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**China ex-premier Li dies**  
BEIJING (AFP): Chinese ex-PM Li Keqiang died of a heart attack on Friday, just 10 months after retiring from a decade in office during which his reformist star had dimmed. He was 68. Once viewed as a top Communist Party leadership contender, Li was sidelined in recent years. The elite economist supported a more open market economy, advocating supply-side reforms in an approach dubbed "Likonomics" that was never fully implemented.

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## Release of hostages needs ceasefire, Hamas official says

GAZA/MOSCOW (Reuters): An official of the militant Hamas group conditioned the release of hostages in Gaza to a ceasefire in Israel's bombardment of the Palestinian enclave, launched after a deadly rampage into southern Israel nearly three weeks ago.

Israel says it is preparing a ground invasion, but has been urged by the US and Arab countries to delay an operation that would multiply the number of civilian casualties in the densely populated coastal strip and might ignite a wider conflict. Two US fighter jets struck weapons and ammunition facilities in Syria on Friday in retaliation for attacks on US forces by Iranian-backed militias since the Gaza war erupted.

An opinion poll on Friday suggested almost half of Israelis now wanted to hold off on a ground invasion out of fears for at least 224 hostages reported to be held there. The Russian newspaper Kommersant quoted a member of a Hamas delegation visiting Moscow as saying time was needed to locate all those abducted by various Palestinian factions in the Hamas attack on Oct. 7.

"They seized dozens of people, most of them civilians, and we need time to find them in the Gaza Strip and then release them," Abu Hamid said. He said Hamas, which has freed four hostages so far, had made clear it intended to release "civilian prisoners". But this required a "calm environment", he said, repeating an assertion that Israeli bombing had killed 50 of those held.

Hamas officials in Moscow said they viewed all their hostages as Israelis, whatever additional passports they held, and could not release any of them until Israel agreed to a ceasefire, according to Russian media. Qatar meanwhile told the US it was open to reconsidering the continued presence of Hamas in Qatar once a hostage release deal has been secured, a senior US official said.

There was no immediate response from Qatar, which, with the US, is leading hostage mediation talks with Hamas and Israel. Palestinian militants clashed with Israeli troops in at least two areas in the Gaza Strip, the latest of several

## Palestinian death toll surpasses 7,326, including 3,038 children

GAZA: The health ministry in Gaza, ruled by Hamas, reported on Friday that 7,326 individuals have lost their lives in the Palestinian territory since the outbreak of conflict with Israel on October 7. This recent death toll includes 3,038 children, as stated by the ministry, and 18,967 people have been injured throughout Gaza.

A medical team and 10 aid trucks entered the Gaza Strip on Friday via the Rafah crossing with Egypt, carrying water, food and medicine, a Palestinian border official told Reuters. "This Friday morning, a medical delegation consisting of 10 foreign doctors entered, in addition to 10 trucks entering the Gaza Strip through the Rafah land crossing, carrying water, food and medicine, bringing the total number of trucks since the beginning of the war to only 84 trucks," the official said. Detailed negotiations were taking place with Israel in a bid to secure more humanitarian crossings into the Israeli-besieged Palestinian enclave, Lynn Hastings, the UN Humanitarian Coordinator for the Occupied Palestinian Territory, told reporters in Geneva.

The Hamas government Friday said Israel "cut communications and most of the internet" across the Gaza Strip. The government's media office accused Israel of taking the measure "to perpetrate massacres with bloody retaliatory strikes from the air, land and sea," as heavy strikes hit northern Gaza. Daniel Hagari, the spokesperson for the Israeli military, said the army's ground forces would expand their operations tonight.

Approximately 49% of Israelis, according to a recent survey by the Panel4All institute, are against an "immediate" ground invasion of the Gaza Strip. These respondents believe it would be better to "wait" before launching such an offensive. Only 29% of those surveyed expressed support for an immediate ground offensive. The poll was conducted on October 25 and 26, with 522 participants, in a country with a population of around 10 million. This data contrasts with a survey conducted by the same institute the previous week, where 65% of respondents supported a military invasion of the Gaza Strip without specifying the timing of the operation. — Agencies

small-scale incursions, Hamas-affiliated media reported. The Israeli military did not immediately confirm the reports.

Israel said its fighter jets had struck three senior Hamas operatives who played significant roles in the Oct. 7 attack, though there was no confirmation by Hamas. Israel's military said the air force intercepted an aerial threat in the area of the Red Sea, without elaborating.

In early afternoon, rocket sirens sounded throughout southern Israel and an Israeli medic said three people had been wounded when a missile hit Tel Aviv. Further north, the Iranian-backed Hezbollah said it had carried out a number of attacks on Israeli positions. In

Jerusalem, Israeli security forces restricted young Palestinians from entering Al-Aqsa mosque for prayers as part of measures to quell any unrest linked to the conflict in Gaza.

In the occupied West Bank, Israeli troops killed four Palestinians during raids, the official Palestinian news agency WAFA said. Two of the dead were members of militant factions. In the Jabalia refugee camp in northern Gaza, an air strike killed the pregnant wife of a Palestinian lawyer, Jehad Al-Kafarnah. "My life, my heart, I love you," Kafarnah wrote, weeping, on the white sheeting wrapped around his wife's body.

## Pak Army thwarts Indian unprovoked firing

RAWALPINDI: The Pak Army thwarted Indian unprovoked fire along the Line of Control (LoC) in the Zafarwal sector on Friday. The Pakistani swift and vigorous response caused a huge financial loss to India besides reports about injuring of several soldiers.

On Thursday, Pakistani forces effectively foiled the Indian infiltration attempt through quadcopter drone, prompting the Indian Border Security Forces to resort to unprovoked firing at Pakistani check-posts. According to security experts, the reason behind the unprovoked firing is the humiliation India faced after awarding of the death penalty to eight Indian navy personnel by Qatar.

They said that Indian had already suffered humiliation due to target killing of Khalistan leaders by RAW in Canada. "Moreover, the Kashmiris across the world are observing October 27 as Black Day against the illegal occupation of the valley," they added. They said that Pakistan's valiant forces are capable of responding to any aggression and India is witness to its practical demonstrations in the past.

## No power on earth can crush Kashmiris struggle: Solangi

F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: Caretaker Federal Minister for Information and Broadcasting Murtaza Solangi said on Friday that no power on earth could crush the Kashmiris freedom movement, who were struggling for the right to self-determination promised by none other than the United Nations in its several resolutions.

Addressing the participants of a rally organized

here marking October 27, the black day to protest against Indian illegal occupation of the then princely state in 1947. The minister said that the history of oppression of the Kashmiri people spanned over centuries. He said that on this day in 1947, India landed its troops in the valley in violation of international law.

He lamented the champions of human rights and democracy, who raise their

voice against any injustice across the world were silent over the Kashmiri genocide at the hands of Indian occupation forces. Murtaza Solangi opined despite the increasing repression, the desire for freedom has increased among Kashmiris manifold. With the increase in tyranny and repression, the spirit of freedom among Kashmiris has got more momentum, he maintained.



PESHAWAR: Caretaker KP Chief Minister Muhammad Azam Khan and Governor Haji Ghulam Ali talking to media persons during a rally to mark Kashmir Black Day.



ISLAMABAD: Caretaker Federal Minister for Information and Broadcasting Murtaza Solangi called on Caretaker Prime Minister Anwaar-ul-Haq Kakar.

## PTI terms Nawaz's return as execution of London 'deal'

F.P. Report

LAHORE: The Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) chairman Imran Khan has strongly criticised what he perceives as the "complete breakdown of our justice system." He has characterised the return of Nawaz Sharif, the leader of Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N), to the country as the fulfillment of a "London agreement."

In a statement initially released by his family on Oct 24 but subsequently tweeted from the official PTI account on Friday, the former prime minister who was ousted from power through a parliamentary vote in April the previous year, expressed his concerns about the current state of the legal system. He stated, "My fellow Pakistanis! In recent days, we have witnessed a blatant disregard for the law. What is unfolding before us is not merely the execution of a London 'plan' but a London 'agreement' that was signed between a fugitive and a corrupt criminal, along with their collaborators."

This statement was made six days after Nawaz Sharif returned to Pakistan from a self-imposed exile in London, which lasted for four years, commencing on Oct 21. Nawaz Sharif, a three-time former prime minister, was granted protective bail in two corruption cases, and arrest warrants in another case were temporarily suspended prior to his return, facilitating a smooth reentry into the country.

The PTI chairman expressed his disappointment regarding the leniency shown to the PML-N leader, stating, "The only way a convicted criminal can be allowed to reenter politics with a clean slate is by undermining the state's institutions. Consequently, what we are witnessing is the complete breakdown of our justice system."

Furthermore, the former PM asserted, "My fellow Pakistanis! Please remember that all the cases against me are entirely baseless and motivated by political interests, fabricated solely to keep me incarcerated either until after the elections or potentially much longer. However, the growing political awareness and the increasing resistance against backroom conspiracies in my nation unsettle those behind such actions."

## Govt believes in freedom of media: PM

F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: Caretaker Prime Minister Anwaar-ul-Haq Kakar on Friday said the government believed in the freedom of media and considered it an "important pillar of the state". He expressed these views as Information Minister Murtaza Solangi called on him here at the PM House.

The meeting discussed the problems concerning the All Pakistan Newspaper Society (APNS), the Council of Pakistan Newspaper Editors (CPNE), and the media industry. PM Kakar on the occasion directed for resolving the legitimate demands of the media industry and taking necessary steps in that regard.

He said he would continue his interactions with journalists and media persons. The meeting was attended by Federal Information Secretary Zahoore Ahmed, Principal Information Officer Tariq Mahmood Khan, and Managing Director Associated Press of Pakistan (APP) Muhammad Asim Khichi.

PM assures federal government's support to Punjab's child protection bureau: Chairperson of Child Protection and Welfare Bureau Punjab Sarah Ahmad called on Caretaker Prime Minister Anwaar-ul-Haq Kakar and discussed matters relating

## President, PM urge world to hold India accountable

F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: President Dr. Arif Alvi has urged the international community to hold India accountable for its atrocities and human rights violations in illegally occupied Jammu and Kashmir. In his message on the occasion of Kashmir Black Day, he said the world community and the media should highlight the plight of Kashmiri people.

Caretaker Prime Minister Anwaar-ul-Haq Kakar has urged the international community to take practical steps to hold India accountable for its excesses in the occupied Kashmir. In his message on day, he said an intensified campaign to 'Indianize' Kashmir and transform Kashmiris into a disempowered community in their own land has been in full swing since 5 August 2019. He Indian Occupation has taken a number of steps to realize these nefarious designs, including gerrymandering of the electoral constituencies, addition of non-Kashmiris to voter rolls, issuance of domicile certificates to outsiders, and introduction of new laws on ownership of land and property.

to child welfare.

The prime minister lauded the services of the Child Protection and Welfare Bureau running under the supervision of Sarah Ahmad. He also assured support on behalf of the federal government to the child protection facility.

Pak-China accords to open new vistas of employment, economic development: Caretaker Prime Minister Anwar-ul-Haq Kakar said the recently signed accords between Pakistan and China would open up new opportunities of employment and economic development for the people of Gilgit-Baltistan.

The prime minister expressed these views as Chief Minister GB Gulbar Khan called on him here at the PM House. The meeting discussed the memorandum of understanding signed during the prime minister's visit to China and other measures to further increase trade relations between GB and Xinjiang.

The chief minister Gilgit-Baltistan thanked the prime minister for his recent visit to GB and for taking interest in the development of the area.

## PTI chairman's bail rejected in cipher case

F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: The Islamabad High Court on Friday rejected the petitions filed by former prime minister and PTI Chairman Imran Khan seeking bail and dismissal of the cipher case registered against him under the Official Secrets Act. Islamabad High Court Chief Justice Aamer Farooq announced the verdict reserved on October 16.

During yesterday's hearing, the Special Prosecutor of the FIA took the position in the court that this was a case in which the crime was committed and the accused had also admitted it. The prosecutor said that under the Official Secrets Act, the secret document was made public. The punishment for the crime is 14 years imprisonment or the death penalty, he told the court. Advocate

Latif Khosa said in his arguments that the PTI chairman did not show any cipher to the public but had symbolically waved a paper.

The FIA prosecutor told the court that the prime minister does not enjoy immunity under Article 248 of the Constitution if he makes public a secret document. IHC issues written order The written verdict issued by the IHC declared that both petitions as "without merit" and were "accordingly dismissed". "It is clarified that any observations, made hereinabove, are tentative in nature and shall not prejudice learned trial court during the trial," the judgement emphasised.

On the matter of the plea seeking dismissal of the case, it stated that the petitioner

had the "efficacious and alternate remedy by way of moving an appropriate application" under section 249-A (power of magistrate to acquit accused at any stage) of the Code of Criminal Procedure. "Moreover, the petitioner is co-accused in the case and even if the arguments advanced for quashing of FIR on his behalf are accepted, FIR cannot be quashed in as much as there are other co-accused and there cannot be a partial quashing of FIR," the verdict said referring to the fact that the FIR had named multiple people named. Referring to a previous Supreme Court verdict, the IHC said it showed that "contents of cipher were such that they only called for demarche and not any further strict action, as there was no conspiracy of any kind".

## China's Wang tells Blinken 'in-depth' dialogue can steady ties

WASHINGTON/BEIJING (Reuters): The United States and China have disagreements and need "in-depth" and "comprehensive" dialogue to reduce misunderstandings and stabilize ties, China's foreign minister, Wang Yi, said, kicking off a long-anticipated visit to Washington. Standing next to US Secretary of State Antony Blinken, Wang said the two countries share important common interests and challenges that they need to resolve together.

"Therefore, China and the United States need to have dialogue. Not only should we resume dialogue, the dialogue should be in-depth and comprehensive," Wang said, speaking through an interpreter. Dialogue would help reduce misunderstandings, help stabilize the relationship and "return it to the track of healthy, stable and sustainable development,"

he said. Blinken responded: "I agree with what the foreign minister said."

Before Wang spoke, Blinken said he looked forward to constructive talks with his Chinese counterpart. During the meeting, Blinken expressed his condolences on the passing of China's former premier, Li Keqiang. Wang's three-day visit is the latest in a flurry of diplomatic engagements between the two strategic rivals as they seek to manage their differences to avoid conflict. The trip primarily is to prepare for an expected summit between President Joe Biden and President Xi Jinping in November. The Israel-Hamas conflict has added a fresh dynamic to the testy relationship of the superpowers, and Washington is hoping Beijing can use its influence with Iran to prevent an escalation into a wider war in the Middle East.

Wang is expected to meet US national security adviser Jake Sullivan on Friday. He is also expected to speak with Biden during his visit to the White House, although it is unclear how substantial their interaction will be. The Biden administration's priority with Beijing has been to prevent intense competition between the two largest economies and disagreements on a host of issues - including trade, Taiwan and the South China Sea - from veering into conflict.

However, while both Beijing and Washington have spoken of looking for areas where they can work together, and Xi said on Wednesday China was willing to cooperate on global challenges, experts do not expect immediate progress. Policy analysts in China and the US say both sides share an interest in averting a wider

war in the Middle East and that China, as a major oil purchaser, could exert considerable influence on Iran. Whether it will remain to be seen.

"The Chinese certainly have an interest in preventing a direct US-Iranian confrontation, as they are major oil consumers and that would spike prices," said Jon Alterman, head of the Middle East program at Washington's Center for Strategic and International Studies. "Still, the Chinese are unlikely to do any heavy lifting here. I expect they'll want a seat at the table when the Israel-Gaza struggle gets resolved, but they don't feel much need or ability to hasten resolution."

Shi Yinhong, professor of international relations at Renmin University of China, said Beijing exerting its influence over Iran was "almost the only serious and practical US expectation of China on the Middle East situation." However Shi added: "The US position on Iran is far from acceptable to China and vice versa. Mutual compromise on this issue could be too limited and small to be of any significance."

Wang's visit to Washington comes after several top US officials, including Blinken, visited Beijing in the past several months. Analysts expect Wang's talks to focus on preparations for an anticipated meeting between Biden and Xi on the sidelines of the summit of Asia Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) countries in San Francisco from Nov. 11 to 17. It would be Biden and Xi's first in-person meeting since a summit in Bali last November.

The two sides go into APEC from different economic perspectives, with economic policy analysts saying the US has weathered challenging global conditions after the COVID-19 pandemic somewhat better than China. US and Chinese officials held a virtual meeting on Monday on macroeconomic developments.

US officials said Taiwan and the South and East China Seas, where they accused Beijing of "destabilizing and dangerous actions" against rival territorial claims, would also be on the agenda. Re-establishing military-to-military ties with China remains a top priority to avoid unintended conflict, they said. Reporting by Humeysa Pamuk and David Brunnstrom in Washington, and Laurie Chen in Beijing; Additional reporting by Simon Lewis, Michael Martina, Trevor Hunnicutt and Gursimran Kaur; Editing by Josie Kao, Tom Hogue and Raju Gopalakrishnan.







# World peace hinges on Kashmir, Palestine resolution: Info Minister

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: To express unwavering support and solidarity with people of Occupied Kashmir, the Chief Minister of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, the Governor of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, and members of the caretaker cabinet came together to lead a solidarity rally in Peshawar on October 27. Imtiaz Iqbal Wani, the Information Secretary of All Parties Hurriyat Conference, also attended the rally.

Following the rally, Wani convened a special meeting with Khyber Pakhtunkhwa's Information Minister, Barrister Feroze Jamal Shah Kakakhel, to extend heartfelt appreciation to the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa government and its people for their resolute support of the oppressed Kashmiri population.

During the meeting, Minister Kakakhel delivered a poignant message, emphasizing the profound pain felt on October 27 as he stated, "Our hearts shed tears of blood for the sufferings endured by our Kashmiri brothers and sisters. The atrocities they face, one day, we believe that the

government of India will have to reckon with them, and Kashmir will find its rightful place within Pakistan."

He continued, "Our solidarity and sympathy are unyielding; they were there seven decades ago, they remain today, and they shall endure until the end of time.

He said that we also vehemently condemn the cruelty and inhumanity inflicted upon our Palestinian brothers, sisters, and children, urging the OIC and the United Nations to play a pivotal role in reaching a lasting resolution to this crisis. World peace hinges on Kashmir and Palestine resolution", Minister said.

Minister Kakakhel also emphasized the need to fortify Pakistan's military and institutions against any propaganda or campaigns launched against them, acknowledging Pakistan's significance on the international stage. He expressed gratitude towards All-Parties Hurriyat Conference Secretary Information Imtiaz Iqbal Wani for joining the rally, assuring that Pakistan, Khyber

Pakhtunkhwa, and its citizens will always stand beside their Kashmiri brethren.

Imtiaz Iqbal Wani, in the meeting, lauded the profound message conveyed by the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa government and its citizens through their participation in the rally. He asserted, "The presence of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Cabinet members, the Chief Minister, the Governor, and Information Minister Barrister Feroze Jamal Shah Kakakhel sends a powerful message to India that the people of Occupied Kashmir are not alone; every one in Pakistan stand with them."

Wani extended his heartfelt thanks to the people of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa for their enduring support, expressing his belief in a brighter future for Occupied Kashmir as part of Pakistan. He underscored that just as the people of Occupied Kashmir remember their martyrs, they wrap them in the flag of Pakistan, and the people of Pakistan have consistently stood by their side in every international forum, where their voice is needed.



PESHAWAR: Mayor Haji Zubair Ali and other holding a banner during rally to show solidarity with Kashmiri people. — F.P. photo

## Rescue 1122 observed black day

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: The protest rally and walk of Rescue 1122 led by Director General Rescue 1122 Dr. Khateer Ahmed was organized from the provincial headquarters of Rescue 1122, here Friday strongly condemned an illegal annexation of Indian illegally Occupied Jammu and Kashmir (IOJK) by India on October 27, 1947.

The participants holding placards and banners condemned state terrorism, human rights abuses and repression at IOJK and expressed solidarity with the oppressed Kashmiris of the held valley. The rally also condemned the illegal revoking of the special status of IOJK by the fascist Modi regime on August 5, 2019 and human rights violations at the occupied territory.

The rally urged the United Nations Security Council to implement its resolutions on Kashmir and press the Modi Govt to give the right of self-determination to Kashmiris as promised to them by the UNO. The road to peace in South Asia was passing through Kashmir and resolution of this long lingering issue was must for lasting peace in the held valley, the participants said.

On behalf of Rescue 1122, India's usurpation of Kashmir was observed as a black day, Dr. Khateer Ahmed, Director General Rescue 1122 said. A special walk was organized from the provincial headquarters of Rescue 1122 to observe Black Day and Kashmir Solidarity Day in all the districts of the province, Director General Rescue 1122 Dr. Khateer said.

Kashmir is ours and the day is not far when Kashmir will be part of Pakistan, Director General Rescue 1122 said in his address. India's illegal and unconstitutional usurpation of Kashmir is not acceptable, Director General Rescue 1122 said. Kashmir should be resolved according to UN resolutions, Director General Rescue 1122 said, adding, we strongly condemn the ongoing atrocities by India in Kashmir.

## Polio vaccination drive from Monday

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: Emergency Operations Center (EOC) Khyber Pakhtunkhwa has decided to carry out a special polio vaccination drive termed as 'Outbreak Response' (OBR) campaign in three selected districts of the province wherein more than 1.24 million eligible children will be administered polio drops.

The decision to this effect was taken in a high-level meeting chaired by Special Secretary Health for Polio Eradication Abdul Basit here in Provincial Emergency Operations Center (PEOC) on Friday. The meeting was attended by Deputy Coordinator EOC Muhammad Zeeshan Khan, team leads UNICEF, WHO & NSTOP, officials of health department and

other relevant stakeholders. The meeting was informed that during this special five-days vaccination drive commencing from October 30, polio drops will be administered to over 0.9 million children in Peshawar, 0.22 million children in Khyber and 0.11 million children in Hangu.

Addressing the meeting, Special Secretary Health for Polio Eradication Abdul Basit said that the government is fully committed to root out the menace of polio virus and this resolve is demonstrated by conducting regular polio vaccination campaigns. He added that we will make all possible efforts to secure the future of our children from this crippling disease.

Abdul Basit appealed to all segments of society including parents, elders,

religious scholars, civil society and the media to extend their full support and cooperation to the national cause of polio eradication so that the dream of a polio-free Pakistan may come true.

The meeting was informed that 4,438 teams of trained polio workers including 3874 mobile teams, 294 fixed teams and 270 transit teams have been deployed for the implementation of this campaign. Besides 1103 area in-charges have also been appointed for the vigilant supervision of these teams to make sure that all children in the target areas are administered with polio drops. In order to ensure foolproof security of the polio teams 8,268 security personnel have been deployed in the target areas.

## KP Minister pledges support for legal community

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: Justice, retired Syed Arshad Hussain Shah, the caretaker minister for Law and Human Rights in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, has reaffirmed the government's commitment to addressing the concerns of the legal community as a top priority. He encouraged unity within the Bar Association and emphasized the importance of resolving any misunderstandings between the legal bar and the judiciary. Justice Shah stressed the need to prioritize respect for both the bar and the bench, acknowledging the pivotal role that lawyers play in upholding the rule of law and delivering justice.

These statements were made during the oath-taking ceremony for the newly elected cabinet of the District Bar Association in Upper Dir, Justice Retired Syed Arshad Hussain Shah administered oaths to the newly elected officials, including President Sulman Khan Advocate, General Secretary Sabz Ali Khan Advocate, Vice President Syed Zahid Advocate, Joint Secretary Shafiullah Khan, and Finance Secretary Imran Hussain, congratulating them on their successful bar election.

The newly elected cabinet received a comprehensive briefing on the challenges faced by the District Bar Association and the legal community. Justice Retired Syed Arshad Hussain Shah, the caretaker provincial minister, assured them that the government is well-informed about these issues and is actively working to resolve them. He expressed his hope that the newly elected cabinet would devote their full efforts to address the concerns of the legal community.

