

No cut in salaries: Bangash

PESHAWAR (INP): Khyber Pakhtunkhwa's caretaker finance minister Ahmed Rasool Bangash has confirmed that the province is facing financial difficulties but has denied reports of cuts to government employee salaries. Bangash said that the federal government owes KP 233 billion rupees from the last financial year, and that the caretaker prime minister has assured the province that this debt will be paid.

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GAZA CITY: A young girl walks amid the destruction following Israeli attacks on al-Shatee camp.

Efforts on to repatriate illegal immigrants

F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: The repatriation of illegal foreign nationals from Pakistan border crossings to their countries is continued as only three days are left for the undocumented aliens to leave Pakistan on Saturday. The Government of Pakistan has asked all undocumented foreign nationals, including Afghans to leave Pakistan by October 31, otherwise, law enforcement agencies will take action as per the law of the land.

Meanwhile, the voluntary repatriation of Afghan families residing illegally in Pakistan is also continued. On October 27, as many as 5,046 Afghan nationals including 1,241 males, 1,052 women, and 2,753 children, left for their country. 153 cars were used in the repatriation process of 310 Afghan families. The repatriation is being done on a daily basis.

Up until now, 81,974 Afghan refugees have been repatriated. All four provinces are taking steps to expel undocumented foreign nationals from the country. To speed up the evacuation of undocumented foreigners to Afghanistan and Iran, the Balochistan government is opening three more crossing points i.e. Qila Saifullah, Qameruddin Karez and Baracha Noor Wahab in Chagai district to help Afghan and Iranian Baloch immigrants to meet the deadline of Oct 31.

In the context of the approaching deadline, preparations for the evacuation of illegal foreigners in the province of Punjab have entered the decisive stages. All the relevant institutions are working together to perform the service. The process of scanning people in various communities and mapping of foreigners has entered the final stages of completion. Teams comprising officials from police and relevant departments seem busy checking every nook and corner of the province to locate people residing without proper documents. These teams have been provided security by Pakistan Rangers and other forces.

Those people who do not have the necessary documents for residence in Pakistan are being asked to leave the country by October 31. The government has taken the necessary steps to expel these aliens. In the first stage, action will be taken against the illegal immigrants. The government will deal very strictly with those who have obtained fake documents. These people will be kept in 'holding centres' and temporary camps set up in various districts.

The detainees will be treated with full respect. They will be provided residence,

food, and medical facilities at these centres. There will be separate lodges for men and women. Registration desk for such person is set up in each camp where the FIA staff will be engaged through special software developed by NADRA. This modern software is linked to Border Management System. Other necessary steps are being taken to evacuate illegal foreigners from these camps to border crossing points. The completion of this national mission will have a very positive impact on the country's economy, national unity, and law and order situation.

As many as 33,555 unregistered people crossed into Afghanistan from Pakistan since October 1 to 23, 2023. According to official data, due to lacking proper documentation, illegal Afghan families including 2,772 families, consisting of 8,309 men, 5,457 women, and 19,789 children moved to Torkham Border.

It is worth mentioning here that the government of Pakistan has instructed all unregistered Afghan families to return to Afghanistan by October 31, 2023 and after the deadline strictly action will be taken against them.

The city administration on Saturday said that around 1.25 lac Afghan nationals still illegally staying in Karachi. Commissioner Karachi Saleem Rajput said that those illegally settled in city would be legally sent back to their countries if they failed to leave by October 31.

He said 18,000 illegal immigrants had been sent back from the metropolis so far. "A place in the city will be declared holding point and deputy commissioners and security institutions will retain illegal immigrants at the holding point. He said illegal immigrants will be handed over to the security officials at Jacobabad and Chaman border. "The convoy of five buses will be sent from Karachi under security," Rajput said. "People illegally staying, will not be allowed in the country, after November 01st," he reiterated.

The city's police have been activated for repatriation of illegally staying immigrants. On the instructions of the Commissioner Karachi, mosques in Afghan settlements and concerned areas announcing repatriation of illegal immigrants on loudspeakers. Saddar Police in District South has launched a campaign informing citizens to avoid offering houses, flats and shops to people illegally staying in city warning that "it is a legal offence". "A crackdown will be initiated against illegal foreign immigrants from November 01," the police warned.

PM felicitates people of Turkiye on Republic Day

F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: Caretaker Prime Minister Anwaar-ul-Haq Kakar on Sunday felicitated the people of Turkiye on the occasion of the 100th Republic Day of the country. "On behalf of the government and people of Pakistan, I extend our warmest felicitations to the brotherly people of Turkiye on the auspicious occasion of the centenary of the Turkish Republic," the prime minister said in his message.

As the Turkish Republic was first proclaimed by the Turkish Grand National Assembly, in Ankara on October 29, 1923, this momentous occasion also marked the culmination of the Turkish nation's heroic struggle for freedom, led by the charismatic Ghazi Mustafa Kemal Ataturk, he added. PM Kakar said the resolute grit and determination of the Turkish nation to preserve their independence continued to inspire freedom-loving people across the world.

During the last one hundred years, Turkiye has made impressive strides across all walks of life. Under the dynamic leadership of President Erdogan, Turkiye's economic transformation and its role in promoting the mutually reinforcing goals of peace and prosperity are globally recognized. As the Turkish Republic marks its centennial, we, in Pakistan, rejoice with our Turkish brothers and sisters on their innumerable accomplishments. Speaking to the first Turkish Ambassador to Pakistan, Qaid-i-Azam said, "The Muslims of Pakistan entertain sentiments of affection and esteem for your country, and now Turkiye and Pakistan both as free, sovereign and independent countries, can strengthen their ties more and more for the good of both".

The Frontier Post

Two soldiers martyred F.P. Report

RAWALPINDI: Two soldiers were martyred while one terrorist was killed and two others arrested in two separate incidents occurred in KP on Saturday. An intelligence-based operation was conducted in the general area of Tirah, Khyber District and after intense exchange of fire, one terrorist was killed, while two terrorists were injured and apprehended by security forces.

Israeli strikes continue in Gaza

Israel says it plans to completely 'eradicate' Hamas in war; If Israel wants to resolve hostage crisis, 'we are ready': Hamas

UN chief calls for ceasefire

NEW YORK (Reuters): UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres said on Saturday he was surprised by Israel's escalation of the bombardments in Gaza, and repeated a call for an immediate humanitarian ceasefire for the delivery of aid.

"I was encouraged in the last days by what seemed to be a growing consensus in the international community ... for the need of at least a humanitarian pause in the fighting," Guterres said in a statement. UNSG Antonio Guterres reiterated his appeal for an immediate humanitarian ceasefire, unconditional release of hostages, and delivery of relief at a level corresponding to the "dramatic needs of the people in Gaza, where a humanitarian catastrophe is unfolding in front of our eyes". "Regrettably, instead of the pause, I was surprised by an unprecedented escalation of the bombardments and their devastating impacts, undermining the referred humanitarian objectives," he said. "Given the breakdown in communications, I am also extremely concerned about the UN staff who are in Gaza to deliver humanitarian assistance," Guterres said on Saturday. "This situation must be reversed."

Israel recalls diplomats from Turkey

TEL AVIV: Foreign Minister Eli Cohen announced diplomats in Turkey were ordered to return so Israel can "conduct a reassessment of Israel-Turkey relations". The order comes as pro-Palestine protests continue in Turkey with President Recep Tayyip Erdogan condemning Israel's actions in Gaza. He said earlier his country is making preparations to proclaim Israel a "war criminal". The Turkish leader has also said "Hamas is not a terrorist organisation, it is a liberation group", while calling the West the "main culprit" behind the killing of civilians in Gaza. The statements have roiled relations between the two countries, which had seen a thaw in recent years. — Agencies

Israel is 'an occupier': Erdogan

ISTANBUL: At a massive pro-Palestinian rally in Istanbul, Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan said Israel was an occupier in its war in Gaza, and repeated his stance about Hamas not being a terrorist organisation. "I reiterate that Hamas is not a terrorist organisation. Israel was very offended by this ... Israel is an occupier, Erdogan speaks clearly because Turkey does not owe you anything," he told hundreds of thousands of supporters on Saturday. People gathered at Istanbul's Ataturk airport for a rally organised by Turkey's governing AK Party to protest against Israel's continued bombardment of the Gaza Strip and call for a ceasefire. Demonstrators chanted pro-Palestinian slogans and waved Turkish and Palestinian flags at the event dubbed the "Great Palestine Meeting" on Saturday, as Israel pushed forward with its "expanded" ground operation amid a near-total communications blackout in the Gaza Strip.

The rally was attended by leaders of other political parties, as well as high-profile media and sports figures – some of whom were expected to take to the stage during the event, local media reported. Erdogan told the crowd that Western powers were "the main culprit" behind the Israeli army's "massacre" of Palestinians in Gaza. "The main culprit behind the massacre unfolding in Gaza is the West," said. Al Jazeera's Osama Bin Javid, reporting from the rally, said this was "by far one of the strongest speeches that we've heard" from the president. Protesters were seen wearing headbands with inscriptions such as "We are all Palestinians", "End the genocide", or "Be the voice of Palestinian children". — Aljazeera

air raids and shelling have killed 50 captives. The "price" of returning all the captives in Gaza is the release of all Palestinian detainees held in Israeli prisons – estimated at about 6,600 people. "If the enemy wants to resolve this issue, we are ready," he said. "If the enemy wants to close this file of detainees in one go, we are ready for it. If it wants to do it step-by-step, we are ready for that, too." Some 229 hostages are being held in the Gaza Strip, according to the Israeli army. In the centre of Ramallah, there is yet another protest and another vigil taking place.

This is now a nightly event. Not only here in Ramallah, but right across the occupied West Bank. We see protests every night in Nablus, in Hebron, in Jenin for example. We are expecting to see much more of this in the hours ahead. There were at least 25 people arrested last night. That brings the number of arrests and

detention since October 7 to approximately 1,550. It takes the total number of Palestinians in Israeli jails in so-called administrative detention – that's being held without being charged – to about 6,600 Palestinians.

Hamas official Ghazi Hamad has called for the immediate implementation of the UN General Assembly decision to allow humanitarian relief into Gaza, warning of a disaster as Israel widens its air and ground attacks. "We consider the decision a victory for our Palestinian people, and we demand this aid piled up on the Egyptian side be quickly sent and distributed to all areas and hospitals in Gaza Strip," Hamad said in a news conference in Beirut. The General Assembly on Friday overwhelmingly called for an immediate humanitarian truce between Israel and Hamas and demanded aid access to the besieged Gaza Strip and protection of civilians. — Agencies



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Haseeb Khan appointed as DRC member

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: A young at Peshawar High Court named Haseeb Ullah Khan as member Dispute Resolution Council (DRC).

According to details, Haseeb Ullah Khan advocate appointed as member Badabhir. It is worthy to mention that Superintendent of Police Saddar had recommended appointment of Haseeb Ullah Khan Advocate as member DRC Badabhir.

IGP reviews performance of traffic police

LAHORE (APP): Inspector General Police Punjab Dr Usman Anwar chaired a video link meeting of chief traffic officers at the Central Police Office here on Saturday.

SSP Traffic Riffat Bukhari briefed about road safety, driving licensing, improvement of training schools and other traffic management related issues.

AIG Operations Punjab Dr Asad Ijaz Malhi and other senior police officers attended the meeting.

The IG Punjab announced letters of appreciation to the district traffic officers who increased rate of driving licensing by more than 600 per cent.

He said that Traffic Police Jhang had increased the rate of driving licensing by 800% this month and won the first position in all districts. Dr. Usman Anwar said that 51 new driving schools, 126 testing centers, and 75 licensing counters had been established during July to October in Punjab.

ASF arrest drug smuggler

LAHORE (PPI): Airport Security Forces (ASF) successfully thwarted the drug smuggling attempt and arrested a female traveler at Lahore's Allama Iqbal International Airport, authorities said Saturday.

According to the ASF Spokesperson, during the routine checking, the ASF officials discovered a substantial quantity of drugs in the possession of a female passenger who was traveling from Lahore to Doha, Qatar.

The security officials seized a total of 59 capsules containing a mixture of heroin and crystal methamphetamine, commonly referred to as "ice."

The ASF took immediate action, offloaded the female passenger from the flight, and was handed over to the Anti-Narcotics Force (ANF) for further investigation and legal action.

Four dead in road accidents

LAHORE (APP): At least four people were killed and 1,355 others injured in 1,241 road accidents in Punjab during the last 24 hours.

As many as 702 people with serious injuries were shifted to different hospitals, while 653 with minor injuries were treated at the incident site by the Rescue medical teams.

The data analysis showed that 637 drivers, 44 underage drivers, 151 pedestrians and 571 passengers were among the victims of road accidents.

CM orders early completion of development projects

LAHORE (NNI): Caretaker Chief Minister Punjab Mohsin Naqvi reviewed progress on 43 ongoing priority projects for the welfare of the people in a 3-hour long meeting on Saturday.

Chief Minister Mohsin Naqvi chaired the meeting which was attended by provincial ministers at the Planning and Development Board offices.

The Chief Minister observed the development progress of 43 projects through drone footage, reviewed the administrative and financial issues of each project. On the occasion Chief Minister Mohsin Naqvi directed to complete the ongoing development projects within the timeline.

CM Muhsin Naqvi also instructed for early commencement of work on Abdullahpur flyover in Faisalabad and Jinnah Park in Jhang. While giving briefing in the meeting, Chairman P&D Board Iftikhar Sahu said that 92 percent of the work on the Shahdara Multigrade Flyover Project and 65 percent on the Imamiya

Colony Overhead Bridge has been completed.

He said the construction of Akbar Chowk flyover and Bedian underpass is 80 percent completed while Main Boulevard Gulberg to Walton Road is 80 percent and Ghora Chowk flyover is 34 percent completed.

He further briefed that about 31 work on Ring Road Southern Loop, 55 percent on Wahandu Interchange Gujranwala, 51 percent on Gajumata to Kasur Ferozepur Road have been completed. In the meeting projects of Multan Shujaabad Flyover, Divisional Level E-Registration Office and New GOR were also reviewed. Upgradation of Services Hospital, Gangaram Hospital, Lady Willington, Mayo Hospital, General Hospital and other hospitals were reviewed in the meeting.

A report was presented on the upgradation, construction and rehabilitation of Lahore Zoo and Safari Park. The CM instructed to speed up the upgradation of Baba Bulhe Shah, Shah Shams Tabriz, Baba Farid and Redarbar Bibi Pakdaman shrines. He

ordered to complete the projects of Safe City Authority of Faisalabad, Rawalpindi and Gujranwala as soon as possible.

A report was submitted on the establishment of Cadet College Multan, Gujranwala University and the restoration of Qila Kahna Qasim Bagh in Multan and the establishment of a park.

The participants were also briefed about the PAFDA Laboratory and Rabi Gas Plants. In the meeting of the Planning and Development Board, the progress of the ongoing development projects across the province was reviewed. Chairman Planning and Development Board Iftikhar Sahu gave a detailed briefing about the monitoring of 43 priority projects and the progress made so far.

Provincial Ministers Bilal Afzal, Dr. Javed Akram, Mansoor Qadir, Amir Mir, Azfar Ali Nasir, Dr. Jamal Nasir, Ibrahim Murad, Chief Secretary, Chairman National Highway Authority, secretaries of departments and senior officials attended the meeting.

Lahore becomes most polluted city of world

LAHORE (PPI) Lahore remained the most polluted city of the world on Saturday as smog hovering over Punjab's capital city in the morning.

India's capital city New Delhi ranked second in most polluted cities of the world on the Air Quality Index (AQI). Overall reading of Lahore on the Air Quality Index measured 368 today. In some parts of the city the reading crossed 400 level on the air pollution scale.

The AQI reading at Garden Town remained 421, Gulberg 434, Polo Ground 430 and Mall Road 407, environment department

said. "In a drive to curb smog action being taken against smog causing elements including sentences and fines," environment department stated.

The AQI is calculated on the basis of five categories of pollution: ground-level ozone, particulate matter, carbon monoxide, sulfur dioxide, and nitrogen dioxide.

AQI as high as 151-200 is considered unhealthy, while an AQI rating between 201 to 300 is more harmful and over 300 is extremely toxic.

According to experts, an increase in air pollution used to be witnessed in the winter. A change in the wind speed,

wind direction and sliding minimum temperature increases air pollution.

The air becomes heavier in the winter as compared to summer, causing poisonous particles in the atmosphere to move downwards and making the atmosphere polluted. As a result, a layer of polluted particles, including large amounts of carbon and smoke, covers an area.

The smoke produced by burning crop remnants, factories and burning coal, garbage, oil or tyres enters the atmosphere and the impact of this appears at the onset of winter and remains till the season's end, experts added.

LESCO recovers Rs 1.65b from 33,237 defaulters

LAHORE (APP): The Lahore Electric Supply Company (LESCO), in collaboration with Tehsildars (Recovery), has recovered more than Rs 1.65 billion from 33,237 chronic defaulters in all five districts — Lahore, Sheikhupura, Nankana Sahib, Kasur and Okara — during one-and-a-half months of its recovery campaign.

A spokesman told the media on Saturday that during the 45 days, Chief Engineer O&M (T&G) Zafar Iqbal, with the support of Tehsildar City Mujahid Zia, and Tehsildar Shalimar Noreez Humayun, recovered outstanding dues of Rs 137.48 million from 4,432 defaulters in Northern Circle and Rs 242.27 million from 3,913 defaulters in Eastern Circle respectively.

Similarly, LESCO Manager (Material Disposal) Engineer Anwar Watto along with Tehsildar Model Town Rana Ahsan and Tehsildar Cant. Sajjad Qureshi recovered Rs 155.16 million from 4,225 defaulters in Central

Circle and Rs 60.55 million from 1,811 defaulters in South Circle, while Manager (Technical) Engineer Muhammad Farooq with the assistance of Tehsildar Nankana Sahib Muhammad Iqbal Rasheed and Tehsildar Sheikhupura Muhammad Aslam Gujjar recovered Rs 66.31 million from 2,938 defaulters in Nankana Circle and Rs 154.56 million from 3,619 defaulters in Sheikhupura Circle. He added that LESCO Manager E&S (PMU) Engineer Abbas Ali in collaboration with Naib Tehsildar Kasur and Okara Mirza Zahid Baig recovered outstanding dues of Rs 70.89 million from 5,032 defaulters in Okara Circle and Rs 178.08 million from 7,267 defaulters in Kasur Circle.

On the 45th day of the recovery campaign, the LESCO with the help of Tehsildars (Recovery) recovered more than Rs 11.9 million from 400 dead defaulters in its all circles of operation. He elaborated that LESCO recovered outstanding dues

of Rs 1.48 million from 44 defaulters in Northern Circle; Rs 2.12 million from 84 defaulters in Eastern Circle; Rs 1.61 million from 41 defaulters in Central Circle; Rs 0.39 million from 13 defaulters in South Circle, Rs 1.00 million from 57 defaulters in Nankana Circle; Rs 2.94 million from 44 defaulters in Sheikhupura Circle; Rs 0.42 million from 28 defaulters in Okara Circle and Rs 2.04 million from 82 defaulters in Kasur Circle.

For the recovery campaign started on September 13, the Lahore Division's Commissioner had assigned additional charge of Tehsildar Recovery (from LESCO defaulters) to relevant Tehsildars, while LESCO Chief Executive Officer Engineer Shahid Haidar has also designated four senior officers to assist them in the dues recovery from defaulters. LESCO Chief Executive Officer Engineer Shahid Haidar said that the company is facing loss due to dead defaulters, and vowed to continue action against them.



LAHORE: Maulana Raghib Naimi addressing the rally to express solidarity with the Palestinians outside Press club. —APP Photo

Sardar Waqar welcomed at Korean Embassy

F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: Park Kijum Ambassador Of Republic of South Korea honored Sardar Waqar Shahzad Advocate to attend the reception held on the occasion of the Independence Day and Armed forces of Republic of South Korea.

Sardar Waqar Shahzad Advocate, forwarded personal warm wishes and the brotherly feelings from the people of Pakistan specially from Swat. Sardar Waqar Shahzad Advocate wished a prosperous and bright future for the brotherly country and people of Republic of Korea.

Sindh bans use of social media in schools

KARACHI (PPI): The Education Department has banned the use of social media in schools of Sindh, according to a letter on Saturday.

In this regard, Director Secondary Schools Hyderabad has written a letter to all the schools and officers of all the districts and instructed them to implement the directions by banning the use of social media in the schools in their concerned areas.

It was directed in the letter that district officials should ensure their employees to stop this type of behavior immediately. The district officers were also ordered to take action against the employees defaming the department.

It was warned that in case of uploading negative and controversial content, they should be fined and action should be taken against them.

Power pilferers detected in Manga Mandi

LAHORE (APP): The Lahore Electric Supply Company (LESCO) conducted an operation against electricity thieves in Manga Mandi Sub-Division and found pilferage at Aziz Medical Centre, 22 residential flats and a TV/internet cable service provider.

According to the company's spokesman here Saturday, SDO Kaab Farooq, along with his staff, conducted an operation in his area and found that the Aziz Medical Centre management was stealing electricity through illegal hooking on the transmission line. Power supply to the centre was disconnected immediately and the accused was fined Rs 150,500 in the form of detection bill.

The team also checked 25 residential flats in the area of Glamor Adda and found that only three power meters were installed there, while the rest were stealing electricity directly from the main supply line. SDO Kaab Farooq disconnected all 22 illegal connections and charged detection bills to the accused.

During the inspection, the Manga Mandi SDO also disconnected power supply to the office of Rana Arshad Cable Network after detecting pilferage, and imposed a fine of Rs 165,500. In this regard, an FIR application against the three accused had also been submitted in the respective police stations.

Illegal immigrants' repatriation plan finalized

KARACHI (APP): The caretaker Minister for Home and Prisons Sindh Brig. (R) Harris Nawaz has said that the repatriation plan for foreign nationals, who were residing in the province without proper documentation, had been finalized and all the necessary formalities were completed in this regard.

He said this while chairing a meeting at his office here Saturday regarding Illegal immigrants' repatriation. The meeting was attended by Secretary Transport, DG PDMA, Commissioners of Karachi, Larkana, Shaheed Benazirabad, Zonal DIGs Karachi, DIGs Special Branch, all Deputy Commissioners of Karachi and Larkana and senior Representatives of NADRA & FIA.

Harris Nawaz said that the individuals had been encouraged to voluntarily return to their home countries by November 1, with the government committed to providing them with necessary support for their repatriation.

"Repatriation efforts will be carried out from designated points across the province. Special arrangements will be made at these points, including the provision of food, and special care for women, children, and the elderly", he added.

The minister also stressed upon foolproof security arrangements at the holding centers as well as security to the convoys on way back to their countries. "There is a need to keep an eye on hostile elements to foil any possible nefarious design", he added.

Harris clarified that the government was not only repatriating illegal Afghan refugees but also all other foreigners living illegally back to their home countries. "State action against illegal foreigners, including their deportation, was in accordance with the law of the land, for ensuring the safety and security of the country", he maintained.

The meeting was informed that three holding centers have been estab-

lished one each in Karachi, Hyderabad and Jacobabad for this purpose. These centers will also offer access to medical services, doctors, medicines, and other healthcare facilities, besides the safety and security of the inhabitants.

It was further inform that the control rooms at provincial, divisional and district levels have been established to coordinate, monitor and report. Representatives of police, NADRA, FIA, PDMA, Special Branch and other intelligence agencies will be a part of the control room.

The meeting also discussed the possibility of sending the illegal immigrants by special trains in order to lessen security issues besides providing all the necessary facilities, at one place, without any interruption. The Caretaker Home Minister Sindh while nominating the Commissioner Karachi as the focal person directed him to discuss the proposal with the federal government.

Literary festivals offer opportunities to rejuvenate spirits: CM

KARACHI (APP): The Council of Pakistan, Karachi (ACPCKH) play an indispensable role in uniting diverse cultures together.

He further added that ACKPKH has been working tirelessly to revive and preserve our cultural heritage on an expansive scale.

The CM said that literary festivals were more than just platforms for intellectual exchange, but they were a form of cultural activism. "They provide a space where ideas flourish, imaginations soar, and diverse voices harmonize," he said.

A large number of literary figures, poets, writers, and journalists attended the program.

Punjab police to create tourism force

LAHORE (NNI): The Punjab police have decided to create a tourism force in the provincial police department for security and guidance of the foreign tourists.

