attack on Israel from the Gaza Strip on October 7, and killed at

least 1,400 people, mostly civilians who were shot, mutilated or burned to death, according to Israeli officials.

In response, Israel launched a relentless bombing campaign on Gaza.

More than 4,100 Palestinians, mostly civilians, have been killed, according to the latest toll from the Hamas-run health ministry.

"The attack on Israel, in conjunction with Russia's ongoing war against Ukraine, has ratcheted up geopolitical tensions," the Fed said in its semi-annual report on financial stability.

"Escalation of these

conflicts or a worsening in other geopolitical tensions could reduce economic activity and boost inflation worldwide," it added.

Elsewhere in Washington, fresh figures published Friday showed the US budget deficit for the past year widened to \$1.7 trillion, in a development that could add pressure on President Joe Biden as he seeks reelection in 2024.

The deficit expanded by \$320 billion for the fiscal year ending September 30, following a drop in tax revenues and lower deposits of earnings by the Fed on the back of higher interest rates.

Air France's African operations facing turbulence

RIYADH (Agencies): The decision by the French Ministry of Foreign Affairs to place the West African nations that underwent coup d'etats under a "red alert," a move initially aimed at ensuring the safety of the European country's nationals, has taken an unexpected turn, adversely affecting aviation companies operating in the region.

This suspension is particularly painful for Air France, as flights between Paris and Bamako, Mali's capital, represent its third busiest route in sub-Saharan Africa, following only Abidjan and Dakar. The abrupt halt of these services not only deals a blow to Air France but also opens up opportunities for competitors.

This crisis marks a turning point in the operator's relations with Africa, impacting a substantial 14 percent of its revenue. This underscores the broader issues facing airlines operating in regions with political volatility and highlights the need for a delicate balance between safety and business interests in the aviation industry.

Africa has experienced seven coups since August 2020, with the most recent military power grab occurring in Gabon, preceded by Niger, Burkina Faso, Guinea, Sudan and Mali.



BEIJING: Federal Minister of Commerce Dr. Gohar Ejaz holding a meeting with CEO of ADM Group Bhambhani regarding establishing EV charging stations network across Pakistan.

Minister conducts meetings

ISLAMABAD (PPI): Caretaker Minister for Commerce Dr Gohar Ejaz has concluded a series of highly productive meetings with China's prominent business leaders and investment groups on the sidelines of the 3rd Belt and Road Forum in Beijing.

According to a press release issued here in Islamabad on Saturday, these meetings were aimed at strengthening economic ties between Pakistan and China and exploring various investment opportunities in Pakistan.

Dr Gohar Ejaz's meetings with business leaders reflect Pakistan's commitment to fostering economic cooperation and development with China.

Gold rates dip by Rs150

ISLAMABAD (APP): The per tola price of 24 karat gold decreased by Rs.150 and was sold at Rs. 208,350 on Saturday compared to its sale at Rs. 208,500 the previous day of trading.

The price of 10 grams of 24 karat gold also decreased by Rs.129 to Rs.178,626 from Rs.178,755 whereas the prices of 10 gram 22 karat gold went down to Rs.163,741 from Rs.163,869, the All Sindh Sarafa Jewellers Association reported.

The price of per tola and ten gram silver remained constant at Rs.2,550 and Rs.2,186.21 respectively.

The price of gold in the international market decreased by \$7 to \$1,992 from \$1,999, the Association reported.

NEW YORK (APP): The US dollar lost in late trading, as the US Treasury yields declined and investors bet on the Federal Reserve's dovish interest rates policy.

The dollar index, which measures the greenback against six major peers, decreased 0.08 percent to 106.1649 in late trading. Atlanta Federal Reserve President Raphael Bostic on Friday said he doesn't envision interest rate cuts happening until well into 2024.

"I would say late 2024," Bostic replied when asked for a time frame when the first decrease could come.

He also cautioned that the road back to acceptable levels of inflation could be a long one. "There's still a

lot of momentum in the economy. My outlook says that inflation is going to come down but it's not going to fall off a cliff."

At the economic level, no relevant data was released on Friday and the focus shifted to the Israel and Palestine conflict which could benefit the US dollar as a safe-haven asset.

The euro rose to 1.0592 US dollars from 1.0583 US dollars in the previous session, and the British pound was up to 1.2158 US dollars from 1.2145 US dollars.

The most active gold contract for December delivery rose 13.90 US dollars, or 0.70 percent, to close at 1,994.40 dollars per ounce.

Investors continued to turn to safe haven gold ahead of the expected ground

invasion of Gaza by Israel. Speaking before a gathering of the Shadow Open Market Committee, Cleveland Fed President Loretta Mester said Friday that she believes the central bank leans toward another rate hike.

"Regardless of the decision made at our next meeting, if the economy evolves as anticipated, in my view, we are likely near or at a holding point on the funds rate as we accumulate more information on economic and financial developments and assess the effects of the tightening in financial conditions that has already occurred," Mester said.

Federal Reserve Chair Jerome Powell left open the possibility for more rate hikes in his speech on Thursday.

China's Q3 data shows 5 per cent growth target 'well within reach'

WASHINGTON (APP): China's recently released economic data shows that a 5-percent year-on-year gross domestic product (GDP) growth is "well within reach," a veteran China watcher said Friday.

"The Q3 numbers just released do not support the downward economic spiral hypothesis, rather they support the view of a modest recovery from Q2 making 5 percent year-on-year GDP growth well within reach," Nicholas Lardy, a senior fellow at Washington D.C.-based think tank the Peterson Institute for International Economics

(PIIE), told Xinhua via email.

China's economy expanded 4.9 percent year on year in the third quarter, and went up 1.3 percent on a quarter-on-quarter basis. It grew 5.2 percent year on year in the first three quarters of 2023, according to the National Bureau of Statistics.

Lardy, an expert on the Chinese economy, noted that the quarterly growth of 1.3 percent is almost two-thirds more than that of 0.8 percent in the second quarter.

"Per capita disposable income continues to grow

more rapidly than GDP per capita and per capita consumption continues to grow more rapidly than per capita disposable income -- continuing trends of the first half that I identified in August as positive and counter to the increased saving/household uncertainty hypothesis," said Lardy.

China's core consumer price index (CPI), which excludes volatile food and energy prices, went up 0.8 percent year on year in September. "Producer goods prices continue to fall, but at slower pace. Little support for the deflation hypothesis," said Lardy.

The veteran China watcher also noted that private investment in the first three quarters fell by 0.6 percent about the same pace as earlier, but private investment excluding property grew at 9.1 percent, slightly below the 9.4 percent reported for the first half.

Private investment excluding property continues to grow more rapidly than state investment, Lardy said, adding there is "little support for general private sector uncertainty slowing growth."



In brief

Salah double gives Liverpool derby win

LONDON (BBC): Mohamed Salah was the Merseyside derby match-winner with a second-half double as Liverpool defeated 10-man Everton in the Premier League. Salah's confident penalty in front of the Kop End following Michael Keane's handball ended a frustrating 75 minutes for the home side and he added a late second to the Reds went top of the table on Saturday lunchtime. It took the Egypt international's tally to 201 career league goals and victory maintained Liverpool's recent dominance over their neighbours in this fixture. Jurgen Klopp's side searched for a way to break the deadlock in the second period after Ashley Young was sent off for two bookable offences, with both fouls coming on Luis Diaz. The hosts had been finding it difficult to make in-roads despite having a man advantage, with many of their efforts from long range comfortable for Jordan Pickford to deal with. The England international smothered Alexis Mac Allister's rasping effort and Darwin Nunez's strike, while dipping drives from Trent Alexander-Arnold and Dominik Szoboszlai both dropped narrowly over.

Jockey wins with King Of Steel

LONDON (BBC): Frankie Dettori's reaction after celebrating his farewell to British racing with a fairytale double triumph at Ascot. The 52-year-old jockey made his last ride in Britain a winning one with an inspired last-to-first victory on King Of Steel in the Champion Stakes. "Oh, Frankie Dettori, Oh Frankie Dettori", rang out from the stand as he saluted spectators. He had earlier sealed an epic triumph on Trawlerman in the opening Long Distance Cup on Champions Day. C h a m p i o n . Magnificent Seven. Plane crash. Success. Drugs ban. Renaissance. It's just the most recent one which has proved to be the hardest of all to finish - performing a late U-turn on retirement plans to embark on a spell in the United States from next year. He said Champions Day at Ascot would be his last riding in Britain and he began his swansong with a captivating victory aboard Trawlerman, which demonstrated just why that change of plan may have been the correct decision. After 37 years based here, in a career which has yielded more than 3,300 winners, it was one of his most dramatic victories.

Aston Villa 2-4 Tottenham Hotspur

LONDON (BBC): Women's Super League top scorer Martha Thomas scored an exquisite hat-trick as Tottenham moved top of the table and condemned Aston Villa to four league defeats out of four this season. England forward Rachel Daly netted a fifth-minute penalty to put the hosts ahead but Thomas drew Spurs level in sensational style when she won possession from Scotland team-mate Rachel Corsie and angled a long-range chip over goalkeeper Rebecca Spencer. Ashleigh Neville then headed the visitors in front at Bescot Stadium on the stroke of half-time from Jessica Naz's arrowed cross. Thomas personified Spurs' confidence by striking twice with fine goals from the edge of the box after the break, ensuring they moved two points clear of Manchester City, Leicester City and Chelsea, with a third consecutive win.