## Kashmir Black day: KPCTA carries out rally

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: The Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Culture and Tourism Authority (KPCTA) carried out a walk on Friday to mark October 27th as a black day when Indian forces illegally landed in Srinagar in 1947, starting a chapter of occupation, subjugation and oppression for the innocent people living in the occupied valley.

The walk started from Peshawar Sports Complex and was participated in by a large number of people from various sections of society. Staff from the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Culture and Tourism Authority, Tourism Police, Sports Department and students from different schools took part in the walk.

Black Day is observed every year to protest against the Indian illegal occupation and to remind the world community of its commitments regarding the implementation of United Nations

Security Council (UNSC) resolutions that advocate the right to plebiscite for Kashmiris.

The participants of the walk tied black bands on their arms and carried flags of Pakistan and Azad Kashmir. A one-minute silence was also observed and the participants carried banners with anti-Indian slogans. Director General of the Directorate of Sports affairs, Khalid Khan, addressed the rally and stated that Pakistan does not accept Article 370, which provides special status to the occupied region because they seek the independence of Kashmir, as it is not part of India. He lamented that the Narendra Modi Government repealed the law and changed Article 35.

He further emphasized that the observance of Kashmir Black Day is to condemn the Indian illegal occupation of the state and to reiterate their unwavering

support for the Kashmiri people struggling for their right to self-determination. He added that IOJK (Indian Illegally Occupied Jammu and Kashmir) is an integral part of Pakistan and the day is not far when Kashmiris will be able to break the shackles of subjugation and join Pakistan.

He also stressed that the ongoing barbarism of Indian forces against the Kashmiris cannot be concealed from the eyes of the international community and soon the oppressed Kashmiris will attain their right to self-determination. The Indian Army invaded the state of Jammu and Kashmir on this day in 1947 in an attempt to subjugate the Kashmiri people. GM Culture and Tourism, Sajjad Hameed mentioned that every Pakistani child stands with the Kashmiris, and the time is not far when occupied Kashmir will be free from Indian oppression.



PESHAWAR: Maulana Muhammad Tayyab Qureshi addressing a rally in support of Palestinian and Kashmiri people. — F.P. photo

# October 27: A blackest day in Kashmir's history marked with mammoth protest rallies, condemning IIOJK illegal annexation

PESHAWAR (APP): Like other parts of Pakistan and Azad Kashmir, the Kashmiris settled in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa on Friday observed Kashmir black day by holding big protest rallies and demonstrations, condemning the illegal annexation of Indian Illegally Occupied Jammu and Kashmir.

From Chitral to Waziristan and Kohistan to Khyber, big protest demonstrations and rallies attended by people of all walks of life were held in all 37 districts of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa where people expressed solidarity with oppressed Kashmiris of IOJK, who faced unending brutal oppression, human rights abuses and organized state terrorism for the last 76 years with steadfastness and bravery.

Every year, the people of Kashmir observed October 27 as black day to condemn the illegal annexation of Indian Illegally Occupied Jammu and Kashmir and remained to the world community to fulfill its pledge by granting them right of self determination as per UN Security Council resolutions.

Protest demonstrations and rallies were held at Peshawar, DI Khan, Chitral, Abbottabad, Mardan, Swat, Khyber, Manshera, Kohat, Bannu, Charsadda, Dir Lower, Malakand,

Hangu, Bajaur and others districts of KP where people raised placards and banners inscribed with slogans like 'Kashmir Banay Ga Pakistan and India Go Out of Kashmir'.

On October 27, 1947, Indian occupied forces had illegally invaded Jammu and Kashmir against the will of Kashmiris, Indian Independence Act and UN Charter and since then Kashmiris observed the black day to express solidarity with Kashmiries of the held valley.

In Peshawar, a big protest demonstration started from Chief Minister Secretariat paraded up to Governor House Peshawar. The participants of the central rally led by Governor KP Haji Ghulam Ali and caretaker Chief Minister Muhammad Azam Khan were holding placards and banners condemning the illegal annexation of Kashmir by India.

Besides others, caretaker provincial ministers, advisers, assistants, civil society members, lawyers, officials, journalists and general public participated in the rally with full throated slogans "India Go out of Kashmir". The rally condemned organized state terrorism and human rights abuses at IOJK and urged International Community including UN Security Council to implement its resolutions on Kashmir.

Misal Khan, a retired information officer said that fascist Modi regime has broken all records of atrocities and organized state terrorism at IOJK where Indian occupation forces were using human rights abuses against women and children as a weapon of war in a bid to suppress the indigenous freedom movement there but failed.

He said unlimited restrictions on free media imposed by the RSS backed Modi regime in IOJK was meant to hide its forces Israel like war crimes at IOJK. He said nearly one million Indian occupied forces have unleashed terror and killed hundreds of thousands of Kashmiris in fake encounters and extra judicially as evident of young freedom fighter Burhan Wani and jailed leader Yasin Malik in a fake case.

Farooq Rehman, Chairman Jammu and Kashmir Peoples' Freedom League said October 27 is the blackest day in the history of Kashmir as on this day India annexed IOJK illegally after making a deep rooted conspiracy with the support of Mahraja Hari Singh. He said the people of Kashmir wanted to join Pakistan as per Indo-Pakistan partition plan and stand freedom struggle against Maharaja Hari Singh and illegal occupation of India after the latter

illegally entered in troops at Srinagar on October 27, 1947. "The Maharaja's authority over Jammu and Kashmir state was officially ended on August 15, 1947 and people of Kashmir was left with no choice but to stood up against Mahraja Hari Singh's illegal move and India's forced occupation.

Manzoorul Haq, former ambassador said that on January 1, 1948, it was India that brought the Kashmir issue before the UN, where it was agreed by a number of resolutions that the destiny of Jammu and Kashmir would be decided by plebiscite under UN supervision. Later India had backtracked from all UN resolutions and declined to hold the plebiscite in Kashmir that was share violation of UN charter. On August 5, 2019, he said India abrogated special status of IOJK attempting to rob Kashmiris of their history, language and identity.

The August 5 illegal acts were done with mala-fide intentions, meticulous planning and nefarious designs, he said, adding All the Hurriyat leadership was incarcerated and even politicians like Farooq Abdullah and Mehbooba Mufti, who in the past were considered pro Indian government, were arrested. Thousands of young Kashmiris rang-

ing from 15 to 35 years were picked from their homes and locked in different prisons of India and most of them continue to languish there in inhuman conditions.

"The goal was to create a fear-psychosis within the population of held Kashmir, and to convey the message that any person showing semblance of resistance will be dealt with brutal force." He said great Kashmiri leader Syed Ali Geelani were buried at night after Indian forces snatched his body from his family and Kashmiris were not allowed to attend funeral of their beloved leader.

Farooq Rehman said that anybody writing against the occupation forces based on facts is slapped with draconian Unlawful Public Activity Act (ULPA) and subsequently imprisoned without any judicial reprieve. He said cordon and search operations are held on a daily basis in all areas of occupied land to create an atmosphere of fear and to arrest or kill youth. During this process, he said properties are destroyed besides human rights abuses against women and youngsters at IOJK exposed Indian's forces war crimes against humanity.

He claimed that all the top-level government positions are held by Hindus from India at IOJK where local Kashmiri officials are being

marginalized. With the influx of a large population of Hindus from India, local Kashmiris find it difficult to compete even for the lower positions in the government. Rehmani said institutions that were previously under the jurisdiction of IOK (Indian occupied Kashmir) Government are now run by New Delhi and there is assiduous effort to increase the number of Hindu applicants into Medical and Engineering colleges.

He said banks in held Jammu Kashmir that used to provide an avenue of employment and funds for the local population has been heavily Indianized and filled with Hindus from India while any financial transaction taking place in administrative sector has to go through Reserve Bank of India besides destruction of agriculture land through construction of unnecessary roads. The apple production being the main source of income for occupied Kashmiris, is systematically being decimated by many oppressive measures like delaying the harvest and impeding the transportation so that fruit gets destroyed in the process and Kashmiris suffered economic losses while revenue records are being tampered to change the ownership of commercial properties from Muslims to Hindus of India in the held valley.





## In brief

WSSCM holds rally  
F.P. Report

MARDAN: Water and sanitation services company Mardan (WSSCM) organized rally on the occasion of Kashmir Black Day. The rally led by Deputy Manager Customer Relations Rahatullah and Assistant Manager Waste Water Management Ikramullah. The participants of the rally hold banners and placards with the slogan against the brutal Indian government. While addressing they also chanted for Kashmiri Freedom and against the illegal Indian occupation. The Indian forces have been brutally using force on Kashmiris for 76 years. 27th of October is observed the world over as 'Black Day' as almost seven decades ago, on this day, India without any legal justification, forcibly took control of Jammu and Kashmir. They said that the United Nations and other organizations working for human rights should raise their voice on the killing of innocent Kashmiris. They said since October 1947, Indian Army is violating human rights in Kashmir for which the United Nations and the whole world should play its role. The problem of Occupied Kashmir should be resolved according to the resolutions of the United Nations. They added.

Utilization of funds directed  
F.P. Report

HAFIZABAD: The Punjab government is committed to provide better healthcare and educational facilities to the people at their doorsteps and billions of rupees are being spent execute different development schemes in the district Hafizabad. This was stated by the Deputy Commissioner Sundas Irshad while visiting ongoing development projects including building of District Headquarter Hospital and University of the Hafizabad. Deputy Director Development Hafizabad Tassawar Abbas, CEO Health Dr. Umer Sharif Rathor, Director Colleges Azhar Janjua and other concerned officers were also accompanied her. During the visit of under construction DHQ Hospital, DC said that with the completion of this mega project, the best treatment facilities would be available to the people of the district at local level and they would get rid of traveling to big cities for treatment. She directed the contractors and officers of building department to ensure use of quality material in completion of the project and expedite construction work for completion of the project timely so that people of the areas could get benefits of government expenditures at the earliest. She also inspected under construction building of University of the Hafizabad. Deputy Director College gave briefing to the DC about project. On this occasion, DC directed the officers to spend all funds released by the Punjab government without any delay.

WUS organizes walk  
F.P. Report

SWABI: Women University Swabi (WUS) here Friday organized walk to express solidarity with Kashmiris on the occasion of 'Black Day.' The walk was participated in faculty members and large number of students who highlighted the atrocities of Indian forces against innocent Kashmiris. Speakers expressed solidarity with the Kashmiris and said that blood of Kashmiri martyrs would not go in vain.

## Kashmir Black Day observed in Mardan

## F.P. Report

MARDAN: Like other parts of the country, Black Day was also observed in Mardan on Friday to mark the 75th anniversary of illegal Indian occupation of Kashmir. In this regard, rallies and ceremonies were held in Mardan for solidarity with Kashmiris and condemnation of Indian atrocities.

In Pakhtunkhwa House Mardan, a ceremony and walk was organized on Black Day in solidarity with Kashmiris. Deputy Commissioner Mardan Captain Retired Abdul Rehman, Additional Deputy Commissioner General Engineer Syed Shahzeb, ADC Planning and Finance Samiur Rahman, Additional Assistant Commissioners, trader leader Ihsan Bacha, Women Chamber of Commerce Aqela Sambal along with media representatives, teachers and students participated.

Deputy Commissioner Mardan while addressing the ceremony on the occasion said that October 27, 1947 is a black day in human history. On that India illegally and illegitimately occupied Kashmir. He said that they strongly condemned the brutality and violence against the

Kashmiri people and reiterated their commitment to continue supporting their right to self-determination at the moral, political and diplomatic levels.

On the occasion of Black Day, a walk was also organized to express solidarity with Kashmiris. The participants of the walk carried placards, Kashmiri flags and banners in their hands, on which slogans were written in favor of Kashmiris.

On this occasion, Deputy Commissioner Also inspected the photo exhibition organized by District Youth Affairs Deptt. Black Kashmir Day was also celebrated in Special Education Complex Mardan.

In this regard, the students and teachers of the institution organized a walk. Addressing the participants of the walk, the head of the institution, Deputy Director Aniq Ahsan and Principal Irfanullah said that the entire Pakistani nation stood by the side of Kashmiri brothers and sisters in the struggle for freedom and right of self-determination. In the end, special students prayed for Kashmiri brothers and sisters.

Meanwhile, Water and sanitation services compa-

ny Mardan (WSSCM) organized rally on the occasion of Kashmir Black Day. The rally led by Deputy Manager Customer Relations Rahatullah and Assistant Manager Waste Water Management Ikramullah. The participants of the rally hold banners and placards with the slogan against the brutal Indian government. While addressing they also chanted for Kashmiri Freedom and against the illegal Indian occupation.

The Indian forces have been brutally using force on Kashmiris for 76 years. 27th of October is observed the world over as 'Black Day' as almost seven decades ago, on this day, India without any legal justification, forcibly took control of Jammu and Kashmir. They said that the United Nations and other organizations working for human rights should raise their voice on the killing of innocent Kashmiris.

They said since October 1947, Indian Army is violating human rights in Kashmir for which the United Nations and the whole world should play its role. The problem of Occupied Kashmir should be resolved according to the resolutions of the United Nations. They added.

## Tehsil Drosh Chairman resigns from his seat

## F.P. Report

CHITRAL: Elected Chairman of Tehsil Drosh Shahzada Khalid Pervaiz of Lower Chitral has resigned from his seat as a protest against non-funding by the provincial government and he also wants to resign from his party membership and join the PTI parliamentarians. In order to serve the people of Chitral in a better way

According to detail Shahzada Khalid Pervaz, chairman of Chitral Tehsil Drosh, resigned from his seat due to no fund for developmental works and no execution of transfer of power on gross root level. Now he want to leave his party and join a new political party. In this regard, he also organized a consultative meeting which was presided over by Syed Ahmed Shah alias Qaid-e-Azam. Tehsil Chairman Khalid Pervaz is the son of late Prince Mohiuddin who is a big name in Chitral politics and has also been District Nazim, Member of National

Assembly and Federal Minister of State who has a good vote bank. Prince Khalid Parvez participated in local bodies elections for the seat of Tehsil Drosh Chairman on the ticket of Pakistan People's Party and was elected as Tehsil Chairman. However, he say that the provincial government has played with the elected chairman, Nazimdeen., councillors and the promises made and them regarding funding and transfer of resources to gross root level were not fulfilled and were snub by Govt badly.

Prince Khalid Pervaz had called the elders of the area from Arando to Garam Chishma in this consultative meeting so that after consulting with them, he would leave his party and join the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf Parliamentary Party of Pervaz Khattak. He says that he wants to do this in the long terms benefit and interest of the people of Chitral so that he can serve the people of Chitral with the support of party that is in government in

the province. He says that many mistakes have been made by us in past, especially by our voters, we elect MNAs from the opposition party in federal, and we nominate MPAs from other party against of ruling party in the province. By doing so, we send our MNA, MPA the assembly, who sit on the opposition seats and play the role of beating the desk only in parliament. And no fund or development project can bring to Chitral. This will not happen now. Our effort will be that if we make the candidate of the party whose government is expected to be elect and send them to the assembly, then the ways of development of Chitral will be opened.

When he was asked that his elder brother Prince Iftharuddin is in the Pakistan Muslim League-N and he was elected as a member of the National Assembly using the card of Pervaz Musharraf, then it will not create any controversy for him, which he denied.



PESHAWAR: Participants holding placards to show solidarity with Kashmiri people on the occasion of 'Kashmir Black Day' during a protest.

Political alliance stage protest for release ANP leader  
F.P. Report

WANA: Leaders of South Waziristan Lower political alliance staged a protest in front of Wana city police station (PS) on Friday against the arrest of Ayaz Wazir, senior leader of Awami National Party South Waziristan Lower. Leaders of PPP, Jamat-e-Islami, ANP and Pakhtunkhwa MAP participated in the demonstration, all political leaders demanded the immediate release of Ayaz Wazir.

On this occasion, Imran Mukhalis from PPP, Noor Zaman Wazir from ANP, Ashfaq Wazir from Pakhtunkhwa MAP and Asad Ullah Wazir from Jamaat-e-Islami addressed the protesters and called the arrest of Ayaz Wazir illegal, and rejected it. The political leaders demanded from the provincial government and Chief Justice of Peshawar that the judicial offices should be shifted from Tank district to South Waziristan Lower headquarters Wana.

On this occasion, the leaders of the political parties also said that South Waziristan Lower district is located 170 km away from Tank district. The courts and jail of South Waziristan Lower Waziristan are located in Tank district, due to which the poor people of Waziristan are facing a lot of difficulties. They said, due to the distance of the court and being in another district, the applicants are often left out of appearance in the court. Which not only wastes the time of the poor people, but the law issues strict orders against it, which adds to the legal complications for the public.

## JI: No to tax on NCP vehicles in Malakand

## F.P. Report

BUNER: The Jamaat e-Islami district Buner Amier Mohamad Halem Bacha has said big No to impositions tax on Non Custom Paid vehicles in Malakand Division and announced resistance at all forums. However, they agreed just a profiling for the sake of data and transparency.

The JI Amier M. Halem (candidate PK 25) flanked by G.S Akbar Khan Advocate ex speaker Bakht Jihan (candidate NA 10) Engineer Nasar Ali (candidate PK 26) in a press conference claimed the JI senator Mushtaq Ahmed Khan was best represented the case in senate and got ten years exemption.

The JI Amier while defending the claim ten years more relaxation for MKD recalled the era when militancy hit earthquake hit torrential rains hit floods hit the inhabitants of MKD and they lost almost all of their income generating sources.

The JI Amier repeated imposition all kinds and f taxes in MKD would not be acceptable until the people of MKD were not properly rehabilitated and able to stand on their feet economically and financially. The JI Amier made it clear all of stakeholders would be provided a single platform to unitedly fight for rights of tax free zone status of the MKD even if the option was wheel jam and shutter down strike, he concluded.

**AGEGA stages demo, march for demands:** The all government employees grand alliance AGEGA was staged a historic grand protest demonstration at Daggar Chowk and a march to DC office where the leaders handed over a memorandum to the DC Hamid Ali and asked forwarding it to the chief secretary KPK.

The protest demo the walk led by AGEGA KPK general secretary Wazir Zada Buner. The leaders of all working departments union leaders i.e doctors

paramedics clerks class IV teachers lecturers professors participated. The protestors were carried banners and pay cards inscribe the slogans No to cut on pension No to cut on salaries and Upgradation a due right. They were chanted full throat slogans in support of demands too. They were blocked the main Pir Baba Daggar Swari roads for a while also.

The AGEGA KPK G.S Wazir Zada Buner Nasrullah Zeb Dr Azam Bahar Bacha Faramoz Zaren Shah Rashed Meraj Ali Shah Abdur Rashed Maulana Waheed Raj Mohamad Khan and others addressed. The speakers bitterly criticized the interim setup for taking decisions beyond mandate and warned of dire consequences in case the demands were not meet till end of this month the AGEGA would stage a set in Peshawar first day November and would be on road till acceptance demands.

## NCP cars' owners directed to get vehicles registered till Dec 31st

## F.P. Report

LOWER DIR: A meeting regarding profiling of the non-custom paid vehicles was held at Balambat with deputy commissioner Muhammad Fawad in the chair.

Director excise and taxation department Malakand Division Javed Khilji, Excise and Taxation officer Fazal Ghafoor and other officials were also in attendance. Briefing the meeting Javed

Khilji said that the provincial government had decided to register NCP vehicles in Malakand Division on Sep, 14 in apex committee meeting.

He said the process of NCP vehicles' profiling had been launched in the district and so far hundreds of vehicles had been registered. He said that the purpose of vehicles' profiling was to protect people, businessmen, car owners and eliminate crimes. He said the profiling would

also help reduce lifting of the NCP cars. He said that it would not only be easier for the police and law enforcement agencies to investigate crimes, but also for the government to construct roads, manage fuel supply and implement environmental policy in each district. He said the registrations were free and the affidavit required only the vehicle owners to swear that the vehicles were owned by them and were not stolen.

## Turkey at 100: Inspiring progress in a changing world

## Syed Ali Nawaz Gilani

*"The future belongs to those who believe in the beauty of their dreams." - Mustafa Kemal Atatürk.*

**ANKARA, Turkey - October 29, 2023, marks a historic date in the annals of time, commemorating the centenary celebration of the Republic of Turkey since its monumental inception in 1923. Mustafa Kemal Atatürk, the visionary architect of modern Turkey, laid the cornerstone for a nation that not only shines as a beacon of hope and prosperity for its people but also resonates as an emblem of progress across the Muslim world. This momentous milestone underscores Turkey's incredible journey toward socio-economic development and its vital role in nurturing profound bonds with nations worldwide, most notably its deep-rooted connection with Pakistan.**

Turkey has endured the tumultuous winds of history, facing five successful military coups since the birth of the Republic in 1923. However, the events that unfolded on that fateful Friday marked a daring attempt at the sixth coup, with soldiers marching against President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan and his ruling Justice and Development Party, known as the A.K.P.

Nestled within the heart of this remarkable nation is a constitutional secular state, a unique blend of history and modernity. Turkey, with more than ninety-five percent of its population adhering to the Muslim faith, carries the legacy of once being the seat of a mighty Islamic empire. Throughout its storied history, the Turkish military has often stood as a stalwart guardian, shielding the cherished principles of secularism and the Constitution, diligently preserving the vision of its founding father, Mustafa Kemal Atatürk.

Turkey also shares a profound connection with the Indian subcontinent, which reviews the complexities of Muslim identity. As time flowed on, the dynamics of Muslim identity in India underwent significant transformations. Following the reign of Shah Alam II, a practice emerged that held deep symbolism - the recitation of the name of the Ottoman caliph during the Khutba, the Friday sermon. This seemingly subtle act signified a profound shift in perception, indicating that the mantle of safeguarding and defending the Muslim community in India had passed from the Mughal emperor to the Ottoman Caliph, the spiritual leader of the Ottoman Empire.

The passage of a century has borne witness to Turkey's remarkable metamorphosis into a regional powerhouse, replete with a robust economy and a rich cultural heritage. It stands as a dynamic and influential global player.

The transformation of Turkey's economic landscape across the past century is nothing short of extraordinary. Its commitment to diversification, innovation, and visionary leadership has catapulted it into the echelons of emerging economic giants. Straddling the continents of Europe and Asia, Turkey's strategic geographical position has amplified its global significance. Embarking on ambitious endeavors such as Vision 2023, Turkey is poised to continue its journey toward becoming one of the world's leading economies by its centennial anniversary. While the path ahead is laden with challenges, it also brims with opportunities for further progress, stability, and prosperity.

Over the course of the century, Turkey has borne witness to a remarkable economic transformation. This evolution has been marked by diversification, innovation, and technological advancement across various sec-

tors. In recent years, Turkey has been ardently working towards establishing itself as a regional hub across a spectrum of fields, encompassing finance, manufacturing, tourism, and agriculture, to name a few. Its geographical location at the crossroads of Europe and Asia has conferred upon it a unique advantage, facilitating international trade and beckoning foreign investment. Under the sagacious leadership of President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan, Turkey has embarked on a series of comprehensive reforms aimed at fortifying economic growth and stability. Initiatives like the Vision 2023 plan, unveiled in 2011, have set audacious targets, envisaging Turkey as one of the world's top ten economies by its centennial anniversary. These reforms have fostered an environment conducive to foreign direct investment, nurturing both domestic and international trade.

This journey is nothing short of miraculous. Turkey's path to progress is emblematic of relentless pursuit - of growth, modernization, and diversification. It has transitioned from a primarily agrarian economy into a dynamic and multifaceted one. Diversification stands at the heart of Turkey's economic prowess. The nation has been unwavering in its promotion of innovation and technological advancement across a spectrum of industries. This strategic approach has enabled Turkey to diversify its economic foundation, transcending traditional sectors and embracing novel opportunities.