Inspector General (IG) of Police also has given approval for creating the new force in police department.

Reportedly, the tourists arriving at the airport will be briefed by the tourism force about the tourist places of Punjab.

In this regard, special counters will be created at three airports of the province including Lahore while male and female staff will be posted on such counters.

The Tourism Force along with Tourism Department will also update records of tourist places including hotels and restaurants.

Health minister reviews performance of govt teaching hospitals

LAHORE (INP): Caretaker Punjab Health Minister Prof Dr. Javaid Akram attended a conference here on Saturday and reviewed performance of all government teaching hospitals in the province.

The conference, held at a local hotel, was attended by vice chancellors, principals and medical superintendents of government medical universities, colleges and the teaching hospitals.

The participants placed a strong emphasis on leadership qualities for hospital heads. Dr. Akram emphasised that Punjab's healthcare system surpassed those of other provinces, attributing it to a historic focus on improving healthcare.

The minister praised introduction of Primary angio-

plasty services as a game-changer in cardiology hospitals, with over 10,000 procedures performed so far.



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LAHORE: Student giving final touch to her painting during Painting and Calligraphy Exhibition organized by Formanite School System at Wazir Khan square inside Delhi gate. —APP Photo

UNICEF to provide financial support

— to ensure primary education to every child in KP

PESHAWAR (APP): The Directorate of Elementary and Secondary Education Khyber Pakhtunkhwa is going to establish the early Childhood Education Classrooms in the selected government primary schools (Boys and Girls) of all the districts with the technical and financial support of UNICEF.

In this connection, District Education Officers of both male and female of all districts including Bannu, Baktagram, Bajaur, Dera Ismail Khan, Dir Upper, Hangu, Kohat, Kohistan Lower, Khyber, Kurram, Tank, Lakki Marwat, Mansehra, Mohmand, North Waziristan, Orakzai, Peshawar, Shangla, Swabi, Swat, South Waziristan and

Torghar have directed to establish early childhood education classrooms in the selected schools.

The Directorate of Elementary and Secondary Education Khyber Pakhtunkhwa through this way is going to establish the early Childhood Education Classrooms in the selected government primary schools (Boys and Girls) of all the respective districts.

The list of the selected schools have already been finalized and shared with this DEO, male and female, revealed in a letter issued by the P&D Department, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. It is to be mentioned here that one ECE Rooms will be established in the existing available classrooms in the

selected Govt Primary Schools. No separate classrooms will be constructed for ECE classrooms, it was decided.

The establishing of ECE Rooms responsibilities has been assigned to Hashoo Foundation. Before starting the work the representatives of the Hashoo Foundation will hold a meeting with the same schools, which have already been selected.

In this regard, a written request has been sent to inform the Head Teachers of the concerned schools to extend their full cooperation with the staff of Hashoo Foundation and after the completion of work in list the ECE Rooms as per directives, it should

be registered in the stock register of the school as well as give completion certificate to the concerned personnel.

The decision was taken to extend the early childhood classrooms project to every primary school in other districts.



PESHAWAR: Deputy Chairman Senate Mirza Afridi, Malik Tariq Awan and Abdul Razzaq Afridi addressing a gathering on occasion of settlement in two groups. — F.P. photo by Ghulam Murtaza

Gas theft crackdown:

193 connections disconnected; Rs16.4m fine imposed: SNGPL

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: During the ongoing crackdown against gas pilferers, SNGPL continued raids in Punjab, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and Islamabad, disconnecting another 193 connections while imposing fine of Rs. 16.4 million and 592 under billing cases processed.

In Lahore, the regional team disconnected 54 connections on illegal use of gas and another 4 on use of compressor, 53 Under billing cases have been processed and amount of Rs 12.33 booked against gas thieves and under

billing cases. In Bawalpur, the regional team disconnected four connections on use of compressor and 21 Under billing cases have been processed, fine imposed 0.002m against under billing cases. The company disconnected 4 connections on illegal use of gas, 33 Under billing cases have been processed and fine of Rs 0.09 Million imposed against gas pilferers in Multan. In Sheikhpura, 21 on illegal use of gas and 37 Under billing cases have been processed, amount of Rs 0.41 booked against gas thieves and Under billing cases.

In Peshawar, the company disconnected 55 connections on account of direct use of gas and illegal connections, 15 under billing cases have been processed. The regional team also lodged 2 FIRs against gas thieves and also imposed fine of Rs 1.47 against gas thieves. In Rawalpindi the regional team disconnected 18 gas connection on illegal use. In Mardan Four connections were disconnected against illegal use of gas while imposing fine of Rs 0.10 million.

In Sialkot, the team disconnected one gas connection and imposed fine of Rs

0.02 against gas pilferers. The regional team in Gujranwala 39 under billing cases processed and 2 meters were disconnected on the use of compressor and 2 on illegal use of gas. The region also imposed fine of Rs. 0.36 million on gas theft and under billing cases.

The company disconnected 14 connections on illegal use of gas and 12 Under billing cases processed in Islamabad. The team also imposed fine 0.49 million Rupees. In Sahiwal, three connections were disconnected on illegal use of gas. In Faisalabad 20 under billing

cases processed and three connections were disconnected on illegal use of gas. Fine of Rs. 0.28 million was also imposed against gas pilferers. The Regional team in Abbottabad also disconnected 01 connection on illegal use of gas. The team in Gujarat disconnected 3 connections on illegal use of gas. 322 under billing cases have been processed and also booked an amount of Rs 0.87 against gas theft and under billing cases.

In Sargodha, the company booked 40 Under billing cases and also imposed fine of Rs0.02 million against under billing cases.

Anti-polio drive to be conducted

PESHAWAR (APP): The decision to conduct a five-day Special Anti-Polio Campaign in three specific districts of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa.

Preparations in this connection have been completed for the special campaign in the three districts of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa including Peshawar, Khyber and Hangu starting from October 30. A total of more than 12,43,000 children are targeted to be vaccinated during the campaign, an official of the Emergency Operations Center, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa said here Saturday.

During the special five-day anti-polio campaign, 900,000 children will be

vaccinated in Peshawar district, EOC officials said. He disclosed that 2,29,000 children in Khyber district and more than 1,12,000 children in Hangu district have been targeted.

He said for this purpose a total of 4,438 teams of trained polio workers have been formed for special polio campaigns including 3,874 mobile teams, 294 fixed teams and 270 transit teams.

The official of the EOC said that 1103 area in-charges have also been appointed for effective supervision of anti-polio teams and about 8,268 police personnel have also been deployed for effective security of the polio teams.

No cut on employees' salaries

PESHAWAR (INP): Khyber Pakhtunkhwa's caretaker finance minister Ahmed Rasool Bangash has confirmed that the province is facing financial difficulties but has denied reports of cuts to government employee salaries.

According to media reports, Bangash said that the federal government owes Khyber Pakhtunkhwa 233 billion rupees from the last financial year, and that the caretaker prime minister has assured the province that this debt will be paid.

He also said that no deductions are being made from government employee salaries, and that this matter was only discussed informally.

The caretaker cabinet has approved a budget of 529 billion rupees for the four months from October 2023 to February 2024.

Police foil bid to smuggling

PESHAWAR (PPI): Police in Jamrud, Khyber recovered 13.97kg ice from the hidden parts of a trailer, police said on Saturday.

However, the suspects managed to flee from the spot. Police were trying to trace the smugglers with the help of passports and other documents they found in the vehicle till last reports came in. According to reports, SHO's Nafees Khan and Maula Dad signaled driver of a trailer, coming from Afghanistan, to stop.

The driver, however, did not apply brakes immediately, and instead parked it a few yards away from the check-post where taking advantage of darkness, he and other suspects managed to flee.

KP launches houses registration

PESHAWAR (INP): Under the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Human Capital Investment Project, the provincial government has launched a door-to-door registration and GIS mapping project to strengthen the health sector and facilitate the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Healthcare Commission in registration and geo-tagging of health centers.

According to media reports, the project is being implemented through a joint venture between Fink Services and Ahsar Foundation, selected through an open and competitive bidding process. Financial support for the completion of the project has been provided by the World Bank.

Survey teams have started door-to-door visits and

are assisting health care providers in registration of health care establishments.

To date, these survey teams have tagged 15,000 health centers in the Peshawar, Mardan and Malakand divisions of the province and successfully registered 3,500 new institutions on payment of a registration fee of Rs 100 as prescribed by the board.

All health care service providers in the province are requested to cooperate with the survey teams and facilitate them in providing the required data. All information provided will be kept confidential.

The project is expected to play an important role in registration, quality control and identification of grants in the province and awareness of citizens at large.

ACS Home Deptt visits Refugee Camp

PESHAWAR (APP): Additional Chief Secretary Home and Tribal Affairs Abid Majeed on Saturday visited Afghan Refugees Camp Torkham District Khyber. During his visit, he reviewed the arrangements for the return of Afghan refugees. The Additional Chief Secretary was accompanied by Deputy Commissioner Khyber Abdul Nasir who conducted a briefing on the preparations for the return of illegal foreign nationals in Landikotal. They inspected the facilities and arrangements made for their return. The ACS reviewed the preparations for repatriation in both Torkham Border and Landikotal, ensuring that all necessary measures were in place for the smooth return of Afghan refugees. Deputy Commissioner of Khyber Abdul Nasir provided a detailed briefing to the Additional Chief Secretary during his visit, outlining the steps taken to facilitate the return of Afghan refugees to their home country.

Khawaja Wajih-ud-Din

There are many perceptions of the event in the electronic, print and social media. Hence many pertinent questions irk ones mind emanating from the said coverage. We saw the most advanced Iron Dome air defense system of Israel having failed to intercept and blast out the Hamas rockets in the air. Consequently, 1000s of rockets landed deep inside the state of Israel.

The media pointed out that massive Hamas force managed to break the steel solid border barriers of Israel and intruded quite deep into the state of Israel absolutely unopposed. Various experts discussed the reasons for the failure of, formidable and time tested, Israel defense system, to evict Hamas fighters from the intruded spots through a quick reactive response and how Hamas managed to import or manufacture and stock such a huge volume of rockets right under the nose of Israel?

Some think that the Israeli PM announced war in haste without cabinet's approval, as his government was caught unaware.

Others believe that the ranks & files of Hamas have been ingressed by Mossad to twist her arm from within. People also think that Hamas been fooled by big powers with big ends in sight e.g. pushing the Ukrainian War onto the relegated burner or making ground for final and devastating blow against Palestinians & Hamas in specific and taking the war to Iran.

Without prejudice to the above, but in addition thereto the predominant view is that the Hamas attack emanates from the strategy of the Arabs and Israel to strike a deal without taking into account the Palestine cause. Israel Premier Benjamin Netanyahu has explicitly stated while addressing the session of the General Assembly at the United Nations in New York "...because they are based on one false idea that unless

we first conclude a peace agreement with Palestinians no other Arab state would normalize its relations with Israel. I have long sought to make peace with the Palestinians, but I also believe that we must not give Palestinians a veto over peace treaties with Arab states"

Muhammad Bin Suleman while giving an interview with Fox News, mentioned the Palestine issue, but did not rebut the statement of Israel's PM in strong words. Rather he said that both countries are coming closer to each other with every passing day.

The Palestine people who have been facing relentless atrocities of Israeli forces since long sensed the planned pulse to isolate them. The Prime Minister of Israel and his address to the United Nations also said that "See, the Palestinians are only 2% of the Arab world. As long as they believe that the other 98% will remain in a war-like state with Israel, that larger mass, that larger Arab world could eventually choke, dis-

solve and destroy the Jewish state. So when the Palestinians see that most of the Arab world has reconciled itself to the Jewish state, they too will be more likely to abandon the fantasy of destroying Israel and finally embrace a path of genuine peace with it."

The planning to put the issue of Palestinian peace on the back burner was reacted to. If the strategic objective of this attack was to thwart this Arab-Israeli agreement and by this attack, Hamas has achieved the objective to a larger extent.

The second perspective of this attack can be that Israel has trapped Hamas by the attack. It has paved the way for Israel to declare a state of war on Hamas and legitimize its attack on the Gaza Strip. It is evident from the statement of Israel PM after the attack. He warned the inhabitants of Gaza to leave the city as he intended to rubble the city for destroying the hideouts of Hamas. If that was the planning relentless bombing is continuing in Gaza to

achieve that objective and hundreds have been reported dead and injured.

The third view regarding the war is that external and/or internal conspiracy is involved in the attack to teach a lesson to the government of Israel for crossing the limits. It would be too early to comment on this view.

Be as it may the Abraham Accords were signed by the UAE, Morocco, Sudan, and Bahrain as a result of President Trump's effort. Now it is the essential element of Biden's foreign policy to persuade the crown prince of Saudi Arabia to sign the accord as it will be a great achievement for his government.

While sitting in the space, the developed world can count the feathers of a bird during flight in the dark but they failed to detect and pre-empt Hamas offensive. Isn't it strange? There are no simple answers. But things are not as simple as they seem to be. There is definitely a bigger picture which we fail to see at the moment.

The standard of our universities and international scenario

Sayed Sajid Shah Bokhari

There are around 244 universities in Pakistan. The higher education commission of Pakistan has approved 99 private universities to the remaining 145 universities working in public sector. All these universities had established through government ordinance and according to the requirement of UGC. Unfortunately majority of our universities go against the international standards required, for sustainable growth. It is unfortunate that a large no of our universities are in decline, confusion and disorder status.

In most of the reputed universities like Gomal University D.I.Khan, Islamia University Bahawalpur and so many other universities poor performance, human exploitation, Drugs addiction, bawdry, bareness, women harassment and financial crisis could be seen which is a clear evidence of Mismanagement and incapability of our Management. Although the measurement of universities in ranking includes Land specified for the university, facilities given to the students, students' ratio, Academic excellence, staff and its reputation with experiences, attitude, and research methodology.

There are in total 13 performance indicators to be followed in international ranking system strictly. In most cases we can find universities at in collision form because of the political interference and nepotism. Each university should be pride of excellence, virtue, disciplined and treasure of knowledge. Our universities (except few) unfortunately, became famed for sexual video links, harassment and plagiarism. As a result of worst, illegal, corrupt and unethical practices we lost the credibility in international scenario.

Few days ago I found detailed report circulating in print media about the future of Shangla University. The district Shangla being poor on HDI got Shangla Campus of Swat University in 2015, after a long struggle. The existence of this university however, fell in to doubt, confusion with its dual name like Shangla University or swat university. Few weeks ago when swat university, arranged a function on the theme of Open Day it raised many question about its performance sustainability and existence. Who can deny a fact that university needs a talented, powerful and visionary leader (vice chancellor) registrar and controller of examination but Shangla university

lacks these positions.

The poor administration had always saved their jobs and could not attract a highly qualified, experienced and motivated staff since its inception. The withdrawal of PC-1 money of Rs.307 Million was another blow to convert the status of university to campus. Although the Shangla University attracted a large number of students (702) including huge number of girls from the surroundings.

The world has recognized that Education is international subject and to follow the international standards needs comprehensive planning (budget, community involvement and motivation of students and recruitment of staff through transparent mechanism) should have in criteria from the very beginning. What the world has got in centuries can be converted to a newly established, institution if experiences could have been shared. Whenever the world ranking of universities issued a report we can find our universities at the bottom level always.

The reason of our decline in education system lies in its traditional way, and stereotype education which is in moldiness shape now. If we cannot find a single university, amongst the 400 universities in the world rank-

ing we should be ashamed for it. The most addlement situation is that we never follow the standards and never compete with the world in science and technology. Innovation in education has brought the world to accelerate, modify education in modalities with sustainability.

Just imagine still there are universities in Pakistan where bad practices of molesting the girl's students are in progress. In how many universities the status, reputation of teachers had ruined and damaged their value. If the purpose of education is the preparation of learners for the future and enhancement of their skills then we should think about it.

In fact there is need of discussion and planning between the stake holders to develop a system for it. The world best universities could be found on permanent basis for doing research and not established for salaries only. Then hiring of the high profile faculty members with distinction shall be preferred. The land and purposeful building with ground, laboratory, library are the other requirements.

Although education is constitutional right of all the citizen without any discrimination and Article 25-A of our constitution provide guarantee to everyone. If the Oxford University

is still on the top of ranking then we should identify the secret of its success and must follow it. Look that amongst 34 universities in KPK, only 27 universities spend half of its budget on paying salaries and the allocation of 1 billion for research.

Look in to another aspect that the numbers of scholars to get admission in PH.Ds and M.Phil is decreasing day by day. It is really interesting and astonishing that in the last three years in 11 universities no one has got admission in higher education. In 6 universities of KP no one has got admission in M.S or M.Phil even. In the analytical report issued by Governor Inspection team for the year 2021-2024 shows figures that in women university Swabi no student was admitted in Graduate programme, while no one got admission in the women university Mardan in the Graduate program in the last 3 years. The time ranking institute has issued the 2024 ranking of universities worldwide.

Unfortunately there is not a single university of Pakistan in the initial list of 400. The only university from Pakistan Quid I Azam University Islamabad has secured 401 position amongst 500 universities in the ranking. In the further ranking between

600 to 1000 there are 14 universities ranked with distinction but still there is not a single university to be found in the list from the province of Sindh and Balochistan.

In the list of 400 best universities there could be found 2 universities from Saudia Arabia, 2 from Iran, 3 from Turkey and 2 from India. In the list of ranking between 600 to 800 Abdul Wai Khan University Mardan, Air University, Capital University, COMSATES University, UET Taxila, Government College University Faisalabad, National University of Science and Technology are included.

Just imagine Columbia University has developed an artificial tree that passively soaks up carbon dioxide from the air using leaves that are 1000 times more efficient than true leaves that use photosynthesis. The recommendation of Shangla University from the list by Governor Inspection team merely on budget issue is not justice.

The people of Shangla need the attention of Governor KPK, Higher education commission not to deprive people from the basic right of education rather to provide them facility and complete codal formality for sustainable growth and development of the area.



In brief

Police foil smuggling bid F.P. Report

JAMRUD: Police in Jamrud, Khyber recovered 13.97kg ice from the hidden parts of a trailer, police said on Saturday. However, the suspects managed to flee from the spot. Police were trying to trace the smugglers with the help of passports and other documents they found in the vehicle till last reports came in. According to reports, SHOs Nafees Khan and Maula Dad signaled driver of a trailer, coming from Afghanistan, to stop. The driver, however, did not apply brakes immediately, and instead parked it a few yards away from the check-post where taking advantage of darkness, he and other suspects managed to flee. Police impounded the vehicle and later registered a case against driver Muhammad Yasin and his accomplice Abdul Mutalib.

Mental health day observed

SIALKOT (APP): The University of Sialkot Department of Psychology organised an event in connection with Mental Health Day on Saturday. Dr. Aslam Dar, department heads, faculty members and students actively participated in the session. It started with the performance of children from a private school. After the marvelous performance by young students a panel discussion on the intersection of mental health and universal human rights was held. It brought together experts and stakeholders to exchange ideas and insights. During the discussion, experts of psychology, international relations, Islamic studies shared their knowledge and explained strategies and best practices for integrating mental health and universal human rights. A skit was performed by psychology students that conveyed the message of self-confidence. Dr. Aslam Dar concluded the event, with his insightful remarks and appreciated the efforts of the students and faculty for arranging the event. Later, shields and souvenirs were presented to the guests and the management team.

Biometric attendance

DG KHAN (APP): Divisional administration is taking measures to improve department's efficiency as a tracking system has been activated on the vehicles and the work for biometric attendance of the municipal committee employees is also being recorded in all four districts. According to official sources, Commissioner DG Khan Dr. Nasir Mahmood Bashir reviewed the waste management company machinery and tracking system on Saturday. He said that the usage of machinery and vehicles was being monitored through the tracking system, which helped in checking fuel consumption. He also stressed for the need of better maintenance of vehicles and machinery. Dr. Bashir also directed the local bodies to take active steps to improve municipal services and warned that negligence and lack of interest in duties would not be tolerated. He said that absent employees would be suspended. Talking to APP here Saturday, the local people said that the activation of the tracking system and the recording of biometric attendance were positive steps towards ensuring greater efficiency and transparency in the functioning of the local bodies in DG Khan Division. These measures will help to ensure that the vehicles and machinery are used properly and that the employees are attending to their duties, said different citizens named Asif Gorchani, Naeem Khosa and some others.



HYDERABAD: Fishermen preparing net for catching fishes at Indus river.

Students' federations and democracy

Shoaib khan

ON 25th October, Pakhtun Student Federation (PSF) University of Peshawar conducted intra-party election that highlights a glimpse of excitement in the students. Students from all over the faculties participated and practiced the right to vote to their nominees, albeit unionisation has been banned since 1984 in Pakistan's campuses, hundred of thousand students excitedly engaged prefer to be active in campus politics.

Pakhtun Students Federation is a progressive student body working for students' rights since its inception, date back to 1968. Every year new membership drive is introduced, which is mandatory on the organising Committee through constitution of PSF to give rights to students to elect their new President and his Comrades.

Similarly, this year, after completion of the member-

ship drive, Chairman of the Committee call for submission of nomination papers and announced date to conduct fresh election. Students participated immensely, total number of vote registration for voting were stood at 1400, in which 951 students cast their vote in favour of his/her new cabinet.

The inclusive characteristics and safe environment of the election process provided the girls students the sense of courage to partake along with the boys. This seems to be the new setoff of gravity on the parts of girls having been politically aware of the campus issues faced by students. The whole day university was characterized with the feelings of students being motivated and rationalized, hoisted flag and wear Red caps and badges.

The democratic conducive environment is the need of hour. The PSF is trying hard from day one the alternative model based on democratic values and traditions, that would enable the students to think

free, creative and critical. But unfortunately, the higher authority of the state has usurped the basic right of the students to associate; whereas, all other walks of life enjoy their very right in a society. The students must be given their right immediately as prescribed in the 1973 constitution of Pakistan, it is in the interest of the progressive nation which would assemble in young life the sense of responsibility and prosperity to compete with the 21st century challenges and hurdles. After all, student is the future they will get betterment and save the country.

In the end, I happily congratulate President Sulaiman Shah and his newly elected Comrades. I hope they will rightly advocate for students' rights and convey with temerity the students' grievances and gradually hiking in fees, and troublesome hostel accommodations and all issues, under the consideration of the concerned authority.

The writer is student of IR department at University of Peshawar.

AD&SJ rejected pleas against NPC Syed Waliullah Shah

NEWSHERA: Additional District and Session Judge (AD&SJ) Nowshera Tayyab Khan rejected petition against Nowshera Press Club (NPC) and Election Committee chairman over nonmaintainability of the plea.

AD&SJ issued detail stating that petition is turned down due to lack of jurisdiction. The plea was filed by Nadeem Shah Tipu against NPC president Jahanzeb, general Secretary Syed Waliullah Shah, Fida Muhammad and chairman election committee Mushtaq Paracha while challenging their jurisdiction for granting memberships.

The petition pleaded that NPC general body is competent forum for granting membership. The general body had granted membership to Nadeem Shah Tipu NPC president and election committee chairman didn't implementing the decision.

NPC counsel Naeem Khan advocate argued that the petitioner had made false statement before court regarding general body. He added that witness had also defeated in the NPC and no general body meeting was held in 2022. AD&SJ Nowshera Tayyab Khan detailed judgment in this regard while rejecting pleas against NPC cabinet.

Pace of work on ongoing plans reviewed F.P. Report

HAFIZABAD: Deputy Commissioner Sundas Irshad visited Sukheki, Kot Sarwar and Pindi Bhattian to review standard of cleanliness, pace of work on ongoing schemes and treatment facilities being provided to the people of the area.

DC was inspected newly constructed building of Trauma Centre Pindi Bhattian with the cost of Rs. 167 million. On this occasion, she was briefed that health department was procured necessary machinery and equipments for the Trauma Centre. DC directed the health officers to make functional the Trauma Centre at the earliest so that people of the area could get better treatment facilities in case of any accident.

She also visited THQ hospital Pindi Bhattian and inspected emergency and other wards of the hospital to review provision of medicines and other facilities in the hospital.