Klaasen sends England's title-defence hopes spiralling

WANKHEDE (Agencies): Heinrich Klaasen crumpled to his haunches in a dripping mess after every shot. In between whiles, he flayed England's bowlers for a 61-ball century to set up an emphatic South Africa victory at Mumbai's Wankhede Stadium.

The brutality of Klaasen's 109 from just 67 balls all told matched the harshness of the heat and humidity which had also left England bowler David Willey cramping throughout South Africa's innings, ending on 399 for 7 and requiring the second-highest successful run chase in ODI history. England capitulated instead, crashing to 170 all out in 22 overs and suffering their heaviest ODI defeat.

Klaasen's innings included 12 fours and four sixes as he shared a 151-run sixth-wicket partnership with Marco Jansen from just 77 balls, one of two century stands for South Africa with Reeza Hendricks - in the side for an unwell Temba Bavuma - and Rassie van der Dussen putting on 121 together for the second wicket after Quinton

de Kock fell on the second ball of the match. Hendricks ended up as his side's second-highest scorer with an excellent 85 from 75 balls while Jansen was incredibly damaging in his own right with a 42-ball 75 not out.

England lost their top three for just 24 runs inside six overs of their reply, Jansen dismissing Joe Root and Dawid Malan with consecutive balls at the end of his second over and start of his third. Ben Stokes, back after missing his side's first two matches with a hip injury, tossed his bat into the air in frustration after he spooned a Kagiso Rabada delivery straight back to the bowler to become the third England batter in succession to fall for single-figures as England slumped to 38 for 4.

Gerald Coetzee conceded 16 runs off his first over but Jos Buttler's four, four and six were as good as it got as Coetzee responded with two wickets in the first three balls of his second when he had England's skipper caught behind and Harry Brook lbw for 15 and 17 respectively. Only No. 10 Mark Wood with an

almost farcical 17-ball unbeaten 43 and Gus Atkinson, scoring 35 in just his fourth ODI, fared better for England with the bat, Reece Topley unable to come in after he was injured while fielding.

The result returned South Africa to winning ways after their shock defeat at the hands of Netherlands blighted victories from their opening two matches and left England's hopes of featuring at the business end of the tournament on a knife edge.

After winning the toss, Buttler opted to bowl first, a decision that looked increasingly dubious as South Africa's batters cashed in on an excellent batting surface. Sam Curran and Chris Woakes were left out after their struggles with the ball as Willey and Atkinson came in. Topley started well, responding immediately to being struck for four off the very first ball of the match with an excellent outswinger that invited de Kock to drive and found an edge which was snaffled by Buttler behind the stumps, although it took an England review to secure the dismissal.

Record international scorer Sinclair retiring from Canada team

OTTAWA (INP): Canada striker Christine Sinclair, the all-time leading international scorer, announced she was retiring from national team after a 23-year career.

"Here I am preparing to tie the bow on an unbelievable international career shared with so many incredible teammates, coaches, support staff, fans and of course family," she wrote in a letter to her 16-year-old self published in Toronto newspaper the Globe and Mail. "Here I am in the 90th minute of our journey." The letter followed a video she posted on Instagram the night before showing a pair of

boots laced together and hanging from a crossbar accompanied by an image of a maple leaf. The 40-year-old Sinclair, who plays for the Portland Thorns in the National Women's Soccer League, indicated she was not prepared to retire entirely. "P.S. - Portland, how about one more year?" she wrote at the end.

Sinclair, who made her senior international debut in 2000, played 327 games for Canada scoring 190 goals. The men's record for goals is 127 by Cristiano Ronaldo, who holds the overall appearance record with 203 Portuguese caps. Canada Soccer said

'Captain Everything' would add to her caps total before retiring. Canada play Brazil twice, first in Montreal on October 28 and then in Halifax, Nova Scotia, on October 31. Sinclair competed in six World Cups and four times at the Olympics, winning a gold medal in the Tokyo Games in 2021. Sinclair stressed that the success had been tainted by the long battle for better pay for women players. "If you will become the most prolific goal scorer of all-time and win an Olympic gold medal, then things must go smoothly, right? Well, pretty soon you'll discover things aren't so rosy behind the scenes."

Hanif Mohammad trophy final-round starts on Oct 22

LAHORE (APP): The final round of the grade-II four-day tournament - rebranded as the Hanif Mohammad Trophy, under the new domestic structure - will commence at Multan and Rahim Yar Khan stadiums from Sunday, October 22.

At the end of the 10-team tournament, the top team will qualify for the next season of the Quaid-e-Azam Trophy while FATA - as they have finished last in the Quaid-e-Azam Trophy 2023-24 - will be relegated to the grade-II tournament.

The tournament is currently in its Super-Four stage, after Islamabad,

Abbottabad, Quetta and Hyderabad qualified from the round stage. Thus far, Islamabad tops the table with 48 points.

Quetta stand second with 29 points. Hyderabad and Abbottabad occupy the third and fourth spots with 24 and eight points respectively.

B a h a w a l p u r ' s Mohammad Ammar, after accumulating 510 runs in four matches, has been the tournament's most prolific batter.

Quetta's Abdul Wahid Bangalzai, with 470 runs in six matches, has also been impressive. Daniyal Hussain Rajput, representing Hyderabad, fol-

lows close behind with 468 runs in six matches.

Quetta's Jalat Khan and Hyderabad's Jawad Ai have been the most successful bowlers so far, picking up 37 wickets apiece in six matches.

Shayan Sheikh, representing Islamabad, is close behind with 36 wickets in six matches.

The fixtures for the last round of the super-four stage of the Hanif Mohammad Trophy are as follows: Quetta v Islamabad at Multan Cricket Stadium. Abbottabad v Hyderabad at Sheikh Khalifa Sports Complex, Rahim Yar Khan.

PCF, KP Cycling Association join Shaukat Khanam Hospital for breast cancer awareness

PESHAWAR (APP): Pakistan Cycling Federation (PCF) and KP Cycling Association, in collaboration with Shaukat Khanam Cancer Hospital, organized a remarkable cycle ride and walk to raise awareness about breast cancer among women. This meaningful event took place at Shaukat Khanam Cancer Hospital in Hayatabad here Saturday.

The event was inaugurated by the esteemed President of PCF, Syed Azhar Ali Shah, who officially opened the cycle rally. A total of approximately 70 mature female cyclists from various women colleges in Peshawar participated in the race, demonstrating their support for this vital cause.

The entire event was meticulously organized

by the dedicated Nisar Ahmad, who played a pivotal role in ensuring its success.

After the cycling rally, an impressive ceremony was held, during which the Chief Executive Officer of Shaukat Khanam Cancer Hospital distributed shields and certificates among the participants, acknowledging their commitment to raising awareness about breast cancer.

This event carried an important message for all women, dedicating just five minutes each day to self-examinations can be instrumental in detecting breast cancer in its early stages, greatly improving the chances of successful treatment.

Distinguished guests, including the Director General of Sports, Captain (R) Khalid

Mehmood, Syed Shayaan Ali Shah, President of KPCA (KP Cycling Association), Muhammad Ali, Secretary of KPCA, and others, who were in attendance, further highlighted the significance of this event.

In the spirit of unity and compassion, we appeal to the generous people of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa to consider supporting Shaukat Khanam Cancer Hospital, a charity hospital at the forefront of the battle against this devastating disease. Donations can make a substantial impact in furthering the cause of cancer research, treatment and support.

Breast cancer awareness and early detection are vital steps in our fight against this formidable adversary, and together, we can make a difference.



WANKHEDE: Matthew Mott and Jos Buttler have some thinking to do after losing three of their first four matches.

Sir Bobby Charlton dies

LONDON (BBC): Sir Bobby Charlton, the Manchester United legend who was a key figure in England's 1966 World Cup victory, has died at the age of 86. Charlton won 106 caps for England and scored 49 international goals - records for his country at the time.

During a 17-year first-team career with United he won three league titles, a European Cup and an FA Cup. Charlton's family said he "passed peacefully in the early hours of Saturday morning". He died surrounded by his family, who said in a statement they wished to "pass on their thanks to everyone who has contributed to his care and for the many people who have loved and supported him". "We would request that the family's privacy be respected at this time," their statement added, as the family said his loss was felt "with great sadness".

United paid a fond tribute to Charlton, describing him as "one of the greatest and most beloved players in the history of our club".

"Sir Bobby was a hero to millions, not just in Manchester, or the United Kingdom, but wherever football is played around the world," the club said.

"He was admired as much for his sportsmanship and integrity as he was for his outstanding qualities as a footballer; Sir Bobby will always be remembered as a giant of the game.

"His unparalleled record of achievement, character and service will be forever etched in the history of Manchester United and English football and his legacy will live on through the life-changing work of the Sir Bobby Charlton Foundation.

"The club's heartfelt sympathies are with his wife Lady Norma, his daughters and grandchildren, and all who loved him". His death leaves Sir Geoff Hurst - the striker who scored a hat-trick in England's 4-2 win over West Germany in the 1966 final - as the sole surviving member of the triumphant team. Hurst posted on X, formerly Twitter: "Very sad news today. One of the true Greats Sir Bobby Charlton has passed away. We will never forget him and nor will all of football. A great colleague and friend, he will be sorely missed by all of the country beyond sport alone. Condolences to his family and friends."

Sarfaraz promoted, Abrar added to PCB Men's central contracts list

LAHORE (INP): The Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB) made tweaks to the already-announced central contracts list, marking the promotion of former captain Sarfaraz Ahmed and the addition of young spinner Abrar Ahmed.