In recent times, Turkey has been zealously endeavoring to establish itself as a regional hub, spanning various sectors from finance and manufacturing to tourism and agriculture. Its geographical juncture at the intersection of Europe and Asia has played a pivotal role in its regional ascent.

Turkey's unique geographical position bestows a strategic

advantage, bridging two continents and serving as an ideal conduit for international trade. This geographic centrality has enticed businesses and investors eager to leverage Turkey's role as a gateway to both Europe and Asia. The visionary leadership of President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan has been instrumental in steering Turkey's economic transformation. His administration has championed far-reaching reforms aimed at enhancing economic growth and stability. The commitment to creating an environment conducive to investment and innovation remains unwavering.

Among the most notable milestones in Turkey's recent economic history is the inception of the Vision 2023 plan in 2011. This ambitious plan laid out a series of goals and targets for Turkey to attain by its centennial anniversary. These targets spanned an array of economic facets, from GDP growth to foreign trade, infrastructure development to educational and healthcare reforms.

Central to Turkey's economic transformation is its prowess in attracting foreign direct investment. The Vision 2023 plan, coupled with other reform initiatives, has nurtured an environment that is alluring to international enterprises. This has precipitated a surge in foreign investments, fueling economic growth and job creation. Moreover, Turkey's economic evolution is underscored by a substantial increase in both domestic and international trade. The nation's enhanced infrastructure, streamlined trade regulations, and strategic geographical position have rendered it an attractive destination for businesses seeking to expand their markets.

While Turkey's economic progress is indeed commendable, it has not been devoid of challenges. Economic stability and growth have, at times, been juxtaposed with the need to

address issues such as inflation, fiscal deficits, and currency fluctuations. However, the nation's leadership remains steadfast in their commitment to surmounting these challenges and pursuing opportunities for further growth.

Pakistan, a nation intertwined with Turkey through deep-rooted historical and cultural ties, has played an integral role in this journey of progress. The bilateral relationship between these two nations has burgeoned over the years, encapsulating various sectors, including trade, defense, education, and cultural exchange. Pakistan and Turkey have joined hands in a plethora of initiatives, forging closer economic ties. The Pakistan-Turkey Free Trade Agreement, inked in 2013, has played a pivotal role in augmenting the volume of trade between the two nations, with a shared aspiration to reach \$5 billion by 2023. Furthermore, collaborative projects such as the Istanbul-Tehran-Islamabad (ITI) train service and the Pakistan-Turkey Cultural Year have fortified people-to-people interactions and deepened cultural understanding between the two nations.

Turkish businesses have made substantial investments in Pakistan, significantly contributing to its economic development. Turkish companies have played a pivotal role in diverse sectors, including construction, energy, telecommunications, and textiles, imparting valuable expertise and creating employment opportunities for the Pakistani workforce. Furthermore, educational and cultural exchanges have cemented the bond between Turkey and Pakistan. Countless scholarships, exchange programs, and cultural festivals have offered opportunities for students and citizens from both nations to immerse themselves in each other's rich heritage, thus fostering enduring ties.

As Turkey commemorates its extraordinary centenary, we find

ourselves compelled to applaud the nation's unwavering dedication to socio-economic advancement. In this remarkable journey, Turkey's partnership with Pakistan emerges as a shining exemplar, epitomizing the immense power latent within robust international bonds. With an unshakable sense of purpose, Turkey boldly embarks on its next century, poised to achieve even greater feats. Turkey's epic journey of a century is a guiding light, not just for its people but for nations worldwide. It stands as an enduring testament to the extraordinary outcomes that arise from unwavering dedication to progress, socio-economic growth, and international cooperation. The luminous torch of inspiration ignited by Turkey's journey reaches far and wide, casting a hopeful glow on what can be achieved when vision, determination, and unity converge.

Today, Turkey stands as a vibrant tapestry of diversity and dynamism, a bridge between two continents, effortlessly weaving together a mosaic of cultures. With a thriving economy, a youthful population, and a strategically vital geopolitical position, Turkey emerges as a pivotal force on the global stage. Its role in regional politics, acting as a vital link between Europe and Asia, remains pivotal. Turkey continues to be a key influencer in international affairs, shaping the destinies of nations while cherishing its rich heritage. The leadership of Turkey, rooted in an unshakable belief in the enchanting power of dreams, unwavering dedication to progress, and an unyielding commitment to modernity, stands as an enduring testament to the limitless potential residing within the hearts and souls of the Turkish people and the great nation they proudly call home.

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## Lebanon cannot afford war, and Hezbollah knows it

BEIRUT (Reuters): With an economy in ruins and a crumbling state, Lebanon can ill afford another war between Hezbollah and Israel. Iran-backed Hezbollah knows this and is keeping Lebanon's crises in mind as it plots the next steps in the conflict with Israel, sources say.

As the war between Israel and Hezbollah's Palestinian ally Hamas reverberates across the Middle East, the risk of war between Hezbollah and Israel remains higher than at any point since their last big conflict in 2006. Analysts say the Shi'ite group could escalate if Hamas appears to be on the ropes in the Gaza Strip 200 km (130 miles) away, while Lebanese leaders fear Israel could chose to instigate a major conflict with Hezbollah.

But with Israel warning Hezbollah it would wreak "devastation" upon Lebanon were the group to open the front, the costs of any war loom large in a country already suffering one of the most destabilising phases since its 1975-90 civil war. "Hezbollah has no interest in war. Lebanon has no interest in war", a source familiar with Hezbollah thinking said. The group did not want to see the country destroyed and Lebanese fleeing from the south as thousands already have, the source said. With state coffers empty, many also wonder who would pay to rebuild. Some question whether Sunni-led Gulf Arab states that financed reconstruction in 2006 would rush to help this time, given Hezbollah's bigger role in Lebanon.

Hezbollah's clashes with Israeli forces at the border have been calibrated to

avoid major escalation so far, sources say, though as of Friday 47 of its fighters have been killed since the Hamas-Israel war erupted. However, Hezbollah has also indicated a readiness for war, reflecting its position as the spearhead of an Iran-backed alliance against Israel and the United States. Lebanese politicians have urged Hezbollah not to escalate, though they have little to no sway over its decisions.

"The fate of Lebanon is at stake," Druze leader Walid Jumblatt said, calling this perhaps the most dangerous phase he had seen in his political career. He said there was nothing Lebanese could do to stop a war instigated by Israel. "But from our side, we must control matters, via dialogue and advising the brothers in Hezbollah to keep the rules of engagement as they are," he said in comments to media.

Israeli President Isaac Herzog has said Israel was not looking for a confrontation on its northern border "but if Hezbollah drags us into war it should be clear that Lebanon will pay the price". One of Hezbollah's closest allies, the Christian politician Suleiman Frangieh, said the group did not want war. If it had, Hezbollah fighters would have stormed Israel on Oct. 7 as Hamas did from Gaza, he said. One senior Lebanese official said governments had contacted Lebanon to cool tensions.

"We're telling them that instead of telling us to restrain Hezbollah, they need to put pressure on the Israelis not to escalate," he said. The last several years have been particularly difficult for Lebanon, which has known little stability since independence and endured

Wars including Israeli invasions in 1978 and 1982. Decades of corruption and mismanagement by ruling politicians led the financial system to collapse in 2019, wiping out savings, demolishing the currency and fuelling poverty.

The following year, Beirut was shattered by a huge chemicals explosion at the port. Hezbollah used its way to help derail an investigation that sought to prosecute some of its allies, calling it politicised. Tensions led to deadly violence. The state is barely functioning, while factional squabbling has left it without a president and a fully empowered government.

Nabil Boumonsef, deputy editor-in-chief of Annahar newspaper, said any war would be far more destructive than 2006, while Lebanon did not have a government capable of managing the fallout.

"We would be facing a scenario of real terror - the destruction of the infrastructure in Lebanon and aborting any prospect of economic recovery," he said. Lebanon took years to rebuild from the 2006 war which killed 1,200 people in Lebanon, mostly civilians, and 158 Israelis, most of them soldiers. After the war, which began after Hezbollah kidnapped two Israeli soldiers and killed others in a cross-border raid, Hezbollah leader Sayyed Hassan Nasrallah said the group had not anticipated war and would not have carried out the operation if he had known it would lead to such a conflict. Seventeen years later, Hezbollah's massively expanded arsenal has cemented a power balance in its favour to the dismay of opponents who say the group is once again deciding matters of war and peace.

## S Korean and US forces stage drills

SEOUL (AP): South Korean and US troops have been conducting live-fire exercises this week to hone their ability to respond to potential "Hamas-style surprise artillery attacks" by North Korea, South Korea's military said Friday.

The two forces regularly conduct live-fire and other training, but this week's drills come after Hamas' Oct. 7 assault on Israel raised security jitters in South Korea, which shares the world's most heavily fortified border with rival North Korea. Experts say the North's forward-deployed long-range artillery guns can fire about 16,000 rounds per hour in the event of a conflict, posing a serious threat to Seoul, which is about 40-50 kilometers (25-30 miles) from the border.

The three-day firing exercises, involved 5,400 South Korean and US soldiers, 300 artillery systems, 1,000 vehicles and air force assets, according to South Korea's military. In a simulated response to "the enemy's (possible) Hamas-style surprise artillery attacks," the exercises practiced strikes designed to "remove the origins of the enemy's long-range artillery provocations at an early date," South Korea's Ground Operations Command said in a statement.

North Korea didn't immediately react to the drills. It typically views major US-South Korean military training as invasion rehearsals and responds with missile tests. South Korea and the United States have been expanding their regular military drills in the face of North Korea's advancing nuclear program. Since last year, North Korea has carried out more than 100 missile tests, some of them simulated nuclear attacks on South Korea and the US.

## Many in Niger are suffering

NIAMEY (AP): Hamsa Diakite can't remember the last time her family of eight had a good meal. She once sustained them by selling fried bread until a coup in Niger three months ago resulted in sanctions against the West African nation, squeezing incomes in one of the world's poorest countries and leaving millions like Hamsa struggling in the absence of aid.

"Not only is food very expensive, but school supplies have also doubled in price. I also have to clothe my children and, above all, deal with their illnesses," the 65-year-old said. After elite soldiers toppled Niger's democratically elected President Mohamed Bazoum on July 26, the country faced economic sanctions from West Africa's regional bloc, ECOWAS, as well as Western and European countries including the United States that had provided aid for health, security and infrastructure needs.

Neighbors shut their borders with Niger and more than 70% of its electricity, supplied by Nigeria, was cut off after financial transactions with West African countries were suspended. Niger's assets in external banks were frozen and hundreds of millions of dollars in aid were withheld. The sanctions are the most stringent yet imposed by the regional bloc in an effort to stem the tide of coups in Africa's volatile Sahel region, but they have had little or no impact on the junta's ambition.

Instead, they have hit hard Niger's more than 25 million people. "We are quickly running out of funding, medicines. People are running out of food," Louise Aubin, the United Nations resident coordinator in Niger, told The Associated Press. The junta has since told her to leave Niger over allegations the global body is blocking the country's participation in its activities. The UN hasn't commented on the allegations. Aubin said there had been "positive responses" from Niger's neighbors to the idea of reopening borders for a humanitarian corridor, but didn't give details. The world's third least developed nation, according to UN estimates, Niger in 2021 received \$1.77 billion in assistance, more than half for humanitarian aid as well as social infrastructure and services.



SEOUL: South Korean army K-9 self-propelled howitzers and K-55A1 self-propelled howitzers fire during the military drills at a training field in Cheorwon, South Korea.

## Tired of protest, Putin opponents take up arms in Ukraine

KYIV (AFP): In a sandy ravine outside Kyiv, a group of soldiers in camouflage were learning the basics of warfare -- in Russian. A newly-formed battalion within the Ukrainian army is made up of some 50 Russians who have come to fight against their fellow citizens.

"I took the decision to go into Ukraine as soon as possible to fight against Russia, against the Putin regime, against imperialism," said one fighter, who goes by the call sign "Grecha" (Buckwheat). The war in Ukraine has attracted a motley bunch of foreign volunteers, most of whom serve in the army's International Legion, which also incorporates the Siberian Battalion. Fighters covered their faces and did not want to give their names.

They were a varied group -- both ethnic Russians with long-standing opposition views and members of Siberia's minority ethnic groups. This is not the only Russian unit fighting for Ukraine. This spring, two others came into the spotlight after brief incursions across the Russian border: the Russian Volunteer Corps, which has links to the far-right and football hooligans, and another unit called the Freedom of Russia Legion. The International Legion's spokesman said he could not give details about how the Russians enter Ukraine but said some come in small groups, others alone. "We don't bring them over

in car boots," he stressed.

"It's not illegal crossings. It's all absolutely legal. We need to look for various loopholes within international and Ukrainian legislation so they can get into Ukraine." None are prisoners-of-war, he said, and they are on military contracts. "Grecha" said he was born in Ukraine's Crimea but had lived in Moscow, working as a paramedic. "We need to free Ukraine, the motherland where I was born in Crimea, that's my dream," he said. He said his political views are not clearly defined but they are "more liberal than in Russia now".

Grecha added that he had joined opposition protests against the war but felt they were "pointless". "In Russia at the moment there is a dictatorship which of course I am extremely unhappy about, because it might not concretely affect me right now: I'm not in jail, I'm not a foreign agent but I feel the state gives less and less freedom to its citizens," the fighter said. "Sooner or later it will be one big concentration camp, basically it already is." He left Russia last year and sought to enter Ukraine, but "at first there was no organisation, there was no information about how to get in." He spent time in countries that are visa-free for Russians, living mainly in a tent.

He said he eventually found an organisation called the Civic Council, which says on its website that it

recruits for the Siberian Battalion. Its Facebook page says it is in Warsaw. Grecha said the organisation agreed his transit along with his wife. "I spent some time waiting in third countries and at one wonderful moment they wrote to me that we can go out, they provided the route and that way we got into Ukraine." He admitted he had not told his parents he was joining up.

"They have different views on this war. We've talked about this topic many times and argued many times." Another fighter -- "Shved" (Swede) -- said he had left Russia more than a decade ago "because of political persecution" and had lived in Sweden since 2011. "I had taken part in anti-government, anti-Putin activities for a long time and was forced to emigrate," he said, calling himself "an anarchist" and partially concealing his face. Prominent Russians known to have joined the Siberian Battalion include Alexei Makarov, a former member of the National Bolshevik Party who was granted refuge in Sweden, and anti-Kremlin activist Ildar Dadin. "In this war, Ukraine stands on the side of people's freedom," Shved said, adding that he began fighting last summer with another unit. "I see what needs to be done now is to achieve the defeat of Putin's Russia," he said, hopeful that this would spark political change in Russia and Belarus. "And for that we need Ukraine's victory."

## Erdogan challenges Ataturk's legacy on Turkey's centenary

ANKARA (AFP): President Recep Tayyip Erdogan will mark Turkey's centenary Sunday by honouring the post-Ottoman republic's revered founder, while chipping away at the foundation of his secular state. Erdogan and World War I-era military commander Mustafa Kemal Ataturk have become the seminal figures of modern Turkey, their contrasting styles and visions defining the shape of society and the country's place in the world.

Dubbed "reis" ("chief") by supporters, Erdogan is now Turkey's longest-serving leader, overseeing a massive modernisation drive that has sustained his popularity in poorer and more religiously conservative provinces since 2003. Meaning the "father of all Turks", the surname Ataturk was bestowed on Mustafa Kemal by Turkey's parliament after the field marshal drove out foreign armies and built a new, staunchly secular republic from the Ottoman Empire's ruins.

Now, Erdogan is walking a fine line between paying respects to the man who created the country, and building his own legacy -- one that critics fear is pulling Turkey back into its Ottoman past. He peppers his speeches with proclamations about a new "Century of Turkey", which could include a revised constitu-

tion that protects women's right to stay veiled in public and defines marriage as a union between a man and woman.

State television is also rolling back coverage of the celebrations, citing Israel's war with Gaza militants. A lack of foreign guests at Turkey's big birthday bash is adding to a sense of this being one party that Erdogan would prefer to skip. Erdogan "didn't really want to celebrate the republic," said Soli Ozel, a professor of Istanbul's Kadir Has University.

"People are unhappy. Nothing has been done to create a festive atmosphere." Ataturk's lasting importance in Turkey is difficult to overstate, making any attempts by Erdogan to eclipse him particularly sensitive.

Historian, researcher and writer Ekrem Isin said Ataturk is still viewed by vast strata of society as a liberator who both defended Turks from World War I invaders and ended the religious conservatism of sultans' rule.

"Think of a people who had spent 600 years under dynastic rule," Isin said. "Anyone who raised his head a little was hit with a stick. There was a climate of fear." The new, secular and Europe-oriented republic formed by Ataturk allowed people "to stand on their own feet, granting

them rights that they did not even ask for". Some of the most sensitive reforms involved the stripping of religion from most facets of public life in the overwhelming Muslim state.

This may be exemplified best by the fate of Istanbul's Hagia Sophia, an ancient cathedral that the Ottomans converted into a mosque. Ataturk turned the UNESCO-protected building -- once the seat of Eastern Christianity -- into a museum, bestowing it a religious neutrality that underscored his vision of modern "Turkishness". Erdogan converted the Hagia Sophia back into a mosque in 2020, drawing international indignation and criticism from his secular rivals. "Erdogan is very much interested in putting his mark in every important policy matter," said Berk Ezen, an associate professor at Istanbul's Sabanci University.

"I think Erdogan has anti-secularism in his veins," added political analyst and columnist Barcin Yincan. "Political Islam has a problem with secularism and the republic," she said. "We are entering the second century of the republic with a government that is not at peace with the republic. Perhaps it does this consciously, because it feeds on polarisation." Erdogan's underlying message

Sunday, when he is due to deliver prepared remarks, will be that "he has done more in 20 years than was done in 100 years," Yincan said. Celebration will still include a drone show over the Bosphorus and fireworks in Turkey's main cities.

The drones' inclusion is a tacit nod to the technological innovations being spearheaded by the Baykar company, founded by the president's popular son-in-law Selcuk Bayraktar. The festivities could also be partially overshadowed by a million-strong rally in defence of Palestinian rights that Erdogan's AKP party has scheduled for Saturday in Istanbul. "He could have organised this meeting for next week. This anniversary only comes once in a century," Kadir Has University's Ozel said. "Our government is an (AKP) party government that has always opposed the republican project." Turkey's TRT state broadcaster is also cancelling concerts and other entertainment broadcasts for the event, citing "the alarming human tragedy in Gaza". The historian Isin said festive marching band parades would always commemorate October 29 in his youth. This time, it will be "an unpleasant celebration with no atmosphere of excitement," Isin said.

## Sudden death of China's leader Li shocked many

HONG KONG (AP): The sudden death of China's former second-ranking leader, Li Keqiang, has shocked many people in the country, with tributes offered up to the ex-official who promised market-oriented reforms but was politically sidelined. Li, who died early Friday of a heart attack, was China's top economic official for a decade, helping navigate the world's second-largest economy through challenges such as rising political, economic and military tensions with the United States and the COVID-19 pandemic.

"Li was extolled as an excellent (Communist Party of China) member, a time-tested and loyal communist soldier and an outstanding proletarian revolutionist, statesman and leader of the Party and the state," the official Xinhua News Agency said in its brief obituary. Li was known for his advocacy of private business but lost much of his influence as President Xi Jinping accumulated ever-greater powers

and elevated the military and security services in aid of the "great rejuvenation of the Chinese nation."

A hashtag related to his death on the Chinese social media platform Weibo drew over 1 billion views in just a few hours. On posts about Li, the "like" button was turned into a daisy -- a common flower for funerals in China, and many users commented "rest in peace." Others called his death a loss and said Li worked hard and contributed greatly to China. The Chinese government, however, had little to say immediately about Li. Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesperson Mao Ning asked reporters to refer to information from official news agency Xinhua and the obituary released later.

"We deeply mourn over the tragic passing of Comrade Li Keqiang due to a sudden heart attack," she said. Beijing resident Xia Fan, 20, said she was saddened by the death of Li, whom she called "a really

conscientious and responsible premier." She said her mind was blank when she first heard about the news. "He really accompanied the growth of our generation, that's how it feels in my heart," she said.

Designer Chen Hui said Li contributed greatly to China's development. "If I were to talk about it, it's impossible to finish it in one day. It's a pity," Chen said. US Secretary of State Antony Blinken expressed his condolences on the passing of Li, said Matthew Miller, State Department spokesperson. Nicholas Burns, US ambassador to China, also extended his condolences to Li's family, the Chinese government and the Chinese people in both English and Chinese on X, formerly known as Twitter.

Japan's embassy in China expressed its condolences on Weibo. It said Li had visited Japan in 2018 and he played an important role in the relations of both countries.



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# Kashmir Black Day

**T**HE Kashmiris in India held Jammu and Kashmir, Azad territory and Pakistanis in the country and abroad observed the Kashmir Black Day on October 27, 2023. Huge public rallies, demonstrations and commemoration sessions were held in major cities worldwide to condemn India's illegal occupation of Jammu and Kashmir that took place on October 27, 1947, when Indian troops unlawfully entered the disputed valley and took control of the Muslim majority region. Historically, New Delhi's complicity with Kashmiri Hindu Maharaja and forceful occupation of Jammu and Kashmir caused a lifelong problem for millions of Kashmiri Muslims, splitting the territory into two, prompting displacement and migration along with instigating rivalry between the newly liberated neighbouring states, India and Pakistan.

India has long been forcibly occupying Jammu and Kashmir over the past seven and a half decades, while Kashmir is one of the longstanding unresolved disputes on the agenda of the UN Security Council (UNSC) so far. The Indian rulers themselves took the Kashmir issue to the United Nations and categorically acknowledged the need for a peaceful settlement of the issue by holding a plebiscite in the Jammu and Kashmir region under the UN's supervision but later treacherously violated the UN resolutions on one or the other pretext. Over the past decades, Indian-occupied Jammu and Kashmir remained one of the world's most militarized zones as New Delhi deployed over nine hundred thousand troops to suppress Kashmiris' rightful quest for freedom and just struggle to grasp their right to self-determination conferred by the United Nations Security Council in 1948. The human rights situation in Kashmir remains dire, while the Indian security forces weighed an undeclared war against innocent Kashmiris through unwarranted raid and search operations, arbitrary arrests, extra-judicial killings, use of pellet guns and unlawful coercion and torture, blocked of internet and restrictions on press, movement of the public, peaceful assembly and political activities. Thus, Kashmir has been presenting the scenes of a highly guarded open prison where inmates do not have even the basic rights and access to information, religious and political rituals etc.

Over the decades, Indian rulers not only betrayed the UNSC's resolutions regarding the Kashmir dispute but intentionally introduced policies and implemented measures aimed at consolidating India's unlawful control of the valley along with adding further complications to the issue making UNSC's resolutions null and void. The major step in this regard was the Modi-led BJP Hindutva regime's unlawful actions taken on August 5, 2019, and thereafter, which was a failed attempt to sabotage the Kashmir dispute by taking unilateral domestic constitutional and administrative measures. The Modi government revoked Article 370 and Section 35 of the Indian constitution to change the special status of Jammu and Kashmir which empowered the Modi government to allow Non-Kashmiris to get Kashmiri citizenry and property rights, change electoral constituencies and voter lists to change the demography of the disputed territory through biased and pre-planned illegal actions.

Unfortunately, 77 long and dark years have passed after Indian troops illegally occupied the Muslim-majority Jammu and Kashmir valley and an equal amount of time has passed that the Kashmiris are waiting for the implementation of the UNSC resolutions to resolve this dispute that has shaped into a grave humanitarian crisis over the past decades. In fact, the ploy of creating a conducive environment for a UN-sponsored plebiscite has caused an unprecedented lapse of time and complicated the issue as the status quo best serves the purpose of the occupier/aggressor. It is high time that the government of Pakistan increases its pressure on India and the United Nations pressing them to fulfil their obligations under the UN charter regarding the Kashmir issue, so the dream of a free and prosperous Kashmir could be realized as early as possible.