During the visit of Rural Revenue Centre Sukheki Mandi, President Markazi Anjuman Tajran Sheikh Tariq Mehmood, prominent personalities including Ch. Nasrullah Khan Bhatti, Malik Muhammad Nawaz, Malik Maqsood Ahmad, Haji Lafif, Ehsan Ullah Jag and Abdul Shakoar Gujjar and Malik Muhammad Nawaz demanded the DC to improve sewerage system, construction of Lahore-Sargodha Road in the city, provision of clean drinking water and sprinkle of water on the both sides of the Lahore-Sargodha Road to save the life of people from dust etc. The DC listened the problems of the people patiently and directed the AC Pindi Bhattian Rashid Iqbal and other officers to address grievances of the people as soon as possible.

KP Governor attends Convocations of Ayub Medical College

F.P. Report

ABBOTTABAD: Governor Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Haji Ghulam Ali Saturday congratulated students and their parents on the completion of the medical studies from country's prestigious educational institution.

The Governor said this in his address as chief guest during the 8th Convocation of the Ayub Medical College Abbottabad. In the same time the Governor KP Haji Ghulam Ali also congratulated the teachers and parents of the students who successfully completed their studies and would service the people as doctors.

Parents have given medical education to their children by bearing hardships and difficulties, for which I congratulate and pay tribute to the parents, Haji Ghulam Ali added. Ayub Medical College is not only a beau-

tiful institution but also has an outstanding faculty which is impressive, Haji Ghulam Ali said.

Serving the suffering humanity is the best thing in the world, Haji Ghulam Ali said, adding, "Young medical students should perform their professional duties in the spirit of serving the suffering humanity." Youngsters studying medicine have to face the current medical challenges, Haji Ghulam Ali said. Haji Ghulam Ali urged the students to move forward with research and new inventions in medicine.

"We have to compete with the world in the diagnosis and treatment of diseases," Haji Ghulam Ali said. Federal and provincial governments are spending more and more resources on education and health sectors, Haji Ghulam Ali said, adding, "If governments are spending

resources then the desired results should also be visible".

Best cheap treatment in hospitals and best results from educational institutions will be considered as the success of the health and education sectors, Haji Ghulam Ali said. He said, doctors should have morals and decency in their attitudes with professional education and training. In every profession including medical one should work with hard work and integrity, Haji Ghulam Ali said. He said, honesty and dedication to one's profession is a guarantee of success. "Our effort is to eliminate the gap between rich and poor in all sectors," Haji Ghulam Ali said. It is our responsibility to provide all opportunities to the poor and middle class in all fields including the medical field, Haji Ghulam Ali added.

Facilitation to marble lease holders assured

F.P. Report

BUNER: The KPK Advisor Mines and Minerals Dr Sarfaraz Khan visited Bampokha Marble Mining in Buner and meet Marble Lease Holders at GS Marbles in Buner.

The Advisor with DC Hamid Ali DPO Shah Hasan founder Bampokha Mining Haji Ghulam Haider visited different portions of the world popular Bampokha Mining and much impressed when observe the wire saw cutting mechanized mining.

The Bampokha mining founder Haji Ghulam Haider briefed the Advisor about human and environment friendly mechanized mining process due to it the precious marble deposits were also protected as compared blasting damages.

The DC briefed the Advisor about precious and huge Marble deposits in Buner. The Advisor meet Marble Lease Holders at GS Marbles in assured them easy loan from BoK for launching mechanized min-

ing in Buner.

On the occasion the Marble Lease Holders representatives Timour Khan and Malak Arshad Iqbal shared the problems and difficulties being faced by the community. They demanded leaving ban on red card for excavation marble from deposits and provision of modern machinery for mechanized mining in Buner for the sake of protection human life environment and marble deposits as well.

TMA Gadezai Salarzai pass resolutions: The TMA Gadezai Salarzai in its council session has passed resolution condemning Israel atrocities against innocent Palestinians, purchase of loader, release of PFC award and shifting dumping site to nearest place.

The council session was convened in chair of convenor Salman Yousafzai the Nazim Sher Alam Khan TMO Anwar Shamim Khan opposition leader Abas Shaheen parliamentary leaders Niaz Khan Diyar Khan Qasam Bacha Nor

Wahid Ashtar Khan Rehmat Said Fazal Raziq Shrafiden and others attended.

The SDO PESCO sub division 1 Ataur Rehman was called to face the angry councilor over load shedding over billing and disconnection electricity from defaulters. The SDO assured solution to problems within his jurisdictions and asked councilor for schedule open forums at villages council level to address issues.

The two days long session was convened to discuss the issues related to electricity and to satisfy worried councilor for further consolation of the consumers in villages. The Nazim Sher Alam Khan and others made it clear consumers were feed up and the PESCO officers should address the issues otherwise they would have no option other than to join protesting consumers and the consequences would rest upon the concerned quarters, they noted.

SP inquires after health of injured SHO

F.P. Report

TANK: Superintendent of Police (SP) Investigation Tank Haji Nasir here on Saturday visited Dera Ismail Khan and inquired after the health of SHO Asghar Khan Wazir, who got injured in a terrorist attack on Gomal Police station on October 22 last.

According to a police spokesman, the SP, along with Deputy Superintendent of Police (DSP) Investigation Sharif Ullah Khan and other staff, visited Combined Military Hospital (CMH) Dera Ismail Khan and inquired after the health of under treatment SHO. He also presented a bouquet to the injured SHO and prayed for his early recovery.

The visiting police officer expressed his satisfaction over the treatment facilities being extended to the injured policeman. Speaking on this occasion, the SP said the brave and courageous officers like Asghar Wazir were national heroes and the pride of the police department.

He mentioned that the police would never leave their 'Ghazis' alone. He said the police were making all out efforts to arrest the terrorists involved in the attack and hoped that they would be brought to justice soon. It is worth mentioning here that SHO Asghar Wazir was injured in a terrorist attack on Gomal Police station, Tank on the night of October 22.

Dera police arrest 5 outlaws: Dera police arrested five outlaws and recovered drugs and weapons during a successful operation against criminal elements in the limits of Paharpur police station on Saturday.

According to the police spokesman, On the direction of District Police Officer Dera Abdul Rauf Babar Qaisrani, Paharpur Police Station led by SDPO

Paharpur Circle Kashif Sattar along with SHO Khabab Wali Baloch conducted operations against criminal elements. During the operation, the police arrested Ziaullah and recovered one Kalashnikov with fitted magazine and 05 cartridges from the possession of the accused.

During another operation, one pistol with 03 cartridges was seized from the possession of Mai Khan resident of Kahawar. Similarly, Khalid resident of Mohalla Muawiya Nagar Paharpur was arrested and police recovered 145 grams of hashish from his possession.

Meanwhile, two accused Khalil and Saeed Ahmed resident of Maqbool Abad Paharpur were arrested, both were wanted to local police in the cases of sexual assault. The police registered separate cases against the arrested criminals and started further investigations.

JUI chief Maulana Fazl reaches Quetta

QUETTA (PPI): Jamiat Ulema-i-Islam Chief Maulana Fazlur Rehman reached Quetta on Saturday. Senator Kamran Murtaza Advocate, former MNA Asghar Tareen, and other central and provincial party leaders received the JUI chief at the airport. During his stay in Quetta, Maulana Fazl will hold meetings with party leaders. He will also address the Al-Aqsa Storm Conference at Hockey Ground on Sunday.

For the last few days, the JUI-F chief has changed his political stance and has been calling upon all political parties to create space for each other despite having

differences of opinion. In a statement last week, the JUI chief said that the time had come for politicians and political parties to show maturity in order to strengthen the political atmosphere and democratic traditions.

On Thursday, the Maulana met a delegation of the Pakistan Tehreek-i-Insaf (PTI) which paid a visit to his residence to condole the death of his mother-in-law. The PTI delegation included former National Assembly Speaker Asad Qaiser, Ali Mohammad Khan, Barrister Muhammad Ali Saif, and Junaid Akbar.

Later, Barrister Saif revealed the details of the meeting. He said both the

PTI leaders and Maulana Fazl agreed that elections in the country should be held on time and in a free, fair, and transparent manner and that all political parties should have a level playing field. He said that the JUI-F chief had already declared that the treatment being meted out to the PTI chairman was not appropriate and that the delegation expressed gratitude to the Maulana over his remarks. Barrister Saif further said that more meetings with the JUI chief might take place, adding that they visited the Maulana in line with a decision taken by the PTI's core committee in a recent meeting.

Inclusion in PK-48: Residents filed petition

HARIPUR (APP): Residents of the Patwar Circle Dheeri Malkyar Haripur on Saturday filed a petition to the Secretary of the Election Commission against the decision to include Dheerai Malkyar in PK-48 from PK-46, which was based on the recent population census of Malkyar, has raised concerns and objections from prominent figures in the area.

Chairman of the Village Council, Malik Faisal Iqbal Khan, Chairman of the Village Council Dheerai, Adeel Ahmed and a resident of Malkyar, Muhammad Junaid Fazal, jointly voiced their dissent against this move. They have raised questions about the reasoning behind this decision and its potential

impact on the local community.

In their petition to the Election Commission of Pakistan, it was argued that Patwar Circle Dheerai Malkyar has traditionally been connected to the main constituency of Haripur. The Village Councils of City One and City Five also have strong ties to Malkyar. The sudden inclusion of Patwar Circle Malkyar in the constituency PK-48 of Tehsil Ghazi from PK-46 is expected to bring about significant challenges and problems for the residents of the area.

The petition further highlights that the offices of the District Council are situated in Patwar Circle Malkyar. Additionally, the residents of Malkyar currently enjoy various essen-

tial services, including access to electricity, through TMA Haripur. Changing the constituency boundaries could potentially disrupt the provision of these essential services and create additional challenges for the local population. In light of these concerns, the petition calls for a reevaluation of the constituency boundaries in the best interest of the public. The proposed solution involves reverting Patwar Circle Malkyar, with a population of 15,072.

The controversy surrounding this decision is expected to generate discussions and debates within the local community, as the affected residents seek to protect their interests and maintain essential services.

GCWUS, WCCI to compile skilled women statistics

SIALKOT (APP): The initiative of historic collaboration between Government College Women University Sialkot (GCWUS) and Women Chamber of Commerce and Industry Sialkot (WCCI) to compile Sialkot skilled women statistics was held at the Sialkot Chamber of Commerce and Industry (SCCI).

According to the details, Government College Women University Sialkot (GCWUS) and Women Chamber of Commerce and Industry Sialkot (WCCI) will compile the data of skilled women associated with all types of the business industry of Sialkot through mutual research collaboration.

According to GCWUS spokesperson Rizwan Hameed, following the special instructions of Vice Chancellor (VC) GCWUS Prof. Dr. Zarin Fatima Rizvi, a delegation of GCWU met the President Women Chamber of Commerce and Industry Sialkot (WCCI) Dr. Mariam Nouman and

discussed the details of the data collection project related to economic and social security of women.

President WCCIS Dr. Mariam Nouman while expressing her happiness on the data collection project said that the efforts of VC GCWUS Prof. Dr. Zarin Fatima are commendable. GCWUS VC Prof. Dr. Zarin Fatima while talking to the members of the committee said that data is of fundamental importance in comprehensive and effective planning. The statistical results will be important milestones for the welfare of women, the VC added.

She said the development of a country is not possible without active participation of women. Skilled women of Sialkot have the honour that their handmade sports equipment highlights the name of Pakistan globally, she added. She said that various departments of GCWUS and their students will play an important role in compiling the data of skilled

women of Sialkot. On the special instructions of VC GCWUS Prof. Dr. Zareen Fatima Rizvi, the ORIC Department organized a meeting with WCCIS. Dean Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences GCWUS Prof. Dr. Yasir Nawaz Manj, Dr. Syed Waqar Rizvi, Dr. Mubeen Shafiq and lecturer Rabil participated in the meeting.

DPO reshuffles SHOs: District Police Officer (DPO) Muhammad Hasan Iqbal has transferred Station House Officers (SHOs) in the district.

According to the police spokesperson, Sub-Inspector Fiaz Ahmed has been transferred from District Complaint Cell to SHO Begowala, Inspector Gulzar Ahmed from SHO Civil Lines to SHO Airport, Sub-Inspector Abdul Rehman Incharge MT Branch to SHO Civil Lines, Inspector Siddique Salik from CIA to SHO City Pasrur and Sub-Inspector Tayyab Hussain from SHO City Pasrur to General Duty Police Station Ugoki.



A day in the life of families sheltering at Gaza’s al-Shifa Hospital



GAZA CITY (Agencies): More than 50,000 displaced Palestinians have taken refuge at the al-Shifa Hospital, squeezing in corridors, waiting rooms and outside in the courtyard. The hospital, which is barely functioning on solar-powered generators, is in a state of collapse like the rest of the healthcare system in the Gaza Strip.

But for many families, they preferred to stay in the hospital, believing it to be a safer option than heading down south to Khan Younis. Still, the living conditions are far from ideal, due to lack of clean water and adequate shelter. Ghaniya Haniyeh, a 41-year-old mother of five boys and three girls, sits under a makeshift tent made out of tarp and blankets.

Her family fled their home in the Sheikh Radwan neighbourhood, running away from a line of explosions in their area. “We’re safe, but we’re suffering from the heat and the swarm of flies all around us,” Ghaniya said. The morning begins with children or men queueing in a long line to fill up their plastic gallons jugs with salty water from a pipe.

Since electricity has been cut off from the Gaza Strip, clean water is rare as the desalination plant is out of service.

Breakfast is canned foul medames, or fava beans. Then there is another long line of people outside the toilet facilities, waiting their turn. “We can’t shower or wash properly or change our clothes,” Ghaniya said. “We use salty water to hand wash our clothes and our dishes.”

On the ground, Ghaniya and her children sleep on two thin blankets. Other blankets act as room dividers for men and women. “It’s difficult for the kids, and their spirits are low,” she said. “They don’t have basic hygiene and you can’t get them what they want or ask for. I hope we can return to our homes safely. We just want a normal healthy life.”

Her sister-in-law, Imm Mohammed al-Mullah, is staying in an adjacent tent with her in-laws and five children. “The martyrs are now resting in peace, but here we are dying a slow death,” she said. “The situation is very bad. No food, no water, no electricity, no sanitation.”

There are five families gathered in their area of the courtyard. The glaring sun forces them awake at 6am and beats down on them until the late afternoon, and there is no respite from the flies. “The salty water has made us itchy,” Imm Mohammed said. “I bathe my three-year-old son, and he goes back to playing in the sand and dirt. Now he’s got scabs all over his body. Nothing is clean. We don’t even have bedding.”

Another one of her sons has a fever, and the 34-year-old mother is sure that there will be an outbreak of smallpox. Every day, there’s a very long line just to get water and bread,” she said. “You can’t even get a full bag of bread, only half. We’re living off of canned cheese and fava beans.” Imm Mohammed wants to go back to her life before the war and not live “this slow death.”

But she says her home has been destroyed in an Israeli air raid, and her entire neighbourhood in Sheikh Radwan is gone. “Just as the US, the big devil, is supporting Israel. I want to see the Arab countries fully behind us,” she said. “Where is their conscience?”

Displaced Palestinians in UN schools face outbreak of disease

GAZA STRIP (Agencies): Days after a UNRWA school in the central Gaza Strip was hit by Israel, killing at least six people, clothes and blankets still hang from the windows and balconies of its other schools, turning the traditional white and blue colours of the United Nations Palestinian refugee agency into a patchwork of bright colours.

The schools have become places of refuge for hundreds of thousands of displaced Palestinians in the Gaza Strip, many of whom believe that the UN designation of these buildings will keep them safe from the constant Israeli bombardment. According to the UNRWA, more than 613,000 of 1.4 million internally displaced people in Gaza are sheltering in 150 of its facilities across the blockaded territory. But severe

overcrowding, a lack of privacy and inadequate sanitation have put these schools at risk of a prolonged and severe public health crisis, adding pressure to the already overloaded healthcare system which doctors and the health ministry describe as being in a state of total collapse.

And now, with the bombing of the school in the al-Maghazi refugee camp, in which dozens were injured, it is clear that schools may not be the places of sanctuary humanitarian agencies hoped for. “This is outrageous, and it again shows a flagrant disregard for the lives of civilians,” Philippe Lazzarini, UNRWA Commissioner-General, said. “No place is safe in Gaza any more, not even UNRWA facilities.”

“At least 4,000 people have taken refuge in this

UNRWA school-turned-shelter. They had and still have nowhere else to go.” The displaced people in these schools also lack access to life necessities such as water, electricity, food, milk, nappies and essential supplies for period health including sanitary pads, disinfectants and pain relief. The UN agency said that some shelters are currently hosting 10 to 12 times more people than their capacity.

One school in Khan Younis is hosting 21,000 people. Noor and her family are staying at another school in the southern city, which has approximately 6,000 individuals, or about 1,100 families housed within it. According to those managing the shelter, just over half of the occupants are men, who sleep outside in the playground.

Malaysian sultans choose new king

KUALA LUMPUR (Agencies): Malaysia has announced that its next and 17th king will be Sultan Ibrahim Sultan Iskandar from the southern state of Johor. Sultan Ibrahim was chosen by the country’s nine sultans at a session of the Conference of Rulers and will be installed on January 31 next year.

“I hereby inform that the Conference of Rulers, during its 263rd (Special) Meeting, held at the National Palace on Friday, October 27, 2023, has agreed to declare that His Royal Highness Sultan Ibrahim, Sultan of Johor Darul Ta’zim, has been chosen as His Majesty the Yang di-Pertuan Agong XVII for a period of five years commencing from Jan 31, 2024,” the keeper of the Royal Seal said in a statement.

The Yang di-Pertuan Agong or “King of Kings” is a constitutional monarch, but since the historic elections of 2018 and the revolving door of ruling coalitions that followed, the king has taken a more active role in politics. King Al-Sultan Abdullah has used the monarch’s discretionary powers to choose the country’s last three prime ministers, including after the election in 2022 when no single party won a parliamentary majority.

Sultan Ibrahim, who is said to have a passion for fast cars and motorbikes and has extensive business interests, is also known for taking an annual road trip around Johor to meet the people of the state. Married with six children, the 64-year-old is trained to fly jets and helicopters, and has “the spirit of a soldier and excel(s) in sea activities and other extreme sports,” according to the website for the royal family.

Sultan Ibrahim’s father was the country’s eighth king, holding the throne between 1984 and 1989. The Johor royal family dates from the early 16th century and has its own private army. For many of the country’s majority Malays, especially in rural areas, royalty remains a potent symbol of identity. Sultans are the guardians of Islam in their own states, while the king is also the protector of the religion in states where there is no hereditary monarch. Malaysia’s Malays are always Muslim.

The head of state lives in a purpose-built palace with 22 yellow domes in Kuala Lumpur’s inner western suburbs. They also act as the commander-in-chief of the armed forces and have the power to grant pardons to convicts.

Meanwhile, Prime Minister Anwar Ibrahim said that EU lawmakers had proposed action against Malaysia because of its support to Palestine, according to state-run Bernama News.

“There were European MPs who proposed this (action) against Malaysia,” said Anwar, suggesting his personal safety may be at risk. His comments came after he said at a pro-Palestine rally late Tuesday night that he “received multiple threats from Western countries over his criticisms of the Israeli government following the start of the war in Gaza.”

People with disabilities not spared by Israel’s war machine on Gaza

GAZA STRIP (Agencies): Heba Abu Jazar cannot hear the sound of the bombs exploding, but she can feel their intensity deeply. The 28-year-old, along with her two brothers, was born deaf, but the magnitude of the powerful blasts can be seen and felt in the vibrations of the doors and windows in their home in the southern city of Rafah, close to the border between Gaza and Egypt.

“Everywhere in our region, there are explosions,” she told Al Jazeera. “The forcefulness is very painful, and I can feel the house shaking violently with every air attack.” The lives of the Gaza Strip’s 2.3 million residents have been completely upended since Israel began its relentless bombardment of the besieged territory on October 7, following an unprecedented attack by Hamas on army outposts and surrounding towns in Israel which killed more than 1,400 people.

Since then, nearly 7,300 Palestinians have been killed, the majority of them women and children. Thousands of buildings across Gaza have been destroyed and more than one million people have been displaced in the territory, which has been largely deprived of medicine, water, food and other basic supplies on the orders of the Israeli government. Heba’s life has also changed drastically, having worked hard to integrate herself into society. Over the past year, she has developed her skills through a graphic design course, taken up photography and participated in various women’s seminars.

“I began to feel that I can contribute to society, and my circle of friends expanded to both men and women,” she said. “But this war, with its continuous bombings, has not stopped for a moment.” Access to the internet is rare – a few minutes a day – since Israel bombed the communications tower in the first week of the war. Heba uses that precious time to check in on her friends, before sitting with her brothers, as her mother informs them of what is happening around them. During Israel’s May 2021 offensive on Gaza, Heba’s sister was injured when their neighbour’s house was bombed, something Heba fears will happen again to her family.

“I thank God that my parents are not deaf, so they can tell us whether we are safe or in danger and save us from death,” she said. In 2022, the Palestinian Center for Human Rights said the number of Palestinians with disabilities in the occupied territories was about 93,000, constituting 2.1 percent of the total population. Some 52 percent of that number, or 48,360, live in the Gaza Strip, while the rest reside in the occupied West Bank. Human Rights Watch said, under the Israeli offensives on the territory,

people with disabilities remain among the most affected.

Furthermore, the 17-year siege on the Gaza Strip by Israel and Egypt has led to heavy restrictions on movement and has curbed access to assistive devices and healthcare for people with disabilities. Chronic power outages compromise the rights and freedoms of these vulnerable people of society, who rely heavily on electric equipment to move around, such as elevators and mobility scooters, and light to use sign language with others. In 2019, the first beach for people with disabilities was inaugurated to the west of Gaza City. Called Muwa’imah Beach, the place holds special memories for Suha Maqat, who has a mobility impairment and uses crutches to get around.

“Each week, I’d meet my friends and teammates at the sports club and train for two hours, playing basketball in wheelchairs,” the 34-year-old from Sheikh Radwan neighbourhood said. “We’d then go to Muwa’imah Beach, and spend time by the sea, chatting and whiling away the hours. Life was beautiful back then. I always said that without wars, Gaza is a beautiful place.”

Suha said she likes to go out frequently as she refuses to see her disability as an impairment and does not like being stuck indoors between four walls. But now, she has no choice but to remain in her house. In fact, she refuses to leave it.

“If I die, I’ll die in my own home,” she said. “Where would I go? We don’t know anyone in the southern Gaza Strip and during war, everyone is looking out for themselves and can barely take into consideration the fate of the people around them.” During the last war in 2011, Israeli warplanes targeted a building next to Suha’s home, which knocked her to the floor. Unable to move, she had to wait for her neighbours to carry her out, which she swore would not happen again.

“I do not want that scene of torment when I fell to the ground to be repeated again when everyone was trying to escape from the warplane’s missiles,” she said. She dismissed the Israeli military’s repeated orders to the Palestinians in northern Gaza to head south. “Israel doesn’t care about civilians,” Suha said. “They only care about death and destruction. I’ve lived through five wars, but this by far has been the worst of them all.”

The devastation wreaked by Israel over the past 19 days has changed much of the Gaza Strip’s landmarks, with entire neighbourhoods flattened and main roads destroyed. Both Suha and her friend, Rabab Nofal, wonder how even an able-bodied person is expected to move around, let alone

one with a disability. “Before the war, we had difficulties going to most places because the streets are not good enough or equipped for wheelchair users like myself,” Rabab said. “But I could still put my three-year-old child in my lap and go to the stores to buy things. Now, how can we move?”

According to the Gaza government’s media office, Israel has bombed the Gaza Strip with more than 12,000 tonnes of explosives, which is equivalent to the bomb that was dropped on Hiroshima. This would mean that, on average, 33 tonnes of bombs were dropped per square kilometre, in one of the most densely populated areas of the world which is 41km long and 10km wide (25 miles by 6 miles).

Rabab sighed, thinking back to her “lovely routine” before the war, which comprised mainly of going to the beach and finishing some embroidery with the waves gently lapping the shore. “Now the sounds of missiles make it impossible for us to move from our homes,” she said. “Israel and its wars greatly oppress people with disabilities and create more disabled people – those who have lost their limbs to the bombardment.”

Another Palestinian who has refused to leave his home in Gaza City even after it was destroyed in an Israeli air attack is Mahmoud Abu Namous, who has a hearing disability. “This is the second time my home got destroyed,” the 33-year-old said. “Last time, it was in 2021, when my wife was pregnant with our daughter, Fatima. I was afraid I would lose them both.”