In a statement, the PCB revealed that it has decided to name five additional players in the men's central contracts list bringing the total number of players offered contracts to 30. The three-year contracts deal announced last month, will run from 1 July 2023 to 30 June 2026.

The new inductions include Abrar Ahmed

(Category C), Noman Ali

(Category D), Tayyab Tahir (Category D), Aamir Jamal (Category D) and Arshad Iqbal (Category D).

Sarfaraz Ahmed, former captain, was previously named in Category "D" but has been elevated to Category B. He is presently Pakistan's first-choice wicket-keeper batter in the red-ball format.

He made his comeback to the Test side in December last year and has amassed 367 runs across four matches at an average of 61.16. Sarfaraz Ahmed was named player of the series for his three half-centuries and one century in

four innings against New Zealand at home.

Abrar and Noman, placed in Category C, have been regular Pakistan's Test team members over the past year. Mystery spinner Abrar has picked up 38 wickets in six matches since making his debut against England in Multan while left-arm spinner Noman has taken 17 wickets in four games over the last 12 months. Aamir (4 T20Is), Arshad (3 T20Is) and Tayyab (3 T20Is) slotted in Category D continue to remain in the plans of the national men's selection committee.

Sri Lanka beat Netherlands for first win

LUCKNOW (BBC): Sri Lanka avoided becoming victims of another Netherlands upset to record their first victory of the 2023 World Cup in Lucknow.

The Dutch, who shocked South Africa on Tuesday, recovered from 91-6 to post 262 all out thanks to 70 from Sybrand Engelbrecht and 59 by Logan van Beek.

Sri Lanka were 52-2 and then 104-3 when Pathum Nissanka fell for 54, only to be steadied by Sadeera Samarawickrama and Charith Asalanka.

Asalanka was bowled for 44 by Aryan Dutt - a third wicket for the off-spinner - with 83 still required, but Samarawickrama remained to manage the chase and end 91 not out. Despite some curiously slow progress as they neared their target, Sri Lanka completed the win with five wickets and 10 deliveries in hand. Sri Lanka are the last of the 10 teams in the tournament to register their first win. They join the Dutch on two points, two points outside the top four in the group table.

Sri Lanka move on to meet England in Bangalore on Thursday, reuniting head coach Chris Silverwood with the side he led between 2019 and 2022. The Netherlands take on



five-time champions Australia in Delhi on Wednesday. This was almost a copy of the Netherlands' incredible win over South Africa in Dharamsala. The Dutch rallied from a poor start with the bat, gained momentum at the back of their innings and took early wickets with the ball. On this occasion, though, Sri Lanka were able to withstand the pressure to ensure they did not suffer a first defeat by the Netherlands in any format of the game.

After the Netherlands won the toss, Sri Lanka opening bowlers Dilshan Madushanka and Kasun Rajitha swung the new ball to rip through the top order. Both finished with four wickets. But Engelbrecht, playing only his third ODI, and Van Beek combined for a partnership of 130, the highest for the seventh wicket in World Cup histo-

ry. Both men made their highest ODI scores, growing from a position where the Dutch went more than 20 overs without hitting a boundary. On a pitch showing some inconsistent bounce, 1996 champions Sri Lanka could have been challenged by their target, especially when key men Kusal Perera and Kusal Mendis fell inside the powerplay, both to Dutt.

Samarawickrama could have been stunned by Dutch captain Scott Edwards before he had scored, albeit from a tough chance down the leg side. Reprieved, he added 52 with Nissanka and 77 with Asalanka, the latter bowled attempting a sweep to give Dutt his third. Any suggestion of a late Netherlands fight-back was ended by the arrival of Dhananjaya de Silva, even if the 76 he added with Samarawickrama was a painstaking crawl towards the target.

Rugby World Cup 2023 England face day of reckoning against South Africa

LONDON (BBC): England are the only team through to the Rugby World Cup semi-finals with a 100% record, progressing with five wins from five games. They are unbeaten, but not undoubted. Victories over Argentina, Japan, Chile, Samoa and Fiji have kept England's campaign purring steadily forward. Not all the wins have been convincing, but on each occasion they have ended up on the right side of the scoreline.

The caveat is that they have also been on the right side of the draw.

On Saturday night, the velvet rope drops and they bash shoulders with the tournament's big rollers.

South Africa - the defending champions, who enacted their own Parisian revolution last weekend by deposing the hosts - have long set the sort of standards to which England coach Steve Borthwick's men aspire. The Springboks are a team of gar-

gantuan power and exhilarating pace, whose patterns run along well-worn grooves. They can overwhelm opponents with diesel grunt up the middle or out-gas them with pace out wide.

Former coach Eddie Jones' attempt to add dimensions to England ultimately folded flat. After the last Rugby World Cup and that painful final defeat by South Africa, he hoped to mould a team that could change tack and flip tactics mid-match.

Instead the transition was fumbled and it was the victors who succeeded in augmenting their repertoire.

Jacques Nienaber, Rassie Erasmus, Mzwandile Stick - a long-standing coaching brains trust - take the credit for that. They have had the time that Borthwick, appointed at the end of last year, hasn't. And they have spent it well. Since Japan 2019, they have overseen a gradual evolution of their backline, bringing through playmak-

ers Manie Libbok and Damian Willemse and elevating sevens specialist Kurt-Lee Arendse into the Test game. In the forwards, their deployment of game-changing impact replacements in the front row has changed the way Test rugby is played. And, while others have talked about the concept of hybrid players, they turned it into reality.

Saturday's replacement hooker is Deon Fourie. The 37-year-old converted from front row to back row nearly a decade ago, but, at this late stage in his career, he has reverted back to allow the Boks to carry extra cover elsewhere in the squad.

The detail in the Boks' game runs to reams of such small print and footnotes. England, by Borthwick's admission, are working to a simpler plan, hoping their headline strengths are punchy enough to make up the difference.



In brief

AIOU extends admissions deadline

ISLAMABAD (APP): Vice Chancellor, Allama Iqbal Open University, Prof. Dr. Nasir Mahmood, has approved the extension in admission date till November 07, for open distance learning (ODL) programs offered in phase 2 of autumn semester 2023 due to the hundreds of applications received from interested students. According to the AIOU, the programs offered in this phase include Associate degree in Arts (BA General), Associate degree in Commerce (B.Com), Associate degree in Education, BS (ODL) programs, B.Ed programs, BBA, postgraduate diplomas and certificate courses. The students can apply for admission to these programs until November 7 without late fee charges whereas continuing students can enroll themselves till October 25. Admission forms and prospectus of all the programs are available on the university website. Admission forms for the Associate Degree programs (BA, B.Com) and B.Ed program are also available at the University's Regional Offices and SWIFT Centers throughout the country. All the necessary information is available in the prospectus. Students can visit our regional offices or call the university helpline at 051-111 112 468 for further information.

IRSA releases 92,200 cusecs water

ISLAMABAD (APP): Indus River System Authority (IRSA) on Saturday released 92,200 cusecs of water from various rim stations with an inflow of 69,200 cusecs. According to the data released by IRSA, the water level in the River Indus at Tarbela Dam was 1528.94 feet and was 130.94 feet higher than its dead level of 1,398 feet. Water inflow and outflow in the dam was recorded as 34,400 cusecs and 35,000 cusecs respectively. The water level in the River Jhelum at Mangla Dam was 1209.85 feet, which was 159.85 feet higher than its dead level of 1,050 feet. The inflow and outflow of water were recorded 7,500 cusecs and 30,000 cusecs respectively. The release of water at Kalabagh, Taunsa, Guddu and Sukkur was recorded as 48,000, 46,000, 42,700 and 13,600 cusecs respectively. Similarly, from the River Kabul, a total of 12,900 cusecs of water was released at Nowshera and 6,200 cusecs was released from the River Chenab at Marala.

09 drug dealers arrested

RAWALPINDI (APP): Police have arrested 09 drug dealers and recovered more than 10 kg of drugs from their possession during a crackdown here on Saturday. According to a police spokesman, Saddar Wah police recovered 2.2 kg from Basharat and 1.5 kg was recovered from Babar while 700 grams of charas from Osama and 510 grams of charas was recovered from Amjad. Similarly, Sadiqabad police held Muhammad Faiz and recovered 1.7 kg of drugs from his possession. While Pirwadhai police nabbed Kamal and recovered 1.4 kg of drugs from his custody. Following the operation, Gujjar Khan police recovered 850 grams of charas from Intizar Khan. Dharmyal police recovered 560 grams of charas from Muhammad Faisal. Ganjmandi police recovered 530 grams of charas from Muhammad Zaman. Police have registered separate cases against all of them and further investigation was underway. City Police Officer (CPO) Syed Khalid Mehmood Hamdani appreciated the performance of police teams and said that the arrested accused will be challaned with solid evidence and will be punished.



ISLAMABAD: A vendor selling coal during the winter season at his setup.

Naqvi directs Commissioner, FWO authorities to speed up work on Ring Road project

RAWALPINDI (APP): Caretaker Chief Minister (CM) Punjab Mohsin Naqvi has directed the Commissioner Liaquat Ali Chhatta and FWO authorities to speed up work on Rawalpindi Ring Road project.

The CM visited Rawalpindi Ring Road project on Friday night and reviewed the progress on the project while inspecting the site of Khalsa Khurd, Adiala Interchange.

The speed of work should be accelerated by

enhancing the work force on the project, the CM said.

He also instructed the NESPAK to provide the drawing work related to the project at the earliest.

The authorities were directed to speed up the earth work, he said adding, the number of dumpers should be increased.

He directed the Commissioner to visit the project regularly and submit report. "I will monitor the pace of the work on Rawalpindi Ring Road project," the CM said.