## Migrants deportation and policy of appeasement

**T**HE residents of Pakistan's southwestern border city of Chaman continued their sit-in protest over the past several days, demanding the government reverse a new passport and visa policy which is due to be implemented from Nov. 1 at the border crossing. The protest, which kicked off on Saturday at the Chaman border, took place in the wake of the Pakistan government's move to tighten its travel policy for citizens of all neighboring countries, after Law Enforcement and Security Agencies informed that foreign nationals particularly illegal Afghan refugees have been involved in serious crimes, relating to country's economic and security issues ranging from sponsoring and harboring terrorists, weighing undeclared war against Pakistani State, smuggling of important commodities together with foreign currencies including most desired US dollar, street crimes and cases of kidnapping, ransom and extortion. After the Country's economy reached a looming collapse and Afghanistan based terrorist outfits mounted serious security risks for the state of Pakistan, the perblind Pakistani leaders came to senses by strengthening the border regime, framing a new visa and travel policy for foreigners effective from November 1. The government of Pakistan has recently issued instructions to illegal migrants including Afghans to leave the country voluntarily before November 1, otherwise they will face a forceful evacuation, along with imprisonment and fines.

There had been a wide ranging reaction against the government's decision regarding repatriation of all illegal migrants, citing multiple grounds, legal and economic consequences together with religious and historic bonds and trade compulsions. Meanwhile, lobbying agents, pressure groups and trade cartels used diverse strategies to reverse the government's decision and the ongoing sit-in Chaman is another tactic to pursue the executive to change its policy. In fact, no nation can survive and grow without the rule of the law, implementation of policies and regulation of entry/exit, trade and tourism, religious as well as political and social activities of the masses. Today, hundreds of thousands of Afghans have illegally procured Pakistani Identity Cards and Passports and are roaming in the guise of locals and threatening the state by one or the other means. Over the years, Pakistan has been a safe haven for criminals and crooks, grazing fields for illegal foreigners, that not only spoiled our economy and society but brought the country to the verge of collapse. The policy of appeasement and undue courtesy has cost a heavy price to the nation. Realistically, no government is authorized to curb lawful movements of its citizens but no group could also be allowed any extraordinary concession that risks national security, economic interests or cause embarrassment for the country any time in the future.

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# Western media failures say more about the West than Gaza

Patrick Gathara

**I**t has been more than two weeks now since another war in Gaza started. More than 6,500 Palestinians have been killed by relentless Israeli bombardment and 1,400 Israelis died in the attack by the armed Palestinian resistance group Hamas on southern Israel. Watching the media coverage of these events, I have been struck by the stark difference between how the killing of civilians has been covered on both sides.

Many Western media outlets insist on highlighting the immorality of killing and brutalising Israeli civilians, as Hamas has undoubtedly done, while soft-peddalling the immorality of the Israeli military's indiscriminate killing of Palestinian civilians by carpet bombing the Gaza Strip. In one remarkable interview on BBC Newsnight, when Husam Zomlot, the Head of the Palestinian Mission to the UK, said that seven members of his family had been killed by Israeli bombs, the reaction of his interviewer was to offer perfunctory condolences and immediately proclaim that "you cannot condone the killing of civilians in Israel".

Zomlot had not offered his personal tragedy as justification for Hamas atrocities but as an answer to a direct question about what happened to them. Yet having done so, he now found himself being asked to condemn, not those who murdered them, but those who killed others. It is worth noting that in all the interviews I watched of Israelis who had similarly lost loved ones, I have not come across a single one where the victims have been asked whether they condoned the actions of their government or disavowed the labelling of Palestinians by the Israeli defence minister, Yoav Gallant, as "human animals". None have been asked to condemn what some are controversially describing as an unfolding genocide and the expulsion of civilians in Gaza.

"We are preconditioned not to see Palestinian humanity because colonialism, white supremacy, and Islamophobia are still the dominant lens through which states, institutions, people, and media in the

West view the world (although geopolitical interests are, of course, also at play)," editorialises 'The New Humanitarian, contrasting the glorification of Ukrainian resistance to the Russian invasion with the delegitimisation of Palestinian struggle against invasion, dispossession and ethnic cleansing. Few outlets have bothered to ask how over two million people came to be packed into a tiny strip or discuss the 16-year blockade that has turned the territory into what is widely acknowledged as an open-air prison.

These inadequacies and distortions in the media coverage of the war in Gaza reflect a reality that is often obfuscated by claims of "journalistic objectivity". The truth is, journalists' discretion over what is fit to publish has never been absolute; it has always been circumscribed by the values and culture of the society in which they operate. The late American media ethicist, John Calhoun Merrill, asserted that "a nation's journalism cannot exceed the limits permitted by the society; on the other hand, it cannot lag very far behind".

Recognising how culture interacts with journalism is the key to understanding these biases, many of which are rooted in history. What we are seeing in the coverage of the war in Gaza is, in the first instance, a demonstration of the largely unacknowledged societal limits imposed on journalism. There is obvious censorship. Opinions that humanise Palestinians or that deviate from the official line of unconditional support for Israel have been suppressed. There have been clampdowns on protests and expressions of solidarity with the Palestinians, threats to arrest people for flying the Palestinian flag, and attempts by Big Tech companies to remove or shadow-ban pro-Palestinian content. A report by Al Jazeera's Listening Post programme suggested that editors in US newsrooms were discouraging any attempts to provide background context to the Hamas attacks as that would be unpalatable to

audiences.

However, censorship is not a sufficient explanation. As Merrill said, the journalism "cannot lag very far behind" the society. Journalism ethics and the moral principles and values that inform them do not belong to journalists alone. Rather they are reflections of society-wide expectations from the media. In essence, the reporting on Israel and Gaza tells us more about the journalists themselves and the cultures they spring from, than about the events in the region. Historically, anti-Semitism and Islamophobia have been a well-documented feature of Western cultural thought. Jews were once racialised and othered in much the same way Muslims are today, routinely subjected to pogroms. In the aftermath of the horrors of the Holocaust, however, anti-Semitism was widely denounced in Western culture as unacceptable and abhorrent.

By contrast, anti-Arab and Islamophobic sentiments in the West were never censured in the same way. Over the past few decades, they have been further fuelled by the US-led "war on terror", which Israel has used to frame its own conflict with the Palestinians. In this context, it is not surprising that many Westerners seem to believe that acknowledging the humanity of Jews has to go hand-in-hand with the dehumanisation of those coded as Muslims or Arabs (the categories are almost always conflated in the Western imagination). The insistence on Israel's "right" to defend itself even in the face of undeniable atrocities that date back to its establishment reflects the Western perception that Arab civilian deaths are an acceptable price for Israeli security and peace of mind.

By contrast, even an attempt to mention the context in which Israeli civilian deaths occurred is considered an outrageous move - as the UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres himself has recently discovered. Western media reports reflect this awful cultural calculus - the one-sided demand for condemnation, the individualisa-

tion and humanisation of the Israeli tragedy are juxtaposed next to the representation of Palestinian tragedy in passive language and as suffered by undifferentiated masses. The calculus is also apparent in the imagery of death. Social media and TV reports are inundated with graphic images of Palestinian dead but relatively few images of dead Israelis. Words and descriptions such as "beheaded babies" are presumed sufficient to articulate the horror of Israeli death. The horror of Palestinian death, however, needs to be established with gory imagery.

Audiences are constantly reminded that Hamas has been designated a terrorist organisation by Western governments, but not that human rights groups and the UN have described Israel as an apartheid regime. Criticism of Israeli actions, or even the attempt to humanise their victims, are coded as expressions of anti-Semitism, which carries a far heavier cultural penalty than anti-Arab sentiment. That said, it is important to keep in mind that culture is itself a collectivising and muddy concept and it should not be assumed that cultural concepts are held or accepted by everyone who identifies as part of the culture.

The huge demonstrations in support of Palestinians that are happening in Europe and North America are an example of this. The point though is that culture does influence media attitudes, ethics and framing as well as limits on what journalists can do. Media practitioners need to take cognisance of the facts and rethink ethics and professional practices forged in days when journalists reported the news largely to audiences who looked like and thought like them. Today, when news reports are instantly broadcast around the world, cultural blindspots can manifest as unethical practices, including as justification for genocide and ethnic cleansing. They should listen to and take seriously the repeated complaints about their reporting and framing. That requires a degree of self-awareness that sadly, many have so far failed to demonstrate.

Aljazeera

## Why is Elise Stefanik congratulating a new speaker?

Nicole Hemmer

**S**INCE the Republicans vacated the House speakership three weeks ago, a throng of candidates have vied for the position, rising and falling in increasingly short succession. After repeated failed votes, the party finally amassed a slate of nine candidates, winnowing them down until the generically-named Rep. Mike Johnson claimed the speaker-designate crown. House Republicans cheered Johnson's victory, surely applauding as much from relief that the process was over as celebration of the man who won.

The raft of would-be speakers came from across the country. They spanned the party's admittedly limited ideological range, and included both those who voted to overturn the 2020 presidential election and those who affirmed the legitimate winner (Johnson is in the former camp).

But one thing united the dozen or so Republicans vying to lead the House: they were all men. The highest-ranking woman in the GOP, Rep. Elise Stefanik of New York, who currently serves as conference chair, spent the past three weeks tweeting out her congratulations to each of the four successive speaker-designates. Stefanik may have her own reasons for avoiding the speaker's chair, which has recently become more of a career-killer than a career highlight. But her absence, and the absence of any of the other Republican women in the House from the roster of potential speakers, calls attention to the party's overall woman problem. Over the last 15 years, women have been strategically visible in the party, but have received very little power in return.

Consider the case of former Alaska Gov. Sarah Palin, plucked from near-obscurity to join the Republican presidential ticket as a vice presidential candidate in 2008. As the campaign slunk toward defeat in the fall of that year, Palin bore the brunt of the blame. Yet she remained a favorite of the party's right-flank, emerging as a leader of the Tea Party movement after Barack Obama's election. Within a few years, however, she had faded into irrelevance. This was in part due to her own choices: she opted for television fame over governing when she quit the Alaska governorship in 2009. But other former officeholders did the same, with different results. Both former Sen. Rick Santorum and former Speaker Newt Gingrich became television commentators after leaving office, using that new platform to launch presidential runs in 2012.

There were others as well, women like Rep. Michele Bachmann, who founded the Tea Party caucus in the House. The top Republican fundraiser in the House and one of the most visible members of the conference - she quickly became a household name - Bachmann vied for a position in party leadership after the 2010 midterm elections. But she was passed over, and a few years later left the House altogether (her successor, Tom Emmer, was speaker-designate for a few hours earlier this week). Former Rep. Liz Cheney, another highly visible House member, quickly made her way into leadership, becoming the conference chair after two years in office. She was stripped of her position 15 months later for opposing the efforts to overturn the 2020 election and voting to impeach Donald Trump. Cathy McMorris Rodgers, who held the conference

chair before Cheney, left the party leadership in 2019 rather than ascending higher in its ranks. (The chair, which Stefanik now holds, remains the highest leadership position any Republican woman has attained.)

These may seem like idiosyncratic cases, united only because they were each highly visible women denied a path to power who then lost the party's support. But they are necessarily idiosyncratic, since so few Republican women hold federal office, and fewer still have even a brush with power within the party. Currently there are 33 women in the Republican House Conference, the highest ever for the party - but still only a third of the number of Democratic women. Since the famous "Year of the Woman" in 1992, when the number of women elected to Congress nearly doubled, the Democratic Party has far outstripped the Republican Party in terms of representation. Which is not to say the Democratic Party has been a place of parity: even with the surge of Democratic women in Congress since 2018, they still represent only around 40% of the party's caucus. And of course, Rep. Nancy Pelosi remains the only woman to have ever become speaker.

So what explains the glass ceiling that kept Republican women out of the ring for the current speakership races? Some have argued that women are "too smart" to run for speaker, especially at a moment when the position has become a dead-end - and short-term - job. But this is too cute by half, an essentialist way of blaming women for their own lack of power. The same dynamic accompanied Bachmann's failed bid for a leadership role. At the time that she dropped out of the leadership race, Politico wrote that she "may actually retain significant power to influence the GOP agenda as an outsider," suggesting that she had little need for formal power so long as she had symbolic power.

But a stronger explanation rests with the party's ideas about women. Why would Stefanik aim for speaker when the party has never offered a woman a role above conference chair? Why would she believe the party would support such a rise? The party opposes most legislation aimed at aiding women. Only 33 House Republicans voted for the reauthorization of the Violence Against Women Act in 2019, and the Republican-led Senate refused to take it up. The party is uniformly against reproductive rights, and has struggled to revise its position even in the face of a number of election losses following the Supreme Court decision overturning Roe v. Wade.

The vast majority of Republicans in the House voted against a 2022 bill that would have codified the right to contraception. Two-thirds of Republican voters believe gender equality has gone far enough (or has gone too far), leaving little pressure to break glass ceilings in Congress.

Republicans understand the value of having women in high-profile positions. Given the party's broad opposition to feminism, a few female faces help cut against the image of a retrograde boy's club. But so far the party's congressional wing has shown little interest in matching that visibility with power, and despite cycling through speaker-designate after speaker-designate, that seems unlikely to change any time soon.

CNN

# Why Palestine was removed from the agenda and why it is back

Ramzy Baroud

**I**SRAEL had the perfect plan for Gaza - in fact, for all Palestinians - when it decided to redeploy its forces around the Gaza Strip in 2005. Despite statements made at the time by Israeli officials that the "disengagement" plan aimed at severing Israel's legal and other responsibilities from its role as an occupier, the actual story was different.

Dov Weissglas, a top adviser to late Israeli Prime Minister Ariel Sharon, conveyed the real reasons behind the redeployment. "The significance of the disengagement plan is the freezing of the peace process," Weissglas told Haaretz in 2004. Weissglas knew exactly what he was saying; after all, he was one of the architects of the plan. But how much of the Israeli plan, as described by Weissglas, was actually implemented? And does the current war in the Strip change those outcomes, as

pronounced nearly two decades ago?

The freezing of the peace process has been achieved in full. And not only that, but Israel has, since then, carried out numerous steps to make sure there is nothing worth negotiating over. The exponential growth of illegal Jewish settlements, the killing of Palestinians, the desecration of holy sites and the annexation plans make it unrealistic to even suggest that a two-state solution is still practically possible. But why was Israel keen on freezing a "process" that was futile to begin with? It was not the peace process that mattered to Israel, but the fact that, as long as such political conversations were still taking place, the Palestinian political agenda remained relevant. This logic, long argued by Palestinians, was supported by Weissglas himself when he said: "When you freeze that process, you prevent the establishment of a Palestinian state, and you

prevent a discussion on the refugees, the borders and Jerusalem."

He added: "Effectively, this whole package called the Palestinian state, with all that it entails, has been removed indefinitely from our agenda. And all this with authority and permission. All with a (US) presidential blessing and the ratification of both houses of Congress." This explains much of what has happened since.

First is that all Israeli governments, regardless of their ideological or political orientations, remained faithful to the plan and never engaged in any genuine political conversations on the future of a Palestinian state or the rights of the Palestinians, let alone a just peace. This indicates that Israel's intentions were not open for debate within the country's political establishment. For Tel Aviv, it was the end of peace efforts and the start of a new phase - that

of entrenching the occupation. Secondly, every US administration since then has either invested in the overall Israeli agenda or disowned the very "peace process" that the Americans themselves invented and sustained. This also did not happen by chance. Israel invested great lobbying efforts and diplomacy in dissuading the Americans from continuing to pursue their own agenda. Not only did Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu get what he wanted, in 2017 he even managed to convince the Trump administration to follow Israel's agenda on Jerusalem, refugees, settlements and even annexation. The Biden administration has not altered the grim political reality established by President Donald Trump, even if some of its language appeared to suggest otherwise.

Thirdly, although unwittingly, Weissglas indicated

that Israel does not see Palestinians and their struggle as fragments, but as a unified whole. By blocking one aspect of that struggle, the political process, all others were meant to fall like dominoes. The division of Palestinians, along with the ability of Mahmoud Abbas to sustain his Palestinian Authority for all these years despite its failure to achieve anything of substance, allowed Israel to advance its original plan unhindered.

Palestinians were still useful, however. The PA served as a line of defense for the ever-growing settlements. And every Palestinian attack against Israeli targets was utilized as further proof that Israel has no peace partner, thus solidifying the anti-peace position of every Israeli government. Discussions in the media following the Hamas attack on southern Israel on Oct. 7 focused on the attack itself, on Hamas as a free and, later, although selectively, on the bloodbath cre-

ated by Israel in Gaza. But that date was not the start of the war; it was one horrific episode in a war that had already started and was sustained by a very violent Israeli military occupation and apartheid.

Equally important, regardless of Israeli propaganda and distorted Western media coverage, there is no question that Israel has failed. That failure was initiated by Sharon's wishful thinking in 2005 and maintained through the illusions and arrogance of every Israeli government ever since. The truth is that Netanyahu is only a cog in a massive Israeli political machine that aims at dismissing the Palestinian cause, forever. Even those who insist on supporting Israel at any cost cannot now genuinely pretend that Palestine is not back on the agenda as the Middle East's most vital issue. Without a free Palestine, there can never be true peace, security or stability.



# Russian morale has broken against the steel hearts of Ukraine

**THE war in Ukraine has been shocking and distressing to a collective Western audience which has not seen industrialised warfare in at least three generations. It has seen grinding, murderous brutality in which men have gone into combat, taken heavy losses, and then the survivors - after a short break, if they are lucky - have been thrown into combat again and again until soldiers come to believe that death is certain.**

It is very hard to maintain any spirit of aggressive attack among such soldiers, especially if they are unwilling conscripts who have no interest in the war. The latest British intelligence update says that Russia is now reliant on specially set up "Shtorm-Z" units, made up of convicts and regular soldiers assigned as a punishment, to conduct offensive operations: that is, to make attacks. The British analysts go on to add that Russia has "extreme difficulty in generating combat infantry capable of effective offensive operations".

In effect, ordinary Russian troops' hearts have been broken: the only Russian soldiers who can be forced to get out of their trenches and attack are those of the "Shtorm-Z" units. These units may once have been meant to be elite, but they are now effectively penal battalions in which every man has been sentenced to death. Similar situations have developed in previous wars. The famous maverick US colonel David Hackworth, fighting in a grinding trench war in Korea, formed an elite unit called the Raiders from the troops of his infantry regiment. The Raiders did almost all the regiment's aggressive fighting: but they actually were treated as an elite. Raiders were given special weapons, better rations and pulled back out of the line to

more comfortable quarters between operations. Later in Vietnam, Hackworth used similar ideas; but he also sought to "steel his soldiers' hearts", to harden them so that they could stay aggressive and willing to fight even after the strain of prolonged combat.

It's a very difficult thing to do: but the evidence suggests that Ukrainian soldiers today have steely hearts indeed. They have continued to attack relentlessly all through the summer. It is clear that Russia is feeling the pressure to the south of Zaporizhzhia, as the Ukrainians push for the Azov Sea and aim to cut Russia's land-bridge in two. This has led the Russians to attempt an ill-advised offensive of their own around Avdiivka, in an attempt to draw off strength from the Ukrainian attack. But the Ukrainian 110th Mechanized Brigade, leading the defence of Avdiivka, are performing heroically. The Russians continue to pour more men and more equipment into another failed meat-grinder, reminiscent of the disastrous Russian campaign to capture Bakhmut at all costs. Russia's 2nd Combined Arms Army appears likely to have lost a brigade's worth of troops as local sources describe seeing hundreds of Russian corpses on the hills around the town. Russian units are pinned by heavy Ukrainian fire, unable to advance or retreat. In light of this failed advance, Russia appears to be mobilising additional reserves from the 106th Airborne Division to relieve pressure at Avdiivka.

It is also reconstituting fresh "Shtorm-Z" assault units from divisions across 1st Corps. These are reportedly given very low priority for medical treatment and resupply, perhaps because they are not expected to

survive long enough to need them. Avdiivka represents a strategic and political failure by Russia, too, not just a tactical and operational one. One of the main aims for this latest offensive is to relieve pressure further south. Yet the Ukrainians are holding out well as Russian losses become unsustainable. It now seems likely that there will be a limited withdrawal at Avdiivka, as Russia won't be able to supply a relief-in-place.

This offensive was the brainchild of General Gerasimov, the head of Russia's General Staff and a staunch Putin ally. Answering to defence minister Sergei Shoigu - another Putin yes-man - Gerasimov was personally tasked to halt the Ukrainian summer offensive by October. His plan has failed, costing huge numbers of Russian lives. Gerasimov should have prioritised reconstituting Zaporizhzhia's defences, as the Russian military has lost its ability to attack. This decision by Gerasimov is indicative of his preference for offensives. This is one reason Putin keeps him in place as his predecessor - the far more capable Surovikin, replaced after the failed Wagner putsch on Moscow - favoured defensive action when the situation demanded it.

With the Russian mechanized infantry divisions on the ropes, the weather turning unfavourable for assaults, and infantry units manned by poorly led conscripts and convicts, Russia can ill afford continued bungling. But bungling there shall be, as Gerasimov and Shoigu have no one to challenge their disastrous handling of the Russian campaigns: only a blood-thirsty tyrant to appease, who is determined to see more ill-conceived Russian assaults doomed to failure against the steely determination of the Ukrainians. Nevertheless,

2024 is going to bring some tough decisions for Kyiv as the US becomes increasingly distracted.

Already we have seen US munitions bound for Ukraine diverted for Israel, and as a fractious House split along party lines argues for more military spending for Tel Aviv, Kyiv will have to find more support from capitals closer to home. That will be a vital diplomatic mission, and a difficult one for Ukrainians who are arguably fighting Europeans' battles for them and receiving very little help in doing so. However, even as these financial and political realities begin to bite, Ukraine can take solace from the fact that Russia's combat attrition is close to, if not more than, 100 per cent of its combat manpower from 2021/22. The tough "kontraktniki" professional soldiers of the pre-invasion Russian army have been wiped out, and Ukrainians now face armies of unwilling conscripts and the dregs of the Russian prison system. Ukraine has been bloodied too, but every soldier in its army knows that he fighting to preserve his own home, his own family and ultimately himself from the horrors of Russian occupation: the task of steeling his heart is comparatively easy to perform.

It is this indomitable Ukrainian fighting spirit which matters. It saved the nation of Ukraine right at the start of Putin's invasion and it is still doing so today. It doesn't matter which foreign nations the money and munitions come from, so long as they come. In time when students look back and study the nature of war, they will remember Napoleon's dictum that in war, "the moral is to the physical as three to one". They will probably cite Ukraine as one of the greatest ever examples of its truth.

The Telegraph

## Greening the BRI

Qin Hu

**CLIMATE change is now affecting every inhabited region across the world. It is estimated that approximately 3.5 billion people are extremely vulnerable to its impacts. Being among the fastest-growing greenhouse gas emitters, developing countries are likely to be the first victims of climate change. Therefore, promoting low-carbon transformation in developing countries is critical to combating climate change.**

The world is looking at China to lead this process, and China has already stepped up to shoulder more responsibility. According to a report by the Green Finance and Development Centre at Fudan University, China's total engagement (in the forms of construction and investment) in the energy sector reached \$8.6 billion in Belt and Road countries during the first half of 2023, and 56 percent of that went into renewable energy, making that period the greenest in any six months since the Belt and Road Initiative's inception in 2013. Globally, China has provided 50 percent of wind power equipment and 80 percent of solar power equipment to the world. This year marks the 10th anniversary of the BRI and we have witnessed the concept of green development getting further embedded into the initiative, providing an essential driver for low-carbon and sustainable development around the world. Yet there is a lot more that can be done. And we can proceed with our work from three different angles. First, we need to create new channels for private capital to support green and low-carbon projects, and one avenue could be by building carbon markets.