Mahmoud said it was not in his nature to complain about life, and that he had always been accepting of his disability. He has always advocated for sign language to be used at events, to improve communication with others. “Sign language is useful during the war so we can know what is going on,” he said. “In previous wars, I would message my friends on a Facebook group, but in this war, communication with everyone is cut off. There’s no electricity and no internet.”

He dreamed of giving Fatima a life that she deserves, and not being homeless without a roof over her head. Mahmoud has rejected the idea of having more children, saying that the more than 3,000 children killed by Israel in this war so far shows it is impossible for parents to provide a decent future for their children. He says he wonders if there will even be one. “It is enough that I have this child of mine,” he said. “I will try to protect her from the occupation as much as possible. We love children, but Israel hates them.”

Ethnic rebel alliance attacks mily positions across northern Myanmar

YANGON (AFP): An alliance of ethnic rebel groups in Myanmar has launched coordinated attacks on the military across the country’s north, with local media reporting many casualties. Development poses a new challenge to the military government, struggling to quell resistance to its rule since the 2021 coup sparked renewed fighting with powerful rebel groups in northern Shan state.

The Brotherhood Alliance – made up of Ta’ang National Liberation Army (TNLA), the Arakan Army (AA) and the Myanmar National Democratic Alliance Army (MNDAA) – launched a “military operation”, it said in a statement on Friday. Pro-military Telegram channels said the rebels were attacking 12 towns or settlements across a swathe of Shan state about 100km (62 miles) across.

The three rebel groups – which analysts say can call on at least 15,000 fighters between them – did not immediately provide details on casualties or whether they had taken territory.

tory, AFP news agency reported. But German news agency dpa said they targeted various posts in towns such as Lashio, Kyaukme, Naungcho, Chinshwehaw, and Laukaing, which are under the control of the military.

The dpa reported that about 20 soldiers were killed as one of the armed groups seized control of the customs office in Chinshwehaw on Friday morning. “The alliance seized the customs office in Chinshwehaw this morning and the junta forces were killed,” a local man from Lashio, who requested anonymity, told dpa. “There was also fighting in Lashio since the early morning, but we have not had any big news here.”

Myanmar’s Mizzima News site also reported 20 casualties, including soldiers and police officers. The army did not immediately comment on the attack. The MNDAA said its fighters had closed the roads from the trade hub of Lashio to Chinshwehaw and Muse on the China border in advance of a “major offensive”. Footage shared on MNDAA’s media channel

showed fighters in what appeared to be an abandoned camp, with weapons and boxes of ammunition scattered across the ground. It did not say where the footage was taken.

“All shops are closed and no one is going out,” a resident of Hopang township, about 10km (6.2 miles) from Chinshwehaw, told AFP. “We can hear the sounds of aircraft and gunfire constantly,” they said, requesting anonymity for security reasons. A rescue worker in Lashio who also requested anonymity for safety reasons told AFP that rebels had begun shelling the military base near the town from 4am on Friday (21:30 GMT on Thursday) and that the military responded with artillery fire. All flights to and from Lashio airport had been cancelled on Friday “because of the situation”, an airline ticketing agency told AFP. Myanmar’s borders are home to more than a dozen ethnic rebel groups, some of which have fought the military for decades over autonomy and control of lucrative resources.

Armenia, surrounded by enemies, must be brought out of Russia’s shadow

Arshak Makichyan

WE always underestimate the power of propaganda and dictators. No one believed that Putin would start a full-scale war in Ukraine, but he did. Before that, Russia waged war in Georgia, Syria and Donbass. Now, weeks after seizing control over the breakaway Armenian region of Nagorno-Karabakh, Azerbaijan could be readying an invasion of southern Armenia proper, according to US Secretary of State Anthony Blinken. It may happen as soon as in the coming weeks.

It is rather difficult to react to news like this. I thought perhaps Azerbaijan is trying to distract us from the ethnic cleansing in Artsakh (Nagorno-Karabakh’s Armenian name) that took place just a few weeks ago. These statements were later refuted, and it turned out that they were apparently only discussing theoretical possibilities. But as experience shows, dictators usually do not stop until they are resisted. And unfortunately, the threats are more than theoretical. They are real. On one side are Presidents Recep Tayyip Erdogan and Ilham Aliyev of Turkey and Azerbaijan, who demand the opening of a corridor linking Azerbaijan with its exclave of Nakhchivan and Turkey through the Syunik region in southern Armenia.

On the other side stands President Vladimir Putin, who does not want Russia to lose influence in the region. After the Armenian Genocide and the wars that followed, the independent First Republic of Armenia, which had an area twice the size of Armenia’s current territory, was divided between Turkey and the Soviet “Union” (actually occupation). Now, unfortunately, the inheritors of these same empires are moving to solve the Armenian Question once and for all. And now Russian propaganda has started discussing war in Armenia as a way to compensate for the failures in Ukraine. It is simple street gang logic. Always strike first. If rebuffed, you always can attack someone else.

It is difficult to predict how this will play out. Perhaps Azerbaijan will attack and Russia will again put itself forward as a peacekeeping force. But we already know the price of Putin’s promises. Moscow and Baku violated the 2020 ceasefire by starting the blockade and military operation. As a result, 100,000 people were forced to leave everything and flee the lands where they had lived for 3,000 years to Armenia, a poor country with closed borders with most of its neighbors. This reminded many people of the first genocide, when Armenians were massacred and no one helped. Almost all Armenians say now that Russia betrayed Artsakh and

Armenia, and the government has started to distance itself from Moscow. But this will not be the end of Armenia’s troubles. Russian propaganda is trying to lay the groundwork for instability. One of Russian television’s most influential propagandists, Vladimir Solovyov, said a military operation in Georgia and Armenia would be good for Russia, as it would give Moscow a land connection with its wartime ally Iran.

Few people paid attention, but these are not empty threats. Russia still has a military base in Armenia, posing a threat to Armenian statehood. Armenians understand this. But they also understand their economic dependence on Russia as the largest economy in the region. Russia also uses soft power. Moscow had close ties with Armenia’s former corrupt presidents, who maintain their platforms and managed to grow rich at the country’s expense. But, unfortunately, perhaps because of Russia’s influence, some of these corrupt officials like former President Robert Kocharyan have escaped jail. And there is, for example, Mika “Burger” Badalyan, a pro-Russian blogger who calls for a revolution in Armenia. His message is boosted by Solovyov and the editor-in-chief of RT, Margarita Simonyan, who have promoted fundraisers for his activities. When he violates Armenian laws, the Russian Foreign Ministry intervenes for him,

even though he is an Armenian citizen.

After Baku launched airstrikes against Stepanakert, these propagandists promoted protests against the Armenian government based on false claims. But the government in Yerevan did not fall, as Badalyan and his supporters failed to appreciate that activism means organization to succeed. I am an activist myself, and have been to many protests in Russia. If it were not for the fact Moscow would exploit any power vacuum, I, as a soon to be Armenian citizen, would support the protests calling for change in Armenia. The government has made many mistakes in recent years, adopting populist tactics and saying Armenia was ready to recognize Baku’s claims over Artsakh. But at least Pashinyan has started to take steps away from Russia, such as ratifying the Rome Treaty to bring Armenia under the jurisdiction of the International Criminal Court. Escaping the influence of Russia may still prove difficult. There are currently more than 100,000 Russians living in Armenia, many of whom fled repression and mobilization in their home country. Armenia is one of the few democratic countries where Russians are allowed without a visa. They do not extradite people at the behest of Russia. Nor do they stop people entering for unspecified reasons, as Georgia does. But attitudes

toward Russia will worsen every year, especially as the new arrivals drive up the cost of living. It is in the interest of all people who oppose Russian imperialism to build a civil society that can resist Putin’s fascism.

As important as helping refugees from Artsakh is, that is only the first step. We have to fight for Armenia against Russian colonialism, which extends far beyond the borders of the Russian pseudo-federation. Now the Russian decolonial movement is awakening across Russia’s republics. And they are the key to mobilizing millions of people much less privileged than Alexei Navalny, who is of course a hero, Ilya Yashin and many other good Russian politicians who have been thrown in prison. Do you know why the Russian opposition failed to stop the war? Because they never became a real civil movement that fought for equal rights for all parts of society. Instead, they behaved as if they were any other political party. Many Russians still struggle to understand what colonialism means to their neighbors. Before the war in Ukraine, I traveled to Georgia and visited the wonderful Museum of Soviet Occupation in Tbilisi. After I wrote that I dreamed about such a museum in Armenia, many “good” Russians came to my comments section to explain that nobody occupied Georgia and that Stalin was a Georgian. Moreover they, the “good

Russians” that they are, tried to help their Soviet brother Armenia during the catastrophic Spitak earthquake.

It’s a pity they didn’t do something as simple as open Wikipedia to read the history of the Turkish and Soviet war against Armenia. History is repeating itself yet again. But I hope we can still prevent the worst from happening. To do so Armenia would need military support from the West and sanctions against Azerbaijan. The Armenian diaspora, including in Russia, will be essential for this. Armenia may be an independent state, but it will be very difficult to wrench itself free from Russia’s zone of influence. Putin still has a lot of instruments of pressure on Armenia. And rest assured, he and his dictator friends will continue to threaten Armenian democracy. That democracy, our mountains (though Mount Ararat, our national symbol, has long been controlled by Turkey), our lives and our history are the only things we have left. Armenia needs allies now who can be trusted. I dream that the country will finally gain true independence and that the world will not let the empires of Russia and Turkey occupy Armenia again. I hope that a miracle will happen. But even if the war does not start tomorrow, we have a huge job ahead of us to save Armenia from the threats it faces on multiple sides.

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Superpowers merit responsible conduct

THE top diplomats of the United States and its fierce competitor the People's Republic of China set the stage on Friday, for a week-long multi-dimensional crucial talks relating to their sweet and sour relationship between their nations on Friday. During a meeting at the State Department in Washington DC, Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi told his American counterpart Antony Blinken that the United States and China have disagreements and need in-depth comprehensive dialogue to reduce misunderstandings and reset ties. Wang noted that the two countries share important common interests and challenges that need to be resolved together. In this context, the dialogue would help them reduce mutual misunderstandings, stabilize the bilateral relationship and return to the track of healthy, stable and sustainable development. Meanwhile, Wang's counterpart fully backed his stance and both sides kicked off their talks to set a course that not only rescues their relationship but maintains peace, and boosts economic cooperation and political stability in the world.

The relationship between the major powers has always been crucial in shaping global politics, resolving regional disputes, maintaining peace and stability and regulating the global economy, and trade. In the contemporary world, the stable relationship and constructive teamwork between two superpowers and long-held competitors are of utmost importance. The People's Republic of China (PRC) and the United States are the world's two largest economies. Their economic relationship has significant global ramifications. Both countries have economic interdependence and rely on each other as trading partners, which impacts global supply chains and trade dynamics. Similarly, both nations hold considerable geopolitical influence and their bilateral relations affect regional and global stability. Cooperation between them is essential to avoid confrontation in multiple spheres and address global issues like climate change, nuclear proliferation, and counterterrorism. At the same time, both countries have a role to play in regional issues ranging from the Indo-Pacific region to the Middle East, Europe and Africa, while their partnership promotes peace in those areas and their rivalry can cause turmoil in various geographical parts of this universe.

Historically, the US-China ties have increasingly witnessed strategic competition in multiple domains particularly in the areas of technology, military and global political influence together with cybersecurity, intellectual property theft, bilateral trade and market access. Meanwhile, trade and tariffs disputes, human rights, Xinjiang, Taiwan, and Chinese ingress in the South and East China seas are continuous issues between Beijing and Washington amid the quest for teamwork in several avenues such as denuclearization of North Korea, global crusade against climate change, US's dealing with Iran and resolution of ongoing Israel-Hamas conflict in the Middle East.

Although, there are wide-ranging differences and divergence of interests between the two major global powers. The US and China have exercised restraint and avoided intense competition between the two largest economies despite disagreements on a host of issues including trade, Taiwan and the South China Sea from veering into conflict. Currently, the Israel-Hamas conflict has added a fresh dynamic to the testy relationship of the superpowers, and Washington hopes Beijing can use its influence with Iran to prevent an escalation into a wider war in the Middle East, while US strategist also perceives' US-China engagement necessary to check Beijing's cooperation with Russia, Iran and North Korea. In fact, a stable and cooperative relationship between China and the US is vital for addressing global political needs, including economic stability, conflict resolution, and collective responses to global challenges. Tensions between them can have far-reaching consequences not only for both contenders but in the international arena as well. Presently, both adversaries are engaged in an open competition and their relationship is a mix of sweet and sour, hence, teamwork is a compulsion of both competitors to reach decisive victory.

Institutional accountability or travesty of the law

THE Supreme Judicial Council has issued a show cause notice to Justice Mazhar Ali Akbar Naqvi and directed him to file a written reply by November 10 to respond to the audio leak scandal. During a recent meeting, the Supreme Judicial Council took up the case of apex Court's judge Justice Mazhar Ali Akbar Naqvi for his alleged involvement in the audio leak scandal, and abuse of authority/position. According to the details, multiple complaints have been filed by over a dozens individuals/ political groups and lawyers' forums against Mr. Naqvi for his alleged involvement in corruption cases and alleged use of his influence to facilitate his sons and a daughter studying abroad and of financial gains from a business tycoon, Mr. Zahid Rafique. As said, the Supreme Judicial council also discussed complaints against several other judges including former NAB Chairman, Justice retired Javed Iqbal, former Chief Justice Umar Atta Bandial, and others.

Accountability, discipline and answerability for conduct and character is the essence of each institution and quality of every government servant and public leader. The Islamic teaching, the country's constitution, social and professional ethics all stress on professional acumen and uprightness for each responsible citizen, while the prerogative of adjudicators merits more cautiousness and responsibility. Unfortunately, the Pakistani judiciary could not build high professionalism, institutional prestige and judicial distinctiveness. The country's judiciary has no reliable system of monitoring, self-evaluation and accountability of its judges and the lower staff, while this sacred cow is far behind the reach of the subordinate LEAs including Police, Anti-Corruption Department and the FIA. The play of self accountability is just a derision with the constitution as well as the public because no bureaucrat ever moves against his colleague due to fear of future reprisal, departmental courtesy and nepotism.

Historically, there is no single example in the history of Pakistan that the Supreme Judicial Council or any higher court moved against its subordinate judges on institutional level until and unless his misconduct became a public issue and pressure mounted from the government and the masses. There should be a comprehensive mechanism consisting of government leaders, public and media representatives which ensure across the board accountability of government servants including judiciary, military and civil bureaucracy so a real culture of transparency could be ensured in all departments and no sacred cow elud this essential aspect in any guise in the future.

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Why are Palestinians supposed to take it – again and again?

Andrew Mitrovica

SINCE Israel began its blatant genocide of occupied Gaza almost three weeks ago, a frothing army of pedestrian Western politicians has confirmed their repellent character once more. Chief among them are Florida Governor Ron DeSantis and British cabinet minister Suella Braverman. Both have pursued – like grovelling suitors – Israel's welcoming embrace, eager to impress their child-mass-murdering darling with loving bonbons of adulation and devotion.

For his predictably slavish part, DeSantis has, in effect, unilaterally scrapped the first amendment of the US Bill of Rights which allegedly guarantees every American citizen the right to express ideas "through speech" and "to assemble or gather with a group to protest". The Ivy-league-trained "ignorant bigot" and flailing US presidential candidate earned a burst of fleeting attention earlier this week when he banned a pro-Palestinian student group, Students for Justice in Palestine (SJP), from the state's university campuses.

To my knowledge, the governor's sweeping cancellation of the SJP has not prompted perpetually aggrieved, third-tier TV personalities and "free-expression" warriors like Bill Maher – who likely has spent more time inside the Playboy Mansion than a library – and company to howl like colicky babies about this egregious assault on unfettered speech.

Not to be outdone on the supposedly sacrosanct "free speech" and "right to assembly" cancellation score, Braverman – the stunt-addicted, bound-to-get-me-on-TV Home Secretary – tried to go one hysterical step further by attempting to have the Palestinian flag outlawed altogether.

Reportedly, Braverman approached several agreeable English police forces – who have been judged guilty, by the way, of institutional racism – asking her compliant chiefs to review if flying or waving the flag constituted the criminal offences of "harassment" or "incitement to violence". I gather that the racist police officers are still pondering whether or not to enforce the crazed edict.

In the meantime, hundreds of thousands of unin-

timidated Londoners and fans of the Scottish football club, Celtic, let Braverman know what they thought of her and the proposed ban by hoisting – at the risk of being jailed – the Palestinian flag in demonstrations over the weekend and during a Champions League match on Wednesday. Good for them.

These acts of solidarity by ordinary people in defiance of erasing any overt exhibitions of support for trapped Palestinians and their just cause are fine

Hence, the determined push by Israel and its fanatical surrogates abroad to have the Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions (BDS) movement barred and tarred as an illegal, anti-Semitic affront to thwart Israel's right to steal and evict Palestinians from their land and homes, as well as to traumatise, imprison, maim and kill them, while invading and obliterating what remains of Palestine with carte blanche impunity.

examples of necessary responses to the West's state-sanctioned resolve not only to stifle but to criminalise dissent. It is an old, instructive story that proves that so-called "liberal" democracies will not tolerate having Palestinians and their millions of allies protest the cruel and lethal actions of their apartheid-practising pal in the Middle East – even peacefully.

The explicit meaning of this systemic suppression of Palestinian "voices" is that Palestinians must have no "voice" at all. They should, instead, shut up and accept as a geopolitical reality Israel's right to steal and evict Palestinians from their land and homes, as well as to traumatise, imprison, maim and kill them, while invading and obliterating what remains of Palestine with carte blanche impunity.

For further and convincing evidence of this pervasive censorial attitude, please see much of the genocide-giddy Western media these days. The bizarre corollary, of course, is any challenge to this absurd construct at any time, anywhere, by anyone, amounts, apparently, to a "blood libel" or worse, the vacuous rhetorical canard,

"anti-Semitism". Hence, the determined push by Israel and its fanatical surrogates abroad to have the Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions (BDS) movement barred and tarred as an illegal, anti-Semitic affront to thwart Israel's right to steal and evict Palestinians from their land and homes, as well as to traumatise, imprison, maim and kill them, while invading and obliterating what remains of Palestine with carte blanche impunity.

Palestinians are expected

this was – surprise, surprise – a lie. "Contrary to the many versions offered by the [Israeli] military, the facts of the case lead to only one conclusion," a spokesperson for B'Tselem said at the time, Israeli security forces deliberately shot and killed al-Najjar "despite the fact that she posed no danger [and] was wearing a medical uniform".

In light of Israel's killing of more than 7,000 Palestinians in the full-throttle pursuit of genocide, nearly half of whom are infants and children, I wonder whether linguist Noam Chomsky and activist Norman Finkelstein – traditional and outspoken friends of Palestinians – are prepared finally to abandon their tactical or wholesale opposition to BDS. The hellish times and circumstances demand it.

Indeed, in a little-noticed section of its 2021 report, A Threshold Crossed, which found that Israel has, for generations, committed "crimes against humanity of apartheid and persecution", Human Rights Watch (HRW) endorsed the main pillars of the BDS campaign. Remarkably, the group wrote that "all states" should: "Subject agreements, cooperation schemes, and all forms of trade and dealing with Israel to enhanced due diligence to screen for those directly contributing to the commission of crimes of apartheid and persecution of Palestinians," and "impose targeted sanctions, including travel bans and asset freezes, against officials and entities responsible for the continued commission of grave international crimes, including apartheid and persecution".

I suspect HRW was motivated to ratify the ethical, legal and moral imperative and legitimacy of BDS by this simple, yet profound impulse: Each one of us is required, in the face of shocking and ingrained injustice and inhumanity visited upon generation after generation of besieged Palestinians, to do something about it. We will no longer abide lectures by Israel, nor the wretched likes of Ron DeSantis and Sue Braverman, dictating the terms of resistance to the genocidal ferocity of an apartheid state. Those obsequious days are over.

Aljazeera

Freedom of speech at stake: Israeli policy debates in US

Fawaz Turki

under so much pressure that they retracted their endorsements. It didn't stop there. Calls were made on the university to remove all the organisations' school affiliations, while former University president Lawrence H. Summers called the joint statement "morally unconscionable". Then all this was followed by several lawmakers in Congress, from both sides of the aisle, denouncing it as "anti-Semitic", and worse.

A hefty donor to the university, William Ackman, a Harvard alumnus and hedge-fund billionaire, went further still – he demanded that the university release a list of the names of all students who were members of the cosigning groups, promising to call on Wall Street execs to refuse to hire them upon their graduation. American campuses have become redoubts of sympathy for the Palestinian cause in America – which has

worried these supporters, in particular those able to wield their influence as they demand that academic institutions do something about it.

And the University of Pennsylvania is one of these institutions, which now finds itself enmeshed in what the media has called a "controversy" over a recent Palestinian festival held there, one that showcased Palestinian art and culture and drew roughly 1,500 attendees from around the world. Though the event had been held several weeks before the war, it still pushed wealthy donors to now come out of the woodwork and bring the tensions surrounding criticism of Israel on campus to a high pitch.

These folks are now up in arms, angry that the university had allowed such a conference to take place, demanding that the school's president, Liz Magill,

America is economically and politically bankrupt

Tim Stanley

HAIL Mary, the US House finally has a Speaker! Mike Johnson clinched the vote on the fourth, exhausting round - but pundits say demagogically possessed Ken doll Matt Gaetz is the real winner. He pushed Kevin McCarthy from the job on October 3, compelling the GOP to audition and reject three other candidates before settling on this ideologically-approved pick from Louisiana – the winner telling legislators that we are all where we are because God wills it (though how this accounts for the career of serial liar George Santos, Heaven knows).

I immediately opened the New York Times, because I like my commentary as hysterical as possible. The hot take is that Johnson is "far-Right" and represents a backdoor coup by the MAGA militants. But what is far-Right? To a European ear, that means neo-Nazi; almost no one in the GOP caucus ticks that box (almost). And is it sensible to see everything through the prism of Trump? The brilliant commentator Matt Lewis explains the dynamics of the Speaker race thus: it was populists v moderates, and the populists were always going to win because the moderates, by their very nature, are prone to compromise. So the conservatives held out doggedly till they got Johnson, an amiable fanatic who ticked the critical box of having questioned the 2020 election result.

But hang on: Trumpally McCarthy also questioned the presidential election, and the supposedly moderate candidate Tom Emmer said it involved "questionable practices", too. Contender Jim Jordan, famous for wrestling and eschewing a jacket, was probably the most ideological contender of all, yet failed to convince his peers to support him - and Johnson's victory speech, contra expectations, turned out to be emollient and occasionally bipartisan.

His first priorities? Help for Israel and securing the border – and there are signs that Right-wingers might cut him more slack on spending negotiations with the White House to keep the government open. It's possible that all Gaetz has won is a promise that Johnson will try to reduce the size of government harder than McCarthy did - confirming suspicions that this whole thing was a battle over style rather than substance, and a distraction from bigger issues.

Gaetzgate is the symptom of a twin structural crisis, not the cause. One part is political: the United States is too divided to provide a majority for any course of action regardless of ideological alignment – allowing tiny factions within Congress to pull the plug on compromise, while the partisan control of different branches makes it impossible to implement one manifesto coherently (that goes for the Court as well as the legislature and executive: over the summer, the judges struck down Biden's signature student debt forgiveness plan).

The other challenge is economic, namely that America is coming to the end of a long road of debt-accumulation. The country can raise taxes or cut spending to restore stability; politics favours neither, while tax cuts and welfare goodies remain central to the Republican and Democrat pitches. Elected officials seem to reside in fantasyland.

In his State of the Union, Biden claimed that he'd delivered "the largest deficit reduction in American history". The editors of the National Review note that what really happened is that Covid-era spending came to an end, giving the impression that because the US was spending less than a historic high, its spending was historically low. Biden was talking gibberish: "the federal deficit [actually] doubled in fiscal year 2023", running between \$1.7 trillion and \$2 trillion.