Chief Minister Mohsin

Naqvi also visited the FWO camp office where he was briefed by Colonel Nadeem of FWO about the earthwork.

The CM was also informed about other issues related to the project and told that the 38.3 kg long Rawalpindi Ring Road Project would comprise six lanes. Provincial Minister, Dr. Jamal Nasir, Commissioner, Regional Police Officer, City Police Officer, Deputy Commissioner and authorities concerned of FWO were present on the occasion.

Blood donation great continuous charity, act of worship: Khan

ISLAMABAD (INP): Head of Pakistan Sweet Home, Zamurad Khan has said that donating blood is a great continuous charity and an act of worship.

He was addressing a blood donation camp organized by Pakistan Sweet Home Blood Bank and Zamurad Khan (Hilal e Imtiaz) at High Tech Texela here on Saturday camp with a mission to save innocent lives. A large number of young students donated blood at the camp.

Zamurad Khan said that youth were the valuable assets of the country and the nations who sacrifice for their countrymen can change the destiny of the country. He that today, he was extremely happy to see that the students of High Tech were fully engaged in the great mission of saving innocent lives by donating blood in large numbers.

He said that our youth was second to none in selfless service to humanity. The spirit of service among the youth was admirable. Today, the selfless spirit of serving humanity has won the hearts of young students, he expressed.

World's most sensitive polio surveillance system exists in Pakistan: Nadeem

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Ministry of Health on Saturday reported that a 24-month-old child has been diagnosed with polio in Karachi district, Sindh. This is the fourth polio case reported in Pakistan this year.

The government has assured that emergency measures are being taken to eradicate polio. Meanwhile, poliovirus has been confirmed in environmental samples from four districts of Pakistan: Karachi, Rawalpindi, Chaman, and Peshawar.

Genetic testing has revealed that the virus found in all the samples belongs to the poliovirus cluster in Afghanistan.

Caretaker Minister for Health Dr Nadeem Jan expressed concern over the recent surge in polio cases and

environmental samples testing positive for the virus.

He said that Pakistan has the world's most sensitive polio surveillance system, as rapid confirmation of the virus in environmental samples demonstrates that the system is working efficiently.

Dr Jan warned that the presence of viruses in the environment is a threat to every child. He said that polio is incurable and only the vaccine provides lifelong protection to children.

The minister announced that the government will organize a polio vaccination campaign in November in the areas where the virus is present. He urged parents to ensure that their children receive polio drops in every campaign.

30 outlaws including 12 professional beggars arrested

ISLAMABAD (NNI): Islamabad Capital Police apprehended 30 outlaws including 12 professional baggers from different areas of the city during the last 24 hours and recovered liquor, drugs and weapons with ammunition from their possession, a public relations officer said.

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

Following these directions the Kohsar police team arrested an accused namely Shamroz Masih and recovered one 30 bore pistol from his possession. Golra police team arrested an accused namely Awais involved in illegally selling petrol. The Sumbal police team arrested an accused namely Javed Afzal and recovered 1620 gram hashish from his possession. Likewise, the Tarnol police team arrested four accused namely Ahmed Sher, Wali Khan, Shahbaz and Ghulam Haider and recovered two 30 bore pistols, one 9mm pistol and

one Kalashnikov from their possession. The Industrial Area police team arrested two accused namely Ali Raza and Ashfaq and recovered 537 gram hashish and 20 liters of alcohol from their possession. The Sabzi Mandi police team arrested an accused namely Sher Khan and recovered one 30 bore pistol from his possession.

Similarly, the Noon police team arrested an accused namely Wajahat Khan and recovered 1120 gram hashish from his possession. The Phulgran police team arrested two accused namely Tabarik Ali and Rizwan Hussain and recovered 15 liters of alcohol and 2 bottles of wine from their possession. Cases have been registered against the nabbed accused and further investigation is underway.

During the ongoing crackdown against professional beggars, the Islamabad Capital Police has arrested 12 professional beggars and registered cases against them under the beggar act.

Academic Staff Association office-bearers call on Rector IIUI

ISLAMABAD (APP): Office-Bearers of the Academic Staff Association (ASA) of International Islamic University, led by Dr Tariq Javed and Dr Faiz ur Raheem, President and General Secretary ASA respectively, called on Dr Samina Malik, Rector IIUI on Friday here at the Faisal Masjid Campus.

The Rector was informed that the teaching community expected that appointments on higher positions should always be according to the Statutes of IIUI. Prof Tariq informed that rules require appointment on the position of Deans to be chosen from among the 3 senior most available faculty members. Similar seniority is required to be followed for Chairpersons too, said a press release issued on Saturday. Any step of appointing junior faculty members and ignoring seniority and rules must be discouraged. Such actions may result in distress among the teaching community and create a non-conducive working environment. The university was already facing several issues of decrease in admissions, and many teachers are disheartened due to delays in holding selection boards and not getting any promotion after lengthy service.

Pakistan Embassy in Hague organizes AI&Big Data Expo Europe

ISLAMABAD (APP): Embassy of Pakistan, the Hague in collaboration with the Pakistan Software Export Board (PSEB) and Trade Development Authority of Pakistan (TDAP) set up a 'Tech Destination Pakistan' pavilion in 'AI & Big Data Expo Europe', at RAI, Amsterdam on 26-27 September 2023.

IT companies from Pakistan namely Abacus Consulting, Royal Cyber, Brickclays, Xynotech, Coeus Solutions, Digifloat, Grayphite, NN Software, and Reach the Globe showcased their services/products in the Expo, a press release issued by the Pakistan embassy, the Hague, Netherlands said on Saturday.

On first day of the Expo, Ambassador Suljuk Mustansar Tarar visited the Expo and met with Pakistani exhibitors. Chief Executive Officer Abacus Consulting Fatima Asad gave a presentation on opportunities in the IT Sector of Pakistan.

She presented Pakistan as an emerging market, offering huge potential not only for sourcing services but also as a very conducive market for investment. Ambassador Suljuk appreciated the efforts of Pakistani exhibitors to promote professionalism and talent from Pakistan in the IT sector.

Embassy of Pakistan, the Hague

organised a networking event attended by Pakistani exhibitors and IT professionals, academia and professionals working in Netherlands-based MNCs.

Ambassador Suljuk gave an overview of the initiatives taken by the Embassy to promote IT services exports. He said that webinars and in-person events have been held in collaboration with PSEB, TDAP and Pakistani IT professionals in the Netherlands. Participation of Pakistan in this Expo was part of the business plan of the Embassy to showcase Pakistan's IT services sector. The Embassy has also launched a series of webinars for awareness of Pakistani professionals about job opportunities in the Netherlands. He further informed that the efforts have come to fruition in the form of an increase in the export of IT services to the Netherlands from US\$ 9.8 Million to US\$ 23 Million and an increase in number of IT professionals joining the Dutch companies.

The Embassy had arranged the visit of a delegation of IT companies in May 2023. The visiting delegates expressed their satisfaction with Pakistan's investment ecosystem. Shurjeel Tousif, CEO of SeQuenX, who was part of the delegation said

that subsequent to his trip to Pakistan arranged by the Embassy, SeQuenX has opened up a software business development centre in Islamabad. This is in line with the vision to set up a software technology corridor between the Netherlands and Pakistan. To cement this, SeQuenX has also signed a MoU with COMSATS Global. Pakistani exhibitors were highly satisfied with the arrangements made by the Embassy and also expressed optimism to increase the export of IT services. Fatima Asad-Saeed commended the decision of the Government of Pakistan to participate in this Expo as well as the efforts of the Embassy to facilitate participants and promoting networking with the Dutch companies. Mustafa of Royal Cyber said that there lies a huge potential in the tech sectors of the Netherlands and Pakistani companies can complement their requirements befittingly.

Ambassador Suljuk said that the Government of Pakistan has recently constituted the Special Investment Facilitation Council (SIFC) which has included IT among the priority sectors for investment. He appreciated the efforts of PSEB and TDAP and thanked the participants. He encouraged Dutch businesses to explore opportunities in Pakistan.



ISLAMABAD: A man selecting and purchasing quilts displayed by vendor.

Commissioner visits VICS Rawat Center to review facilities being provided to transporters

RAWALPINDI (APP): Commissioner Rawalpindi Division, Liaquat Ali Chhatta on Saturday visited the Vehicle Inspection and Certification System (VICS) Rawat Center and reviewed the facilities provided to the transporters.

The Commissioner also got the fitness certificate of the official vehicle, he was using by inspecting the VICS Center Rawat and reviewed all the processes in detail. The Secretary, of Regional Transport Authority Rashid Mehmood, the Chairman of Rawalpindi Waste Management Company Rafiq Ahmed and representatives of the Transport Union were also present on this occasion.

The Commissioner inquired about the facilities being provided by the Punjab government to the transporters who came to get the vehicle fitness certificate. The Secretary RTA, Arshad Mahmood

gave a detailed briefing on this occasion.

During the briefing, the Commissioner was told that wheel alignment, suspension, brake, tire, and appearance tests, headlights, seat belt check, engine sound and smoke tests are done during the vehicle inspection.

The fitness test would be mandatory after every 6 months while the fitness test of about 60 vehicles is done daily at the center.

The Commissioner said that vehicle fitness checks are mandatory to control smog. He directed the authorities concerned to take action against all smoke-emitting vehicles.

He informed that Rawalpindi City would be made smog free area.

The transporters must get fitness certificates for their vehicles from VICS before bringing their vehicles on the roads, Liaquat Ali Chhatta said.