According to a report by the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development, the annual demand for renewable energy investment in developing countries is about \$1.7 trillion, and they received about \$540 billion in clean energy investment in 2022. The gap is enormous. Meanwhile, data show that about 80 percent of green investment in developed countries comes from the private sector, while it is less than 15 percent in developing countries. Therefore, attracting more private capital to green and low-carbon projects has become central to promoting transition in developing countries. Establishing carbon markets can be one of the solutions as it effectively channels more private capital to green industries such as renewable energy and promotes the green transformation of industries. Besides, establishing carbon markets requires data reporting and a measurement, reporting and verification system. From this groundwork, private

investors can gain more information. Such approaches promote transparency, accountability, and trust among stakeholders, which will channel more private capital and provide assurance globally that the efforts are yielding results in the fight against climate change. Second, we need to deepen cooperation on "small but beautiful" projects that can serve the economic development needs of the local communities.

Understandably, economic development is the primary issue facing many developing countries, and "small but beautiful" projects could improve people's living conditions while ensuring low-carbon development. Compared with large-scale projects, "small but beautiful" projects are community-friendly, with low financial risk and high economic return, and they are easier to finance, build and manage. In addition, small projects usually have a shorter construction period and can generate economic and environmental benefits more quickly. "Small but beautiful" projects are usually designed according to the real needs of the local communities with higher environmental standards. Community residents are more likely to participate in "small but beautiful" projects than in large infrastructure projects. Their clearer understanding of the local ecological environment and economic development can make the investment more targeted, efficient, and beneficial for improving people's living.

Over the years, micro solar and hydroelectric power stations, green agriculture cooperation and sewage treatment projects jointly built with China in countries such as Georgia, Congo and Somalia, not only demonstrate green and sustainable development, but also drive the growth of local communities, making them a model of South-South Cooperation. Here are three ways to encourage the investment to "small but beautiful" projects. First, by assisting developing countries in conducting pre-feasibility studies for projects. In addition, common international standards should be developed for these projects to actively serve local livelihoods with high-quality products and services. Last, community residents should also be involved in the construction of these projects, as it is better to teach a man to catch fish than to give him fish. Third, we can promote experience-sharing through extensive and in-depth personnel exchanges in the low-carbon transition.

This may seem self-evident enough that we need to strengthen communication to draw from our collective experiences. In the 40 years

since the country's reform and opening-up, China has seen incredible economic development. Along the way, it has also learned many lessons and accumulated valuable experiences from its so-called polluting-first-and-cleaning-up-later process. Greater transparency and more frequent exchanges about China's experiences would be of great value to advancing low-carbon development in developing countries. This kind of exchange will need a large pool of talents who are knowledgeable about low-carbon technologies and management strategies and can contribute to the long-term green development in their countries. From 2012 to 2023, China has officially trained about 2,300 officials and technicians from 120 developing countries on climate change. Meanwhile, international training programs launched by universities, think tanks, and NGOs have helped officials, business leaders, students and members of local communities, who also play an important role in environment governance, gain the necessary capacity and knowledge. The Environmental Defense Fund has made a modest contribution in this regard through the inclusion of students from the BRI countries in our climate corps program since 2018. So far, the EDF has trained and sent fellows from Uganda, Ecuador and Malaysia to top-level enterprises in China on sustainable and low-carbon development projects. It will continue and strengthen its efforts in the coming years to help further enhance this kind of personnel exchanges. Through international personnel exchanges, understanding between countries can be enhanced so that the spirit of peace and cooperation, openness and inclusiveness, mutual learning and mutual benefit can be deeply rooted in people's hearts.

Climate change is a major challenge before the international community, especially the developing countries, and requires a global response. Active international cooperation in addressing climate change is a crucial way to participate in global climate governance actively and support developing countries in improving their capacity to address climate change. At the same time, international cooperation can further help the BRI countries to grow and help local communities to improve people's lives in an environmentally friendly way. With its rich experience in environmental governance, China could work with countries in the BRI to pursue low-carbon development and build the Green BRI together, thereby contributing to the global low-carbon transition.

The China Daily

## Israel's Gaza war rooted in dehumanizing, genocidal language

**TUTSIS "are cockroaches. We will kill you." Arabs are like "drugged cockroaches in a bottle." The first quote was a line repeated frequently by Radio Television Libre des Mille Collines, a Rwandan radio station that is largely blamed for inciting hatred toward the Tutsi people. The second was a 1983 quote from former Israeli army chief of staff Gen. Rafael Eitan when speaking at an Israeli parliamentary committee hearing.**

Rwanda's hate-filled radio station operated for only one year (1993-94), yet the outcome of its incitement resulted in one of the saddest and most tragic episodes in modern human history: the genocide of the Tutsis. Compare this "radio genocide" to the massive Israeli-US-Western propaganda that dehumanizes Palestinians using almost identical language. Many seem to forget that, long before the latest eruption of Israel's war on Gaza, and even before the establishment of Israel itself in 1948, the Zionist-Israeli discourse was always one of racism, dehumanization, erasure and, at times, outright genocide.

If one were to randomly select any period of Israeli history to examine the political discourse emanating from its officials, institutions and even intellectuals, one could draw the same conclusion: Israel has always built a narrative of incitement and hatred, thus making a constant case for the genocide of Palestinians. This genocidal intent is now becoming obvious to many people. "There is ... a risk of genocide against the Palestinian people," a group of UN

experts said in a statement last week. But this "risk of genocide" is not born out of recent events.

Indeed, effective political or military actions anywhere in the world hardly take place without an edifice of text and language that facilitates, rationalizes and justifies those actions. Israel's perception of Palestinians is a perfect illustration of this claim. Prior to the establishment of Israel, Zionists denied the very existence of the Palestinians. Many still do. When that is the case, it becomes logical to conclude that Israel, in its own collective mind, cannot be morally culpable for killing those who never existed in the first place.

Even when Palestinians factor into the Israeli political discourse, they become "bloodthirsty animals," "terrorists" or "drugged cockroaches in a bottle." It would be too convenient to label this as just racist. Though racism is at work here, this sense of racial supremacy does not exist merely to maintain a sociopolitical order in which Israelis are masters and Palestinians are serfs. It is far more complex than that. After Palestinian fighters from Gaza crossed into Israel on Oct. 7, killing hundreds, not a single Israeli politician, analyst or mainstream intellectual seemed interested in the context of this daring act. The post-Oct. 7 language used by Israelis, as well as many Americans, created the atmosphere necessary for the savage Israeli response that followed.

The number of Palestinians killed in the first eight days of the Israeli war against Gaza reportedly exceed-

ed the number killed during the longest and most destructive Israeli war on the Strip, dubbed "Operation Protective Edge," in 2014. According to Defense for Children Palestine, a Palestinian child is being killed every 15 minutes and, according to the Palestinian Ministry of Health, more than 70 percent of the casualties in Gaza are women, children and the elderly. For Israel, none of these facts matter. In the mind of President Isaac Herzog, who is often perceived as a moderate, the "rhetoric about civilians not being aware, not involved (is) absolutely not true." They are legitimate targets, simply because they "could have risen up, they could have fought against that evil regime," he said, referring to Hamas. Therefore, "it is an entire nation out there that is responsible," according to Herzog, who promised payback.

Ariel Kallner, a Knesset member of Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's Likud party, explained Israel's goal behind the Gaza war: "Right now, one goal: Nakba. A Nakba that will overshadow the Nakba of 1948," he said. The same sentiment was conveyed by Israeli Defense Minister Yoav Gallant, the man responsible for translating Israel's declaration of war into an action plan. "We are fighting human animals and we will act accordingly," he said on Oct. 9. By "accordingly," he meant that "there will be no electricity, no food, no fuel. Everything is closed." And, of course, thousands of dead civilians.

Since Israel's top political authorities have already declared that all

Palestinians are collectively responsible for the events of Oct. 7, this means that all Palestinians are, as per Gallant's assessment, "human animals" that deserve no mercy. Expectedly, Israel's supporters in the US and other Western countries joined the chorus, also using the most violent and dehumanizing language, thus cementing the mainstream Israeli political discourse among ordinary people. For example, US presidential hopeful Nikki Haley told Fox News that the Hamas attack was not just on Israel but also "an attack on America." She then made a sinister declaration, while looking directly at the camera: "Netanyahu, finish them, finish them ... finish them."

Much more, equally sinister, language continues to be uttered. The outcome is being broadcast around the clock. Israel is "finishing off" Gaza's civilian population and it is "leveling" thousands of homes, mosques, hospitals, churches and schools. Indeed, it is producing another painful episode of the Nakba. From Golda Meir saying Palestinians "did not exist" to Menachem Begin's Palestinians are "beasts walking on two legs" and Eli Ben Dahan's Palestinians "are like animals, they aren't human," along with numerous other racist and dehumanizing references, the Zionist discourse remains unchanged. Now, it is all coming together - the language and the actions are in perfect alignment. Perhaps it is time to start paying attention to how Israel's genocidal language is translated to an actual genocide on the ground. Sadly, for thousands of Palestinian civilians, this awareness is simply too late.

Ramzy Baroud

## WHO regional election sparks nepotism concerns in Bangladesh

**THE coming election to choose the World Health Organization's next chief of the South-East Asia Regional Office, or SEARO, has become contentious as the person who takes up that post could influence the health of billions of people. The daughter of Bangladeshi Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina is one of two candidates for the SEARO position. Saima Wazed's nomination has sparked controversy with many health experts calling it "nepotism," and expressing concern over the election process to fill senior roles at the UN health body. A candidate for the SEARO post should have a "strong technical and public health background and extensive experience in global health", according to the WHO website. The candidate should also have "competency in organizational management" and "proven historical evidence for public health leadership", the website says.**

The next SEARO chief will be elected through a secret ballot by the region's 11 member countries, which include Bangladesh, Nepal and India. The vote is scheduled to take place in New Delhi during a WHO regional committee meeting Oct. 30-Nov. 2. Countries in the region nominate candidates to head the WHO regional office. Wazed was nominated by the government of Bangladesh. In addition to Wazed, who is a mental health advocate, only one other candidate has been put forward: Shambhu Acharya, a public health expert and senior WHO official who was nominated by Nepal. Questions have been raised about the disparity between the candidates' qualifications.

Wazed has a master's degree in clinical psychology from Barry University, a school in Florida. She has spent nearly a decade serving as an adviser to the director general of the WHO on mental health and autism issues. Acharya has been with the WHO for almost 30 years. He has experience working with the UN body in senior positions and holds a Ph.D. in public health, health policy and financing from the University of North Carolina. Sixteen public health experts in Nepal issued a statement saying that Acharya "is the better fit" of the two candidates vying for the SEARO director's position.

"[Acharya] possesses a very strong public health background and has extensive leadership experience in tackling global health issues," the statement said. "He knows the public health and medical challenges of our region intimately, having worked for three decades to strengthen responses at local, national, regional and global levels, including in Nepal, Bangladesh and India, apart from his responsibilities at [the] WHO headquarters in Geneva." So far there have not been any public statements of support for Wazed from public health experts in Bangladesh. Right now a strong anti-Hasina wave is sweeping Bangladesh, ahead of next general election all likely to be held in January. With the US closely monitoring the forthcoming election in Bangladesh many believe the ruling Awami League party will not be able to rig the elections this time and lose power. In such a situation many, long-known as pro-Awami League groups, are not speaking in support of

Hasina, her party and family members now.

However, AK Abdul Momen, Bangladesh's foreign minister spoke in support of Wazed's candidacy several days ago. In an interview with the Indian newspaper The Hindu, the minister demanded that Nepal withdraw its candidate from the contest for the WHO-SEARO post. "[Nepal's candidate] had been working in the WHO for the last 30 years and was in a decision-making position. So why have [health indices] not improved in the whole of the South East Asian region, even though he himself is a person of South Asian origin?" Momen asked while adding that Acharya should "step down" from the race for the WHO-SEARO post.

Wazed, who has held advisory positions at some Bangladesh government mental health bodies, rebuffed accusations that her nomination was "fueled by nepotism" because her mother is the prime minister. She said those critical of her nomination were overlooking her experience and achievements in the field of mental health.

"They ignore that I have been an adviser to WHO's DG on Mental Health & Autism, or that I have been a member of the WHO's Expert Advisory Panel on mental health for almost a decade," Wazed wrote in an Inter Press Service opinion piece earlier this month. "They do not mention that I am [the] chief adviser to Bangladesh's National Mental Health Strategic Plan, or that I was a technical expert for Bangladesh's National Mental Health Act of 2018," she wrote.

Bangladesh's nomination of Wazed has also come under scrutiny by several activists and public health experts. Bishow Parajuli, former UN resident coordinator and UN Development Program representative in Myanmar and Zimbabwe, said that Wazed has limited experience and qualifications to assume such a leadership position. "In a country with so many qualified and competent health professionals, the nomination of Ms. Wazed, and her use of the Prime Ministerial Office to engage with the various world leaders, also shows nepotism and the influence of her mother's office in the process. ... The selection must be made 'on the basis of merits,'" he said in emailed comments. Paris-based Bangladeshi social activist and physician Pinaki Bhattacharya said Wazed has none of the required qualifications for the WHO-SEARO post.

Wazed has not responded to a VOA email requesting direct comment on the nepotism issue. Kent Buse is director of the Global Healthier Societies Program at The George Institute for Global Health at Imperial College London. Buse told VOA that the rules governing the selection of directors across all WHO regions need considerable reform to ensure public confidence in the merit-based nature of the organization. "This relates to improving transparency and delivering enhanced oversight of the election process. This should include better scrutiny of the candidate's compliance with the existing codes of conduct governing the campaign processes."

VOA

## Toward another strong decade

**DESPIKE many unforeseen odds against it, China can celebrate the 10th anniversary of the Belt and Road Initiative. The initiative has brought much-needed financing to the Global South, contributed to economic growth, and provided opportunities for Chinese companies to engage abroad and more.**

Like any brand-new project of such a mammoth scale, there are also lessons to be learned from some of the initiative's experiences. Moving forward, if China and the Belt and Road countries can work to maximize benefits and minimize risks, the initiative will have an even more impressive second decade than the first. The BRI is a major effort of South-South cooperation aimed at generating trade, investment and finance opportunities and integrating the partnering countries. At the Boston University Global Development Policy Center, we have been studying China's overseas engagement in general and the BRI, in particular, for several years. We generate data sets to track the trends in Chinese overseas economic engagement, analyze the determinants of that engagement and measure their impacts.

According to our China's Overseas Development Finance Database - which tracks flows from China's two development finance institutions, the Export-Import Bank of China and the China Development Bank - from 2008 to 2021, China alone provided financing at approximately the same magnitude as the World Bank, at \$500 bil-

Kevin P. Gallagher

lion; at least \$331 billion was provided after the BRI was announced in 2013. Not only has the volume of Chinese finance been significant, even its composition has been important for supporting sustainable development. Chinese overseas finance has been concentrated in needed infrastructure and energy finance that had long been neglected by Western financiers. Not only has such financing filled important infrastructure gaps (and steered Western finance in the same direction), but Chinese finance has also been associated with robust economic growth. More recently, as countries in the Global South have suffered economically from the COVID-19 pandemic, climate change shocks, the Ukraine crisis and aggressive interest rate hikes in the United States, China has provided much-needed liquidity and fiscal support to partner nations through currency swaps and fiscal support.

Concomitantly, the BRI has also been associated with risks to the global climate, to global biodiversity and the debt crisis facing an increasing number of developing countries across the world. According to our research, Chinese-financed overseas coal plants emit upwards of 245 million metric tons of carbon dioxide annually, and this is associated with an erosion of natural capital and poses risks to indigenous lands.

While many in the West claim that Chinese finance is a form of debt-trap diplomacy, that has been disproven over and over again. That said, China's loans are

a significant portion of the debt stock and debt payments of the most distressed countries in the Global South. In terms of the external debt stock owed by the most debt-distressed countries, China holds 10 percent of that debt stock, behind private bondholders at 28 percent and multilateral development banks at 28 percent. In terms of external debt payments, 21 percent is owed to China over the next few years, with 32 percent to bondholders and 26 percent to MDBs. If China and the Belt and Road countries work to maximize the benefits of new financing, energy and infrastructure projects and South-South cooperation and put policies in place to minimize climate and biodiversity risk and debt distress, the second decade of the initiative will be even better than the first.

There are signs that China is already moving in that direction with a noticeable shift to financing smaller and greener projects. China has also stopped financing new coal-fired power plants and is instead focusing on supporting low-carbon growth. China has also showed a willingness to suspend debt payments for some of the most distressed developing countries. These are steps in the right direction. More ambition and support from China, the Belt and Road countries and the international system as a whole will be critical as countries aim to meet their development and climate goals during a crucial decade. It's time to celebrate a strong decade today and aim to surpass these important milestones in the next.





# Kitchen items' prices eases by 0.33 percent

ISLAMABAD (APP): The weekly inflation, measured by the Sensitive Price Indicator (SPI), witnessed decrease of 0.33 percent for the combined consumption group during the week ended on October 26, the Pakistan Bureau of Statistics (PBS) reported on Friday.

The SPI for the week under review in the above-mentioned group was recorded at 277.11 points as compared to 278.04 points during the past week, according to the PBS data.

As compared to the corresponding week of last year, the SPI for the combined consumption group in the week under review

witnessed an increase of 29.65 percent.

The weekly SPI with the base year 2015-16 =100 covers 17 urban centers and 51 essential items for all expenditure groups.

The SPI for the lowest consumption group up to Rs 17,732, decreased by 0.25 percent and went down to 283.77 points from last week's 284.47 points.

The SPI for consumption groups from Rs 17,732-22,888; Rs 22,889-29,517; Rs 29,518-44,175 and above Rs 44,175 declined by 0.31 percent, 0.33 percent, 0.36 percent and 0.33 percent respectively.

During the week, out of 51 items, prices of 14

(27.45%) items increased, 17 (33.33%) items decreased and 20 (39.22%) items remained stable.

The items, which recorded a decrease in their average prices on a week-on-week (WoW) included chicken (10.19%), onions (4.4%), rice irri-6/9 (3.84%), bananas (3.64%), gur (3.4%), pulse masoor (2.36%), sugar (2.22%), and mustard oil (2.17%).

The items that recorded an increase in their average prices on a week-on-week (wow) basis, included tomatoes (20.81%), potatoes (3.33%), eggs (1.63%), salt powdered (0.91%), garlic (0.77%), tea prepared (0.67%), bread plain

(0.56%) and mutton (0.28%). On a Year-on-Year (YoY) basis, the items that witnessed decrease in prices included, tomatoes (31.90%), onions (24.88%), pulse gram (5.82%), mustard oil (4.16%) and vegetable ghee 1 kg (0.92%).

The commodities which recorded an increase in their average prices on YoY basis included gas charges for ql (108.38%), cigarettes (94.46%), chillies powder (84.11%), rice basmati broken (78.51%), wheat flour (77.49%), sugar (63.22%), rice irri-6/9 (62.83%), gents sponge chappal (58.05%), gur (57.73%) and salt powdered (54.84%).

## HBFC signs an MoU with NITB to transform office operations with E-Office

### F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: The House Finance Company (HBFC) has signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with the National Information Technology Board (NITB) to implement the E-Office suite within HBFC's nationwide offices.

The event took place at the HBFC Regional Office, where Mr. Zahid Suleman, CIO of HBFC, and Mr. Babar Majid Bhatti, CEO of NITB, officially signed the document. E-Office, an application developed by NITB, is designed to support public sector organizations in transitioning towards a paperless environment, elevating their internal operational efficiencies through electronic means and platforms.

At HBFC, our unwavering commitment to innovation and customer facilitation remains at the core of our operations. The adoption of E-Office is another milestone in fulfilling this commitment. This initiative will allow HBFC to remodel its day-



to-day operations, boosting efficiency, transparency, and reducing loan processing times.

During the event, Mr. Zahid Suleman, CIO of HBFC, expressed, "Transitioning to an E-Office paperless environment marks a profound shift in how modern work places operate. In this digital era, the traditional reliance on physical paper document is replaced by efficient electronic alternatives. This transformation not only contributes to significant reductions in environmental waste and

clutter but also streamlines workflow processes. By harnessing the power of digital technologies, organizations can enhance collaboration, accessibility and data security."

As the oldest specialized housing finance institution, HBFC has been a cornerstone of the Pakistani housing landscape for over seven decades. Our legacy is intricately woven into the fabric of the nation's history and heritage. Throughout the years, HBFC has consistently demonstrated resilience

and dedication, contributing significantly to the nation's economic progress through housing finance.

With pride, we note that HBFC has helped more than 480,000 families realize their dreams of homeownership, leading to enhanced financial security, elevated living standards, and increased social inclusion. This commitment to empowering individuals and families in Pakistan through affordable housing solutions remains at the heart of what we do.



MULTAN: A vendor is busy sprinkling water on the pieces of sugarcane to keep them fresh at his handcart.

## Agricultural chemicals imports decreased 22.30 % in 1st quarter

ISLAMABAD (APP): The imports of agricultural and other chemicals into the country during the first quarter of the current financial year decreased by 22.30 per cent as compared to the exports of the corresponding period of last year.

During the period from July to September 2023, agricultural chemicals valued at \$2.047 billion were imported as com-

pared to the imports of \$2.635 billion in the same period of last year, according to the data of the Pakistan Bureau of Statistics.

In the first three months, the imports of fertilizers decreased by 52.58 per cent as 105,085 metric tons of fertilizer were manufactured costing \$55.152 million imported as compared to the imports of 182,231

metric tons worth \$116.308 million in the same period of last year, it added.

Meanwhile, the imports of insecticides were reduced by 24.73 per cent during the period under review as 9,270 metric tons of the above-mentioned commodity valued at \$44.402 million were imported as against the import of 108,817 metric tons worth \$58.987 mil-

lion in the same period last year, the data revealed.

In the first quarter of the current financial year, the imports of medicinal products went down by 33.08 per cent and reached at 7,357 metric tons valued at \$249.195 million as compared to the imports of 8,643 metric tons valued at \$372.361 million in the same period last year.

## EFU Life introduces whatsapp for customer support

### F.P. Report

KARACHI: EFU Life, the leading life insurance Company in Pakistan has been a pioneer in groundbreaking technology and its ethos centers around its customers. Keeping its customers at the heart of business operations, the Company has now further enhanced its services by

launching WhatsApp.

EFU Life WhatsApp facility will provide policyholders instant policy information and the first of its kind Claims Helpdesk for effortless claim processing offering a streamlined digital experience. Through this service the customers will be able to access details about their policy status, premium and benefi-

ciary information at the ease of their fingertips.

This is the first time that any Life Insurance company has extended the service of Digital Claims Helpdesk to its policy holders. The client can now initiate a claim, download and upload claim forms along with requesting the status of their claims all with the

ease of a WhatsApp message. Introducing another customer service touch point reflects EFU Life's unwavering commitment to enhance customer accessibility and convenience reaffirming its position as a customer-centric insurance provider, dedicated to simplifying and safeguarding the lives of its valued policyholders.

## PNSC convened its 45th annual general meeting for the financial year 2022-23

### F.P. Report

KARACHI: The National Flag Carrier, Pakistan National Shipping Corporation (PNSC), convened its 45th Annual General Meeting for the financial year 2022-23 on October 26, 2023 in Karachi.

Chairman PNSC, Rear Admiral Jawad Ahmed, HI (M), chaired the meeting with all Executive Directors and other senior company officials.