Adding to this, the president took the opportunity of the Israel attacks to go on TV and demand an additional \$106 billion, with only \$14 billion of it earmarked for the beleaguered Jewish state (Ukraine gets \$61 billion, a figure that Johnson is likely to oppose). Why is the deficit up? Well, we can pin more than 40 per cent of the increased shortfall on falling tax revenues, while over a quarter is thanks to rising costs of entitlements. As Facts of Life conservatives will tell you, failure to grow the economy wedded to generosity in welfare spending creates a "doom spiral", as one struggles to keep pace with the expanding cost of the other. A society cannot spend that much more wealth than it generates, and the byproduct is the cost of financing greater debt, with interest costs rising 40 per cent last year.

You can fool voters into thinking this is sustainable – along with academics, pundits and even central banks, who, until recently, bought into the popular idea that inflation was a thing of the past and money would remain cheap forever. The one thing in life you can never, ever buck is the market – and hence there's been a rapid sell-off in the bond markets.

The price of these bonds is falling, the yields are going up, which indicates that the market believes the era of cheap money is over, governments are overstretched, wars in Ukraine and the Middle East signal further disruption to come, and investors don't believe the US has the leadership necessary to fix things soon.

Thus the economic problem circles back to the political. If America had the kind of politicians who cleared up a similar mess in the early 1990s – with a grand budget compromise that damaged the reputation of both Democrats and Republicans – the market mood might revive. But the combination of Biden's senility, Trump's trials, the Democratic Party's drift towards woo-woo politics and the Right's refusal to give ground on anything, adds to the sense that our current world order is a pack of jokers waiting to fall.

The Telegraph

you have it.

In the US, and to a lesser extent in Europe, the public discourse is a free-for-all – except, sadly, when it comes to Palestinians and those who support their cause. These folks simply have to be careful what they say and, yes, even what they do. Hey, we all remember the time in July, 2000, when the Freud Society of Vienna cancelled a lecture by Edward Said, the celebrated Palestinian-American academic and public intellectual, after members of the society saw a photo of him, at the Lebanese border, poised to hurl what he later called a "symbolic" stone at an Israeli guardhouse. Johan August Sculein, the society's president, later told the New York Times in a telephone interview, "A lot of members of our society told us that they cannot accept an engaged Palestinian who also throws stones at Israeli soldiers". Oh, yes, it's true. The more things change ... well, you know the rest of it.

Gulf News

The ICC should urgently investigate what happened at al-Ahli Arab Hospital

Mark Kersten

THE the devastating explosion at the al-Ahli Arab Hospital in central Gaza, in which the Palestinian Health Ministry says at least 500 people were killed, shows exactly why the International Criminal Court (ICC) must investigate atrocities committed in Israel and Palestine. With allegations levied from all directions, the ICC may just be the best option to provide an impartial and independent assessment of the bombing and, critically, who bears responsibility for it.

There is little doubt that the destruction of the al-Ahli Arab Hospital is a war crime, no matter who is ultimately responsible. Under the international law that governs conduct in armed conflict – International Humanitarian Law – civilians and medical professionals can never be targeted by military attacks, whether they are committed intentionally or recklessly – “when an attacker consciously disregards a substantial and unjustifiable risk of harm to civilians or civilian objects”.

Even if a warning is issued to those in a hospital or any other civilian infrastructure, patients and medics who cannot leave or who choose not to leave, still cannot be targeted. Warnings are not a magic wand that does away with the legal protections that civilians enjoy. No military advantage can be lawfully gained by bombing a hospital where civilians sought refuge, believing it was safe.

Someone is responsible. The question is who? Who is responsible for this massive loss of life, for this war crime? How are we supposed to know amid so many competing accounts and the misinformation that characterises this war?

In the immediate aftermath of the bombing, Gaza officials maintained that Israeli forces had bombed the hospital. There was some confusion as reports from sources close to Israeli authorities suggested that the Israeli military had bombed the hospital in an attack against Hamas, in an apparent admission that they had bombed it. Some observers may have been quick to assume Israeli forces were responsible because of past precedence, including reports from the World Health Organization that in the 2009 Gaza War, Israeli forces damaged more than half of the 27 hospitals and 44 medical clinics in Gaza. The Israeli military, however, denied any

involvement and insisted that Islamic Jihad had misfired rockets and destroyed the hospital. Some states have backed Israel up , but many remain unconvinced

As a signatory to the Geneva Conventions, Israel is required to investigate war crimes, including any committed by its own forces. Under international humanitarian law, states have an obligation to investigate and, where necessary,

tion” and that Abu Akleh’s death “is a direct result of Israel’s militarisation of law enforcement operations in the West Bank, including East Jerusalem”. The targeting of journalists is a war crime. The killer has never been held accountable.

This does not mean that Israel is responsible for the loss of life at al-Ahli hospital. It just means a credible and impartial actor should be

The United Nations Commission of Inquiry on the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem and Israel, found that Israeli forces had used “lethal force without justification” and that Abu Akleh’s death “is a direct result of Israel’s militarisation of law enforcement operations in the West Bank, including East Jerusalem”. The targeting of journalists is a war crime. The killer has never been held accountable. This does not mean that Israel is responsible for the loss of life at al-Ahli hospital. It just means a credible and impartial actor should be investigating, not one with a direct interest in the outcome.

prosecute anyone who has committed a war crime. The problem is that states which are themselves implicated in hostilities and alleged atrocities are rarely able or willing to impartially investigate their own.

The IDF has a history of first blaming Palestinians before, sometimes, taking responsibility for its acts of violence. A recent example is the killing of Al Jazeera journalist Shireen Abu Akleh as she was reporting on the Jenin refugee camp in the West Bank in May 2022. Israeli officials first insisted that she had been killed by Palestinian fire, only to later back-track and apologise. It was, in fact, an Israeli sniper who had shot Abu Akleh in the head, killing her instantly. The United Nations Commission of Inquiry on the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem and Israel, found that Israeli forces had used “lethal force without justifica-

investigating, not one with a direct interest in the outcome. Even among those states with robust and independent criminal justice systems, few have admirable records when it comes to investigating their own wartime atrocities. The fog of war and the layers of allegations are too thick. The incentive to turn a blind eye, deflect and minimise responsibility is often too strong, especially when popular support for war efforts may be at stake.

Who could possibly trust an investigation in the context of repeated calls for Gaza to be annihilated – what some might suggest is genocidal rhetoric – by the likes of Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and Minister of National Security Itamar Ben-Gvir? An international investigation is needed. The Commission of Inquiry can play a critical role and collect evidence. But it won’t itself attribute responsibility or charge

those who bombed the al-Ahli Arab Hospital. As luck would have it, an investigation that could do just that already exists.

In 2021, the ICC prosecutor announced the opening of an investigation into the situation in Palestine, which covers the ongoing war in Gaza as well as any war crimes and crimes against humanity committed by Palestinian factions, including Hamas, in Israel. Current ICC Prosecutor Karim Khan has reiterated in recent days that his office has jurisdiction over any atrocities perpetrated in Gaza. That the prosecutor has broken his silence on the situation in Israel and Gaza is good. But the ICC must act. The ICC can impartially and independently investigate international crimes in Gaza. The prosecutor should immediately announce that he is actively doing so and dedicate resources to his investigation. Israel and any actors in Gaza with effective control of the area around the hospital should immediately allow ICC investigators safe access to the site. Like they did in Ukraine, states – especially those who purport to defend human rights and international law – must support such an effort.

In denouncing war crimes and crimes against humanity in Palestine and Israel, however, many Western states and their leaders have refused to acknowledge, let alone lend their support behind the one international institution that could prosecute those very atrocities: the ICC. In Canada, for example, Prime Minister Justin Trudeau has called the situation in Gaza a “humanitarian situation”, when it is more accurate to say it is a factory of war crimes that demand justice and accountability.

Will an investigation by the ICC solve the conflict? Is criminal law the arbiter of all truths? Of course not. But it is worth trying, even if the results are not immediate. Right now, the best way through the tangle of untruths is an international investigation. The best chance of holding perpetrators to account is through the ICC. We know for sure that inaction only breeds impunity and further violence. As international law Professor Adil Haque poignantly writes: “Investigate all of them. Hamas. The IDF. All of them. For everything. Prosecute all those responsible. All of them. Justice is not enough. But justice is all that is left.”

Russia’s influence may be waning but it will never end

Khaled Abou Zahr

WHAT a difference a year makes. In 2022, think tanks and experts in Washington were describing how Russia was turning Armenia into an outpost or, even worse, a subdued country. Fast forward to today and we are hearing Armenia’s leaders stating their disappointment at Moscow’s stance during the latest clashes with Azerbaijan.

Russia is engulfed on the Ukrainian front and is currently unable to support its historic ally. This latest flare-up raises many questions about Russia’s influence in the Caucasus and beyond. How will this impact the entire Caucasus, Central Asia and Middle East area? Will it create other spots of instability where local and regional players might see an opportunity to gain greater influence?

It is interesting to notice that this is not the first time that Moscow’s power has receded in these areas. A clear point in history comes to mind here with the collapse of the Soviet Union. For the first years of the post-Soviet era, Moscow’s influence nearly disappeared. There were no resources, central decision-making or strategic vision to maintain it.

There were years of chaos and conflict. It took President Vladimir Putin until the end of the Second Chechen War to reassert and project Russia’s power and influence in the Caucasus region. It was at about the same time that the same thing took place in the Middle East.

There is symbolism in the fact that the conflict between Armenia and Azerbaijan looks like it is putting the final nail in the coffin of Russia’s strong influence. Many analysts had described a receding Russian influence as early as 1988, when the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict started. This was furthered after the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991. Could we compare this collapse with Moscow now being drowned on the Ukraine front?

The fact is that Russia does not have — and probably has not had for the past couple of decades — the strongest military in the area. It is the Turkish army and its fellow NATO members that have become the most pow-

erful force. This was very clear in the previous clashes, in which Turkiye gave its support to Azerbaijan, while Russia and Iran backed Armenia. The Azerbaijanis were able to show their military prowess and reconquer their lands.

I would like to digress a little and note the lack of knowledge of many politicians and even journalists in the West who support both Ukraine and Armenia. I recently had a conversation with a French journalist who was vehemently opposed to Russia’s actions in Ukraine and who was, with the same vehemence, standing with Armenia. I simply asked, “Do you think Western countries should stand against all of Russia’s allies?” His answer came swiftly: “Yes, of course.” His silence was just as vehement when I informed him that Russia was Armenia’s closest ally. This creates much more complicated dynamics in this region than most would have the will or patience to analyze.

This balance has been the reality for decades, if not centuries. The main actors are still the same. At the forefront are Turkiye and Iran, while in the background are China, Europe and the US. The dynamic between Russia and its allies such as Iran is complex. Even during the years of positive collaboration, there have been spheres of competition between Moscow and Tehran. This became clear in the Middle East in the Syrian arena — they were both partners and competitors at the same time.

The dominance of Azerbaijan has forced stability for now. But which other areas could go through the same uptick in military violence? The first country that comes to mind is Georgia. This would mean a new conflict similar to the one that took place in 2008, known as the Russo-Georgian War, with the Russian-backed self-proclaimed republics of South Ossetia and Abkhazia. It was described, at the time, as the first European conflict of the 21st century. Is this the time to settle the score?

It seems like Georgia is trying to take advantage of Moscow’s current weakness to further its interests, but without pushing for con-

frontation. This “nearly rapprochement” could be a way to avoid military conflict while allowing for a new working formula for the disputed regions. This might also mean Tbilisi seeking greater alignment with another power to maintain this new equilibrium. However, the risks of a conflict flaring remain.

There are other regions of course. Some analysts and think tanks go as far as mentioning the possibility of Russia’s southern republics potentially seeking independence from Moscow. This would be in case Russia and its military became too severely weakened by the conflict in Ukraine and it would be a continuation of the post-Soviet era of independence in Russia’s backyard and sphere of influence. But the risks of instability also reach well into the heart of Europe and the Balkans, where Moscow maintains strong historical friendships. There is no doubt that, despite its strong industrial military capacity, Russia would have difficulty maintaining its influence on multiple fronts.

It is interesting to notice nevertheless that Moscow has been capable of asymmetric positioning in the Middle East and Africa, despite the current situation in Ukraine. Indeed, Russia has increased its attacks on rebel bases in Syria. The latest strike took place on Wednesday on a displacement camp in Syria’s northwest, the country’s last main rebel bastion. Here too, we find the same actors, namely Iran and Turkiye, as well as China and the West in the background. There is no doubt that geography, logistics and energy routes entangle the same actors across both regions and into Europe. In Africa, Moscow has been able to reduce Paris’ influence in a way very few expected.

Russia is at risk of losing its influence and other actors might see a window of opportunity. But this risk also means new military conflict areas and the potential for a broader conflict. One thing is for sure: to think that this will mean the complete end of Russia’s influence is naive. Looking back at history, Moscow’s influence is like the seasons of the year — it always comes back.

Greek resistance during WWII remains a model for confronting evil

Christopher Cosmos

THERE is a famous quote often attributed to former British Prime Minister Winston Churchill, although some debate whether he said it: “From henceforth, we will not say that Greeks fight like heroes, but that heroes fight like Greeks.” It describes the heroic actions of Greece and the Greek people in resisting the Axis invasion of their country that began in the Fall of 1940 during World War II. To fully understand the quote, though, it’s necessary to start further back, in the hours before the invasion and fighting began. On October 28, 1940, Greece’s Prime Minister, Ioannis Metaxas, was awakened at his residence at 3 a.m. and given an ultimatum by the Italian ambassador to Greece, Emanuele Grazzi: either let the Italians occupy Greece without a fight, or it would be war.

The important words that come next have been debated throughout the years since. Grazzi himself, in his memoirs wrote that Metaxas said to him, staring straight into his eyes, “Alors, c’est la guerre!”, that translates from French - a common language of diplomacy at the time - as, “Then it is war!” When Grazzi responded by saying war could be avoided entirely if the Greeks simply surrendered, Metaxas interrupted and allegedly answered with a single Greek word: “Oxi.” No. Whether Metaxas actually said “oxi” (pronounced: Oh-hee) or not is still debated, but regardless of what he actually said, this is the word of refusal that would embed itself in the collective consciousness of the Greek people, and it would need to, because mere hours later, true to his word, then-Italian Prime Minister Benito Mussolini’s troops invaded from where they were stationed in Italian-occupied Albania, on Greece’s northern border. Greece’s military participation in WWII thus began.

Adolf Hitler himself, as Chancellor of Germany and leader of the Axis Powers, had no intention of invading Greece. In fact, he’d told Mussolini, who had designs on expansion and conquest throughout the Mediterranean, not to start a war or create another front at all. The restless and ambitious Mussolini, however, hungry for glory of his own, decided to ignore Hitler’s orders. Before delivering his ultimatum, he told Count Galeazzo Ciano, his foreign minister (as well as his son-in-law), “Hitler always faces me with a fait accompli. This time I am going to pay him back in his own coin. He will find out in the papers that I have occupied Greece.”

This, however, proved to be a miscalculation of the highest magnitude as Greece’s response to his ultimatum and the single word that was spoken in defiance by an entire nation during the early hours of

October 28, 1940, would become a rallying cry not just for Greece, but also the rest of the Allies and the world, eventually changing the course of the entire war — and history — forever. The Greek resistance to the Italian invasion was immediate, and after Italian troops spilled over the northern Greek border from Italian-controlled Albania that very same morning, at 5:30am, just hours after the rejection of the Italian ultimatum and declaration of war, fighting began between Greece and Italy in the northern mountains of Greece.

The fighting didn’t last long on Greek soil, though, and despite Greece’s significantly smaller population (just 7.3 million people) against the much larger Italy, which in 1940 had a population of 43.8 million, the better-equipped Italians were pushed back into occupied Albania again and out of Greek territory altogether. These initial Greek victories over the Italians were actually the very first land victories for the Allies in all of WWII, and the effect of this Greek pride, defiance and success was undeniable and even reached as far as America. On the cover of the December 16, 1940 issue of Life magazine there was a picture of a member of the Greek Evzone army unit standing at attention in front of the Temple of Olympian Zeus in Athens with a bugle at his lips. The cover of Time magazine on the exact same day also paid tribute to the Greek victories and featured an image of the Greek army’s Commander-in-Chief and architect of their military defense, Alexandros Papagos, pencil-sketches in uniform with the Acropolis proudly behind him.

For the Allies and America, this victory was both a representation of the low morale, convictions and capability of the invading Italian troops, combined with the fierce and inspirational spirit of the under-equipped and out-manned Greeks, who were fighting to defend their homes and everything they had. Historian Mark Mazower would later describe the event as the “first Axis setback of the entire war,” with the Greeks “surprising everyone with the tenacity of their resistance.” This changed things for Germany, as Hitler saw these Greek victories over the Italians as a direct threat to his own southern border and interests, so a fateful decision was made, and in early April 1941, German forces came south.

Even though Greece had defied the odds and beaten the Italians when no one thought they could, they wouldn’t be able to defeat the combined Italian and German forces. It was very important that they continue to fight, though, because even though ultimate victory over Germany wasn’t achiev-

able either in or by Greece, the ensuing battle would end up being very likely one of the deciding factors in the outcome of the entire war. How long the Greeks fought and resisted is ultimately what prolonged the German invasion of Russia into the harsh winter, when they could be defeated, just the same as Napoleon had been, a little over a hundred years earlier. There is a famous story about the Spartan Basileus Leonidas, his 300 warriors, and their doomed stand in 480 BCE against the Persians at Thermopylae where they fought as another small but determined group against a much larger invading opponent, facing certain defeat.

In 1940 and 1941, the Greeks would bear a similarly fatal cost as they continued their resistance, against all odds, even after the Germans overran their northern border and reached Athens. The capital fell on April 27, 1941 and the Greek government fled to Crete, where resistance would still continue until Crete finally fell, too, in June of 1941. All told, beginning on October 28, 1940 and continuing until early June 1941, Greece ultimately resisted the combined Axis forces for 219 days, which was significantly longer and more than triple the time of any other country that would come to be occupied during the war.

During the course of their resistance and the ensuing German and Italian occupation, Greece would lose in both military and civilian casualties, by varying counts, an estimated 10 to 13 percent of its entire population. Even the low end of that estimate is a staggering amount of people, and while it’s not something found in many history books, the importance of the Greek defeat of the Italians and delay of the Germans to the Allied war effort and eventual victory was essential, and something that would come to be a matter of great national pride. After the war and during his trial at Nuremberg, Wilhelm Keitel, one of Hitler’s field marshals, would succinctly summarize and qualify the importance of what the Greeks did during this time with the following quote:

“The unbelievably strong resistance of the Greeks delayed by two or more vital months the German attack against Russia. If we did not have this long delay, the outcome of the war would have been different.” As noted, it’s been debated throughout the years whether Prime Minister Metaxas ever said “oxi” to the Italian ambassador in the middle of the night, or if his words were simply, “Alors, c’est la guerre,” and then nothing else. What hasn’t been debated in the years since, though, is that very same morning, on October 28, 1940, after Metaxas

addressed the Greek people via radio and told them of the Italian ultimatum and his response to it, the people of Greece spontaneously took to the streets of their cities and villages chanting and shouting together as one, “Oxi!” For them to put aside politics and differing ideologies in a very politically fractured country was quite significant in and of itself, as Greece was a nation that had just suspended certain parts of its constitution and was under authoritarian rule and would later descend into civil war nearly as soon as WWII and the Axis occupation was over.

But, for a brief moment, Greece stood united as one when it mattered most, and they stood stronger and more resilient than anyone ever thought possible. In acknowledgement of this Greek spirit and the country’s contribution, President Franklin Roosevelt is believed by some to have said, “When the entire world had lost all hope, the Greek people dared question the invincibility of the German monster, raising against it in the proud spirit of freedom.” In 1943, Joseph Stalin, the leader of the Soviet Union, also acknowledged during the German invasion of his country Greece’s contribution and role in the war, and is quoted as saying on a radio broadcast, “I am sorry, because I am getting old, and I shall not live long enough to thank the Greek people, whose resistance decided WWII.”

When many think of the legacy of Oxi today, what they think of is perhaps the quotes above, or the more famous one from Winston Churchill, about how the Greeks fought when they were called upon to do so. But before the fighting began, there was a choice – to either surrender, or come together, as one, and resist and stand-up to evil – and every year on October 28, with parades and ceremonies in both Greece and around the world, that’s what’s celebrated most of all. Oxi Day celebrates the path of bravery, unity, and freedom over the path of fascism, tyranny, and lies.

It’s a day that celebrates righteousness and good being stronger than evil, and reminds us that passing despots are mere representations of themselves and their time, and not of their people. And most of all, Oxi Day is a day that celebrates sacrifice of the highest order by the Greek people during WWII, and all those who fought in Greece alongside them. It serves as an eternal reminder of the enduring obligation to stand up to evil and injustice wherever and whenever it’s next seen — and how a small but brave country that had been all but forgotten was able to once again change the course of history and help save the world.

CNN

Fanatics vs generals: The strange Israeli rift over Gaza

Marwan Bishara

ISRAEL’S new “unity” government, formed earlier this month to oversee an all-out war on Gaza, seems to be divided over strategy and objectives. The tension between Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and the other two leading generals in the war cabinet, Benny Gantz and Yoav Gallant, is widening this division and creating confusion over the much-anticipated land invasion of the densely populated Palestinian enclave.

The rift is driven by personal, military, political and ideological disagreements that emerged well before the war started, and are likely to shape the Israeli polity well after it ends. There is no love lost between Netanyahu and the generals, who felt obliged to join the country’s wartime emergency coalition. They have long treated the veteran prime minister with suspicion and contempt, especially since Netanyahu allied his Likud party with the religious fanatics of the extreme right, and went on to rewrite the country’s fundamental laws, to suit his and his fanatical partners’ interests.

Gantz continues to hold a grudge against Netanyahu, who fired him as defence minister in March 2023 for questioning the soundness of his fanatical legislative agenda and its implications for national security. Although Netanyahu reversed his decision under public pressure a few weeks later, the two men haven’t buried the hatchet.

Militarily speaking, the generals do not trust Netanyahu and his fanatic minions with war; they especially do not trust their motives and objectives that render the war no more than the continuation of their politics through violence. They reckon Netanyahu, the failed

prime minister turned wartime leader, is more pre-occupied with restoring his legacy than ensuring the security of the country. But since they were stuck with him as prime minister, the generals had to settle with excluding his most fanatic ministers from the war cabinet.

The generals and security heads have accepted responsibility for the country’s military and intelligence failure on October 7, and are expected to resign soon after they take their revenge on Hamas, and Gaza. Hence, the generals want to assign clear military objectives for the war, notably to destroy Hamas’s military capabilities and dismantle its administrative and political structures.

But Netanyahu has not accepted his responsibility in the the October 7 fiasco. His plan, it seems, is to wage a “long and painful” war, and remain on the political stage as a war hero after the dust settles on the ruins of Gaza. Delusional? Perhaps, considering the prime minister’s sinking popularity, including within his own party. But Netanyahu’s megalomania, which led to the October 7 blowback, is severe enough that he won’t hesitate to prolong the war for as long as it takes for him to change the public perception and avoid accountability.

Likewise, Netanyahu and his fanatical allies, who deepened Israel’s occupation and inflamed the Palestinian anger, have raised the public expectation from the war, insisting on total annihilation of Hamas and its leadership. This, of course, is as unrealistic a goal as that of the US to finish off the Taliban in Afghanistan, which remains unrealised after 20 years of war. But this unrealistic objective will make it easy for Netanyahu and company to blame the military for its failure to meet the national aspiration when the war comes to an end.

The fanatics have also declared their intention to rebuild the illegal and highly problematic Jewish settle-

ments in Gaza from which Israel withdrew in 2005 – the nightmare of every Israeli general, ever since the infamous general-cum-prime-minister, Ariel Sharon, decided to change the Israeli position from directly occupying Gaza to besieging it in perpetuity.

These disagreements over the war’s endgame have further complicated the already complicated calculations about the invasion and the ensuing urban warfare, which is bound to cause tens if not hundreds of thousands of casualties, and may also open up another front in the north against the Lebanese Hezbollah, pushing Israel towards an apocalyptic scenario. Enter the United States and its gunboat diplomacy through the deployment of two aircraft carriers in the Eastern Mediterranean to shield Israel from any regional repercussions as it invades Gaza, which has further complicated Israeli calculus and timelines.

Thankful for its strategic and technical assistance in urban warfare, both Netanyahu and the generals have since fallen in line with the Biden Administration, which expects them to agree on clear and realistic objectives and an actionable strategy to meet them, as well give a chance for diplomacy to free more hostages, before launching a land offensive. Since neither side wishes to antagonise America, they blame each other for the delayed land offensive, which most Israelis support, according to recent polls, albeit without a defined endgame.

