



@thefrontierpost

The Frontier Post

5-day anti-polio campaign

ISLAMABAD (APP): A five-day anti-polio campaign will begin in Peshawar, Khyber and Hangu districts tomorrow (Monday) along with the supplementary dose of vitamin A. According to the district health officer KPK, over one point two million children up to five years of age will be administered anti-polio drops during the drive, the private news channel reported.

Vol. XXXIX

No. 281

Regd. No. 241

RABI-US-SANNI 13 1445 -- MONDAY, OCTOBER 30 2023

PESHAWAR EDITION

12 PAGES

PRICE. 30

Israel pounds Gaza as UN warns order 'starting to break down'

GAZA STRIP (AFP/APP): Israel pounded Hamas-ruled Gaza on Sunday in an escalating air and ground campaign as the UN warned civil order was "starting to break down" in the besieged Palestinian territory.

Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu steered the nation for a "long and difficult war" ahead as the Red Cross voiced shock at the "intolerable" human suffering inside Gaza.

Despite calls for a humanitarian ceasefire and outrage across the Muslim world, Israel has intensified the war triggered by Hamas's unprecedented attack more than three weeks ago. Hamas militants stormed across the Gaza border on October 7 in the deadliest attack in Israel's history, killing 1,400 people, mostly civilians, and kidnapping 230 others, according to Israeli officials.

The Hamas-run health ministry in Gaza says the unrelenting retaliatory Israeli bombardment has killed more than 8,000 people, mainly civilians

and half of them children.

Israel's army said "stage two" of the war started with ground incursions since late Friday. On Sunday the military said it had struck another 450 Hamas targets within the past 24 hours, and that it was increasing its ground forces in Gaza.

In a late-night televised address on Saturday, Netanyahu announced a "second stage of the war whose goals are clear: Destroying the military and leadership capabilities of Hamas, and bringing the hostages back home".

He vowed to "eradicate" Hamas "for the sake of our existence".

Panic and fear have surged inside Gaza, where more than half of its 2.4 million residents are displaced, according to the UN, and thousands of buildings have been destroyed.

UN chief Antonio Guterres said the situation was "growing more desperate by the hour" as casualties increase and essential supplies of food, water, medicine and shelter

dwindle. He reiterated appeals for a ceasefire to end the "nightmare".

The UN agency for Palestinian refugees, UNRWA, on Sunday said "thousands of people" broke into several of its warehouses and distribution centres in Gaza, grabbing basic survival items like wheat flour and hygiene supplies. "This is a worrying sign that civil order is starting to break down," it said.

Inside Gaza, where petrol and diesel have virtually run out, donkey cart driver Raafat Najjar told AFP "there are no cars, we transport (people) on carts as there's no fuel."

Communications went down for days after Israel cut internet lines, although connectivity was gradually returning on Sunday.

Mirjana Spoljaric, president of the International Committee of the Red Cross, voiced shock at the "intolerable level of human suffering" in Gaza and urged all sides to de-escalate.

"This is a catastrophic failing that

the world must not tolerate," she said.

Defence Minister Yoav Gallant has said Israel was attacking "above the ground and below", alluding to Hamas's sprawling tunnel network.

Israeli fighter jets again dropped leaflets over Gaza City on Saturday, warning residents that the northern area was now a "battlefield" and they should "evacuate immediately".

Hamas authorities reported Sunday that a "large number" of people were killed overnight in strikes on two refugee camps in northern Gaza.

Israeli military spokesman Daniel Hagari reiterated that Palestinian civilians should go south "to a safer area where they can receive water, food and medicine".

After 84 aid trucks entered the territory in recent days, he vowed humanitarian efforts to Gaza would expand. But Ibrahim Shandoughli a 53-year-old from Jabaliya in northern Gaza, told AFP he and his family went nowhere.

"Where do you want us to evacuate to? All the areas are dangerous."

Netanyahu in his address also acknowledged the intelligence failure that exposed Israel to the October 7 attack that stunned and infuriated the nation. "There was a terrible failure here, and it will be thoroughly examined," he said.

While Israel has mourned its dead, sympathy has swelled for the families whose loved ones were abducted by Hamas and are at heightened risk as the war intensifies in Gaza.

"Bring them home," shouted relatives at a rally on Saturday.

Hamas has released four of them but this week said "almost 50" had been killed by Israeli air strikes, a claim that was impossible to verify.