State-of-the-art vehicle fitness certification system is fully functional in Rawalpindi, he informed.

The fitness certification system would help reduce pollution, the Commissioner said adding, that the issuance of fitness certificate for public transport and freight vehicles are conducted with modern technology. The fitness certificate is very important for road safety. The Commissioner also directed the authorities to display banners regarding anti-smog measures on major roads and public transport terminals. The transporter union office bearers should guide the transporters to get the fitness certificates from VICS centres, the Commissioner added.

He warned that the commercial vehicles violating the rules would be impounded and that strict action would be taken against the rules violators.

Minister Shah stresses strong cultural ties between Pakistan, Korea

ISLAMABAD (APP): Federal Minister for National Heritage and Culture, Jamal Shah, emphasized the enduring cultural bonds between Pakistan and Korea during the Migrant Multicultural Festival (MAMF) 2023 in Changwon, South Korea, which is taking place from October 20 to 22. He highlighted the mutual respect and appreciation for each other's cultural values that both nations share.

"Our Cultural Art Troupe from Pakistan and the Korean Performance Team are here as both performers and envoys of our rich traditions and heritage," he stated. "I am delighted to be part of this special cultural concert, a highlight of the Migrant Multicultural Festival 2023 in the vibrant city of Changwon."

Jamal Shah explained that their performances would bring stories from their homelands, anecdotes of their people, and the essence of their traditions. Using the universal language of music and dance, they aim to intertwine the narratives of two distinguished nations, evoking emotions that transcend boundaries.

He expressed that this special event promises to be a captivating blend of traditional rhythms and melodies, uniting the cultures of Pakistan and Korea.

Jamal Shah also pointed out the long history of cultural exchanges between Pakistan and Korea, dating back hundreds of years. He mentioned the introduction of Buddhism and its traditions from Pakistan to the ancient Baekje

Kingdom by Monk Maranantha almost two millennia ago.

In the spirit of reciprocity, he shared that a Korean Cultural and Art Troupe has been invited to visit and perform in Pakistan, further strengthening cultural ties between the two nations.

He expressed his anticipation of their visit, providing an opportunity for the people of Pakistan to experience the rich traditions of art and culture from Korea, just as they were doing in Changwon. The Minister extended his appreciation to the organizers of MAMF, the City Government of Changwon, and all individuals and institutions that made the event possible, emphasizing how such platforms promote lasting friendship, harmony, understanding, and unity among nations.

MAMF is South Korea's largest cultural diversity festival, celebrating its 18th anniversary at Changwon Yongi Cultural Park and Seogsan Art Hall. Countries from all over Asia, including Pakistan, with their diverse cultures, heritage, and values, are participating in MAMF 2023.

Pakistan is leading MAMF 2023 with the theme "Pakistan Zindabad," meaning "Long Live Pakistan," presenting its cultural beauty and values through traditional clothing, accessories, Henna, traditional music like Dhol and anthems, as well as traditional dance performances like Bhangra, Dhamal, Luddi, and more.

2 armed robbers killed 2 arrested in Helmand

LASHKARGAH (Pajhwok): Two armed robbers have been killed and two more arrested in the Babaji district of southern Helmand province, security officials said on Saturday.

Provincial police spokesman Mullah Ezatullah Haqqani told Pajhwok Afghan News two robbers were killed on the Kandahar-Herat highway this morning.

The Frontier Post

AFGHANISTAN

Rabi-us-Sanni 05, 1445 — Sunday, October 22, 2023

France welcomes release of journalist Mortaza Behboudi

KABUL (Agencies): The government of France welcomed the release of Afghan-French journalist Mortaza Behboudi, who had been detained in Afghanistan since January 7.

French Foreign Ministry in a statement said that the Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan (IEA) held Behboudi in custody for 284 days. "From day one of his imprisonment, France monitored Mortaza Behboudi's situation very closely.

Migrants complain of behavior of forces

KABUL (TOLONews): Migrants told TOLONews that police have arrested them and beat them.

Meanwhile, the Islamic Emirate pledged to hold discussions with the Turkish authorities about the situation of Afghan refugees.

In addition to concerns over the situation of Afghan migrants in some neighboring countries, a number of Afghan migrants in Turkey say police beat them after they were arrested.

Some of these migrants who have been sent to Iran complain about the situation.

"We stayed in a camp for about 20 days in Van province. The officers beat us too much. In that country, animals are more valuable than humans. Then they left us on the Iranian border, two of our four people were killed by shooting of Turkish border guards and two of us came alive and my hand was injured," said Hekmatullah, a migrant.

"It was morning, when we were going to work, we were captured by Turkish forces. We were handcuffed and taken to a camp,

Afghans are not treated as human beings," said Ahmad Shah, a migrant.

An Afghan migrant in Iran complained about the lack of timely handling of cases of Afghan migrants in Iran, saying that Afghan citizens are not being treated appropriately in the country.

However, the Islamic Emirate said that in their contacts with Turkish authorities they urged the country not to deport Afghan refugees from Turkey.

"Those who are illegal may need an action, but the methods should be normal, in accordance with Islamic and human values, especially the Islamic countries that are brothers with us should have a soft attitude towards migrants so that they return safely and peacefully," said Zabihullah Mujahid, spokesman for the Islamic Emirate.

Earlier, the Ministry of Refugees and Repatriations said that a delegation from the Islamic Emirate traveled today to Turkey to address the situation of Afghan refugees in Turkey.

British citizens advised to avoid travel to Afghanistan

KABUL (Khaama Press): The United Kingdom's Foreign Ministry issued a solid advisory to its citizens, strongly discouraging travel to Afghanistan due to elevated security concerns. In an official statement, the ministry cautioned that terrorists are highly likely to attempt attacks within Afghanistan. The British Foreign Ministry issued a statement stating that the security situation in Afghanistan is unstable and "Terrorists are very likely to try to carry out attacks in Afghanistan." The statement also said that "terrorists" are likely attempting to attack Afghanistan. Furthermore, the British Foreign Ministry emphasized the danger of terrorist attacks around religious sites across the country and near airports.

According to the statement, Britain has expressed concern about the risk of detentions of its citizens in Afghanistan, highlighting significant challenges in establishing communication and consular services, making it more difficult to contact and assist individuals detained, especially in prolonged detention. Continuing the statement, the British Foreign Ministry stated: "If you are a British citizen living in Afghanistan, you should carefully consider your security risks; the situation can change rapidly and without warning." This comes as the Taliban administration and authorities have claimed to ensure overall security in Afghanistan, asserting that security has improved compared to the past.

EU help school feeding for nearly 2m Afghan children

KABUL (Khaama Press): The European Union has announced an additional allocation of EUR 9.9 million to bolster the United Nations World Food Programme (WFP) efforts. Over two years, this funding is specifically directed towards supporting nearly 2 million primary school students across provinces, including Nangarhar, Nuristan, Ghor, Farah, and Jawzjan.

According to the statement, this financial injection enables the WFP to extend its reach, benefiting nearly 900,000 boys and 850,000 girls enrolled in primary schools. These students will receive nutritious school snacks, enhancing their access to vital sustenance for their educational journey.

Raffaella Iodice, the EU Chargée d'Affaires to Afghanistan, said, "Learning with an empty stomach is hard. The school feeding programme in Afghanistan helps increase enrolment, attendance and retention in primary school for boys and girls. School feeding improves learning abilities and the well-being of the children who are the next generation of Afghanistan."

Meanwhile, the deputy country director of World Food Program Afghanistan, Harald Mannhardt, stated, "Many children in Afghanistan come to school without breakfast, and WFP's school feeding programme provides their first meal of the day. School feeding is an integral part of our activities in the country, where 15 million people – or one-third of the population – do not know where their next meal will



come from."

According to the statement, most school children, amounting to a planned 1.4 million, are set to benefit from a nutrition boost during their morning school break. They will receive locally produced fortified biscuits, each weighing 100 grams. These biscuits pack a nutritional punch, containing 450 calories, a mix of fats, proteins, and a rich assortment of vital vitamins and minerals crucial for children's growth and development.

In parallel, approximately 340,000 additional children will have their daily

nutritional needs met through a ration of bread composed of wheat and soy flour combined with dried fruits and nuts. This nourishing bread is freshly baked in a local bakery, underscoring the project's commitment to supporting the local economy by sourcing ingredients from Afghan farmers.

Furthermore, 480,000 female students will receive take-home rations of fortified vegetable oil as part of the initiative. This contributes to the well-being of the students and extends its benefits to their families, enhancing the overall nutri-

tional security of households in the region.

For over two decades, WFP's school feeding program in Afghanistan has been bridging food security improved nutrition, and education for school-aged children. In 2022, over 700,000 primary school students received snacks, with an additional 200,000 girls benefiting from take-home rations. The European Union, a long-standing supporter, has added EUR 9.9 million to its contributions, building on a prior EUR 11 million donation to WFP's school feeding program.

Bridge being constructed

PARON (Pajhwok): Construction work on a bridge over a river has been launched at a cost of 11 million afghanis in Paron, the capital of Nuristan province, an official said on Saturday.

Maulvi Ehsanullah, Nuristan rural rehabilitation and development director, said the bridge will be about 21 meters lengthy and seven meters wide. The bridge is being constructed in Mandi area of Paron and will take six months to complete.

He added the bridge would facilitate the movement of thousands of farmers and vehicles between Mandi and Pushki areas.

The cost of the construction will be paid from development budget of the Ministry of Rural Rehabilitation and Development.