The deepening rift between its formidable military establishment and its far-right and fanatical religious camp will have far-reaching implications for Israeli society and polity. But for the Palestinians, there is not real difference between Israel’s warmongering generals who call the Palestinians “human animals” and its racist fanatics, who call for their expulsion, especially for those at the receiving end of Israel’s sadistic bombing and siege, Fascists, fanatics; to-mato, tom-ato.

Use of RMB to fortify Pak-China economic ties

ISLAMABAD (INP): Governor State Bank of Pakistan (SBP) Jameel Ahmad said that employing the Chinese Renminbi (RMB) for cross-border trade and investment transactions could further fortify Pakistan-China economic ties.

Addressing an event themed "Promoting the use of RMB in Cross-Border Settlement," organized by China's ICBC Bank here, Governor SBP Jameel Ahmad underscored the robust and enduring economic and financial connections between Pakistan and China.

According to a Gwadar Pro's report, he stressed

that employing the Chinese Renminbi (RMB) for cross-border trade and investment transactions could further fortify these ties.

This event celebrated ICBC Bank's designation as the RMB clearing agent in Pakistan by the People's Bank of China (PBOC).

The Governor SBP elaborated on the significance of Pakistan's economic relations with China and emphasized that the SBP had established the necessary regulatory framework to facilitate the use of RMB in trade and investment activities.

This includes actions like opening Letters of Credit (L/Cs) and accessing financing facilities in

Minister assures to address issues of pharma industry

ISLAMABAD (APP): Caretaker Minister for National Health Services Regulations and Coordination Dr Nadeem Jan Saturday said that the government is determined to address the key issues of the pharma industry to further strengthen it and boost its exports.

The pharma industry is playing a crucial role in meeting the growing demand for medicine and promoting exports, he said while addressing a delegation of the Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry (ICCI) that called on him led by Ahsan Zafar Bakhtawari, President ICCI.

The Minister said that the government is working to establish a pharma park with public-private partnership and incentives would be offered to the pharma industry for local production of pharma raw material as well as local production of new molecules in the country.

He said that he was already in contact with friendly nations for the

transfer of technology to the pharmaceutical sector.

Dr. Nadeem Jan said that the government plans to digitize the overall health system in the country to meet modern trends.

He said that the purpose of technology transfer to the medical sector is to strengthen the country's health infrastructure.

He also informed the ICCI delegation about the forthcoming Global Health Security Summit in Pakistan.

He assured that the issues highlighted by the ICCI delegation would be considered for redress.

Speaking on the occasion, Ahsan Zafar Bakhtawari, President, ICCI briefed the Minister of National Health Services about the key issues of the pharma industry.

He said that the pharma industry imports almost 90 per cent of raw material to manufacture medicines but due to fluctuation of currency, the import cost of raw materials has increased manifold.

He urged the govern-

Fuel issues between settled

KARACHI (INP): The fuel issues between PIA and PSO have been settled, as a result of which flights are likely to return to normal soon. PIA has paid Rs 100 million to PSO, and a list of 8 flights for fuel has been forwarded to PSO along with the cash payment.

After the ECC received 8 billion rupees last night, there are chances of improvement in the complex issue of departure of flights.

PIA's flight operations were frozen for the first time since Covid-19 last Sunday due to lack of advance payments and holidays. The daily domestic and international flight operations of PIA consist of 81 flights. The fuel problem linked to the financial crisis of the national airline has lasted for more than two weeks, resulting in 597 flights being grounded in the last 17 days.

It is hoped that the settlement between PIA and PSO will help to normalize the airline's flight schedule and minimize disruption to passengers.

Pak Pavilion inaugurated

BEIJING (APP): Pakistan's Ambassador in China, Moin ul Haque inaugurated the Pakistan National Pavilion at the Sichuan Agriculture Expo in Chengdu.

He was joined by the Vice Governor of Sichuan Province, Hu Yun, the Secretary Trade Development Authority of Pakistan (TDAP), Dr. Farheed Iqbal and Pakistan's Acting Consul General in Chengdu, Agha Hunain Abbas Khan.

The Pavilion introduces the famous tourist sites in Pakistan and displays a number of the agricultural goods produced by the country.

More than a dozen Pakistani companies displayed their agricultural products at the Pavilion. The Pavilion attracted great interest from the participants attending the Expo.

Earlier on the same day, the Ambassador participated in the Opening Ceremony of the 9th Sichuan Agriculture Expo, where Pakistan is the Country of Honour.

on political trust, strategic communication, and practical cooperation.

He also highlighted the close cooperation between Pakistan and Sichuan, including through sister province and city collaborations.

Pakistan's participation in the Expo will inject impetus into the ongoing cooperation between Pakistan and China in the agriculture sector.

Recently five important agriculture SPS protocols have been finalised between the two sides, giving Pakistan access to a market of US\$30 billion in cooked beef, dairy, chilies, cherries and other livestock products.

This endeavour will contribute to Pakistan's efforts to increase its exports to China. Sichuan Agriculture Expo is the largest agriculture expo in western China and caters to over 400 million people. More than 2000 exhibitors are attending the Expo and more than 200,000 people are expected to visit it.

Court Notice

In the Court of Sulaiman Khan Mohmand civil Judge II Tehsil pabbi, Nowshera. Next date of hearing 04/11/2023, Case title: Shah Nazar khan VS Sultan quresha and others, Notice to 1 Javed 5 Nadia daughter of Miskeen Legal heirs of Noor Jahan W/O Miskeen All R/O Muhalla Zakhi Qabristan akberpura Tehsil Pabbi District Nowshera 7 shoukat Jahan R/O swati patak umeed abad District Peshawar 8 Shamshad jan D/O Multan khan late R/O Karachi presently at America 9 patwari Halqa moza jabba Daud zai post office Akberpura district Nowshera (Defendants). In the above title case the respondents/defendants is directed to appear before this court at 8:30 am on 04/11/2023 either personally or through attorney or counsel, in failure an ex-parte proceeding will be initiated against respondents/defendants. Given under my hand and seal of the court.

Court Notice

In the court of khadijah Rehman judge family court matta Swat. Case# 166/FC. institution 2023. Next Hearing date 11/11/2023. Salma Rani VS Kaleem Javid. Nature of chala under section (4)10 Notice to:- defendant. Kaleem Javid s/o Saleem javid t/o Haryan kot tehsil dargai Malakand (presently Hor Al Anz Deira Near Alelooshi Masjid United Arab Emirates mob +971523270473) whereas the above named cannot be served in ordinary manner it is therefore proclaimed or through dually authorized agent or pleader in the court on 11/11/2023. at 8.am. Ex-parte proceeding will be initiated against you. Seal of the court.

F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: The Federation of Pakistan Chambers of Commerce and Industry (FPCCI) Presidential Candidate for the upcoming election 2024 Muhammad Ali Sheikh, stressed the need for implementing structural reforms for good governance, curbing unproductive state expenditures, expanding the tax base, fostering public-private partnerships, and reallocating resources to critical sectors to stimulate sustainable growth, as fiscal discipline cannot be achieved without initiating structural reforms.

Muhammad Ali Sheikh said that we must maintain fiscal discipline and establish controls to create fiscal space to extend relief to the

business community.

Quoting the reports, he said that the budget deficit continues to grow, entangling Pakistan in an unrelenting cycle of debt. Even if we exclude the impact of debt servicing, our revenues fall short of covering other expenses, implying that all these are met from borrowed funds. At the close of the fiscal year, Pakistan recorded a budget deficit of Rs 6.52 trillion, equivalent to 7.7% of the GDP, a slight decrease from the previous year's 7.9% of GDP. However, in absolute figures, the budget deficit surged by a substantial 24%, or Rs 1.26 trillion, within just one year.

Due to this bleak scenario, the BMP leader said and added that the primary balance registered a negative Rs 690 billion in FY

2023. Encouragingly, Pakistan achieved a noteworthy reduction of Rs 1.3 trillion or 67% year-on-year in its debt portfolio at the primary balance level during FY 2023. According to the Fiscal Operation report the primary deficit, which stood at 3.1% of GDP in FY2022, was reduced to a more manageable level of 0.8% of GDP in FY 2023. This improvement has created some fiscal room, and with continued efforts we can attain a primary surplus, representing the fundamental level of financial discipline.

The FPCCI presidential candidate by the BMP Muhammad Ali Sheikh said that it is encouraging to note that at the consolidated level, the government successfully attained an overall

primary surplus of Rs 503 billion. However, by end of the third quarter of FY 2023, overall budget's balance showed a negative figure of Rs 3.07 trillion. Yet, in the last quarter of FY 2023, primary surplus turned into primary deficit, with latter recording a primary deficit of Rs 1.1 trillion.

The budget deficit in last quarter of FY 2023 surged to nearly 112% of the cumulative figures from July 2022 to March 2023. Pakistan's budget deficit for the initial nine months amounted to approximately Rs 3 trillion, but in Q4 FY23 alone, it registered a substantial increase of Rs 3.4 trillion. It's worth noting that in the latest budget documents released in June 2023, revised estimate for primary deficit in FY23

was Rs 421 billion.

However, there was a primary balance overrun of Rs 690 billion, marking an increase of Rs 269 billion, which is 64% higher than the revised estimates for FY 2023 shared earlier in June of the same year. Contrastingly, according to the budget document from the previous year, a surplus of Rs 153 billion was projected. This highlights the inadequacies in financial planning at ministerial level.

While many countries are implementing privatization policies for SOEs, Pakistan remains in debate over the issue without officially announcing any plans for disinvesting in such entities. Meanwhile, the government continues to inject substantial sums of money in the form of subsidi-

es and grants each year to sustain the operations of these unprofitable entities.

Ali Sheikh said the focus of the caretaker government to date is not on implementing structural politically challenging reforms but on heavy reliance on realizing pledged foreign direct investment and crackdowns on markets infected by widespread speculations/smuggling with a view to taking the economy out of its ongoing deepening economic impasse. While one would no doubt support these measures yet economic reforms as well as improving governance are critical to ensuring that the economy moves out of the continuing logjam that successive administrations have pushed it into.



KARACHI: Caretaker Minister for Information Technology and Telecommunications Dr. Umar Saif and Chairman P@SHA Mohammad Zohaib Khan in a group photo at 19th Edition of HBL P@SHA ICT Awards 2023.

HBL P@SHA ICT Awards-23 organized

F.P. Report

KARACHI: Caretaker Minister for Information Technology and Telecommunications Dr. Umar Saif has said that the interim government tenure is short, but in available time, we will lay the foundation of steps under the right Line of Action, which will provide the required benefits of the information and communication technology (ICT) sector to the up-coming government. IT sector can play a significant role in the stability of the country's economy, the government is doing its part to provide facilities, the industry should play its part by increasing its capabilities, IT companies, which were compelled to keep their reserves outside, should bring their liquidity into Pakistan. He said this while addressing as the chief guest at the prestigious ceremony of the annual ICT Awards organized by Pakistan IT Industry Association (P@SHA) in collaboration with HBL in here in local hotel at Karachi.

Dr. Umar Saif appreciated chairman P@SHA Muhammad Zohaib Khan, HBL management and IT industry for organizing the grand event and said that work is going on rapidly for the required initiatives including spectrum auction, co-working station for freelancers, startups funds, digital payments, global payment gateway etc.

"I assure the IT industry that we will work closely with P@SHA and all other stakeholders for the promotion and development of this sector, the only goal is that Pakistan can achieve its desired position and share in the digital world so that not only the People of Pakistan can earn decent amount but also strengthen Pakistan's economy", he added.

While talking about this event, the Chairman P@SHA, Mr. Mohammad Zohaib Khan said, "With a distinguished legacy of more than two decades, the P@SHA ICT Awards have been honoring groundbreaking achievements and visionary contributions in the technology sector, this award symbolizes the relentless pursuit of excellence in shaping our ever-evolving digital landscape".

Starting the ceremony with this year's trophy revelation, for the first time, a redesigned trophy was introduced, signifying the ever-evolving landscape of technology and innovation. HBL P@SHA ICT Awards 2023 featured 34 remarkable Gold Awards, 40 Merit Awards, and a total of 727

nominees, showcasing the remarkable growth and advancements within the Pakistani tech industry. The event's panel of 82 judges from all over Pakistan ensured a fair and rigorous evaluation process.

The HBL P@SHA ICT Awards 2023, organized by the Pakistan IT Industry Association, consistently honored companies at the forefront of technology innovation. These awards acknowledged the remarkable creativity, innovation, and excellence displayed by home-grown Pakistani innovators in the ever-evolving field of Information and Communications Technologies. The ICT Awards 2023 ceremony brought together technology enthusiasts, industry leaders, and innovators to recognize and celebrate the outstanding achievements of the IT Leaders of Pakistan in the ICT sector.

Adding a melodious note to this remarkable evening, the sensational Asim Azhar took the stage by storm. Asim Azhar, a celebrated artist known for his enchanting voice and captivating performances, elevated the evening's entertainment and celebrated the synergy between technology and the arts.

Following the awards ceremony and Asim Azhar's electrifying per-

formance, attendees were treated to a sumptuous gala dinner, fostering networking and collaboration within the tech community.

HBL P@SHA ICT Awards 2023 was a night filled with celebration, recognition, and inspiration, and it served as a testament to the outstanding talents and potential within Pakistan's technology sector. This event not only highlighted the achievements of the industry's best but also served as a platform to encourage further innovation and excellence.

The Pakistan Software Houses Association for IT & ITES (P@SHA) is Pakistan's sole trade association representing the IT and IT Enabled Services sector since 1992. Its mandate is to work with the government on policy issues and with all other stakeholders to promote the IT sector and provide platforms that create more opportunities for members of the ecosystem, both domestically and internationally.

Shanghai sees foreign trade growth

SHANGHAI (APP): Shanghai's imports and exports reached 3.17 trillion yuan (about 441.6 billion US dollars) in the first three quarters of this year, up 2.7 percent year on year, according to local customs.

Over this period, Shanghai's exports rose 3.9 percent year on year to 1.3 trillion yuan, while its imports increased by 1.8 percent to 1.87 trillion yuan, data from Shanghai Customs showed.

Shanghai's trade with the European Union amounted to 638.23 billion yuan, up 5.4 percent year on year, accounting for 20.2 percent of its total foreign trade volume during the period.

In the first three quarters of 2023, Shanghai exported 130.37 billion yuan of emerging products, including electric vehicles, lithium batteries and solar cells, a year-on-year increase of 79.5 percent, accounting for 10 percent of the city's total export value.

Meanwhile, Shanghai imported 422.23 billion yuan of consumer goods, up 9 percent year on year, amounting to 22.6 percent of the city's total import value.

Fiscal discipline can't be achieved sans initiating structural reforms: FPCCI presidential candidate



In brief

Wade to captain Australia

SYDNEY (Agencies): Veteran wicketkeeper Matthew Wade will captain Australia in their Twenty20 series against India next month with a host of senior players giving the tour a miss, selectors said Saturday. Wade was elevated to the top job with regular captain Mitchell Marsh returning to Australia after the one-day World Cup in India to prepare for the home Test summer. Test and one-day skipper Pat Cummins along with pace partners Mitchell Starc and Josh Hazlewood are also being rested, as is allrounder Cameron Green. Spinner Ashton Agar was not considered due to injury. But batting stalwarts Steve Smith and David Warner were among the 15-man squad for the five-game series starting on November 23 in Vishakhapatnam. "It's an experienced squad with a mixture of players who have had their first opportunity on the international stage and that we hope will continue to develop into important players in our T20 group," said chief selector George Bailey. "Matthew has captained the team previously, is a leader in the group and we look forward to him taking the reins for this series." Australia T20 squad: Matthew Wade (capt), Jason Behrendorff, Sean Abbott, Tim David, Nathan Ellis, Travis Head, Josh Inglis, Spencer Johnson, Glenn Maxwell, Tanveer Sangha, Matt Short, Steve Smith, Marcus Stoinis, David Warner, Adam Zampa.

SA and NZ seek Rugby WC history

PARIS (Agencies): Defending champions South Africa face arch-rivals New Zealand in an eagerly awaited Rugby World Cup final on Saturday with both teams in the all-southern hemisphere clash aiming for a record fourth title. The Springboks and All Blacks have reached the final at the Stade de France thanks largely to dramatic quarter-final victories over France and Ireland, both of whom were fancied to make the latter stages. After northern hemisphere teams topped all four pools, hopes were high that the Webb Ellis Cup would head to Europe for the first time since England won in 2003. But it was not to be. Wales joined France and highly favoured Ireland in an early departure after falling to Argentina -- who went down heavily to New Zealand in the semi-finals -- and England lost a hard-fought semi-final to the Boks. England, who had defied pre-tournament expectations to reach the last four, claimed third place with a 26-23 victory over Los Pumas on Friday. Southern hemisphere domination -- So, once again, the Cup will head southwards, to one of the two teams that has already won it three times. South Africa have never lost a World Cup final, winning in 1995, 2007 and 2019, but coach Jacques Nienaber predicts this final will be "grind". New Zealand lifted the trophy in 1987, 2011 and 2015, but lost that 1995 final to the Springboks in a moment made special by Nelson Mandela's rallying call as South Africa embarked on its arduous voyage away from the dark days of apartheid. The feeling remains that the Springboks are playing for more than personal glory. "This is what we live for, it's about the people who are dreaming to be in our position in the communities back in South Africa," said assistant coach Mzwandile Stick on Friday.

World Cup 2023 Australia edge past New Zealand in high-scoring thriller

DHARAMSALA (Agencies): Australia overcame a spirited New Zealand to extend their World Cup winning streak to four games in a high-scoring thriller in Dharamsala. The Black Caps needed 19 to win from the final over to complete a World Cup record chase of 389. But James Neesham was agonisingly run out for 58 off the penultimate ball and last man Lockie Ferguson could not hit the six needed from the final delivery. They finished five runs short on 383-9, led by Rachin Ravindra's stunning 116. The combined tally of 771 runs made it the highest-scoring World Cup game of all time. Earlier, Travis Head's brutal 109 from 67 balls, in an opening stand of 175 in 19.1 overs with David Warner, helped Australia to their imposing total of 388. An uncharacteristically sloppy performance in the field saw New Zealand spill four catches, including Head on 70 and 75, amid a chaotic opening bowling display. The usually consistent seamers Matt Henry and Trent Boult struggled in the face of Warner and Head's aggressive start, with the pair smashing 118-0 in the 10-over powerplay -- an Australia ODI record. Part-time spinner Glenn Phillips took 3-37 to record the only respectable figures in Australia's imposing total, which included 20 sixes. Australia have recovered from two successive defeats to start the tournament and are well-placed for a semi-final spot, while New Zealand's hopes are

not too severely dented after their strong start of four wins. Classy Ravindra leads brave New Zealand effort After such a brutal onslaught from Australia's batters, New Zealand left the field looking understandably overwhelmed: some drooping shoulders, wry smiles and tired legs. But they are a side renowned for their grit and determination and that is personified by 23-year-old Ravindra. An opening stand of 61 between Devon Conway and Will Young gave him a platform, and he started cautiously in a stand of 96 with Daryl Mitchell, who made 54. Mitchell's departure handed Ravindra the reins and he scored freely, targeting straight down the ground, ensuring the daunting run-rate never got too far out of reach with his second century of the tournament. New Zealand matched Australia at the 40-over mark, reaching 292-5, but Ravindra fell two balls later to damage their hopes. But Neesham, who famously batted in New Zealand's fateful super over in the 2019 World Cup final, kept accelerating with three fours and three sixes in his knock before Mitchell Starc aided the Black Caps' cause with five wickets in the final over. Marnus Labuschagne earlier stood on the boundary sponge to hand Trent Boult a six -- another parallel with that 2019 epic -- but fought back to run out a sprawling Neesham and spark joyous Australia celebrations.

Head marks return with sensational century Warner has been in sublime form throughout the tournament, with 413 runs and two centuries, and was buoyed by the return of Head from a broken hand. His injured hand remained heavily strapped but it certainly did not hinder his scoring, reaching his century from 59 balls and whacking seven sixes and 10 fours. The opening 10 overs were brutal, particularly given New Zealand chose to bowl first. They are usually meticulous -- Boult and Henry start with consistency, Mitchell Santner's spin rattles through the middle overs and they are backed up by immaculately high standards in the field. But they buckled in the face of balls regularly flying to the boundary -- and at one stage Australia's projected score was 600. It was remarkable that Warner and Head continued their onslaught for almost 20 overs, but the middle order of Mitchell Marsh, Labuschagne and Steve Smith slowed proceedings down as none of them could find any fluency. But Glenn Maxwell's 41 from 24 balls and Pat Cummins' 14-ball 37 led a revival before the last four wickets fell for just one run as Australia fell just short of 400. With Head a certainty to remain at the top of the order, Australia may reconsider Marsh's place at three, but they are surging towards the semi-finals with a powerhouse batting line-up looking like they are peaking at the perfect time.



DHARAMSALA: Jimmy Neesham reacts after being run out off the penultimate ball of the match.

Mickey warns of 'witch hunt' against Babar, management

CHENNAI (Agencies): Pakistan head coach Mickey Arthur warned against a "witch hunt" targeting captain Babar Azam and team management after the South Asian side suffered their fourth consecutive defeat at the One-Day International Cricket World Cup. Denying their semi-final hopes, Pakistan lost by one wicket against an in-form South African team in a thrilling contest in India's Chennai on Friday. After defeats against arch-rivals India and Australia, the 1992 world champions slumped to an eight-wicket loss against a lower-ranked Afghanistan side before suffering another upset against the Proteas. Sitting in sixth, Pakistan now face the prospect of an early exit from the quadrennial tournament despite starting the campaign as one of the favourites. Still, Arthur backed Azam and the management. "It's really unfair to start a witch hunt, certainly on Babar Azam, on Inzi (chief selector Inzamam-ul-Haq), on our coaches, on the management team," Arthur told reporters. "What I do know is the boys have tried, and the effort of the coaching staff, the effort of the players has been first-class. If they would see the amount of effort that the players and staff put in, they would be amazed." Pakistan put up 270 against South Africa but fought back through their bowlers later, only to go down by a wicket. "Tonight is a totally different feeling in that dressing room to the Afghanistan game. The Afghanistan game was... we were average in all departments," Arthur said. "Tonight, we were OK with the bat, I thought we were very good with the ball. I'm really proud of those (players) because they fought right to the bitter end."

Pakistan sanctioned for slow over rate

NEW DELHI (Agencies): Pakistan's faltering ICC Men's Cricket World Cup campaign has received a further blow with the team sanctioned for a slow over rate during their recent match against South Africa. The Asian side were found to be four overs short during South Africa's batting innings in Chennai and were handed a penalty of 20 percent of their match fee. The ICC Code of Conduct states that players will be fined five percent of their match fee for every over that is failed to be bowled in the allotted time. On-field umpires Alex Wharf and Paul Reiffel, third umpire Richard Illingworth and fourth umpire Richard Kettleborough levelled the charge after Pakistan's loss to South Africa. And Pakistan captain Babar Azam accepted the sanction. Pakistan have prevailed in just two matches from six appearances at this year's World Cup and the 1992 champions need to win their remaining three matches just to have any chance of qualifying for the semi-finals. Their next clash comes in Kolkata on Tuesday, with Pakistan facing Bangladesh in what looms as a must-win encounter.