The Board of Directors of PNSC on Wednesday 27th September 2023, announced the financial results for the year ended June 30, 2023. According to results announced, the earnings per share of the PNSC (Group) is Rs.227.11 as against Rs. 42.75 in the comparable period last year. PNSC has declared final cash dividend of Rs.15 per share (150%),



which is also the highest ever in the history of PNSC. Earlier during the year (2022-23), PNSC had announced interim dividend of Rs. 5 per share (50%), making total cash dividend for the year, Rs. 20 per share (200%).

Cumulatively, the Group achieved a turnover of Rs.54.8 billion as compared

to Rs.27.8 billion last year. The major increase in freight revenue was observed from the transportation of liquid cargo which increased by Rs.22 billion. During the year PNSC was able to successfully add to its fleet two Aframax Oil Tankers (M.T. Sargodha & M.T. Mardan).

The Dry Cargo segment

(including slot charter) increased by Rs.2.62 billion due to major increase in slot charter revenue business from Public Interest Entities.

Chairman PNSC concluded his address by thanking the participants and with a hope for PNSC's continued performance for better results in future.

## FFC announces third quarterly results for year 2023



### F.P. Report

KARACHI: Fauji Fertilizer Company Limited (FFC) announced its financial results for the quarter ended September 30, 2023 in its Board of Directors meeting held on October 25, 2023.

The Company has earned a net profit of Rs. 22.21 billion for the period ended on September 30, 2023 and registered an EPS of Rs. 17.46 compared to Rs. 11.67 last year. The earnings in dollarized terms stood at USD 80 million

compared to USD 75 million in the previous year.

This achievement is attributable to various initiatives including Company's continued drive for cost economization and efficiency optimization, especially in view of per-

sistent high rates of inflation, financial cost and weak rupee.

Plant sites delivered urea output of 1,926 thousand tonnes, around 7% higher than last year mainly due to improved reliability of Company's production facilities. Higher production, favourable weather and anticipation of increase in urea selling prices due to impending gas price increase resulted in a surge in sales volume to 1,911 thousand tonnes.

The Board of Directors also announced an Interim Cash Dividend for the quarter ended September 30, 2023 at Rs 3.98 per share i.e. 39.80%. This is in addition to Interim Dividends already paid at Rs 7.41 per share i.e. 74.10

## Shipping Activity at Port Qasim

KARACHI (APP): Three ships namely, Al-Danah, Sea-Con Tokyo and Zekreet, carrying Wheat, Coal and LNG, berthed at Grain Terminal, Bulk Terminal and Elengy Terminal respectively on Thursday. Meanwhile two more gas carriers, Nordic Basel and Energy Achilles are also arrived at outer anchorage of the Port on same day.

A total of nine ships were engaged at PQA berths during the last 24 hours, out of them two ships, Marangas Kalygnos and Alikri Force left the port on today morning, while two more ships, Tydo Star and RDO Endeavor are expected to sail on today afternoon. Cargo volume of 101,309 tonnes, comprising 95,581 tonnes imports cargo and 5,728 tonnes export cargowas handled at the port during last 24 hours. There are ten ships at Outer Anchorage of Port Qasim, out of them a gas carrier 'Amalia' and two more container ships, RDO Concord and RDO Endeavor are expected to take berths at FOTCO oil Terminal and Container Terminal respectively on today Friday.

## Markets rise on tech bounce hope, inflation in focus

HONG KONG (AFP/APP): Asian markets rose Friday after strong earnings from two tech titans provided hope for a bounce on Wall Street, while traders were also steeling themselves for key US inflation data.

The gains come at the end of a rollercoaster week for equities, but the Middle East crisis continued to cast a shadow as Israel said ground forces had raided central Gaza for a second day. And while figures showed the US economy enjoyed its best growth since late 2021 during the third quarter, observers said there was a belief it had peaked and the new year would see a slowdown.

However, questions remain over how long the Federal Reserve will keep interest rates at elevated levels. All three main indexes sank Thursday, with the Nasdaq again the worst performer owing to tech firms' susceptibility to higher borrowing costs. But blockbuster earnings from Amazon and Intel after the markets closed -- and a

surge in after-hours trade -- provided Asian traders with hope for a bounce in New York at the end of the week.

Hong Kong, Tokyo, Shanghai, Mumbai, Sydney, Seoul, Jakarta and Taipei were all well up.

London, Paris and Frankfurt rose in the morning. Eyes now turn to the release later on Friday of the personal consumption expenditures (PCE) price index, which is the Fed's preferred measure of inflation. A slight easing of the core reading -- released Thursday -- provided some optimism. The reading comes ahead of the bank's policy decision next week, and while expectations are for it to pause, traders are hoping for guidance for the next few months.

Officials have lined up in recent months to say that while there might not be any more cuts, rates could be kept at two-decade highs for an extended period.

Still, with Treasury yields sitting around 16-year highs, experts do not foresee a recovery in markets any time soon. "The

stock market isn't ready to rally until bond yields are sharply lower, which probably won't happen until we see inflation a lot closer to the Fed's target," said OANDA's Edward Moya.

And Stephen Innes at SPI Asset Management added that with the economy still resilient, the question was whether it could slow enough to bring yields down to four percent from close to five percent.

"While markets are desperately trying to escape from this hurt locker squeezed on all sides by higher for longer interest rates, it's unlikely a significant rates respite is on the cards with the US economy still firing on all cylinders," he warned. "I guess the question is, can the economy slow down fast enough to move 10-year yields closer to four percent rather than five percent." Oil prices rose, recovering much of their losses of more than two percent Thursday, as traders tracked developments in the Israel-Hamas war amid concerns it could draw in other countries.

## NBP stands strong for breast cancer awareness in Pinktober

### F.P. Report

KARACHI: National Bank of Pakistan (NBP) hosted a special Pinktober event at its head office, reaffirming its commitment to inclusivity and equality. NBP recognizes the importance of breast cancer awareness and stands firmly with those affected by this disease.

The event was graced by Mr. Rehmat Ali Hasnie, President and CEO of NBP. Senior Executives of the Bank, and Mr. Omer Aftab, CEO and founder of Pink Ribbon. Ms. Mariam Malik, a member of Pink Ribbon highlighted the need to have conversations within families to fight against this disease. Together, they discussed the critical role organizations like Pink Ribbon play in raising awareness and promoting early detection.

Mr. Rehmat Ali Hasnie,

President and CEO of NBP, expressed the bank's commitment to the cause, stating, "Breast cancer affects countless lives, and NBP is proud to support initiatives that promote awareness and early detection."

As a bank, we are committed to play a positive role in the betterment of our employees and all

lives, standing in solidarity with survivors and those fighting this battle."

During a compelling panel discussion, Mr. Aftab shed light on the challenges faced by Pink Ribbon and the importance of early detection. He also highlighted the numerous programs initiated by Pink Ribbon to

support those affected by breast cancer.

In a heartwarming conclusion to the evening, NBP's head office was illuminated in pink, symbolizing the bank's unwavering dedication to breast cancer awareness. The event served as a poignant reminder of the bank's commitment to equality and inclusivity.







## In brief

**Rizwan completes 2,000 ODI runs**

**C H E N N A I** (Agencies): Pakistan's Mohammad Rizwan completed 2,000 one-day international runs in the World Cup game against South Africa in Chennai on Friday. The 31-year-old reached the personal milestone when he opened his account with a boundary off fast bowler Marco Jansen after Pakistan opted to bat at the Chidambaram Stadium. Rizwan has been prolific in this World Cup with 302 runs before the South Africa match. South Africa's Quinton de Kock heads the batting list with 407 runs ahead of Friday's game. The Indian duo of Virat Kohli (354) and Rohit Sharma (311) are second and fourth respectively while Australia's David Warner sits third with 332 runs in five matches.

**Tenpin Bowling C'ship from Nov 7**

**ISLAMABAD (APP):** Pakistan Open Tenpin Bowling Championship would kick off from November 7 to 12, at the Royal Rodale Club, DHA, Karachi. The Championship would be played under the auspices of the Pakistan Tenpin Bowling Federation and in collaboration with the Sindh Tenpin Bowling Association. According to the President, Pakistan Tenpin Bowling Federation, Ijaz ur Rehman, all preparations for the event were in full swing. He said male and female athletes from across the country would feature in the championship. A total of eight categories of competitions will be held, including open singles, amateur, ladies, under-22, senior, media, doubles and mixed team, he said. Players who want to participate in the championship can register their names till November 5. The championship would continue till November 12 and prizes would be distributed among the winning players at the end of the event.

**Talent Hunt Squash League**

**MULTAN (APP):** Prime Minister's Talent Hunt Professional Squash League was formally opened at Bahauddin Zakariya University here on Friday. Four matches were decided in girls and boys categories on the first day. According to the results, Rawalpindi defeated Sialkot by 0-3 in the girls round. In the boys matches, Lahore defeated Faisalabad by two games to zero in both the girls and boys categories. About the matches held at BZU squash court, focal person of the event Abida Khan said that Palwasha of Rawalpindi defeated Bisma Batool of Sialkot by 08\_11 and 06\_11. Areej from Rawalpindi beat Sialkot's Fajar Shehbaz with 11-0, 11-07. In the third match, Areej from Rawalpindi overcame Sialkot by two games to zero against Sialkot's Fajr Shehbaz. In the girls matches, Sarah of Lahore beat Ayman of Faisalabad 02\_11. And Fajr of Lahore defeated Maryam GMD of Faisalabad from 02\_11 and 02\_11. In Boys category, Kaleemullah of Lahore defeated Usman of Faisalabad by 02\_11 and 01\_11 and Zain of Lahore won against Riaz of Faisalabad by 03\_11 and 03\_11. Shozib Ali, Amjad Ali, Naqash Shahid and Tahoor performed as umpire. Ghazanfar Raan was the official scorer. Registrar BZU Zubair Ahmed Khan and Chairperson department of Psychology BZU Professor Dr Sarwat Sultan were the chief guests.



**CHENNAI:** Aiden Markram drives elegantly, Pakistan vs South Africa, World Cup 2023.

## Taskin says 'nothing for bowlers' at WC batting paradise

**KOLKATA (AFP):** Bangladesh spearhead Taskin Ahmed said Friday "there's nothing much for bowlers" at the World Cup as runs flow in India's batting paradise. The 28-year-old Taskin returns to the Bangladesh side for Saturday's clash with the Netherlands after being rested to nurse a shoulder niggle. Both Bangladesh and the Dutch have just one win each against four losses and another defeat at Eden Gardens will almost certainly signal the end of their slim semi-final hopes. "There's nothing much for the bowlers," said Taskin who has taken only two wickets in three matches at a cost of 126 runs. "It's kind of batting friendly, all the grounds." He added: "But also there are some challenges and it's not all about speed. Like we have seen there are express fast bowlers in the world, they're also struggling, leaking runs. "You need some variation skills and a game awareness. You need a lot of skills to do well on this kind of surface."

Bangladesh are eighth in the 10-team World Cup table while the Netherlands are at the bottom. Both have just two points.

But 28-year-old Taskin believes his team can still make it to the last four.

"It's not finished yet, we still have four more games to go," said Ahmed.

After facing the Netherlands, Bangladesh will meet Pakistan (October 30 in Kolkata), Sri Lanka (New Delhi on November 6) and Australia (Pune on November 11).

"If we can win those four, anything can happen because there are some run-rate issues."

Taskin played down the controversy of skipper Shakib Al Hasan leaving for home during the World Cup to work with his own batting coach.

Shakib was greeted with boos by frustrated Bangladesh fans when he appeared in Dhaka.

"It's not affected us much," said Taskin. "Actually he went for some improvements, like he was not batting as well as he expected."

But he went to do some specific practice to do well for our team."

## Bangladesh women win second T20I by 20 runs

**C H A T T O G R A M** (Agencies): Bangladesh women beat Pakistan women by 20 runs to gain an unassailable 2-0 lead in the three-match series at the Zahur Ahmed Chowdhury Stadium in Chattogram on Friday evening. The third T20I match of the series will be played on Sunday at the same venue.

Chasing 121 to win, Pakistan finished their innings at 100-7 in the allotted 20 overs. Experienced batter Bismah Maroof, who top-scored with 30 off 44 deliveries, Iram Javed (15, 17b, 1x4) and Umm-e-Hani (14, 14b, 1x4) were the only batters to reach double figures for Pakistan.

Bangladesh left-arm spinner Nahida Akter, who took a five-fer in the previous game, once again shone with the ball taking two wickets and giving away 15

runs in her four overs. Rabeya Khan also got two wickets while Fahima Khatun and Marufa Akter took one wicket apiece.

Earlier, after being put into bat Bangladesh managed to score 120 for six in 20 overs. During the batting powerplay, Bangladesh batters accumulated 48 runs for the loss of one wicket. The bowlers pulled off well and conceded only 72 runs and took five wickets in the remaining 14 overs of the innings.

Off-spinner Umm-e-Hani, who bowled economically in the first T20I, gave away only 12 runs today in her spell of four overs and clinched the wicket of opening batter Murshida Khatun (20, 28b, 2x4s). The off-spinner was equally supported by left-arm spinners Nashra Sundhu and Sadia Iqbal – both bagged a wicket each for 16

and 24 runs, respectively.

Right-arm fast Diana Baig was the most successful bowler for the tourists, grabbing two wickets for 34 runs in four overs.

That the hosts were able to score 120 in 20 overs was due to a quick-fire unbeaten knock by Shorna Akter, who top-scored for her side with a 22-ball 27, hitting a four and a six.

**Scores in brief:** Bangladesh women beat Pakistan women by 20 runs Bangladesh 120-6, 20 overs (Shorna Akter 27 not out, Murshida Khatun 20; Diana Baig 2-34)

Pakistan 100-7, 20 overs (Bismah Maroof 30; Nahida Akter 2-15, Rabeya Khan 2-21)

Player of the match – Shorna Akter (Bangladesh women)

Third T20I at Zahur Ahmed Chowdhury Stadium, Chattogram on 29 October

## Heroics by Shamyl Hussain award Pakistan U19 2-1 lead in the one-day series against Sri Lanka U-19



**KARACHI (Monitoring Desk):** Pakistan U19 defeated Sri Lanka U19 by six wickets in the third one-day at National Bank Stadium, Karachi, effectively taking a 2-1 lead in the five-match series. Opening batter Shamyl Hussain scored a magnificent 150 which ensured that the home side chase the target of 290 with ease, taking only 45.5 overs to do so.

After winning the toss, the visitors decided to bat first. They scored 289, while losing nine wickets,

in 50 overs. Rusanda Gamage, who produced a brilliant century (110, 127b, 6x4s), was the star batter for the side. Wicket-keeper batter Sharujan Shanmuganathan contributed with 61 runs off 75 deliveries.

The three Pakistan right-arm pacers had a successful day with the ball; Aftab Ahmed returned with three scalps while Ubaid Shah and Mohammad Ibtisam both picked up two wickets. While chasing 290, Shamyl's knock completely

turned the game in Pakistan's favor. The left-hander smashed 150 in 109 deliveries and hit 13 boundaries and seven maximums.

He was supported by Riazullah Khan who hit 48 in 62, including two boundaries. Arafat Minhas (34 not out, 35b, 3x4s, 1x6) and Haroon Arshad (27 not out, 39b, 1x4) finished the chase for their team, taking them to a six-wicket win over the touring side.

The fourth one-day is scheduled to be played on 29 October at the National Bank Stadium, Karachi.

**Scores in brief** Pakistan U19 beat Sri Lanka U19 by six wickets

Sri Lanka U19 289-9, 50 overs (Rusanda Gamage 110, Sharujan Shanmuganathan 61; Aftab Ahmed 3-31, Mohammad Ibtisam 2-60, Ubaid Shah 2-65)

Pakistan U19 293-4, 45.5 overs (Shamyl Hussain 150, Riazullah Khan 48; Sineth Jayawardene 2-35, Ruwshan Perera 2-44)

Player of the match – Shamyl Hussain (Pakistan U19).

## World Cup 2023 South Africa defy Pakistan to stay on course for semis

**CHENNAI (Agencies):** South Africa clung on to beat Pakistan by one wicket in the best game of the World Cup so far.

Chasing 271 in Chennai, the Proteas were in charge while Aiden Markram was at the crease, only for Markram to fall for 91 in a slide from 235-5 to 250-8.

Time was not an issue, but the South African tail was tasked with finding 21 runs against a pumped up Pakistan attack. Keshav Maharaj and Lungi Ngidi edged South Africa closer, before Ngidi was athletically held by Haris Rauf in his follow-through with 11 still needed.

Amid incredible tension, Pakistan reviewed an lbw shout against number 11 Tabraiz Shamsi from the final ball of Haris' spell. The not-out decision was upheld by the narrowest of margins, despite the ball being shown to be hitting leg stump. With the pacemen bowled out, Pakistan had to return to spin and Maharaj pulled Mohammad Nawaz for the winning boundary with 22 balls to spare.

South Africa, who go top of the table, had earlier bowled out Pakistan for 270 thanks mainly to an enchanting spell of 4-60 by left-arm wrist-spinner Shamsi.

The Proteas' only defeat in six games was a shock loss to the Netherlands. They join India on 10 points, but go above the hosts on net run-rate, albeit having played a game more. Victory against New Zealand in Pune on Wednesday will probably be enough to secure a spot in the last four. For Pakistan, a fourth defeat in six games makes it incredibly difficult to reach the semi-finals.

Even if they win their final three matches, they will need some unlikely results to go their way. Proteas pull one out

South Africa have a history of impressing in the early stages of World Cups, only to then find bizarre ways to be eliminated.

So far in India, bar the aberration against the Dutch, they have looked an all-round package. This win was noteworthy for it being their first victory batting second at this tournament. It is their first defeat of Pakistan in any World Cup - 50-over or T20 - since 1999.

Still, they came incredibly close to throwing it away. From 136-4, the unflappable Markram had an ally in David Miller. The fifth-wicket pair added 70 to put the game within South Africa's grasp.

But Miller's dismissal, edging Shaheen Afridi behind, began nervy moments, especially for new arrival Marco Jansen.

Markram began a counter-attack. Jansen joined in, launching Haris for a straight six, then was dismissed next ball with 36 still needed. Even then, Markram was in control,

but played a wild hack at leg-spinner Usama Mir, brought into the game as a concussion replacement for Shadab Khan. When Gerald Coetzee edged Shaheen without further addition to the score, Pakistan were favourites.

Maharaj and Ngidi played and missed, and were uncertain with their running between the wickets. Shaheen charged in, but exhausted his 10-over allocation, while fellow pace bowler Mohammad Wasim battled cramp.

Haris, though, had one over to bowl and energy in reserve. When Ngidi chipped the ball back, Haris swooped to take a spectacular catch. Then came the decisive moment. Shamsi was struck on the pads by his second ball from Haris. Umpire Alex Wharf turned down the appeal and was vindicated by an 'umpire's call' from the decision review system. Had Harif given it out on the field, Pakistan would have won.

South Africa saw off Wasim's final over, leaving Pakistan to turn to Nawaz with five to defend. Shamsi pinched a single and Maharaj swivelled the next ball for four, beating his chest in celebration.

Pakistan pushed to the brink. Pakistan's indifferent campaign, including a crushing defeat by fierce rivals India and an upset loss to Afghanistan, had moved their cricket board to release a statement urging supporters to back captain Babar Azam and his team.

But this latest reverse leaves them staring at the exit. Familiar batting frailties gave the bowlers too much to do, even if the attack put in a wholehearted effort to defend the score. South Africa were without key pace bowler Kagiso Rabada, ruled out with a back spasm, yet Pakistan's batters could not impose themselves. Seven Pakistan batters reached double figures, but only one partnership developed past 50.

Left-arm seamer Jansen was effective at both ends of the innings and Coetzee bowled with hostility in the middle overs. The real star was Shamsi, who was full of flight, guile and turned the ball both ways.

Shamsi got the crucial wicket of Babar, looking ominous on 50 when he attempted a sweep. Wicketkeeper Quinton de Kock took a smart catch down the leg side and an intelligent review detected the faintest catch.

Saud Shakeel, with 52, and Shadab, who made 43, added 84 for the sixth wicket, but Shadab's dismissal was the start of the last of the last five wickets falling for 45 runs. Pakistan seemed 50 runs short of a competitive target. The heart-stopping finish showed they were actually much closer.



## Zaka Ashraf meets Sarfaraz

**LAHORE (APP):** The Chairman of the Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB) Management Committee, Zaka Ashraf, met with the former captain of Pakistan and current Test batter Sarfaraz Ahmed here on Friday.

The meeting took place after Sarfaraz guided Karachi Whites to a title triumph in the Quaid-e-Azam Trophy on Thursday beating Faisalabad in the final.

"PCB Management Committee Chairman Mr. Zaka Ashraf met Sarfaraz Ahmed and Shanawaz Dahani at the Pakistan cricket headquarters here," PCB sources told APP on Friday.

"The PCB Chairman congratulated Karachi Whites for winning the Quaid-e-Azam Trophy 2023-24 and hailed the leadership qualities of their captain Sarfaraz Ahmed while also appreciating the performance of fast bowler Shah Nawaz Dahani.

"Mr Zaka Ashraf also reaffirmed PCB's commitment to continue to work for the players' well-being and support of regional cricket."

## Roman, Aasim reach in National Jr Tennis C'ship final

**ISLAMABAD (APP):** Hamza Roman and Hamza Aasim reached the boys 18 & under final of the Islamabad National Junior Tennis Championships at the PTF-SDA Tennis Complex on Friday.

Hamza Roman defeated Muhammad Salaar 6-1, 5-7, 7-5 in the semifinals, while Hamza Aasim defeated Kashan Tariq 6-2, 6-2.

In the girls 18 & under singles semifinals, Amna Ali Qayum beat Hibba Omar 6-0, 6-0.

In the boys 14 & under singles semifinals, Haziq Asim defeated Nabeel Ali Qayum 5-3, 4-2, and Amir Mazari defeated Razik Sultan 4-0, 4-0.

In the boys and girls 12 & under singles semifinals, Shayan Afridi defeated Waqas Janas 5-4(4), 4-0, and Junaid Khan defeated Razik Sultan 5-3, 3-5, 4-0.

The boys 18 & under singles final will be played on Saturday, followed by the prize distribution ceremony.

Ms Zarmeeneh Rahim was the chief organizer of the event. President PTF Senator Salim Saifullah Khan appreciated the efforts of the PTF Management for providing all possible assistance to ITA and for the successful conduct of the event in a highly professional manner.

## Klopp praises age-defying Salah after European record

**LIVERPOOL (AFP):** Jurgen Klopp says Mohamed Salah combines deep understanding of football with the body of a young man after the forward set a new European goalscoring record for a player on an English club.

The Egypt international came off the bench to score the final goal in Thursday's 5-1 Europa League win over Toulouse, his 43rd goal in major European competitions for the club, surpassing Thierry Henry's tally of 42 for Arsenal.

Klopp, whose side host Nottingham Forest on Sunday, is enjoying the spectacle of a maturing player with a more rounded game, yet one who still has the physical attributes to match anyone.

"Off the pitch he behaves like a grown-up man but besides that he's still a young player," Klopp said. "He's so fit. I think if we scan him the majority of the bones are probably

19 or 20 (years old) because he just keeps in such good shape. (He has) game understanding. That's what we try to give young players. They all know an awful lot about football when they finish their career at 35 but the earlier you can get this information the more useful it is."

"And with Mo he understands the spaces much better, he knows how players react on him and if he cannot score he can still be a threat for us and that's super important.... I cannot compare Mo to other 30-odd-year-old players because I don't think biologically he is."

Salah, who has attracted strong interest from the cash-rich Saudi league, has already scored nine goals in all competitions in the 2023/24 season and is just five away from 200 in total since arriving at Liverpool in 2017.

Klopp described the 31-year-old as "in all phases world-class",

adding: "We appreciate him and we will appreciate him even more after his career when we realise we saw something really special."

Liverpool go into the weekend three points off the top of the Premier League table and aiming to show they can balance a Europa League campaign with a title challenge at home.