Niamatullah, a resident of the area, expressed happiness over the bridge's construction and added in the past the wooden bridge over the river was substandard and in danger of collapsing. In the opening ceremony of the construction of the Bridge, Nuristan Governor Sher Ahmad Haqqani said Nuristan was a backward province in the country, with many of its villages lacking roads.

Govt not endure without people's support

KABUL (TOLONews): In a meeting with Kabul province authorities, the acting Interior Minister, Sirajuddin Haqqani, said that bringing Afghanistan into "obedience" does not demonstrate the improvement of physical strength but rather the improvement of "spiritual" strength.

He also said that the interim government will not continue without the support of the people.

During the meeting, Haqqani said that silencing the revolutionary people in the 34 provinces of Afghanistan and making them obey is not something that can be done by force.

"If we really surrender to God, the people will obey the government, if we are bad inside but good outside, God will make us scandalous and we will not endure. If we don't obey God, we will be beaten," he said.

"There was fighting against the invasion. It was struggles of the Islamic Emirate's forces and it was Jihad. Now we are in another level of Jihad,



which is stability and steadiness of the Islamic government," said Mohammad Qasim Khalid, governor of Kabul.

Meanwhile, the head of the Kabul department of intelligence, Mohammad Arif, emphasized the need for implementation of the edicts of the Islamic Emirate leaders' decrees in a bid to pave the ground for a "sharia government."

"Every decree which is issued by the leaders, including the decree of Amirul Momineen [Islamic Emirate's leader], we should consider it with respect and bring it into

effect," he said.

On the other hand, the deputy Interior Ministry, Mohammad Nabi Omari, called on the Islamic Emirate's forces to treat the people with proper behavior.

"Some of the people have complained that when we go to the governor or commander, we were ignored... my brothers we should pay attention to these points," he said.

This comes as the citizens across the country have repeatedly complained about the mistreatment of the Islamic Emirate's forces.

Polio vaccine campaign announced

KABUL (Khaama Press): Afghanistan is preparing for a new round of its polio vaccine campaign starting next week. The Free Polio Afghanistan page announced Thursday that this crucial vaccination effort will begin on Monday and reach different regions.

Specific details from the newsletter indicate that the campaign will get underway on Sunday, targeting the provinces of Nangarhar, Laghman, and Kunar. The campaign addresses the pressing need for Polio prevention in these provinces.

The urgency of this campaign becomes evident when considering that Afghanistan has already reported six polio cases in the country this year. The most recent confirmed case was documented in September in Nangarhar province.

Before this latest case, five positive instances of polio had emerged in Nangarhar province, specifically in Batikot, Kot, Nazian, Bahsood, and Dor Baba, which underlines the persistent polio threat in these districts.

Meanwhile, Afghanistan and Pakistan remain among the last places on Earth where polio has not been wholly eradicated, putting children's health at risk.

National Uzbek Language Day marked in Kabul

KABUL (TOLONews): Cultural institutions celebrated the 29th of Mezan National Uzbek Language Day in Kabul.

The organizers emphasized the importance of the Uzbek language in the program and asked the authorities to develop practical solutions for the growth of the language, which has millions of speakers in the country.

The ambassador of Uzbekistan in Kabul, Shadmanov Yadgarkhoja Makhmatovich, who was present in the program, announced Tashkent's assistance in providing scholarships for Afghan youth and distributing books to universities in the northern provinces of Afghanistan.

"On behalf of the leadership of the Republic of Uzbekistan, we have established relations with students and teachers of Turkish and Uzbek languages in the universities of Balkh, Jawzjan, Faryab, Sar e pul, and Kunduz provinces, and we have helped them as much as possible in the distribution of Uzbek language and lit-

erature books," said the ambassador of Uzbekistan in Kabul.

Traditional clothes, Uzbek traditional foods, and books published in



recent years were exhibited in the program.

"Today, on the 29th of Mezan, the National Uzbek Language Day was celebrated in the city of Kabul with the initiative of three cultural institutions of the Afghan Uzbek community..." said Naqibullah Obaid, head of a cultural institution.

"Only celebrating National Uzbek Language Day is not enough for the development of the language. I ask the Islamic

Emirate to print and distribute schoolbooks in the Uzbek language and to recruit many teachers in the Uzbek language department," said Zainullah, a

cultural activist. The National Uzbek Language Day was recognized by the previous government and 29 Mezan was included in the Afghan calendar as the National Uzbek Language Day. Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, Kyrgyzstan, Kazakhstan, and Uzbekistan also celebrate 29 Mezan as Uzbek language day, and these countries, like Afghanistan, have millions of citizens who speak the Uzbek language.

US Special Envoy emphasizes food security in Afghanistan

KABUL (Khaama Press): Thomas West, the United States Special Representative for Afghanistan, has reported his meeting with high-ranking officials of the Food and Agriculture Organization and the Food Authority in Afghanistan. He emphasized the critical importance of enhancing food security in the country.

West took to his Twitter account to share that he engaged in comprehensive discussions with officials from food and agriculture organizations in Afghanistan on World Food Day.

He continues to emphasize that strengthening food security is vital in supporting the Afghan people.

The Food and Agriculture (FAO) and World Food Program (WFP) "reach millions of Afghans with life-saving agriculture assistance and food aid. Had a good exchange with their leadership on the heels of World Food Day. Improving the country's food security is critical to support the Afghan people," he said.

The World Health Organization (WHO) has issued an urgent appeal for \$7.9 million in funding to provide critical services to the 114,000 residents of Herat severely affected by the recent earthquake. This financial support is vital to address their immediate healthcare

requirements after the devastating tremors.

According to the World Health Organization, women, girls, children, and other vulnerable communities account for more than 90 per cent of the casualties and injuries resulting from the Herat earthquake.

The requested funds will play a pivotal role in ensuring that medical services reach those most in need, particularly vulnerable groups such as women, children, and marginalized communities, constituting over 90 per cent of the earthquake's casualties and injuries in Herat.

The recent Herat earthquake has struck

Afghanistan at a particularly dire juncture, as highlighted in the recent report by the World Food Programme. The report reveals that this seismic event coincided with a staggering 15 million Afghans uncertain about where their next meal would come from.

This alarming statistic underscores the severe food insecurity crisis gripping the nation, amplifying the urgency of addressing this pressing issue.

Furthermore, aid organizations operating in Afghanistan have expressed growing concerns about the Herat earthquake exacerbating the already daunting challenges the country faces.

Protest organized in Kabul City in support of Palestinians



KABUL (TOLONews): A number of Kabul city residents marched in support of the Palestinians.

They say that only distributing statements and sending messages of sympathy cannot help the Palestinian people, and that practical steps must be taken in this regard.

"There is no one to support them. They have been surrounded within a circle and are being bombarded from above," said Sher Mohammad Hagmal, a protestor.

Some of the residents meanwhile expressed criticism of the Islamic countries, saying that only financial support cannot help alleviate the problems of the people of Palestine.

"The Muslims of all countries should come together and help as they did with the people affected in the Herat earthquake. The people in Palestine also need assistance," said Ahmadullah, a protestor.

The protest comes amid a horrific war between Israel and Hamas that also caused death and injuries to hundreds of civilians including women and children.



KABUL (Agencies): A private company in Herat manufactures LPG storage tanks and has signed a contract for exports to Uzbekistan.

The company's officials say that around \$2 million have been invested in the factory and the construction of each storage tank costs about \$25,000.

"We have a five-tank contract with Uzbekistan. These are the samples of tanks. If they accept the samples, the next contract will be 16 tanks, and the

next contract will be 30 and 35 tanks," Mohammad Akbar, the company's director, said.

Hamidullah Khadim, head of Herat Chamber of Industries and Mines, said: "Manufacturing and exporting gas storage tanks is not easy. Maybe this is a small step in the eyes of some people, but I think that today we took the most fundamental step in industry."

Local authorities in Herat emphasized on the importance of quality of domestic products. The

governor of Herat said that in order to gain people's trust and use domestic products, it is necessary for domestic companies to pay attention to the quality of their products.

"We are proud to say that the food items produced in Herat industrial township can compete with the region in terms of weight and quality," Noor Ahmad Islamjar, the governor of Herat, said. This company can produce storage tanks with a capacity of 500 kg to 100 tons.

Leaders attend Cairo summit to ‘de-escalate’ Israel-Hamas war

CAIRO: Leaders and top officials from more than a dozen countries have gathered in the Egyptian capital, Cairo, for a conference to discuss ways to “de-escalate” the Israel-Hamas war amid growing fears of a wider Middle East conflict. Dubbed the Cairo Summit for Peace, representatives from countries including Jordan, France, Germany, Russia, China, the United Kingdom, the United States, Qatar and South Africa are attending the one-day meeting on Saturday, together with United Nations and European Union officials.

In his opening remarks, Egyptian President Abdel Fattah el-Sisi invited leaders to come to an agreement for a road map to end the “humanitarian catastrophe” in the Gaza Strip and revive a path to peace between Israel and the Palestinians. The plan’s goals included the delivery of aid to Gaza and agreeing to a ceasefire, followed by negotiations leading to a two-state solution, he said.

“All civilian lives matter,” Jordan’s King Abdullah said, addressing the summit. “The relentless bombing campaign under way in Gaza as we speak is cruel and unconscionable on every level. It is collective punishment of a besieged and helpless people. It is a flagrant violation of international humanitarian law. It is a war crime.” “Anywhere else, attacking civilian infrastructure and deliberately starving an entire population of food, water, electricity and basic necessities would be condemned. Accountability would be enforced ... but not in Gaza,” he added.

Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas attended the summit and asked for humanitarian corridors to be opened. He also said Palestinians would not leave. “We will remain on our land.” The absence of any representative from the Israeli side, and any senior US official, has dampened expectations for what the summit can achieve.

Al Jazeera’s diplomatic editor James Bays said that while it is good for these countries to propose a road map out of this crisis, “Is Israel going to listen to that road map?” “Israel is not represented. It’s Israeli generals and the Israeli prime minister and the Israeli war cabinet who have the decisions on what to do militarily, and you see – as the speeches have been going on – fresh bombardment of Gaza [is taking place],” Bays noted.

The summit takes place as Israel readies a ground assault on Gaza, after weeks of aerial attacks following the October 7 attack by Hamas that killed 1,400 people in Israel. More than 4,200 Palestinians have been killed in Israel’s counteroffensive, amid a growing humanitarian crisis in Gaza. Egypt called for the international conference last week to discuss the “developments and future of the Palestinian cause”. Egyptian Foreign Minister Sameh Shoukry said the meeting would seek an “international concurrence” on the need for de-escalation and humanitarian aid deliveries to the Gaza Strip.

The Rafah border crossing between Gaza and Egypt, the one access point not controlled by Israel, had been closed for

nearly two weeks amid Israel’s bombardment of the Strip but opened on Saturday to allow only 20 aid trucks in. Egypt, the first Arab country to sign a peace treaty with Israel in 1979, is worried about a mass exodus of Palestinians into its territory.

President el-Sisi said on Wednesday that Egyptians in their millions would oppose any forced displacement of Palestinians into Sinai, adding that any such move would turn the Egyptian peninsula into a base for attacks against Israel. Egypt’s position reflects Arab fears that Palestinians could again flee or be forced from their homes en masse, as they were during the war surrounding Israel’s creation in 1948.

Arab countries have voiced anger at Israel’s unprecedented bombardment and siege of Gaza, home to 2.3 million people. Marc Owen Jones, assistant professor of Middle East studies at Doha’s Hamad Bin Khalifa University, said there was “a large amount of political grandstanding” in the opening statements of Arab leaders at the Cairo summit as they reaffirmed their commitment to a two-state solution in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.

“A lot of this is about the domestic legitimacy of these leaders, particularly el-Sisi who is worried about the population becoming restive if they don’t see him doing anything about the Palestinian cause,” he told Al Jazeera. Despite the “showboating”, Owen Jones said the summit’s impact on developments on the ground would be limited. He said “the realistic practical outcomes” would be “at the most a ceasefire, and at the least, a little more humanitarian aid going through”.

“I can’t see, without Israel at the table, that there’s going to be a sufficient degree of political clout here to stop Israel’s bombing of Gaza.” Speaking at the summit, UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres appealed for “a humanitarian ceasefire now”. He emphasised three key things to help de-escalate the crisis: “Immediate, unrestricted and sustained humanitarian aid for besieged civilians in Gaza. Immediate unconditional release of all hostages in Gaza. And immediate and dedicated efforts to prevent the spread of the violence, which is increasing the risk of spillover.”

Clashes on Israel’s border with Lebanon and attempted attacks by Iranian-backed forces elsewhere have fuelled fears of a spillover, particularly if a ground offensive proves bloody, while growing anti-Islamic and anti-Jewish harassment around the world has raised security concerns in many countries. European countries have struggled to settle on a united approach to the crisis, beyond condemning Hamas’s attack, after days of confusion and mixed messaging. At the summit, the UK’s foreign secretary James Cleverly said he has “called for discipline and professionalism and restraint from the Israeli military” and that he still believed in the “power of diplomacy and to secure a future where Israelis and Palestinians live in peace”. — Aljazeera

Tank police repulsed terror attack on police station

F.P. Report

TANK: The district police have repulsed a terrorist attack on a police station late Friday night.

According to a police spokesman, unknown militants stormed Gomal police station with heavy weapons late at night and tried to enter into the police station. The police promptly and effectively retaliated and the exchange of fire continued which during Gomal police station SHO Asghar Khan Wazir received bullet injuries at his neck. However, the attack was repulsed by the valiant police personnel and the terrorists managed to escape while taking full advantage of the darkness.

As soon as the information was received about the incident, District Police Officer (DPO) Iftikhar Ali Shah along with DSPs, SHOs and a heavy contingent of police reached at the site and cordoned off the area.

The police also started search operation in the area. The injured SHO was shifted to a hospital in Tank from where he was referred to the Combined Military Hospital (CMH) Dera Ismail Khan.

Later, Regional Police Officer (RPO) Nasir Mehmood Satti visited the CMH to inquire after the health of injured SHO. The RPO presented a bouquet to the injured SHO and checked the medical facili-

ties being provided to him. He commended the valor and courage of the injured SHO and prayed for his early recovery.

He said that SHO Asghar Wazir shown exemplary performance without caring of his own life, adding that the police force was proud of him. “The determination, courage and high morale of policemen is a valuable asset of the force,” he mentioned. The RPO directed the DSP headquarters and hospital administration to ensure provision of best treatment facilities to the injured policeman. He said a noose has been tightened against terrorists and criminal elements, hoping, they will be brought to justice soon.

Storm brewing in Arabian Sea at 1850km southwest of Karachi

KARACHI (PPI): A low-pressure area in the Arabian Sea has developed into a depression and lies at the distance of 1850km southwest of Karachi, Pakistan Meteorological Department said on Saturday.

This would be cyclonic storm is predicted to further intensify due to favorable environmental conditions into a severe cyclonic storm on Sunday and move toward the south coasts of Oman and adjoining Yemen. The Arabian Sea storm has been presently at the distance of 960km in southeast of Oman and will likely to get further intensi-

ty by this evening, PMD Chief Meteorologist Sardar Sarfaraz said.

The system was earlier located at a distance of about 1810km southwest of Karachi and 1750km south of Gwadar. None of the Pakistan coastal area is likely to be impacted by the system, PMD has stated. This would be the second cyclonic storm in the Arabian Sea this year. According to a report the cyclone will be called ‘Tej’, as per a formula followed for naming cyclones in the region.

Meteorologists caution that at times, storms may deviate from the predicted

route and intensity, as seen in the case of earlier Cyclone Biparjoy, which formed in the Arabian Sea in June and initially moved in a north-northwest direction before changing course to make landfall between Sindh and Gujarat coast in Pakistan and India.

According to reports, most of weather models indicate the storm is heading for the Yemen-Oman coast. However, a model suggests a re-curvature while positioned over the deep central parts of the Arabian Sea, steering the system towards Sindh and the Gujarat coast, a report said.

Court allows police to quiz Khadija in prison

LAHORE (INP): An anti-terrorism court (ATC) in Lahore on Saturday accepted the investigation officer’s (IO) petition, seeking questioning from diehard PTI supporter and daughter of ex-finance minister Khadija Shah in connection with torching of police vehicles at Lahore’s Rahat Bakery chowk on May 9 inside the jail. In his petition, IO

Naveed Anjum said that questioning was required in yet another case in which Khadija had been nominated.

A case had been registered against her at Sarwar Road police station for setting police vehicles on fire. The officer told the court that although Khadija had been granted bails in Askari Tower and Jinnah House attacks cases, she

had not been set free yet since she was still to deposit surety bonds.

Yesterday an ATC in Lahore had ordered the release of another PTI female activist Sanam Javed after the approval of a surety bond in the case, but she was arrested again after she came out of the jail. Sanam was granted bail in the May 9 riots case last week.

PHC upheld SBP decision

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: Peshawar High Court (PHC) upheld State Bank of Pakistan (SBP) regarding incorporation of Money Exchange franchises in its branches while rejecting exchange companies’ writ pleas.

PHC’s divisional bench comprising of Justice Ijaz Anwar and Justice Shakeel Ahmad issued the decision on Exchange Companies’ writ pleas. During hearing SBP’s representative Alamzeb Khan advocate and Deputy Attorney General Aftab Ahmad appeared on behalf of federal’s government.

The writ pleaded that applicant’s companies are operating money changer franchises in Peshawar but on 6th September SBP issued a circular which had provided two option either the petitioners would incorporate the franchises in money exchange branches or sold it.

The counsel for petitioner argued that the circular is issued in contradiction with Foreign Exchange Regulation Act 1947 because the applicants had obtained permission from SBP and didn’t violated the rules. SBP’s 6th September circular is also against Article 9&18 of the Constitution of Pakistan.

However, SBP’s lawyer Alamzeb Khan advocate argued that the Bank has jurisdiction to regulate and issue policy guidelines time to time to Money Exchange Companies. He argued that the decision is appreciated for its positive impacts for Money Exchange Companies and didn’t challenged before court in rest of the country. PHC had turnaround Money Exchanger writ pleas and declare that SBP is regulatory authority and can issue guidelines in this regard.

North Korea flays US

SEOUL (Reuters): North Korea on Saturday condemned the United States for supplying Ukraine with long-range ballistic missiles known as ATACMS, saying any strike on Russia with them will only hamper peace efforts.

On Tuesday, Ukraine said it used the US-supplied Army Tactical Missile System (ATACMS) for the first time, inflicting heavy damage on two airfields in Russian-occupied areas. Russian forces invaded Ukraine in February 2022 and the Kyiv government has repeatedly asked Washington for the missiles, while promising not to use them inside Russia. “The US finally delivered ATACMS ground-to-ground missile system to Ukraine despite the deep concern and strong opposition of the international community,” Sin Hong-Chol, North Korea’s ambassador to Russia, said in a statement carried by state media KCNA.