World Cup 2023 Netherlands beat Bangladesh for second World Cup win

KOLKATA (Agencies): Paul van Meekeren took 4-23 and skipper Scott Edwards made a crucial 68 as the Netherlands beat Bangladesh by 87 runs for their second World Cup win. Edwards' knock laid a solid platform for the Dutch to post a competitive 229 on a tricky Eden Gardens pitch. Mehidy Miraz made 35 for Bangladesh but despite some lower-order resistance the Dutch clinically closed out an emphatic win as they were rolled for 142. It leaves the Netherlands eighth in the table, and England bottom. Bangladesh's top order were skilfully wicketed out by some intelligent bowling from Van Meekeren, as he backed up a good start with the ball from the Dutch with the wickets of Najmul Shanto (9), Shakib Al Hasan (5) and Mushfiquur Rahim (1). From 70-6 Bangladesh twice threatened to recover only for the Dutch to turn the screw. A seventh-wicket stand of 38 from Mahmudullah (20) and Mahedi Hasan (17) was ended by a brilliant piece of fielding from Bas de Leede as he ran out the latter. The Durham all-rounder then had the dangerous Mahmudullah caught by Aryan Dut to signal the beginning of the end for Bangladesh. Fittingly, Van Meekeren took the final wicket of Taskin Ahmed -- held by De Leede in the deep -- to seal a win with 46 balls left unused. Earlier, Wesley Barresi had counter-attacked for the Netherlands after they had lost both openers early on having won the toss and batted first. Barresi, the oldest player in the tournament at 39 years and 178 days, looked the most fluent of any Dutch batter en route to

a run-a-ball 41 in his first appearance at this World Cup. Edwards then dug in with a patient knock off 89 balls as he made his second half-century of the tournament after being twice dropped in the same over. The Dutch lost momentum after he spooned Mustafizur Rahman, the pick of Bangladesh's bowlers with 2-36, to point but Logan van Beek biffed 23 off 16 balls to finish the innings with a flourish. Ruthless Dutch punish sloppy Bangladesh This result widely fits the narrative of an upset given Bangladesh are a full ICC member and the Netherlands have Associate status. Yet, the arc of progress of this Netherlands team, who have qualified ahead of two full members in West Indies and Ireland it should be remembered, means it really should be classified as a mild surprise rather than a big shock. The playing field may not be level in terms of facilities, financial resources and pool of players but out in the middle the Dutch are a versatile well-drilled international side. A victory over tournament table-toppers South Africa was no fluke, and neither was this. In the three meetings in ODIs between the sides the Netherlands now have a 2-1 advantage over Bangladesh. Where the Dutch have excelled on this occasion is outplaying a side with significantly more experience of subcontinental conditions and pitches. Equally impressively, it came on the back of a record-breaking defeat to Australia which would have bruised their confidence. Bangladesh's impudent batters looked ill-prepared for the patient lines and lengths of the Van Beek, Van Meekeren and De Leede with four top-order batters caught behind.

Wasteful Chelsea suffer home setback against Brentford

LONDON (AFP): Mauricio Pochettino said Chelsea must arrest an alarming run of home results after goals from Ethan Pinnock and Bryan Mbeumo gave Brentford the bragging rights with a 2-0 win in the west London derby on Saturday. The big-spending Blues have won just one of their last 13 home Premier League games over the past two seasons and this latest setback punctures belief that Pochettino was beginning to get Chelsea back on track. After a difficult start to the Argentine's reign, back-to-back victories over Fulham and Burnley were followed by an impressive performance, even though they blew a two-goal lead, in a 2-2 draw against Arsenal last weekend. However, Brentford leapfrogged Chelsea into 10th in the Premier League table, pushing Pochettino's men into the bottom half. "I'm not happy and think the players also and the whole club is not happy about the run (at home)," said Pochettino. "It's a long time that we need to be more consistent here and very disappointed with this. We feel the responsibility that we need to change the dynamic." Chelsea started brightly, penning the Bees back, but it was a familiar tale for

Pochettino as his side lacked the clinical touch to make good approach play count. The former Tottenham boss said on Friday that Christopher Nkunku is nearing a comeback from the knee injury that has prevented the £52 million (\$63 million) signing making a competitive appearance yet for his new club. On this evidence, the French international's return cannot come soon enough as Chelsea's other new striker Nicolas Jackson again failed to fire. "Have to be clinical" Noni Madueke was unfortunate when his blistering strike from a narrow angle came back off the crossbar after just 10 minutes. Marc Cucurella should have done much better with a tame effort straight at Mark Flekken after being picked out by the impressive Cole Palmer. The former Manchester City winger and Raheem Sterling have been the bright sparks as Chelsea's attack has flickered into life in recent weeks. But Sterling was also guilty of being wasteful when he blazed well off target from close range. "It's difficult to accept the defeat because we dominated the first half," added Pochettino. We had the chances, the control. We

were so good but in the last 30 metres you have to be clinical." The defending for Brentford's opening goal will anger Pochettino as much as his forwards' wastefulness. Mbeumo hung up a cross to the back post and Pinnock took advantage of ball watching by Madueke to power home a header at Robert Sanchez's near post. After that, it was Brentford who looked the more likely to add to their lead despite Chelsea dominating possession. Sanchez flew off his line to deny substitute Yehor Yarmoliuk his first Brentford goal before Mbeumo fired inches wide. Brentford were on the verge of a famous win at Old Trafford earlier this month only for Manchester United to score twice in stoppage time. However, this time it was Thomas Frank's men who sealed the three points at the death. Sanchez's decision to come forward for a corner in search of an equaliser backfired as Brentford broke quickly up the other end and Neal Maupay gave Mbeumo the simple task of rolling into an empty net. Victory means Brentford become the first side to ever win their first three Premier League away games against Chelsea.



KOLKATA: Aryan celebrates the wicket of Litton Das, Bangladesh vs Netherlands.

England haven't 'lost faith' as India challenge looms at World Cup

LUCKNOW (AFP): Defending champions England are feeling the heat of a lacklustre World Cup campaign but assistant coach Marcus Trescothick insisted Saturday that they haven't "lost faith" in the under-pressure 50-over format. England face unbeaten hosts India in Lucknow on Sunday, coming into the contest with four defeats from five matches to languish ninth in the 10-team table and with their hopes of making the semi-finals almost over. "We're all feeling the heat. But what can you do? We prepared the same, we've done things very similar to what you'd expect," Trescothick told reporters. "Every practice we go through we're coming out the other side thinking we're in a good place and feeling quite right. It's just not quite worked then when we go into the games." Critics have targeted England's approach to the 50-over format after they won the crown in 2019. They played just 13 ODI matches in the build-up to their title defence. "Forgive me, I don't want to be blunt here, but we haven't lost faith in what it is," said Trescothick. "We love playing any form of cricket, any form of the game that we play. And we were desperate to come here and try and win back-to-

back 50 over competitions. So, we're still very much focused on all formats." He added: "I think nowadays the cricket structure is so busy, right? It's really busy. You've got to plan in Test matches, T20s, 50s. And we're always trying to get the balance right -- sometimes we do, sometimes we don't." Trescothick, a former left-hand batsman who played 76 Tests and 123 ODIs for England between 2000-2006, said the team is looking forward to playing India and make the occasion their own. "I think playing against India in a World Cup in their own country is a special part of the game, you get these opportunities that come around -- you know there'll be a big crowd, there'll be a wonderful occasion," he said. "We're looking forward to that chance. I think there's nothing more that we can offer apart from going out and playing that performance. And then hopefully you come out on top at the end of it. So, really excited for it." England's latest loss was to Sri Lanka by eight wickets in a match their batting folded for 156 to leave their semi-final hopes in tatters. Trescothick said for now it's about getting their act together than pursuing a place in the final-four. "I think we're more focused on getting our performance

right, getting the better levels of performance than what we've shown in the last few weeks," he said. "So, that sits over there and it will just look after itself. If it happens, it happens. We know it will be very challenging. Mathematically, it's still possible. But, it's very tough." Rahul looks for 'happier memories' at scene of injury: India's KL Rahul hopes to have "happier memories" of Lucknow in the World Cup clash against holders England on Sunday after he suffered a serious injury at the venue on his last visit. Unbeaten India take on a struggling England team in this northern Indian city, the home base of an Indian Premier League franchise captained by Rahul. But he carries some painful memories of Lucknow's Ekana Stadium after he injured his thigh while fielding in this year's IPL T20 tournament and was helped off the ground in visible discomfort. The injury kept him out for five months before he returned to the team during the Asia Cup tournament won by India in Sri Lanka last month and made the squad for the World Cup. "I am a little sad about the injury that I had, it kept me out of the game for 4-5 months. That was a tough time," Rahul told reporters on Saturday.



In brief

Sanjrani visits S.M. Zafar's residence

ISLAMABAD (APP): Senate Chairman Muhammad Sadiq Sanjrani on Saturday visited the residence of Senator Ali Zafar on Saturday to condole the demise of his father and renowned lawyer, S.M. Zafar, who passed away on October 19 this year. The Senate Chairman prayed for the departed soul to rest in peace and for the grant of patience to the bereaved family. Senator Abdul Qadir also accompanied the Senate Chairman. Sanjrani paid tribute to the services and contributions of the deceased, saying that Zafar was an extraordinary jurist and a very sophisticated person. S.M. Zafar's death is a loss to Pakistani politics and the Parliament, said the Senate Chairman. S.M. Zafar passed away at the age of 93 in Lahore after a prolonged illness.

IESCO issues power suspension programme

ISLAMABAD (APP): Islamabad Electric Supply Company (IESCO) on Saturday issued a power suspension programme for Sunday for various areas of its region due to necessary maintenance and routine development work. According to IESCO Spokesman, the power supply of different feeders and grid stations would remain suspended for the period from 09:00 AM to 04:00 PM, GSO Circle, Foreign Office, NTC, ETBP, G-5, Pandorian, Mahfuz Shaheed, Scheme II, Pak China Centre, Rest House, Hospital, CDA, G-6, ISI, Nimble Feeders and 132KV Consumer Grid Station New Islamabad Int'l Airport (T-I), surrounding areas.

IRSA releases 90,300 cusecs water

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Indus River System Authority (IRSA) on Saturday released 90,300 cusecs water from various rim stations with inflow of 60,000 cusecs. According to the data released by IRSA, water level in the River Indus at Tabela Dam was 1527.12 feet, which was 129.12 feet higher than its dead level of 1,398 feet. Water inflow and outflow in the dam was recorded as 29,500 cusecs and 40,000 cusecs respectively. Water level in the River Jhelum at Mangla Dam was 1205.65 feet, which was 155.65 feet higher than its dead level of 1,050 feet. The inflow and outflow of water was recorded 10,200 cusecs and 30,000 cusecs respectively. The release of water at Kalabagh, Taunsa, Guddu and Sukkur was recorded as 48,000, 45,300, 45,100 and 12,700 cusecs respectively. Similarly, from the River Kabul, a total of 9,000 cusecs of water released at Nowshera and 3,300 cusecs released from the River Chenab at Marala.

Sufi-Rang celebrations start

LAHORE (APP): 15-day Sufi-Rang celebrations started on Saturday in connection with "Lahore Lahore A" festival 2023 under the auspices of the Auqaf Department and Religious Affairs Punjab. The ceremony of the first Mahfil Sama started at Darbar Hazrat Mian Mir. Punjab Auqaf Secretary Dr. Syed Tahir Raza Bukhari, Administrator Data Darbar Tauqeer Mehmood Wattoo, Auqaf officials and a large number of people belonging to different walks of life participated in the ceremony. Before the start, the Secretary Auqaf along with other officials of the institution and dignitaries visited the mazar of Hazrat Mian Mir and placed traditional chadar on the shrine of the great saint of the sub-continent. They offered dua for the development, prosperity and stability of the country. Local police made fool-proof security arrangements for the visitors.

Muslim nation unity only help to resolve, Kashmir, Palestinian issues: Ashrafi

ISLAMABAD (APP): Special Representative to PM on Religious Harmony & Pakistani Diaspora in the Middle East and Islamic Countries, Hafiz Muhammad Tahir Mehmood Ashrafi on Saturday called on all Muslim nations to unite to resolve the long-standing conflicts of Kashmir and Palestinians.

Talking to a Private news channel, he stressed that Muslim countries should cooperate for scientific achievements, wealth creation, security promotion and political strength as this would bring prosperity to the entire Islamic region.

"We as Islamic nations

should try to promote a true culture of Islam in the Muslim world and describe for other people that Muslims are not violent people and terrorists", he added.

He also reiterated his call on the international community to "assume its responsibilities and revive a peaceful and credible process" to achieve peace and security in the region.

He asked world powers and the UN to intervene and prevent India and Israel from perpetrating acts that threaten humanity, adding, that neglecting these enduring global issues could lead the world towards anarchy.

"Pakistan will not stay

silent anymore on the sufferings of the Kashmiris and Palestine brothers and sisters," he added.

"Pakistani government repeatedly asked the Israeli leadership to never expand the scope of its attacks on civilians and to immediately end its operations amounting to genocide.

Pakistan has consistently raised this issue and implored world powers to intervene and prevent further loss of Palestinian lives at the hands of Israel, he mentioned.

"It is high time for the world to awaken from its complacency and take concrete steps to halt Israel's and Indian aggression in the region" he added.

Submission of Hajj applications to start in mid-November

ISLAMABAD (NNI): Good news for those aspiring to perform Hajj this year as the time for submitting applications is now near.

Quoting its sources, the channel reported that the submission of applications for performing pilgrimage under the government scheme would start by mid-November.

They further said that the federal cabinet was likely to approve the Hajj Policy for the year, 2024 in the beginning of November.

On people's recommendations, several changes

have been made to the policy this year.

For the first time in history, a Hajj package for a short period of time (20-25 days) has been introduced.

Sources added that the sponsorship Hajj scheme for overseas Pakistanis would continue this year as well.

Furthermore, they disclosed, since payment for Hajj expenses would be made in dollars; therefore, this time there would be no balloting.

Moreover, pilgrims would be given the choice to select any number of

days, between 4 and 8, for stay in Medina.

The bags, which would be given to pilgrims this time, would bear image of Pakistan's flag, QR code and other particulars.

Similarly, a mobile app would be introduced for filing applications online.

Sources revealed that as was the case in the past, this year too, the Economy Package would be for a period of 40 days.

Around 90,000 Pakistanis would be able

to perform Hajj this year under the government scheme, they concluded.

Health Minister assures to address key issues of pharma industry

ISLAMABAD (APP): Caretaker Minister for National Health Services Regulations and Coordination Dr Nadeem Jan Saturday said that the government is determined to address the key issues of the pharma industry to further strengthen it and boost its exports.

The pharma industry is playing a crucial role in meeting the growing demand for medicine and promoting exports, he said while addressing a delegation of the Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry (ICCI) that called on him led by Ahsan Zafar Bakhtawari, President ICCI.

The Minister said that the government is working to establish a pharma park with public-private partnership and incentives would be offered to the pharma industry for local production of pharma raw material as well as local production of new molecules in the country.

He said that he was

already in contact with friendly nations for the

transfer of technology to the pharmaceutical sector.

Dr. Nadeem Jan said that the government plans to digitize the overall health system in the country to meet modern trends.

He said that the purpose of technology transfer to the medical sector is to strengthen the country's health infrastructure.

He also informed the ICCI delegation about the forthcoming Global Health Security Summit in Pakistan. He assured that the issues highlighted by the ICCI delegation would be considered for redress.

Speaking on the occasion, Ahsan Zafar Bakhtawari, President, ICCI briefed the Minister of National Health Services about the key issues of the pharma industry.

He said that the pharma industry imports almost 90 per cent of raw material to manufacture medicines but due to fluctuation of currency, the import cost of raw materials has increased manifold.

He urged the government to encourage local

production of active pharmaceutical ingredients to reduce the production cost of medicines and compete more effectively in the international export market.

He said that Pakistan's pharma industry exports were just over US\$ 700 million during the fiscal year 2022-23 and stressed the collective efforts from the government, industry players and regulatory bodies to enhance pharma exports to over US\$5 billion in the next few years.

Faaz Waheed, Senior Vice President of ICCI said that many local and international pharma companies are working in Pakistan and emphasized that the industry players and regulatory authorities should work together to position Pakistan as a leading player in the global pharmaceutical market. Zafar Bakhtawari, former President ICCI and Secretary General UBG, Dr. Joharia Azhar, Faseeh ullah Khan and Zia Khalid Chaudhry were in the ICCI delegation.

14 outlaws arrested; drugs and weapons recovered

ISLAMABAD (NNI): Islamabad Capital Police apprehended 14 outlaws from different areas of the city during the last 24 hours and recovered liquor, drugs and weapons with ammunition from their possession, a public relations officer said.

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

Following these directions, the Shalimar police team arrested two accused namely Wajahat Khan and Muhammad Shakeel and recovered one 30 bore pistol and 520 gram hashish from their possession. The Golra police team arrested an accused namely

Rehmat Gul and recovered 1047 gram heroin from his possession.

Likewise, the Sangjani police team arrested three accused namely Sajjad, Usman, and Chanzeb and recovered 252 gram heroin, 110 gram hashish and one 30 bore pistol with ammunition from their possession.

The Industrial-Area police team arrested two accused namely Ibrahim Khan and Abdul Waheed and recovered one 30 bore and 32 bore pistols from their possession.

Similarly, the Sabzi Mandi police team arrested an accused namely Ayaz Khan and recovered one 30 bore pistol with ammunition from his possession.

The Shams Colony police team arrested 03 accused namely Ahmed Jalil, Shahzeb and Syman

Ali and recovered 1585 gram hashish from their possession.

Moreover, the Koral police team arrested an accused namely Saqib Akhlaq and recovered two liquor bottles from their possession. The Phulgran police team arrested an accused namely Zain ul Abideen and recovered one 30 bore pistol with ammunition from his possession.

Cases have been registered against the nabbed accused and further investigation is underway.

ICCP Dr. Akbar Nasir Khan directed the police officials to further intensify the crackdown against the criminal elements. "Safety and security of the citizens is our foremost priority and no laxity will be tolerated in this regard", he maintained.



ISLAMABAD: Eduard-Robert PREDA, Minister Plenipotentiary / Chargés d'affaires of Romania and Air Marshal Irfan Ahmad cutting cake to celebrate Romanian Armed Forces Day in Pakistan. —APP Photo

NAB organizes seminar to empower students against corruption

ISLAMABAD (APP): The National Accountability Bureau (Balochistan) organised a seminar titled "Empowering Students to Combat Corruption" as part of their awareness campaigns to educate students about their role in eradicating corruption.

The seminar was conducted at NUML University in Quetta, featuring Dr. Muhammad Rashad, who holds the position of Director at NAB, as the main speaker. Also in attendance were Lt. Col (Retd) Nisar Ahmed, the Regional Director of NUML, along with faculty members and students from the university.

In his speech to the audience, Dr. Muhammad Rashad provided insights into the operational procedures, vision, mission, and the threefold strategy that NAB utilizes in its anti-corruption efforts.

He elaborated ill effects of corruption in the light of Hadith and Quranic injunctions as well. The youth were not only told to discourage corruption but were also emphasized to raise their voice for its eradication from society. Further, he informed that every individual has to play his role against the menace of corruption for the betterment of economy and society.

The seminar concluded with an engaging question-and-answer session between the speaker and the students. In closing, Dr. Muhammad Rashad, the Director of NAB, expressed gratitude to the students and the event's hosts for their active participation and for organizing such a fruitful seminar.

ANF's crackdown on drug trafficking continues

ISLAMABAD (APP): Anti Narcotics Force (ANF) in eight country-wide operations against drug trafficking, recovered 137 kg of drugs and arrested 3 accused including woman.

According to the spokesperson, 3 kg 600 grams of hashish was recovered from the accused resident of Karachi in Dera Ghazi Khan. The accused was smuggling drugs from Quetta to Punjab.

A woman resident of Okara who was going to Doha by flight number QR-621 from Allama Iqbal Airport was arrested and the officials recovered 59 capsules containing heroin and ice from the arrested accused.

85 kg of heroin and 10 kg of ice found hidden in a house in Kalibatizai area of Pishin while 26 kg of ice hidden in a house near Turbat was recovered. The recovered drugs were concealed for smuggling abroad. 2 kg crystals was recovered from the accused who was a resident of Chagai and was going to Sukkur from Quetta.

10 kg of hashish concealed for smuggling was recovered from an uninhabited area of Zakhakhel Khyber. Cases were registered against the accused under the Anti-Narcotics Act and further investigation was started.

Raja hails security forces for successful operation in South Waziristan

ISLAMABAD (APP): Speaker National Assembly (NA) Raja Pervaiz Ashraf on Saturday hailed the security forces for conducting a successful operation against terrorists in South Waziristan.

The NA Speaker paid tribute to the spirit of patriotism of soldiers Banaras Khan and Abdul

Karim, who were martyred in the Sarwekai area of South Waziristan when an improvised explosive device (IED) exploded.

In his condolence message, the NA Speaker lauded the gallantry of martyred soldiers for neutralizing the nefarious designs of the terrorists.

He prayed to Almighty

Allah to grant the martyred soldiers eternal rest and console their bereaved families over their martyrdom.

Pervaiz Ashraf said that the anti-state elements wanted to spread unrest in the country, adding that the entire nation stood with the security forces in the war against terrorism.

Asad Qaiser lambasts 'convict' Nawaz Sharif for striking 'deals' for power

ISLAMABAD (NNI): Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) leader Asad Qaiser on Saturday fired a broadside at the 'fugitive' PML-N supremo Nawaz Sharif for "striking deals" to pay ways to gain power time again since his political birth.

In an exclusive interview with a private television channel, the former NA speaker said that Nawaz Sharif returned to Pakistan under a new "deal." "This is the only strategy which elder Sharif had always adopted in his entire political career."

"Everyone knows Nawaz returned to Pakistan under a deal and he would be made country's next prime minister," Qaiser said, adding that PML-N would not come into power win under free and fair

elections.

Asad Qaiser, who is heading PTI's political committee, criticized the caretaker Punjab government for suspending the sentence of former prime minister Nawaz Sharif. "Under which law caretaker government had suspended the conviction of Sharif?" he questioned.

On a question regarding his and other PTI leaders' recent meeting with the JUI-F chief, Asad Qaiser said that they met JUI-F chief Maulana Fazlur Rehman at his residence with the consent of PTI Chairman Imran Khan and the permission of the party's core committee to lower tensions between the two sides.

"We met Fazl to offer condolences on the demise of his mother-in-law," he

explained and refuted the notion that the two sides met to explore the possibility of forming a new political alliance similar to the PDM, seat adjustment in the upcoming elections or any strategy to work as political allies before or after the polls.

To a question about offering Namaz behind Maulana Fazl and that too keeping in view the sentiments that the PTI and its leadership had for him, Qaiser quipped: "When we reached Fazl's house Asar prayer was being offered and we just attended the prayer."

He, however, expressed displeasure with JUI-F for recording the prayer video and releasing it on social media. "Politics and religion should be kept separate," Asad Qaiser added.

Pakistan's cuisine to play role in tourism promotion, says Wasi

ISLAMABAD (APP): Minister of State for Tourism, Wasi Shah on Saturday emphasized the significant role that Pakistani cuisine can play in the promotion of tourism in the country.

Addressing at the International Chef Day celebration organized by the Chef Association of Pakistan, the minister expressed his delight in witnessing the increasing participation of women in the food sector, noting the potential for job creation and

economic empowerment.

He believed that alongside Pakistan's stunning natural landscapes, its high-quality cuisine can serve as a major attraction for both domestic and international tourists.

Praising the expertise of Pakistani chefs, the minister highlighted their presence in leading hotels and restaurants worldwide, underscoring their contribution to the country's pride.

He expressed a personal interest in all sectors of the tourism industry, believing

that their development is integral to the nation's progress.

Participants at the event commended Wasi Shah's commitment to every facet of the tourism sector, anticipating a bright future for tourism in the country if such dedication continues.

At the end of the event, the minister also presented prizes to the best chefs, reinforcing the government's appreciation for their contribution to the culinary landscape and tourism industry.



ISLAMABAD: Worker busy in stitching cozy quilts for upcoming winter season at their workplace. —APP Photo

Minister travels to Turkey
KABUL (Agencies): Acting Foreign Minister Amir Khan Muttaqi has traveled to Turkey, the ministry's spokesman Abdul Qahar Balkhi said on X, formerly Twitter. Balkhi said that Muttaqi will visit the Afghan embassy in Ankara and the country's consulate in Istanbul. He added that Muttaqi will meet with Turkish officials, businessmen, Afghan influentials, scholars, charitable organizations and companies in that country.

Grape exports surged
KANDAHAR (Agencies): This year, Kandahar province has seen a significant surge in grape exports, with thousands of tons reaching global markets. The lucrative business has generated over \$54 million in revenue, according to officials. Noorullah Noori, the spokesperson for the Kandahar Chamber of Commerce and Investment, revealed that 8,343 tons of Kandahar grapes were exported to Pakistan and India this year. This venture alone brought in over \$15 million.

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

US education assistance: Afghan authorities benefited: SIGAR

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 and extorting existing 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 IEA education 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.

Badruddin appointed Afghan envoy 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.

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."