Netanyahu on Saturday assured hostage relatives that Israel would "exhaust every option to bring them home". "We demanded that no action be taken that endangers the fate of our family members, and any

step considered should take into account the safety of our loved ones," said Meirav Leshem Gonen, the mother of hostage Romi Gonen. Hamas's armed wing, the Ezzedine al-Qassam Brigades, said it was prepared to release the hostages if Israel freed the Palestinian prisoners it was holding.

Hamas's leader in Gaza, Yahya Sinwar, said the group was ready for an "immediate" exchange.

Ifat Kalderon, whose cousin Ofer Kalderon is believed held in Gaza along with other relatives, told AFP she supported the idea of a prisoner release in exchange for the hostages.

"Take them, we don't need them here," she said. "I want my family and all the hostages to come back home." The ground operations have heightened fears that Israel's other enemies -- the Iran-allied "axis of resistance" forces in Lebanon, Syria, Iraq and Yemen -- enter the conflict.



MADRID: Thousands took to the streets in Madrid in solidarity with Palestinians.

Cop martyred as militants storm police camp in DIK

DERA ISMAIL KHAN (NNI): A policeman was martyred when militants, armed with sophisticated weapons, stormed a police camp near CPEC York Toll Plaza in Dera Ismail Khan early Sunday morning.

Sources said that loud explosions were heard as the militants also hurled hand grenades at the camp, which normally houses 15 to 20 policemen. The exchange of fire between the two sides continued for a considerable time period.

The deceased cop was identified as Sher Alam. However, swift response by

the police personnel forced the militants to flee. Heavy contingents of police and other law-enforcement agencies (LEAs) were combing the area when last reports came in. Attacks by militants on the police and personnel of other LEAs have become more frequent in the recent past, especially in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa.

At least one police official was martyred and two others were injured in a terrorist attack on Hathala police station in Dera Ismail Khan three weeks ago. As per the police's version, the militants, armed with sophisticat-

ed weapons including hand grenades, attacked the police station. The injured officers were shifted to the district hospital where one of them succumbed to his injuries. He belonged to Buner district of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. The terrorists were able to destroy the main gate of the police station. However, they had to retreat after a heavy exchange of fire with law enforcers. Similarly, on August 29, two police officers were martyred and three were wounded after terrorists opened fire at a patrolling van in Lakki Marwat area of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa.

Punjab cabinet to approve budget for next four months

LAHORE (NNI): Punjab Chief Minister Syed Mohsin Naqvi on Sunday convened a special meeting of the provincial cabinet tomorrow (on Monday).

The cabinet will approve the budget for the next four months of the ongoing financial year 2023-24.

Provincial ministers, advisers to the CM, chief secretary, inspector general of police, Punjab, Planning and Board chairman, secretaries of the concerned ministries and other senior officials will attend the meeting. Earlier in June, the caretaker Punjab government approved budget for the first four months of the financial year 2023-24.

The government planned to release the four-month budget under the relevant clause of the Constitution with the signatures of the caretaker chief minister as it lacks the authority to approve a full-year budget in the absence of an elected government. In the absence of the provincial assembly, the presentation of the finance bill remains pending.

Maulana Tariq Jamil's son Asim shot dead

KHANEWAL (NNI): A son of Maulana Tariq Jameel, a well-known religious scholar was killed by a bullet in Mian Chanu on Sunday. DSP Mian Chanan Saleem Marth said that Maulana Asim Jameel received a shot in his chest and was rushed to Talamba Rural Health Center in critical condition where he succumbed to injuries.

However, police said an investigation is underway to find the cause of his death whether is a murder or suicide. IG Punjab Usman Anwar took notice of the incident and sought a report from RPO Multan.

IG said that in the light of evidence and forensic reports, the causes of death should be determined. Punjab police spokesperson said that DPO Khanewal and senior police officers were present at the spot, and evidence was collected. On the other hand, Maulana Tariq Jameel declared his son's death an accident in his tweet on Sunday.

Caretaker PM, Solangi grieved over death of Maulana Jameel's son: Caretaker Prime Minister Anwaar-ul-Haq Kakar on Sunday expressed his deep grief and sorrow over the death of Asim Jameel, son of Maulana Tariq Jameel. Expressing his condolence, the prime minister prayed for the departed soul and for the bereaved family to bear the loss with equanimity. PM Office Media Wing said in a press release. Caretaker Minister for Information and Broadcasting Murtaza Solangi on Sunday expressed deep grief and sorrow over demise of Asim Jamil, son of a prominent religious scholar Maulana Tariq Jamil. The minister, in a condolence message, conveyed sympathies to the bereaved family and said he shared their grief.