“Any strike at the interior of Russia, a nuclear power, will not be of help to the early end of the Ukrainian situation or its peaceful settlement as the US advocates but will serve as a catalyst for putting the whole Europe into the crucible of endless war and prolonging the war,” the statement said. Several variants of ATACMS can carry cluster bomblets. The system provides “the ability to engage both point and area high value targets with precision fires out to 300 km,” a US Army website says. On Oct. 13, the White House accused Pyongyang of providing Russia with a shipment of weapons recently, calling it a troubling development and raising concerns about the expanded military relationship between the two countries.

JUI-F welcome Nawaz

F.P. Report

KARACHI: The Jamiat Ulama-e-Islam Pakistan (Fazl) on Saturday extended a warm welcome to the former Prime Minister of Pakistan, Nawaz Sharif, on his return to the country.

A spokesperson for JUI-F seized the opportunity to urge Pakistan’s political parties to put their differences aside and cease the ongoing conflicts that have been plaguing the nation’s political arena. The spokesperson emphasized the pressing need for unity, stressing that the current socioeconomic situation in Pakistan is too precarious to allow for further discord among the political factions.



GAZA STRIP: Palestinians shifting an injured to hospital after Israeli attacks on their area.

ATC sent Kamran Bangash to jail on 14 days judicial remand Issued warrant of 27 PTI’s workers over absentia

Hamayun Khan

PESHAWAR: Anti-Terrorism Court (ATC) Peshawar Judge Muhammad Adil Khan sent former provincial minister Kamran Bangash to jail on 14-days judicial remand for firing on police personnel, proclaimed offender of Islamabad police and providing safe haven to former federal minister Murad Saeed, on Saturday.

Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) lawyers including Ali Zaman, Syed Sikandar Hayat Shah and Muhammad Inam Khan Yousafzai advocates appeared before ATC while arguing that police had raided Kamran Bangash residence without warrant and took into the custody.

The allegations in First Information Report (FIR) are baseless and the country is working under constitution and no one is above the law, the counsel argued. The counsel Ali Zaman Advocate that petitioner is arrested for didn’t participating in Pervaiz Khattak gathering because he is loyal to PTI and added that CCTV footage is available which will verify that Kamran Bangash had surrendered before police willingly.

However, Syed Sikandar Hayat

Shah argued that police are using Murad Saeed is a tool for arrest of PTI’s leaders and added that a likely raid was made on a house at Nasir Bagh Road. He requested that for discharging Kamran Bangash from FIR because it is baseless.

Moreover, Muhammad Inam Yousafzai advocate also requested for discharging and added that CCTV footage had been produced before court while arguing that the petitioner will approach High Court to quash the FIR. Meanwhile, Public Prosecutor argued for provision of physical remand as the petitioner had provided shelter to absconder for investigation.

ATC Peshawar Judge Muhammad Adil Khan sent PTI’s leader Kamran Bangash to jail on 14-days judicial after conclusion of arguments. Although, as many as 134 PTI’s workers are appeared before ATC while non-bailable arrest warrant of 27 activists were issued due to absentia in three cases regarding 9th& 10th May vandalism.

ATC Peshawar Judge Jahan Zeb Shinwari also ordered the submission of supplementary challan against cul-

pripts arrested later allegedly involved in vandalism after arrest of PTI’s chairman Imran Khan on 9th May National Accountability Bureau.

As many as 134 PTI’s workers including former Member Provincial Assembly (MPA) Arbab Jahan Dad and Arbab Wasim were appeared before court in two separate cases registered police stations East Cant and Hayatabad. Former MPAs Fida and Fazal Elahi along with 25 others non-bailable arrest warrant were issued due to their absentia from ATC Peshawar in 9th& 10th May vandalism.

ATC Peshawar Judge Jahan Zeb Shinwari issued notices to personal sureties of PTI’s workers to ensure their appearance otherwise their bonds would be confiscated in favor of state treasury. ATC further observed that DFC (police personnel) would appear personally before court in case absentia of accused and ordered submission of supplementary challan against Asif, Abdul Wajid, Akhtar Gul and Farid Gul along with other while adjourned further hear till 4th, 6th and 7th November respectively.

Passing out parade of cadets held at PMA, Kakul

F.P. Report

RAWALPINDI: Passing out parade of cadets of 148th PMA Long Course, 67th Integrated Course, 35th Technical Graduate Course and 22nd Lady Cadet Course was held at Pakistan Military Academy (PMA) Kakul on Saturday. Cadets from Iraq, Maldives, Nepal, Palestine, Qatar, Sri Lanka and Yemen were also amongst the graduates. Chief of the Naval Staff (CNS), Admiral Naveed Ashraf, NI(M), TBt was the chief guest on the occasion.

The chief guest reviewed the parade and gave awards to distinguished cadets. The coveted Sword of Honour was awarded to Academy Senior Under Officer Muhammad Abdur Rehman Awan of 148th PMA Long Course. The President’s Gold Medal to Battalion Senior Under Officer



Muhammad Hamza Khalid of 148th PMA Long Course.

Chairman Joint Chiefs of Staff Committee Overseas Gold Medal to Battalion Senior Under Officer Shreejan Baniya of 148th PMA Long Course from Nepal.

Commandant’s Canes were awarded to Course Under Officer Muhammad Najam Azam of 67th Integrated Course

and Course Under Officer Fareeha Kainaat Arif of 22nd Lady Cadet Course. Chief of Army Staff Cane to Company Quarter Master Sergeant Frasad Toufique of 35th Technical Graduate Course.

Commander of the Sri Lankan Army, Lieutenant General HLMV Liyanage, RWP, RSP, ndu also graced the occasion as Guest of Honour.

Siraj for provision of level playing field to all parties

F.P. Report

KHANEWAL: Ameer Jamaat-e-Islami (JI), Sirajul Haq has emphasized the need of providing a level playing field to all political parties ahead of the polls. Address at a public gathering in Khanewal on Saturday, he warned that without such fairness, the upcoming elections would be marred by controversy, and the resulting outcome would be difficult for anyone to accept.

Sirajul Haq underscored the critical role that the Election Commission and the caretaker government must play in ensuring the future stability of the nation.

He emphasized the importance of their commitment to upholding their constitutional duty to conduct free and fair elections. JI vice-emir Liaqat Baloch also spoke on occasion and emphasized the urgency of the ECP announcing the schedule for the national vote. After the conclusion of the Khanewal mass meeting, Haq is scheduled to embark on a two-day visit to Sindh.

The JI chief highlighted

that the country has been under the influence of a select few families and individuals, mainly comprised of feudal lords and capitalists, for the past 75 years.

Those who portray themselves as saviours before the nation are, in fact, responsible for the dire circumstances faced by the people, he added. Siraj said the rulers who remained in power for decades had always prioritized their interests over those of the country. Their actions, Ameer Jamaat-e-Islami (JI), Sirajul Haq said, had weakened the democracy and damaged the national economy.

He said the past governments had relied heavily on foreign loans, which they often spent to fund their personal luxuries and protocols.

The flawed policies of previous administrations, he said, have led to a surge in inflation and unemployment, burdening the common man with additional taxes to offset national debts. The elite themselves, he said, always managed to evade substantial tax obligations. The JI leader

lamented that the pervasive inflation has rendered the life of an ordinary citizen exceedingly difficult, with many struggling to make ends meet. Ameer Jamaat-e-Islami (JI), Sirajul Haq said that a significant portion of the population continues to grapple with challenges such as lack of access to clean drinking water and the inability to send their children to school, primarily due to poverty.

Highlighting the plight of southern Punjab, he said the infrastructure and dilapidated roads in the area were telling the stories of the inability of the past governments.

He criticized the prevalent culture of broken promises by ruling parties and local feudal lords, who have failed to address the persistent issues faced by the region. Assuring a resolution to the challenges faced by southern Punjab upon assuming power, Siraj urged the people to elect courageous and honest leadership in the upcoming elections. The JI, he said, was the only political party which could put the country on track.

4th polio case reported from Karachi

ISLAMABAD (PPI): Pakistan’s fourth polio case of the year 2023 was confirmed in Karachi, according to the health ministry report on Saturday. The health ministry has confirmed that the polio virus found in a two-year child from UC Gujro in Gadap Town of Karachi East. “Polio virus has been confirmed in two-year Afghan child crippled by the virus on October 03,” health ministry sources said.

“This week presence of polio virus was confirmed in sewerage samples of Karachi East,” sources said. “Total 48 sewerage samples were confirmed positive this year”. “This year three polio infections were reported in Bannu district of KP,” sources added.

Pakistan earlier registered three polio cases since January, a blow to the goal of eradicating disease that affects the nervous system and can cause severe paralysis in children. In the year 2022, as many as 20 cases of poliovirus were reported across the country. Pakistan was come near to eradication of disease in year 2021 when only one case was reported in the country. Pakistan and Afghanistan are the only two countries in the world where polio continues to threaten the health and well-being of children.

SC disposed of 1623 cases in a week

F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: The Supreme Court of Pakistan has disposed of 1623 cases (excluding CMAs) during the period from 16th October 2023 (Monday) to 20th October 2023 (Friday) whereas 359 new cases have been instituted during the period from 16th October 2023 (Monday) to 21st October 2023 (Saturday).

The Hon’ble Chief Justice of Pakistan and the Hon’ble Judges of Supreme Court remained committed to accelerate disposal of the cases and diminish the backlog. The Hon’ble Judges continued to hear the cases with the aim to minimize the backlog and provide relief to the litigants.