He said Mawlawi Haqqani's acknowledgement as ambassador was a major progress towards diplomatic ties between Afghanistan and UAE which will help strengthen overall bilateral relationship between the two countries.

He said the move will also help the provision of improved services for hundreds of Afghans living in the UAE.

Women's rights advocates call for Global Action to advance gender equality in Afghanistan



KABUL (Khaama Press): Many advocates for women's rights are calling for practical actions from the global community to advance gender equality and women's rights in Afghanistan.

On October 26, UN Women convened a meeting that brought together women's rights advocates and representatives from countries such as the United States, Italy, the United Kingdom, the European Union, and several others to discuss the situation of women in Afghanistan. During this session, the participants engaged in a dialogue concerning women's rights and gender equality in Afghanistan.

Sima Bahous, the Executive Director of UN Women, emphasized the political and social participation of women in the future governance of Afghanistan during this meeting. She stressed that Afghan women must have a central role in decisions related to their country. She also highlighted the gender inequality in Afghanistan, describing the repressive actions of the Taliban administration as a form of gender apartheid.

Habiba Sarabi, a women's rights advocate and former government negotiator in Doha, and Adela Raz, former Afghan Ambassador to the United States, were also present at this session.

They called upon the global community to take practical steps to advance gender equality and women's rights in Afghanistan as oppressive and believe that orders issued by the Taliban administration restricting women's freedoms should be immediately revoked.

The United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA) previously stated that around 50 restrictive orders aimed at limiting women's lives and work have been issued in the past two years since the Taliban took power.

Richard Bennett, the UN Human Rights Rapporteur on Afghan affairs, whose mission in Afghanistan was recently extended, stated that they are preparing a report that highlights the existence of gender apartheid in Afghanistan and will release it in the coming months.

Mosque resembling Dome of the Rock 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 & Sheikh Mahmud Effendi was built at the suggestion of the interior ministry and funded by IDDEF, an Islamic organization in Turkey.

According to officials, the mosque was built on 270 square meters of land at a cost of \$120,000 and has the capacity to hold 350

Afghans, to Palestine and Al-Aqsa."

Haqqani condemned the oppressive and aggressive actions by Israel on Al-Aqsa and 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 to Muslims.

Turan stated that the inauguration of the new mosque comes amid a difficult time for Palestinians who 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.

UNAMA to hold conference to attract investment in agriculture

KABUL (Agencies): The United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA) is set to hold a major conference in Kabul in the next two days with the aim of attracting investment in the country's agriculture sector.

UNAMA officials, representatives of international organizations, private sector representatives, sectoral ministries and bank representatives are expected to participate in the meeting.

"In the next two days, a conference will be held to strengthen the agriculture sector, in which representatives of the private sector will be present. The goal is to strengthen Afghanistan's agricultural system," Misbahuddin Mustain, the spokesperson of the Ministry of Agriculture and Livestock, said.

The deputy of the Chamber of Commerce and Investment also said that in order to raise the potential and mechanize the country's agriculture, it is necessary for international organizations to help

nearby 60 percent of the country's population get their income from agricultural products, and with the mechanization of the country's agriculture, the country's economy will grow.

"With such conferences by UNAMA to support the agriculture sector, investment in the agriculture sector will increase. It is hoped that the Ministry of Agriculture and the sectoral institutions will make maximum use of such meetings," Shabir Bashiri, an economic expert, said.

ARA seeks Trans Project commencement

KABUL (Agencies): Mullah Bakht-ur-Rahman Sharaf, the general director of the Afghanistan Railway Authority (ARA), who is on a trip to Russia to participate in an official meeting, asked for the start of the Afghan Trans project as soon as possible.

On the sidelines of this meeting, he discussed with Dimitri Rivok, who was leading the meeting the implementation of the Afghan Trans project, said ARA in a statement.

In the meeting, Mullah Sharaf said that now security and transparency have been maintained in Afghanistan, this opportunity should be used to the maximum in the implementation of the Afghan Trans project.

For his part, Dimitri Rivok, said, Russia is one of the founders of the Afghan-Trans project, and this project is of special value to them.

He also added that he will participate in the next meeting related to Afghan Trans which will be held in Tashkent.

Minister seeks int'l cooperation in Qatar



KABUL (Agencies): Dr. Qalandar Ebad, the Acting Minister of Public Health of the Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan, has embarked on a mission to Qatar with a delegation.

According to a statement from the Ministry of Public Health, the primary objective of this visit is to garner international cooperation for Afghanistan's health sector.

During his stay in Doha, Dr. Ebad is scheduled to meet with various Qatari government officials, representatives of international organizations, and foreign diplomats.

These meetings aim to secure cooperation from the international community in expanding health services within Afghanistan.

Over 30,000 tonnes of fruits, vegetables exported in six-month: MoCI

KABUL (Pajhwok): Nearly one and half times more fruits and vegetables have been exported during the first six months of the ongoing solar year comparing to the same period last year, an official said on Wednesday.

Farmers, however, demanded the construction of cold stores to further strengthen and consolidated the production of fruits and vegetables.

Afghanistan is an agricultural country where 70 percent of its people are associated with agriculture.

Due to the past four decades of conflict basic development work could not be done in different sectors, including the construction of standard cold stores for agricultural products.

Farmers lost a large amount of their products are wasted due to the non-availability of agricultural products because proper attention had been not paid to build cold stores.

Surge in fruits, vegetables export

Abdul Salaam Jawad Akhundzada, spokesperson for the Ministry of Commerce and Industries (MoCI), said 18,097 tonnes of fresh fruits exported during the first six months of ongoing year while 7,528 tonnes of fresh fruits exported last year during the same period.

He said 12,092 tonnes of vegetables mostly onion and Mash are exported during the first six months of ongoing year to India, Pakistan and Kazakhstan. He did not had information regarding the vegetable export during the same period last year.

Farmers' complaints

Abdul Jameel, a farmer from the central Bamyán province, said his yield declined this year compared to the past year.

He said: "This year potatoes yield was lesser, we have water secrecy issue, last year seven kilograms of potatoes were sold against 160 afs while this year the rate of the same quantity of potato was 100 afs, there is no proper market and its sale had declined."

He linked decline in the potato price with decline in its export.

He said in previous years potatoes were exported to Iran, Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan but this year export did not take place outside the country.

Mohammad Saleh, another farmer from Bamyán province, had similar complaint and said besides the promotion of fruits and vegetables export attention should be paid to the construction of cold stores as well.

Orchards owners' complaints

Ahmad Ameeri, one of the apples orchard owners in Maidan Wardak, province said that his orchard produced good yield.

He did not said how much apples his orchard produced but complained against the non-availability of cold store for fruits preservation.

He said: "Every year apples were exported to India, but this year the number of exporting companies had reduced because it take 17 days to dispatch apples to India."



He said the import of fruits was also against the interest of orchard owners.

Khalik Dad, other farmers in Kandahar province, said he collected decent yield this year but considering the value of agriculture yield the export volume had declined and Afghanistan's pomegranates only exported to Pakistan.

He said: "Currently, the Pakistan route is also closed and when the gateway is closed then what could we do and when the businessmen suffer losses common people also suffer losses."

Akhtar Mohammad Ahmadi, head of the Fresh Fruits and Vegetables Businessmen Union, said due to the none-availability of proper market and absence of cold stores agriculture products are sold on the road at a low price.

Referring to the importance of cold stores, he said: "When our season is off then different types of vegetable and fruits are imported an sold at a high rate, few cold stores are available but all did not have access to them, government should take steps for the creation of cold stores."

He added some private cold stores are available but businessmen select the fee themselves.

Ministry's response

Commerce ministry's spokesperson said many efforts had been made to promote the export of agriculture products, including fruits and vegetables.

He said: "In terms of export some facilities had been created such as cherries are exported to India from Panjsher province in a refrigerator trucks."

He said this year fresh fruits, dried fruits, vegetables and salads are exported to Arab countries, Turkey, Russia, China and India.

Akhundzada said after 30 years the ministry signed pomegranates export contract with Russia and efforts were underway to explore better markets for Afghan products.

Referring to the construction of up to the slandered cold stores, he said 14 standard cold stores existed in the country and work on the creation of hundreds of cold stores was underway.

He added: "Office of the PM order that the number of cold storages existed during the republic and were either non-functional or semi-functional should be without any delay reconstructed so that they can be used by traders and farmers."

He said: "Cold stores are available in Kabul, Parwan, Balkh, Nangarhar, Kandahar, Khost and Paktia provinces and some are being constructed, some have started functioning in Kabul and this will slowly progress, we hope that one day we will become self-sufficient, we will be able to store our products in our cold stores and supply them to the market in proper time."

Akhundzada said that in the past there were some problems in the export of fruits and vegetables to Pakistan and it was delayed, but the issue was discussed with other countries and an understanding was reached that if there was danger of fruits and vegetables being spoiled sooner, the containers will reach the ports as soon as possible.

Referring to the damage to some fruits and vegetables on its way to Pakistan, last year he said: "Pakistan was doing this in violation to all international rules and regulations and due to this problem our two nations had suffered, we hope that Pakistan will not only now but in the future cooperate in this regard and take full advantage of the trade ties between the two nations"



KARACHI: President Dr. Arif Alvi addressing the gathering at REAP's Export Trophy ceremony.

Tareen vows to fulfill dream of a Naya Pakistan

F.P. Report

JAHANIAN: Istehkam-e-Pakistan Party (IPP) Patron-in-Chief Jahangir Khan Tareen has expressed his commitment to fulfill the 'dream of a Naya Pakistan,' in party's maiden power show on Saturday.

Addressing the IPP's maiden power show in Jehanian, Jahangir Tareen highlighted ideals and ambitions that initially driven the now IPP leaders to join Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI). "Ten years ago, we came together to make Pakistan better. We devised a comprehensive plan for economic improvement as our vision was to bring about change in every sector of the country," the IPP leader said. "I and my col-

leagues had put in relentless effort to bring about change for ten years," he said. However, he regretted, these dreams remained unfulfilled.

Without naming PTI chief Imran Khan, Tareen said when came into power, the original team was gradually replaced "one by one", and individuals who were unaware of their vision took the reins. "Our dream of Naya Pakistan remained unrealised," he said, raising concerns that PTI had fallen into the hands of individuals who lacked a genuine concern for Pakistan and its well-being. Jahangir Tareen further said that they once again came together – forming IPP – to complete the

unfinished mission they had set out on a decade ago.

The IPP patron-in-chief maintained that they were not defeated and their goal remained to transform Pakistan into a better state. He stressed that at this point, the focus should be on the people and the country, rather than personalities. He also expressed concern over the emigration of young people in search of a better future, vowing to provide employment opportunities and ensure a brighter outlook for the youth, making Pakistan an attractive place to stay. Earlier, IPP President Abdul Aleem Khan addressed the maiden power show and vowed a poor-friendly manifesto for the people of Pakistan.

JI, police workers clash in Islamabad

ISLAMABAD (PPI): Islamabad Jamaat-e-Islami (JI) chief along with other party workers protesting against Israel's brutality in Gaza Strip were picked up amid clashes between police and protesters at capital's Serena Chowk, ARY News reported on Saturday.

According to details, the protest had been organised by the JI whose two prominent leaders was among those detained by the police. JI Islamabad chief Nasrullah Randhawa, spokesperson Aamir Baloch, Kashif Chaudhry among others were picked up amid clashes between police and protesters on Serena Chowk where the law enforcers fired into the air and resorted to tear-gas shelling to disperse the people.

The protestors also pelted stones at the police in response to baton-charged and teargas shelling. The religious party accused the law enforcers of trying to stop the protest, organized against Israel's brutality in Gaza strip.

JI leader Mian Aslam said that protests were being held all over the world, including United States (US), to express solidarity with Palestine, but "we are being barred from such demonstrations". He criticised the Islamabad administration's tactics, asserting that the Gaza March, planned for the following day in front of the US Embassy, would proceed as scheduled.

JI chief Sirajul Haq had announced a protest outside United States (US) embassy in Islamabad against Israel's siege and relentless bombing of the Gaza Strip. Sirajul Haq urged the people to attend the Gaza march in connection with showing solidarity with the Palestinians.

PM convenes cabinet meeting

F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: Caretaker Prime Minister Anwar-ul-Haq Kakar has convened the cabinet meeting on Monday to discuss the political and economic condition of the country. The cabinet will also approve the Economic Liaison Committee recommendations. It will also validate the ECC decision on the recent surge in the gas tariff and review the progress regarding return of illegal settlers in Pakistan.

The law enforcement agencies will also apprise the federal cabinet about the continuing operations against unlawful economic activities.

At UN, Pakistan calls for an end to war, killings in Gaza

UNITED NATIONS (APP): The balanced Jordanian-led resolution calling for a "humanitarian truce" in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict survived a last-minute Western attempt to tilt the draft in Israel's favour as it collapsed due to some hard work by its sponsors and a compelling speech by Pakistan's top diplomat Munir Akram.

Canada, backed by the United States, moved an amendment ahead of the vote in the UN General Assembly that would have the draft unequivocally reject and condemn "the terrorist attacks by Hamas" in Israel which started on October 7 and the taking of hostages. In return, Canadian Ambassador Rovert Rae, on behalf of the amendment's sponsors, said if that language was worked into the Jordanian text, they would all vote for it. The offer to back the resolution was meant to gather support for the Israeli push to seek international condemnation of Hamas.

Significantly India, now a strategic ally of Israel, voted for the amendment which failed to muster the required two-thirds majority, having received 88 votes in favour to 55 against, with 23 abstentions. During the lunch break the resolution's sponsors lobbied with delegates to ensure that it retained sufficient support for passage in the 193-member Assembly.

Ambassador Akram, the permanent representative of Pakistan to the UN, spearheaded the effort to defeat the amendment as the Assembly prepared to take action on it. In a well-reasoned speech, he appealed to all member states not to support the Canadian amendment, which he called one-sided, unequal and unfair. While the Canadian envoy insists on naming Hamas, he does not feel the need to name Israel for killing 7000 Palestinians and injuring 17,000. The Pakistani envoy told delegates in the crowded General Assembly hall

"Only Hamas. Is this balance?", he asked. "If you are fair, if you are equitable, if you are just, you will not blame one side and not the other. If you were to go back to the issue of who started this (conflict), we all know who started this -- It is 50 years of Israeli occupation and the murder and killing of Palestinians with impunity that started this. "When you push a people into the corner, he will respond," Ambassador Akram added.

Noting UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres' comment that the current conflict "did not happen in a vacuum," he denounced the "disrespectful" response to it from the

Israeli diplomats. "Look at the reaction that came from the Israeli representative, insulting the Secretary-General and calling for his resignation," the Pakistani envoy said, adding, "They can't face the truth. They can't face justice. They can't face the fact that the crime has originated with the Israelis."

"The Israeli occupation is the original sin in this case. It is not what happened on the seventh of October. That is a proximate cause. But the real cause is the occupation of Palestine." He urged the backers of the Canadian amendment "not to show that you are biased against the Palestinian people who have suffered 50 years of occupation; that you are even-handed; that you will either name both or you will name neither in this draft resolution." "Our purpose," the Pakistani envoy said, "is to stop the fighting."

"And if you only focus on your kith and kin in Israel and forget the Palestinians, because they are different people, are they people of a Lesser God," he asked. As regards Canada's demand for the release of Israeli hostages, Ambassador Akram said, "The text does speak in balanced terms for the release of all who are held, not only the Israeli hostages but also the Palestinians, they have the same rights. They are human beings too." A loud and sustained applause rang out as Ambassador Akram finished his intervention. After the amendment was defeated, the Assembly went on to adopt the resolution by a wide margin of 120 votes in favour to 14 against, with 45 amendments. India was among those countries which abstained. France broke ranks with its Western allies by voting for the resolution.

French Ambassador Nicolas de Riviere, speaking after the resolution passed, said he had voted in favour, as "nothing justifies the killing of civilians". "We have to work collectively to set up a humanitarian truce because the situation in Gaza is catastrophic," he said, noting that France has already sent an aid vessel. Under its terms, the resolution demands "the immediate, continuous, sufficient and unhindered provision" of essential goods and services to civilians throughout the Gaza Strip, including but not limited to water, food, medical supplies, fuel and electricity. It urges immediate, full, sustained, safe, and unhindered humanitarian access to Gaza.

It encourages the establishment of humanitarian corridors and other initiatives to facilitate the delivery of humanitarian aid to civilians in Gaza

and welcomes efforts in this regard. The resolution demands that all parties immediately and fully comply with their obligations under international law, particularly in regard to the protection of civilians and civilian objects, and enable and facilitate humanitarian access for essential supplies and services to reach all civilians in need in Gaza.

It also calls for the rescinding of the order by Israel for Palestinian civilians and UN staff, as well as humanitarian and medical workers, to evacuate all areas in the Gaza Strip north of the Wadi Gaza and relocate to southern Gaza. The resolution firmly rejects any attempts at the forced transfer of the Palestinian civilian population. It calls for the immediate and unconditional release of all civilians who are being illegally held captive, demanding their safety, well-being and humane treatment in compliance with international law.

It also calls for respect and protection, consistent with international humanitarian law, of all civilian and humanitarian facilities, including hospitals and other medical facilities, as well as their means of transport and equipment, schools, places of worship, and UN facilities, as well as all humanitarian and medical personnel and journalists, media professionals and associated personnel, in armed conflict in the region. It stresses the particularly grave impact that armed conflict has on women and children, as well as on other civilians who may have specific vulnerabilities, including persons with disabilities and older persons.

The resolution stresses the need to urgently establish a mechanism to ensure the protection of the Palestinian civilian population, in accordance with international law and the relevant UN resolutions, and further stresses the importance of a humanitarian notification mechanism to ensure the protection of UN facilities and all humanitarian installations and to ensure the unimpeded movement of aid convoys. The resolution emphasizes the importance of preventing further destabilization and escalation of violence in the region, and in this regard calls on all parties to exercise maximum restraint and on all those with influence on them to work toward this objective. It reaffirms that a just and lasting solution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict can only be achieved by peaceful means, based on the relevant UN resolutions in accordance with international law, and on the basis of the two-state solution.

Caretaker govt, COAS trying to bring investment: President

F.P. Report

KARACHI: President Dr. Arif Alvi on Saturday said that the incumbent caretaker Federal government and Chief of the Army Staff (COAS) General Asim Munir were trying to bring foreign investment under joint-ventures to improve the economy of the country.

He said that the decision-making played a vital role in putting the country on the path to economic stability. While addressing the 15th Rice Exporters Association of Pakistan (REAP)'s Recognition Ceremony, also attended by the Sindh Governor Mohammed Kamran Khan Tessori, at a local hotel here, the President said that the business community could make Pakistan economically strong. Alvi said that Pakistan had tremendous potential, which could be tapped by taking responsibility.

He congratulated REAP for its journey from the exports of \$300 million to \$3 billion. The President while suggesting REAP members said that they could move to joint-ventures and focus on value-added rice items. He said that 'Briyani Festival' was a good idea and it was a value addition. He

also invited REAP to organize the festival in the President House. Alvi said that the Rice research institutions should be revived to further grab the international market.

He, on the demand of REAP, said that market-oriented institutions should be jointly established by the government and REAP. The President said that woman must be employed in companies to empower them and play their role in the economy of the country. He said we had to impart education to our children to cope with the challenges being faced by the country. On the occasion, he also condemned brutality in Gaza.

Sindh Governor Mohammed Kamran Khan Tessori, addressing the ceremony, said that Rice was the second best export of the country. He deplored that it had not been recognized as an industry so far. He said that the COAS was fighting economic terrorism along with the boarder terrorism. He said that the value of Dollar had come down, Tessori said that law and order situation in the country would improve as the action against illegal immigrants had started in the country.

Speaking on Palestinians, he said

that the world should raise its voice for the Palestinians and against Israeli brutality. REAP Chairman Chela Ram Kewlani said that REAP was the backbone of the country's economy. He said that the rice of Pakistan had become a brand at international level. Kewlani said that the country had 9 million ton crop of rice. The rice were being exported to Europe, middle East, Russia and rest of the world. He said that Pakistani rice were famous around the world due to its quality.

The REAP chairman said that the rice exports of the country was \$300 million in the past and then it had reached \$3 billion. Kewlani urged the President to declare rice as an industry. He also drew attention towards Minimum Export price (MEP) of rice and said that due to MEP they would not be able to export rice. He said that two crops of rice were being grown the world over and Pakistan was still growing only a single crop. He demanded for establishing a Rice Research institution for more and better opportunities and exports growth. Later, the President and Sindh Governor distributed awards and trophies among the best exporters of rice.



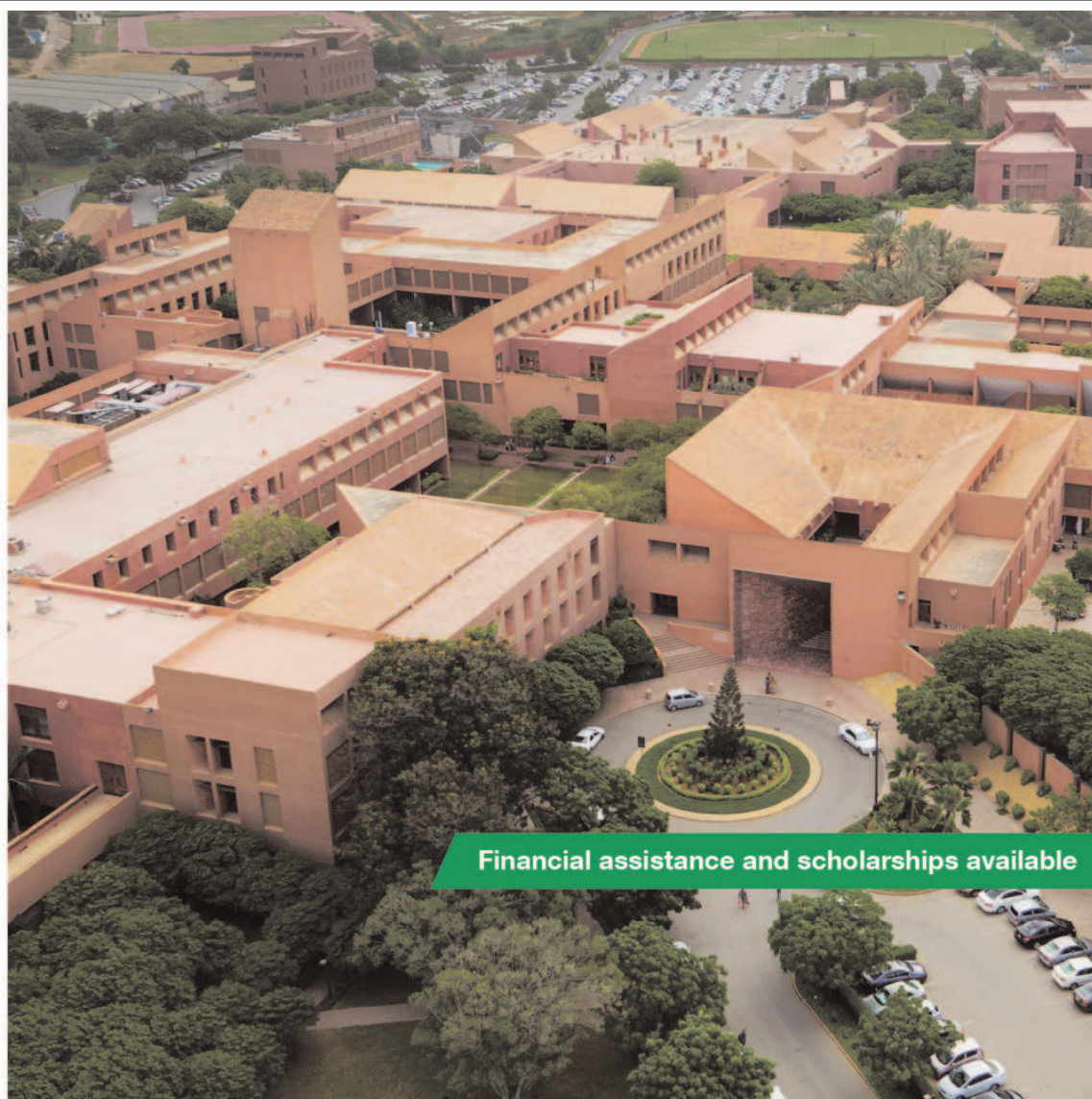
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