"So far we could do it," he said. "Thursday-Sunday is not great but it's something we know really for long enough and that's fine."

"A lot of the players who didn't play (against Toulouse) will probably start on Sunday so for them they had if you want a day off, just warming up and kicking a few balls," he added. "We will have a proper session to prepare for Nottingham. "This rhythm is the rhythm we have this year. We should get used to it sooner rather than later."

## Man Utd always 'tough' despite struggles, warns Guardiola

**MANCHESTER (AFP):** Manchester City boss Pep Guardiola said Manchester United are always a "tough opponent" despite their struggles as he prepares his team for Sunday's derby clash.

United have steadied the ship with unconvincing wins over Brentford, Sheffield United and FC Copenhagen in their past three games after losing six of their first 10 matches in all competitions this season.

Scoring goals has been a particular problem, with new striker Rasmus Hojlund yet to find the net in the Premier League and Marcus Rashford looking a shadow of the player who scored 30 times last season.

However, Guardiola is still wary of the individual quality United possess. "United always have been -- it doesn't matter the manager -- always they are

a tough opponent," he said at his pre-match press conference on Friday.

"The qualities of the individuals they have, the stadium, the character they have, the momentum. "They can score goals, we know the quality they have. Always that has been and always it will be." City returned to winning ways by beating Brighton 2-1 last weekend after losing consecutive Premier League games for the first time since 2018.

Guardiola's men are looking to become the first side to win four consecutive English top-flight titles and remain well-placed, just two points behind surprise early leaders Tottenham. The last time the two teams met, in June, City beat United to lift the FA Cup, completing the second leg of a treble. Guardiola acknowledged there is far less on the

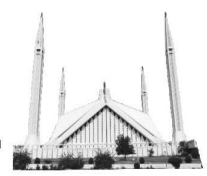
line this weekend, but is keen to see how his side respond to the challenge posed by travelling to Old Trafford.

"It is a game not like an FA Cup final or last games of the season that defines winning or not the Premier League. Still we have only played nine fixtures and there are 87 points to play. We have to be focused," he said. "It's too early. All the teams are there and the teams behind can be there."

"When you play just nine games many things will happen. We have been behind by a few points in February and March and then we were able to win."

"I want to see how is our mentality on Sunday in Old Trafford. We have won a lot. It's not about if we win now what is going to happen (in the future). I want to see the right mentality to play for these points."





## In brief

### 12 drug dealers caught with 1.5 kg heroin

RAWALPINDI (APP): Rawalpindi police have arrested 12 drug peddlers including two female accused and recovered over 15 kg charras, over 1.5 kg heroin and other items from their possession, said a police spokesman here on Friday. He informed that Wah Cantt police acting on a tip-off conducted a raid and managed to net three accused, a drug dealer and two suppliers namely Abdul Latif, Numan and Wiki and recovered over 1.5 kg heroin from their possession. He said, in other raids conducted in different areas, Saddar Wah, New Town, Chontra, Wah Cantt and Civil Lines police rounded up nine accused including two female drug smugglers namely Khitija, Sadia, Tariq, Altaf, Arslan, Meharban, Rifhat Mehmood, Dilawar and Faisal and recovered over 15 kg charras. Separate cases have been registered against all accused and further investigations are underway. This is part of a crackdown launched by Rawalpindi police against drug peddlers and bootleggers, he said. The police have urged the citizens to come forward and report any suspicious activity to the authorities.

### PHA organizes Kashmir rally

RAWALPINDI (APP): The Parks and Horticulture Authority (PHA) in Rawalpindi organized a Kashmir Solidarity Rally on Friday. Participants carried placards and banners in solidarity with Kashmiris and raised anti-India slogans. They vowed to keep raising their voices for the rights of Kashmiris and said that every Pakistani stands with them in their struggle for freedom. They urged the United Nations to act on resolutions concerning Kashmir so that Kashmiris could have the right to live according to their aspirations. A PHA spokesperson said that the rally was organized as a Black Day protest against India's unlawful occupation of Jammu and Kashmir Valley. The authority organized the rally on special instructions from the Punjab Government to express solidarity with the innocent people of occupied Kashmir. PHA officers, staff, and the public participated in the rally, which started at the Press Club in Rawalpindi and culminated at Murree Road.

### AIIOU marks Black Day

ISLAMABAD (APP): Allama Iqbal Open University (AIIOU) observed Black Day against the humanitarian atrocities and human rights abuses in Indian Illegally occupied Jammu and Kashmir (IIOJK) by arranging a seminar with the presence of faculty members, officers, employees and students. Director General Regional Services, Dr Malik Tauqir Ahmed Khan presided over the seminar, while the Chairperson of the Department of History, Dr. Kishwar Sultana hosted the event. Dr. Malik Tauqir stated that Pakistan has always stood by the Kashmiri people and will continue to support them, as Muhammad Ali Jinnah said, "Kashmir is the aorta of Pakistan". It is our duty to protect Kashmir. Dr. Ashraf Wani, as a guest speaker, conveyed the voice of the Kashmiris and stated that seminars, conferences, and observance of Black Day boost the morale of Kashmiris. They want the Muslim Ummah to practically stand with them and Palestine during these difficult times just as the whole West stands with Israel against Palestine.



ISLAMABAD: Students and faculty members of the Shaheed Benazir Bhutto University (SBBU) Sheringal, Upper Dir visiting Senate Museum at Parliament House.

## Punjab, Sindh CMs inspects work on Rawalpindi Ring Road project

RAWALPINDI (APP): Caretaker Punjab Chief Minister Mohsin Naqvi along with Caretaker Sindh Chief Minister Maqbool Baqar on Friday visited the Rawalpindi Ring Road Project to review progress of the construction work. Chief Minister Naqvi appreciated the Commissioner Rawalpindi and Frontier Works Organization over their performance. The work on the project should be completed swiftly, he said and directed the authorities to provide necessary project drawings to NESPAK as soon as possible. The Sinch CM appreciated the ongoing projects in Punjab, especially the construction work of Rawalpindi Ring Road.

He said the problems being faced by the commuters in Karachi could be resolved through the Lyari Expressway and Karachi Circular

Railway projects.

Mohsin Naqvi offered full support of the Punjab government to his Sindh counterpart in the execution of different projects in the province.

CM Naqvi drove the vehicle himself and inspected the project site with the Sindh chief minister.

They also reviewed the progress of the project at Union Council Trahia. In order to speed up the work on the Ring Road, CM Naqvi directed the authorities to use additional road leveling machinery at the project site.

He said the Rawalpindi Ring Road was an important project of public interest and all-out efforts should be made to complete it before the stipulated time frame.

He directed the authorities to ensure construction work on the project in three shifts so that the tar-

gets could be achieved as soon as possible.

The completion of Ring Road would permanently resolve the traffic congestion problem in Rawalpindi and Islamabad, Mohsin Naqvi added.

Both the chief ministers also had an aerial view of the ongoing work on the entire road. The FWO officials, during a briefing, informed the CM that six-lane Rawalpindi Ring Road would be 38.3 kilometers long. The construction work on its Banth and Chak Beli interchanges was underway while the work to remove the structures on the right of way had also been started.

The Commissioner Rawalpindi, Regional Police Officer, City Police Officer and Deputy Commissioner, and FWO officials were present on the occasion.

## Ashrafi urges global action to address Kashmir, Palestine human rights violations

ISLAMABAD (APP): Special Representative to the Prime Minister on Religious Harmony and Pakistani Diaspora in the Middle East and Islamic Countries, Hafiz Muhammad Tahir Mehmood Ashrafi on Friday emphasized that the severe human rights violations in Kashmir and Palestine posed a significant threat to world peace.

Addressing Arab media on the occasion of Kashmir Solidarity Day, he called on world powers and the United Nations to intervene and prevent India and Israel from perpetrating acts that threaten humanity. He warned that neglecting these enduring global issues could lead the world towards anarchy.

Ashrafi who is also the Chairman of Pakistan Ulema Council highlighted the determination of the third generation of Kashmiris who continued to fight for their freedom. Despite Indian oppression, tyranny, and the unlawful alteration of the Muslim population's demographic makeup in the occupied valley, the spirit of independence remained strong among Kashmiris. "They look to the United Nations and the world's major powers for justice and support," he added.

India's violations of international law, United Nations Security Council resolutions, and the Fourth Geneva Convention had persisted for 76 years, he said, adding that India had employed brutal tactics to

prolong its illegal occupation of Kashmir.

He said on August 5, 2019, India repeated the dark history of October 27, 1947, effectively converting the entire held valley into the world's largest prison.

Despite 76 years of Indian coercion and tyranny against innocent Kashmiris in Indian Illegally Occupied Jammu and Kashmir, every attempt to subdue them had failed, he added.

Ashrafi stressed the urgent need for the United Nations to step in and halt the war crimes, genocide, and all other atrocities committed by the occupying forces.

He affirmed that Kashmiris had never accepted Indian occupation and would continue their peaceful struggle for freedom. He believed that India could not maintain its usurpation of Kashmir indefinitely and would eventually have to acknowledge the indomitable spirit of the Kashmiri people. Ashrafi concluded by asserting that Pakistan, its government, and the Kashmiri people would persist in their diplomatic and moral support for the oppressed. He also noted that Saudi Arabia and Pakistan shared a unified stance on the issues of Palestine and Kashmir.

He said Saudi Arabia's unwavering commitment to supporting oppressed nations had found expression through its leadership role on the Kashmir and Palestine issues within the Organization of Islamic Cooperation platform.

## Sarfraz Bugti's message on "Black Kashmir Day"

ISLAMABAD (APP): Caretaker Federal Minister for Interior Sarfraz Bugti in his message on Black Kashmir Day on Friday, said that October 27 was the darkest day in the history of the state of Jammu and Kashmir. He said, on October 27, 1947, Indian army usurped the freedom of people of Jammu and Kashmir and

seized the whole area illegally and turned a large part of Occupied Jammu and Kashmir into a military cantonment. Today, 76 years have passed, India continues to forcefully occupy this area even after 76 years, said the minister and added that UN and international organizations could not stop India from atrocities. The minister

said that Narendra Modi had flouted UN resolutions and overturned the political system in Occupied Valley on August 5, 2019. New laws were imposed to suppress the voice of Kashmiri people, said the minister adding that the true representatives of the Kashmiri people have been suffering the hardships of imprisonment for years.

## Lawmakers pay tributes to Rana Maqbool, S.M Zafar

ISLAMABAD (APP): Lawmakers in the Senate on Friday paid heartfelt tributes to the late Rana Maqbool Ahmed and former Senator Syed Muhammad Zafar, remembering their unwavering commitment to upholding the rule of law and the sanctity of the Constitution.

Soon after the start of the session's proceedings, Senate Chairman Muhammad Sadiq Sanjrani asked for a Fateha for the departed souls of Rana Maqbool Ahmed and former Senator Syed Muhammad Zafar.

Yousaf Raza Gillani, while paying tribute to these two senators, mentioned that Rana Maqbool was always helpful to members of the Senate and highlighted his contribu-

tions to the Senate Standing Committee's proceedings.

He also paid tribute to Syed Muhammad Zafar for his contributions to the supremacy of law and the constitution. Caretaker Interior Minister Sarfraz Ahmed Bugti paid tribute to Rana Maqbool and Syed Muhammad Zafar for their contributions to the rule of law. He also shared his working experience with Rana Maqbool, describing him as one of the finest senators and lawmakers who treated junior members with dignity and respect.

The minister disclosed that he had learned a lot from the late Rana Maqbool. He also paid tribute to the security forces personnel who sacrificed their lives for the bright and

secure future of the next generation. Raza Rabbani, while paying tribute to the late Rana Maqbool, mentioned his active participation in the proceedings of the Senate standing committees. He noted that S.M. Zafar always believed in accountability and worked beyond party lines.

Irfan Saddique, in his tribute to Rana Maqbool, highlighted his readiness to help members of the Senate and others, as well as his encouragement of new members. He also praised Rana Maqbool's active involvement in the proceedings of the Senate Standing Committee. He paid tribute to S.M. Zafar, acknowledging his role in democracy, human rights, and the supremacy of the constitution.

ISLAMABAD (APP): By using illegal weapons and pellet guns, torturing in custody, molesting women and killing youth by Indian occupational forces in Illegally Indian Occupied Jammu and Kashmir (IIOJK), Modi regime has resorted to unending cruelties against Kashmiri people.

But, despite use of lethal and inhuman dirty tactics, no colonial power in the world could crush freedom struggle of the suppressed people as witnessed in IIOJK where even use of lethal weapons and pellet guns could shatter the courage of people struggling for right to self-determination.

The use of pellet guns by Indian occupation forces in Jammu and Kashmir is a continued and clear violation of human rights and humanitarian law. The Indian government and puppet administration of IIOJK must direct Indian Army and police to immediately stop using pellet guns as any further use of such weapons, causing extensive, arbitrary deaths and grievous wounds, would be callous and criminal.

The indiscriminate use of pellet guns since July 09, 2016, against the protesting people in the aftermath of martyrdom of Kashmiri youth icon Burhan Wani, had killed dozens of civilians with hundreds wounded with scars on their faces and in many cases losing their eye sight.

Stone pelting does not give police the right to shoot at peaceful protesters indiscriminately as force is only used when the mob goes unruly endangering other people's lives. But, in case when people march around peacefully for a just right, showering pellets on them is brutal as well as inhumane. The force is only used when it is unavoidable and proportionate to the crowd's actions. Proportionality, necessity and calibration are key principles governing the use of force within national and international law. But, Indian occupation-

al forces, know no law – national or international or mercy when it deals with innocent Kashmiris.

Pellet guns were first introduced in Kashmir in 2010 for crowd control as a "non-lethal" alternative to other deadlier weapons. Nevertheless, in 2010, 14-year-old Irshad Ahmad Parray and 20-year-old Mudasir Nazir lost their lives to pellet gun injuries. These boys were two of several victims who have been killed by pellet guns since 2010, yet these guns are considered the better option, a "non-lethal" choice to control crowds. It is reported that at least 92 people have lost their eyesight and at least 1,500 people have sustained serious injuries from pellet guns since 2010. The Indian government led by fascist Modi is violating the UN Basic Principles on Use of Force and Firearms by Law Enforcement Officials and the UN Code of Conduct for Law Enforcement Officials.

In Kashmir, restraint is not being exercised, injury is not being minimized and medical assistance is not ensured. The use of Pellet guns is not a proportional response to current protests as far too much harm has been inflicted, particularly involving people's eyesight, far too many bystanders, including children, have been injured and medical assistance comes only at the risk of being arrested and prosecuted.

When the police are involved in crowd control efforts, they must distinguish between violent protestors, peaceful protestors and bystanders. The pellet guns are used indiscriminately and even the inspector general of the Jammu and Kashmir police acknowledged that pellets do not have a predictable trajectory.

Since, the basic principles require that, "in cases of death and serious injury or other grave consequences, a detailed report shall be sent promptly to competent authorities," but in case

of IIOJK, instead of investigating these injuries, police personnel attack ambulances and search hospitals to make arrests. Even the Jammu and Kashmir State Human Rights Commission (SHRC) has warned that "use of pellet guns by the government forces was a serious threat to life".

The SHRC declared that the petitions submitted regarding ten people who received serious bodily injury from pellet guns made out a prima facie case of a human rights violation. The commission also reminded law enforcement agencies that they must follow standard operating procedures of minimum use of force.

Article 3 of the UN Code of Conduct for Law Enforcement Officials states, "law enforcement officials may use force only when strictly necessary and in general, firearms should not be used except when a suspected offender offers armed resistance or otherwise jeopardizes the lives of others".

The use of pellet guns as a crowd control tactic is deemed to be too lethal and inhuman but it goes on unchecked in IIOJK to the utter neglect of international community.

The so called champions of human rights across the world have been putting a deaf ear to Indian forces atrocities against innocent Kashmiri people. And this saga goes on decades after decades without any respite to the people and no one is ready to hear their demands whatever the reasons. The use of pellet guns in Kashmir in reaction to the peaceful protests is a clear violation of human rights and humanitarian law. These weapons have neither been used proportionally nor in compliance with international standards. Therefore, world powers should press India to immediately stop use of such lethal weapons on freedom-loving Kashmiri protestors who have been demanding their right to self-determination and freeing them from Indian yoke.

## Islamabad admin launches all-out anti-dengue fogging drive

ISLAMABAD (APP): In a bid to combat the rising threat of dengue fever, the city's authorities have launched a massive anti-dengue fogging drive in various areas of Islamabad capital territory.

The teams of health workers, led by the Director of Health Services Metropolitan Corporation, are fanning out across the city, spraying insecticide in residential areas, schools, and other public spaces.

The Deputy Commissioner Islamabad Irfan Nawaz Memon has directed that all possible resources be used to control the deadly virus, and that sanitation arrangements be improved in different areas

of the city to prevent dengue breeding grounds, ICT spokesman Dr Abdullah Tabasum said on Friday.

The fogging has been carried out in Government Schools IMC G-9/1, G-9/2, Lok Virsa Shakarpadian, IMS G-9/4, G-10 Markaz, G-8 Markaz, IMS G-9/2, Judicial Academy H-8, IMCBI-III, Public Library H-9, Islamabad, including DHS, DHO Office, Additional Deputy Commissioners, Assistant Commissioners and Magistrates, Health Department teams, MCI, UASIES teams and other institutions.

In recent weeks, the city has also launched a public

awareness campaign, urging residents to take precautions to avoid mosquito bites. The fogging drive is the latest in a series of measures that the city's authorities have taken to combat dengue fever.

The authorities have also stepped up their efforts to clear garbage and stagnant water from public places, which are breeding grounds for mosquitoes.

The Deputy Commissioner Islamabad has warned that the city is facing a "serious dengue threat," and has urged residents to cooperate with the authorities' efforts to control the virus.

The anti-dengue fogging drive is expected to continue for several weeks

## ANF seizes 43 kg narcotics in five operations

RAWALPINDI (APP): The Anti-Narcotics Force (ANF) has seized 43 kilograms drugs and arrested four accused while conducting five operations across the country, an ANF spokesperson said on Friday.

He informed 4.8 kg hashish concealed in the tire of a vehicle was recovered on GT Road Suhawa. During the operation, a suspect, resident of Swabi, was arrested.

In another operation, 2.4 kg Ice drug hidden in the passenger's baggage was recovered at Faisalabad Airport. A female passenger, resident of Faisalabad who was leaving for Sharjah by flight number G-9563 was arrested.

A resident of Khanewal who was going

to Qatar by flight number QR-617 was arrested at Multan Airport. ANF recovered 135 heroin and ice-filled capsules from the passenger's stomach.

A suspect resident of Swat was arrested from a passenger bus near Ravi Motorway Toll Plaza Lahore. During the operation, 1.1 kg cocaine was recovered from the possession of the accused.

10 kg of drugs hidden for smuggling were recovered in an operation conducted in Zakha khel area of Khyber.

Separate cases have been registered against the accused under the Anti-Narcotics Act while further investigations are under process.



ISLAMABAD: Federal Secretary for Information and Broadcasting Mr. Zahoor Ahmed visiting the Digital Photographic and Painting Exhibition in connection with Kashmir Black Day.



### Ambassador in UAE

ATLANTA (Pajhwok): Mawlawi Badruddin Haqqani has taken the charge of the Afghanistan's Embassy Abu Dhabi, the capital of the United Arab Emirate (UAE), an official said on Friday. Abdul Qahar Balkhi, spokesperson for the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, on his twitter handle wrote: "Mawlawi Haqqani reached Abu Dhabi and during an official ceremony was introduced to the embassy staff and took over the embassy charge."

## The Frontier Post

# AFGHANISTAN

RABI-US-SAANI 13, 1445 — Saturday, October 28, 2023

### Two people killed, 9 injured

KAABUL (Pajhwok): Two people were killed and nine others injured in a blast in capital Kabul late on Thursday, an official said. Police Spokesperson Khalid Zadrán told Pajhwok Afghan News the blast took place in a market situated in the limits of 18th Police District. "Initial information said that two of our fellow citizens are martyred and nine others injured who are evacuated to the nearby hospital," he said.

## ‘Afghan authorities indirectly benefited from US education assistance’



KABUL (Pajhwok): US Special Inspector General for Afghanistan Reconstruction (SIGAR) has claimed that the acting Afghan government benefited from US education assistance, a claim repeatedly denied by the Afghan officials with assurances regarding transparency and fairness in the distribution of aid in all areas.

The watchdog in its recent report claimed that the US funded assistance generated tax revenues through personal income

taxes on Afghans employed by US-funded programs & sales tax revenue from goods purchased from landlords, contractors, and vendors. SIGAR claimed that acting Afghan officials benefited from US education funding through establishment of fraudulent NGOs to receive donor assistance, and by infiltrating Afghan NGOs delivering educational assistance.

It added restrictions on women teachers, deteriorating economic situation, and

decrease in quality teachers all limiting students' access to education in Afghanistan.

Although #StateDept & #USAID on-budget education assistance ceased after the Taliban takeover, both agencies continue to support Afghanistan's education sector, currently implementing six programs with estimated cost to agencies of \$1.9 million & \$183.3 million, respectively.

The Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan' (IEA) educa-

tion policies reduced overall quality of education by narrowing curricula offered to Afghan students. In particular, Taliban are removing some secular subjects at all education levels to primarily focus on Islamic studies that adhere to its interpretation.

Madrassas expanding in number and into the public school system. Without secular education focused on technology, science, math, reading, and writing, students will not have skills necessary to earn a sustainable income and Afghanistan will not have skilled workforce to grow economy. SIGAR report comes at a time when Afghan government officials on different occasions renewed its commitment to the distribution of international humanitarian aid in a transparent and fair manner.

Afghan official often encouraged international organisations to support Afghanistan's education and healthcare sector and not to mix them with politics. Afghan authorities also reaffirmed their support to education for girls above class sixth when an appropriate environment is ensured.

## Sirajuddin Haqqani calls Israeli attack on Gaza a ‘crime’

KABUL (TOLOnews): Acting Minister of Interior Sirajuddin Haqqani condemned Israel's war on Palestine and called it a crime against the people of Palestine.

Speaking at the inauguration ceremony of a Mosque in Kabul, Haqqani said: "Al-Aqsa Mosque is calling for the support of Muslims, the Jewish have been storming the Al-Aqsa Mosque and Gaza, not only the Muslims of Afghanistan but also other Islamic countries who have sympathy for the Palestinian people."

He said that the Islamic Emirate condemned "in the strongest terms the ongoing cruelty in Gaza and consider the ongoing violation of Muslim rights an unforgiv-



able crime." On Friday, a mosque which resembles Al-Aqsa—the major historic

mosque in Palestine—was inaugurated in the Wazir Akbar Khan area of Kabul.

The mosque is named Mullah Mohammad Omar Mujahid and constructed by a Turkish company.

## Bayat Foundation delivers aid packages to Herat's quake victims

GULRAN (Agencies): Bayat Foundation on Friday carried on to hand out relief packages to dozens of earthquake affected families – this time in Gulran district of Herat province. Affected families in the farthest villages of the district have received these aid packages.

Foundation officials say the process of distributing aid to the affected families continues and they are trying to send the aid packages to the areas where there is less cooperation.

The aid packages include clothes, blankets and kitchen utensils.

"We would like to thank Bayat Foundation despite many problems and tasks they endured and helped the farthest areas of Gulran district, said Mohammad Arif Omar, deputy of Gulran district.

However, the affected families in this district say they have not received any kind of aid so far and this is the first aid packages that have reached them.

"We thank Bayat Foundation for taking this long and risky route and helping us," said a quake affected individual.

Although Herat earthquakes did not cause much damage to the villages of Gulran district, people are forced to spend their days and nights under tents due to the fear of continued aftershocks.

The recent earthquakes in Herat have caused enormous financial and human losses to the people of Herat, in many of the affected villages, the first aid has not yet reached the people, but Bayat Foundation aid packages are being distributed for the affected people in this province.



## Afghanistan aspires to be South-Central Asia hub: Sharafat

KABUL (TOLOnews): The Head of the Afghanistan Railway Authority (ARA), Bakht Rahman Sharafat, in a meeting in Astrakhan, stressed that Afghanistan wants to become a hub between South and Central Asia. Sharafat called on the financial organizations and traders to invest in Afghanistan's railway project. "We will cooperate with all of the organizations and traders who want to invest," said Abdul Sami Durrani, a spokesman for the ARA.

Sharafat also stressed the need for the implementation of the Trans-Afghan project in his meeting with Russian officials, according to the spokesman. "The Trans-Afghan project is one of the important



projects to change Afghanistan into a regional hub and the inclusion of Russians will have a vital role," said Mahbobullah Mohammadi, a trader. The Afghanistan

Chamber of Industry and Mines (ACIM) will improve the economic sector of Afghanistan.

"Afghanistan has a transit location like a square for the Asian Railway.

Afghanistan's connection for transit brings together facilities in the region and improves the Afghan economy," said Sakhi Ahmad Paiman, deputy head of the ACIM.

## A mosque resembling Dome of the Rock built on Wazir Akbar Khan hill in Kabul

KABUL (Agencies): A mosque resembling Jerusalem's Dome of the Rock has been built on Wazir Akbar Khan hill in Kabul. The mosque named after Mullah Muhammad Omar and Sheikh Mahmud Effendi has been built with the suggestion of the interior ministry and is funded by IDDEF, a Turkish organization.

According to officials, the mosque was built on

270 square meters of land at a cost of \$120,000 and has a capacity of 350 worshippers at a time.

The Acting Minister of Interior Sirajuddin Haqqani said at a ceremony to inaugurate the mosque that this mosque was built resembling the Dome of the Rock with the proposal of the ministry because of the boundless love of Muslims, especially

Afghans, to Palestine and Al-Aqsa.

Haqqani condemned the oppression and aggression of the Jews on Al-Aqsa and the oppressed Palestinians and said that supporting Muslims is an Islamic obligation.

IDDEF's general director Mehmed Turan said that the Grand Mosque, the Prophet's Mosque, and the Al-Aqsa Mosque are of significant value for

Muslims. He said that a new mosque resembling the Dome of the Rock is inaugurated in Kabul while the Palestinians are making great sacrifices to regain their land. Turan expressed his hope that the inauguration of the mosque will lead to the liberation of Al-Aqsa Mosque. He said that IDDEF is ready to build more mosques and orphanages in Afghanistan.



## Release of Matiullah Wesa sparks global reactions

KABUL (Agencies): The release of the educational activists and founder of PenPath, Matiullah Wesa, was welcomed by high profile Afghans as well as international officials.

US special envoy for Afghan women, Rina Amiri, on X reacted to Wesa's release who, she said, "should never have been detained for standing up for the rights of Afghan girls to an education."

Amiri called for the "immediate release of all Afghans unjustly detained for the courageous act of defending their rights."

The US special envoy for Afghanistan, Thomas West, wrote on X: "Echo colleagues' welcome of Matiullah Wesa's release and call for release of all Afghan human rights defenders." The Chargé d'Affaires of the Afghanistan Permanent Mission to the UN, Naseer Ahmad Faiq, on his X account said he hoped that all detainees would be released



from the Islamic Emirate's custody. "This is good news. We hope for the release of all innocent civilian and military prisoners from Taliban detentions," he said.

The UN special rapporteur for Afghanistan had called for Wesa's release: "I call for the immediate & unconditional release of all Afghan human rights defenders who are

arbitrarily detained for standing up for their own rights and the human rights of others." But the Islamic Emirate's spokesman, Zabiullah Mujahid, said that Wesa was arrested because the interim government had concerns about him. "The government has the right to detain and investigate the people who are being accused. When

the court gives an order for their release, he/she will be released. This is a normal process of the government. Matiullah Wesa was arrested because of concerns regarding public security and protection that the government had," he said.

Wesa spent 215 days in detention of the Islamic Emirate and was released on Thursday.

## Electricity tariffs will be equal: MoEW

KABUL (TOLOnews): The Ministry of Energy and Water says that the electricity tariffs will be equal across the country.

The Ministry of Energy and Water announced the standardization of electricity tariffs across the country.

Abdul Latif Mansour, the acting minister, in a meeting in Takhar province said that he sent the proposal for this to the cabinet and economic commission of the prime minister's office.

Matiullah Abed, the spokesman of Energy and Water, said that after the approval of the Islamic Emirate cabinet, it will come into effect in the whole country. "If tariffs are taken equally, some families that are

under pressure are removed from the pressure, and some families that do not pay tariffs or have low tariffs, the tariff will be appropriately taken from them to get electricity based on each family's consumption in the right way for everyone, and also reduce the pressure on families," said Zabiullah Mujahid, the spokesman of the Islamic Emirate.

A number of Kabul residents welcomed the universal tariff rate of electricity, but said there should also be a focus on reducing the cost of electricity.

"In the past, the cost of electricity in all the provinces was usually balanced; now that the government decides that the elec-

tricity tariff is equal in all provinces, it's a positive step and we support it but it's better to reduce the cost of electricity because the people are not in a good situation and they have economical problems," said Sayed Samsor, a Kabul resident.

"In the previous government this could not be balanced but now if they make it balanced, it's very good because the problems of the people that will be solved," said Abdullah, a resident of Kabul. The ex-chairman of Breshna said that with unification of the electricity tariffs in the country, the electricity cost of some provinces will remain in their own place and the electricity cost for

some provinces will be decreased but the tariff cost of some areas including industrial parks will increase.

"If they increase the residential tariffs, there will be lots of problems for poor people. So the solution is to consider a subsidy by the government or increase the commercial and governmental sectors tariffs," said Amanullah Ghaleb, ex-chairman of Breshna.

Afghanistan is purchasing 70 percent of its electricity from Central Asian countries including Iran, but the officials have spoken of their efforts for building and investing in large water dams to improve the production of electricity inside the country.



# Support of oppressed Kashmiris to continue: KP CM

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: Caretaker Chief Minister Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Muhammad Azam Khan here Friday strongly condemned the Indian atrocities on Kashmiris. He reiterated the resolve to continue moral, political, and diplomatic support for Kashmiris, and said that people of Kashmir were not alone in this tough time, each and every Pakistani stood by them and we will continue to support their just struggle at every forum.

Talking to media persons on occasion of Kashmir black day rally here, the Chief Minister termed the 27th October, 1947 as the darkest day of Kashmir history, and remarked that for the last seven decades, India has gone allout and resorted to extreme cruelty to deprive the Kashmiri people of their right to self-determination.

He added that on August 5, 2019 India has started a new chapter of atrocities and tyranny by revoking special status of Kashmir. The chief minister stated that Kashmiris had been facing severe lock down for the last few years which is the evidence of aggression and brutality of Indian government and a blatant violation of not only international laws but fundamental human rights as well.

Muhammad Azam Khan, called upon the international community especially United Nations and other Human Rights Organizations to take serious notice of fundamental human rights violations in

Indian Illegally Occupied Jammu & Kashmir, and play their effective role to give the Kashmiris their right to self-determination so that they could decide their fate as per their desires and aspirations.

He made it clear that sustainable peace in the region was not possible without just and fair solution to the Kashmir issue. The chief minister also paid rich tribute to the struggle of Kashmiri people and reiterated the commitment to support them at every forum. The people of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa stood by the people of Kashmir and will continue to stand by them in future as well, he said.

Earlier, a rally to mark 27th October (Kashmir Black Day) was arranged which started from Chief Minister's House and ended at Governor's House. The rally was jointly led by the caretaker Chief Minister Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Muhammad Azam Khan and Governor Haji Ghulam Ali. Besides caretaker cabinet members, government functionaries, members of civil society, representative of All Parties Hurriyat Conference Azad Kashmir, people from different walks of life and a large number of students participated in the rally.

The participants of the rally strongly condemned Indian atrocities on innocent Kashmiris and expressed solidarity with the people of India Illegally occupied Jammu & Kashmir. They were carrying banners and placards

inscribed with slogans against the barbarism and oppression of Indian forces on the innocent Kashmiris.

Earlier, the central protest rally led by KP Governor Haji Ghulam Ali and caretaker Chief Minister, Muhammad Azam Khan here Friday strongly condemned an illegal annexation of Indian illegally Occupied Jammu and Kashmir (IIOJK) by India on October 27, 1947. The rally attended by people of all walks of life was started from the Chief Minister Secretariat and culminated at Governor House Peshawar.

Besides others, the rally was also attended by the caretaker ministers, advisers, officials, civil society and students in large number. The participants holding placards and banners condemned state terrorism, human rights abuses and repression at IIOJK and expressed solidarity with the oppressed Kashmiris of the held valley.

The rally also condemned the illegal revoking of the special status of IIOJK by the fascist Modi regime on August 5, 2019 and human rights violations at the occupied territory. The rally urged united nations security council to implement its resolutions on Kashmir and press the Modi Govt to give right of self determination to Kashmiris as promised to them by UNO. The road to peace in South Asia was passing through Kashmir and resolution of this long lingering issue was must for lasting peace in the held valley.

## US: Russia executing soldiers who refuse to follow orders

WASHINGTON (Reuters): The United States has information that the Russian military is executing soldiers who do not follow orders related to the war with Ukraine, the White House said. "We have information that the Russian military has been actually executing soldiers who refuse to follow orders," White House spokesperson John Kirby told reporters.

"We also have information that Russian commanders are threatening to execute entire units if they seek to retreat from Ukrainian artillery fire," Kirby said. Representatives from the Kremlin, the Russian defense ministry, and the Russian embassy to the United States did not immediately respond to requests for comment about the issue. Russia's ambassador to Washington, Anatoly Antonov, in a comment on the Telegram messaging app, made no reference to the White House allegations.

But referring to the latest military aid package to Ukraine of \$150 million, Antonov branded the US move as "provocative and inflammatory actions in the international arena that look more like pouring oil on the fire" than trying to ease conflict. "It is long past time to halt the mindless multi-billion dollar flow to the bankrupt Kyiv regime," Antonov wrote on Telegram. "Time to stop showing total disdain toward the opinions of your own citizens and indifference to the growing number of victims dying from American weaponry." Ukrainian officials said on Wednesday that Russian forces were disregarding heavy losses and pressing on with a drive to capture the eastern Ukrainian city of Avdiivka.

The United States has strongly condemned Russia's invasion of Ukraine and has been providing significant aid to Kyiv. Kirby said Russia's mobilized forces were undertrained, under-equipped, and unprepared for combat. He said the military was using "human wave tactics" by throwing groups of poorly trained soldiers into the fight. Kirby said threats to execute the soldiers was barbaric. "I think it's a symptom of ... how poorly Russia's military leaders know they're doing and how bad they have handled this from a military perspective," he said.

## Pak observed Kashmir Black Day

F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: The government and the people of Pakistan and Kashmiri people on Friday observed the 76th anniversary of the Indian troops' landing in Jammu and Kashmir as a 'Black Day'.

The prime minister and the foreign minister, in their special messages on the occasion, reiterated Pakistan's unflinching moral, diplomatic and political support to the Kashmir Cause. They also underscored the need to reverse India's illegal and unilateral actions of 5th August 2019, which have triggered a process aimed at changing the demographic structure and political landscape of the Indian Illegally Occupied Jammu and Kashmir (IIOJK).

The foreign minister, Jalil Abbas Jilani, addressed letters to the President UN General Assembly, the President UN Security Council, the UN Secretary General, the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights and the OIC Secretary General to apprise them of the latest situation in IIOJK.

In the letters, he called for the implementation of the relevant UN Security Council resolutions to enable the people of Jammu and Kashmir to determine their own future. He requested the international community to urge India to immediately release the political prisoners and dissenters, including Yasin Malik, for whom the Indian authorities had sought a death penalty.

The foreign secretary briefed the Islamabad-based diplomatic missions on the situation in IIOJK. He also highlighted the legal, security and human rights dimensions of the Kashmir dispute.



ISLAMABAD: Governor Sindh, Muhammad Kamran Khan Tessori, called on President Dr Arif Alvi, at Aiwan-e-Sadr.

## ‘Misconduct’: SJC serves show-cause notice to SC judge

F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: The Supreme Judicial Council has issued a show cause notice to Justice Mazahar Ali Akbar Naqvi and directed him to file a written reply by November 10 to respond to the audio leak scandal. A meeting of the Supreme Judicial Council was held on Friday under the chairmanship of Chief Justice of Pakistan, Justice Qazi Faez Isa, in which the matter of complaints against Supreme Court judge Justice Naqvi for his alleged involvement in the audio leak scandal was discussed.

On March 10, the Pakistan Bar Council (PBC) filed a reference against Supreme Court Judge, Justice Naqvi in the Supreme Judicial Council for "misconduct" after his name surfaced in connection with the recent audio leaks purportedly involving him, former Punjab chief minister Chaudhry Pervaiz Elahi and others. Justice Sardar Tariq Masood and Justice Ijazul Ahsan also attended the SJC meeting along with Lahore High Court Chief Justice Ameer Bhatti and Balochistan High Court Chief Justice, Justice Naem Akhtar Awan. Supreme Court Registrar Jazeela Aslam and Attorney General for Pakistan Mansoor Usman Awan were also in attendance.

The huddle also considered a complaint of misconduct against former National Accountability Bureau (NAB) chairman Justice (ret'd) Javed Iqbal. It may be mentioned here that complaints had also been filed against Supreme Court judges includ-

ing Justice Mazahar Naqvi. Retired CJP Umar Ata Bandial had referred the complaints against Justice Naqvi to senior judge Justice Sardar Tariq for scrutiny. Justice Sardar Tariq had forwarded his legal advice on the complaints against Justice Naqvi on September 25.

As many as 10 complaints had been filed in SJC against Justice Naqvi during the current year seeking inquiry into his alleged "misconduct and financial impropriety". On February 23, a reference was filed against Justice Naqvi in the SJC on behalf of Mian Dawood Advocate. In the referral, the SJC was prayed to investigate the assets of the Supreme Court judge and his family members. The reference alleged that the judge used his "influence to facilitate" his sons and a daughter studying abroad and to get "financial gains" from Zahid Rafique, a businessman.

On March 4, the Pakistan Muslim League Nawaz Lawyers Forum filed a complaint against him in the SJC after his name surfaced in connection with an alleged audio leak. The reference, filed under Article 209 of the Constitution, stated that the oath of a superior court judge as prescribed by the Constitution required strict adherence to a code of conduct, any departure from which "may invite misconduct proceeding".

On March 10, Pakistan Bar Council Vice Chairman Haroon-ur-Rasheed and Executive Committee Chairman Hasan Raza Pasha filed a complaint against Justice Naqvi under Article 209 of the Constitution,

praying the SJC to investigate the complaint after his name appeared in connection with the recent audio leaks purportedly involving him and former Punjab chief minister Elahi.

On April 4, the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Bar Council filed a reference against Justice Naqvi seeking a probe into a purported audio leak featuring him. On April 3, 2023, two senior SC judges and members of the Supreme Judicial Council (SJC) including now Chief Justice Qazi Faez Isa and Justice Sardar Tariq Masood wrote a judicial letter to the head and members of the SJC to call a meeting to review the allegations of misconduct and financial corruption levelled against Justice Mazahar Ali Akbar Naqvi.

In the letter, it was said that by calling a meeting of the SJC, the allegations levelled against the judge should be reviewed if they were false or true. The Pakistan Bar Council sent a complaint against Justice Naqvi. "Article 209 of the Constitution of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan establishes the Supreme Judicial Council of Pakistan ('the Constitution and 'the Council respectively) and it is the duty of the Council to inquire into the capacity and misconduct of a judge."

The two judges said that a meeting should be called to determine whether the allegations against Justice Naqvi were true or false, if the allegations were false, the honour of the judge should be restored, if the allegations were true, action should be taken according to the Constitution.

## Rejoining of Special Secy: PHC orders reply

Humayun Khan

PESHAWAR: Peshawar High Court (PHC) ordered Speaker and Secretary Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Assembly for submission of reply in writ seeking rejoining of Special Secretary after deputation, on Friday.

PHC's divisional bench comprised of Justice Ijaz Anwar and Justice SM Attique Shah heard writ petition of Waqar Ahmad while Mian Zakir Hussain advocate appeared before court during the hearing.

The counsel argued that Waqar Ahmad was deputed to National Institute of Parliamentary Affairs in August 2019 for three years which is ended in August 2023 and the petitioner reported to Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Assembly but didn't allow for joining the parent department.

Moreover, the salary of petitioner is also attached and requested PHC to direct respondent to allow Waqar Ahmad to rejoin as well releasing of salary, the counsel added.

PHC's divisional bench comprised of Justice Ijaz Anwar and Justice SM Attique Shah ordered respondents for submission of reply while adjourned further hearing. PHC converts death penalties to life-

time imprisonment: PHC's divisional bench comprised of Justice Ishtiaq Ibrahim and Justice Sahibzada Asadullah accepted plea partially by converting four times death penalty to four times lifetime imprisonment.

Meanwhile, PHC's divisional bench comprised of Justice Abdul Shakoor and Justice Syed Arshad Ali granted status quo to mining contractor against cancellation of marble excavation license in Mohmand district as well as ordered submission of comments.

The counsel Umair Iqbal advocate argued that Khalid Yousaf had obtained marble excavation license for Mohmand while completing all documentation and requirements but Deputy Commissioner had cancelled it on directives of high-ups without any reason. The counsel further added that the license was granted to a contractor from Punjab after cancellation of petitioner's license which is illegal because no reason had provided for cancellation. He added that Deputy Commissioner had no jurisdiction to cancel mining license without any reason.

PHC's divisional comprised of Justice Shakeel Ahmad and Justice Syed Arshad Ali granted status quo and ordered submission of reply after conclusion of arguments.

## Security of Shehbaz, Maryam tightened

LAHORE (PPI): The interim Punjab government has further tightened the security protocol of former prime minister and PML-N president Shehbaz Sharif and PML-N Senior Vice President and Chief Organizer Maryam Nawaz on Friday.

On the directives of the Punjab IG police, the provincial administration has provided fool-proof security to both Shehbaz Sharif and Maryam Nawaz. Both the Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz leaders will be given a security protocol by four police vehicles with jamming facilities during their movement. The special branch has provided vehicles fitted with jammers on the written request made by the operation branch.

## Sh Rasheed forgives CCPO

RAWALPINDI (INP): Former interior minister and Awami Muslim League chief Sheikh Rasheed on Friday forgave CCPO Rawalpindi and other cops, who arrested him, last month. On September 18, a plea was moved in the LHC Rawalpindi against the arrest of Sheikh Rasheed. The IG Punjab, RPO, CCPO Rawalpindi and SSP Operations were made respondents in the case. The former interior minister appeared on a TV show, earlier this month after he was taken into custody in September.

Rasheed appeared before the Lahore High Court Rawalpindi bench in a plea against his 'disappearance'. In his statement before the court of Judge Justice Sadaqat Ali Khan, Sheikh Rasheed held CCPO Rawalpindi and other policemen involved in his arrest. The former minister then forgave his accusers "for the sake.

of Allah," indicating his willingness to absolve those involved in his arrest. Later, the LHC Rawalpindi bench disposed off the petition.

## Terrorism and extortion cases linked to Afghans

Syed Adnan

PESHAWAR: A concerning trend has emerged in the city of Peshawar, where a significant number of registered mobile phone numbers for extortion activities primarily belong to Afghan women. The investigation reveals that these numbers are often used to extort money or participate in terrorist activities, raising serious security concerns in the region.

Law enforcement agencies, particularly the Counter-Terrorism Department (CTD), have observed a pattern where Afghan women, especially those from less educated backgrounds or rural areas of Punjab and Sindh provinces, are involved in these criminal activities. These women, often lacking formal education and awareness, become unwitting tools in the hands of terrorists or extortionists.

Imran Shahid, a senior

official from the CTD, expressed grave concerns about the situation. "These women lack awareness and education, making them vulnerable to being manipulated for terrorism or extortion purposes," he stated.

The issue has prompted the Pakistan Telecommunication Authority (PTA) and Federal Investigation Agency (FIA) to take action. The authorities are now collaborating to block such identification cards associated with these criminal activities. "We are in contact with relevant authorities to block these identification cards and curb the involvement of Afghan nationals in these incidents," confirmed a spokesperson from the CTD.

Furthermore, investigations have revealed that a significant number of terrorism and extortion cases in the region involve Afghan nationals. Whether

it's suicide attacks, terrorist guidance, extortion activities, or facilitation of criminal operations, Afghan nationals seem to have a connection in various criminal incidents.

Even high-profile cases are not immune; Afghan nationals have been found involved in heinous acts of terrorism, including suicide attacks. The situation calls for increased vigilance and collaborative efforts between law enforcement agencies to address this growing security concern effectively.

The security agencies are intensifying their efforts to identify and apprehend those responsible for manipulating vulnerable individuals, ensuring the safety and security of the region. The issue serves as a reminder of the importance of raising awareness and providing education to prevent the exploitation of individuals, especially women, in criminal activities.

## Govt sticks to deadline for illegal immigrants' evacuation

F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: Caretaker Interior Minister Sarfraz Bugti has reiterated that the government will not extend the date set for evacuation of the illegal immigrants. The minister said the government had devised a final plan for the foreigners living here illegally and now they had two days in hand to leave Pakistan.

He said the geo-fencing and geo-mapping of the illegal settlers had been completed. He said following the document regime, the government was supporting those landing in Pakistan with proper documentation. He said people would not be allowed to enter Pakistan without visa. Under the one document regime, the minister said a passport office would be inaugurated in Qila Abdullah tomorrow (Saturday).

As for the crackdown on smuggling, the minister said the government had controlled smuggling in Balochistan and not hit any business activity. On Thursday, addressing a press conference in Islamabad, he said to evacuate such foreigners the temporary camps had been set up where provincial governments would provide them food and medical facilities. He said the provincial governments would bear all

expenses of these camps.

He said illegal residents would be repatriated to their countries from the holding centres. Utmost respect of children, women and elders would be maintained at the centres, he said, adding after Nov 1, no compromise would be made on the illegal residents. Bugti also ruled out the possibility of an extension to the deadline, saying there were no current proposals for such an extension.

Bugti, while briefing the Senate Standing Committee on Interior, emphasised that the government's intent to take action against unauthorised residents had been misconstrued. Earlier on Oct 3, the caretaker government had announced that law-enforcement agencies would repatriate all individuals living illegally in Pakistan after the deadline's expiration. At that time, Bugti had indicated that approximately 1.73 million unregistered Afghans were residing in the country. State media had previously reported that the decision to remove 1.1 million foreigners living unlawfully was prompted by the revelation of their involvement in terrorist activities and illegal practices like smuggling.

This announcement had faced criticism from various quarters, with many

questioning whether it primarily targeted Afghan refugees. In his briefing, Bugti clarified, "Our intention was to deport unauthorised residents, but our announcement was interpreted as if we were only deporting Afghans. The government's message was not exclusive to Afghans; it applied to all undocumented residents."

The minister explained that individuals with refugee cards or valid visas were considered guests, and the government was also deporting unauthorised entrants from Iran, particularly those from the Baloch community. Bugti highlighted that the issue should not be seen as an ethnic matter, emphasising that it solely pertained to deporting unauthorised residents from the country. He noted that no country in the world allowed people to reside illegally within its borders.

The minister reiterated that the issue had no ethnic dimension and did not involve diplomatic interference, stating that there was no need for such interference. Sindh Home Minister retired Brig Haris Nawaz had similarly emphasised the operation's broader scope, clarifying that it targeted all foreign nationals residing illegally in the country.