Pakistan calls on world to exert pressure on Israel for ceasefire in Gaza

ISLAMABAD (NNI): Pakistan has called on the international community to put pressure on Israel to respect UN resolutions demanding an immediate ceasefire in Gaza.

In a post on social media platform X on Sunday, Caretaker Foreign Minister

Jalil Abbas Jilani said Israel turned lights off and cut all communication in Gaza as the death toll rises.

He further stressed not to lose sight of the plight of innocent Palestinians in the hour of darkness. "Pakistan calls on Int community to exert pressure on Israel to

respect UN Res demanding an immediate ceasefire," Abbas further said in his post. The Gaza health ministry has said that more than 8,000 had been killed in the Palestinian territory since the start of the current conflict with Israel on October 7.

Two remaining footballers recovered from Dera Bugti

QUETTA (NNI): Pakistan Levies have recovered two footballers, who had been kidnapped from Dera Bugti along with their four team mates on September 9, from Pir Koh tehsil of the district.

The other four had been recovered 20 days later on September 29.

According to the Levies officials, both Babar Ali and Shiraz Khan have reached their homes.



The footballers were whisked away when they were travelling from Dera Bugti to Sibbi.

JUI-F declares unwavering support for Palestinian cause

QUETTA (NNI): Jamiat Ulema-i-Islam-Fazl (JUI-F) chief Maulana Fazlur Rehman Sunday called for global unity against Israeli oppression and declared unwavering solidarity with the Palestinian people and their struggle for independence.

In an address at the Al-Aqsa Conference organized by the JUI-F in Quetta, he asserted without taking the name, "We have defeated the agent of Jewish lobby and we will defeat the Zionist powers on Palestinian land as well." He hinted that the agent of the Zionist lobby (Imran Khan) is facing the consequences.

Maulana Fazlur Rehman asserted that they stand

with our Palestinian brothers and are with them in the war of independence.

He reiterated that the large gathering was a message directed towards America and Israel, underscoring the shared commitment of the JUI to the Palestinian cause.

"We declare equal participation in the liberation of Palestine," Maulana Fazlur Rehman added. In a direct message to the world, Maulana Fazlur Rehman asserted, we stand with our Palestinian brothers. He expressed his unwavering belief in the readiness of the Mujahideen to fight against Israel.

Fazlur Rehman also addressed the changing dynamics of global power, stating, "America is no

longer the superpower of the world," and urged the rulers to break free from what he perceived as subservience to America.

Commenting on the global stage, Maulana Fazlur Rehman raised concerns about Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi's open support for Israel.

He criticized the Pakistani rulers for not taking a stronger stand, highlighting the contrast in the terminology used to describe certain groups. "Those you call terrorists, we call them mujahideen of the time," he proclaimed.

JUI head also pointed out that while the rulers celebrated independence on August 14th, the population remained enslaved throughout the year.

Govt encourages voluntarily repatriate of aliens till Nov 1: Bugti

ISLAMABAD (APP): Caretaker Interior Minister Sarfraz Bugti said on Sunday that the government was encouraging voluntarily repatriation of undocumented foreign nationals residing in the country until November 1.

"After the November 1 deadline, there will be no compromise on the issue of the expulsion of illegal immigrants," the minister told a private news channel.

Divulging details of the repatriation plan, Bugti said after the deadline, the law will take its course and such individuals would be captured and housed in 'holding centers' established in all provinces, including Azad Jammu and Kashmir and Gilgit Baltistan. From 'holding centers' within one to four weeks, their journey of repatriation would start.

In response to a query, he said the authorities have been clearly directed to keep all the inmates in a dignified manner, especially women, children, and the elderly, who would be treated "with respect" and provided with meals and medical facilities.

He clarified that during the first phase, those with no valid documents will be repatriated, and those who illegally procured Pakistan's national identity cards or passports through the National Database and Registration Authority (Nadra) will

also be expelled following the cancellation of their identity documents.

The interior minister said that the authority was working round the clock, and the government had done geo-fencing and identified areas where illegal immigrants were residing. In response to another query, Bugti said the ratio of voluntarily returning aliens varies from day to day, and so far, over 15,000 aliens have left the country.

The repatriation process of undocumented immigrants was expedited through the Torkham border, where illegal refugees were being seen returning to their homes in significant numbers with only two days left until the October 31 deadline, said the minister. Similarly, those with a Proof of Registration Card (PoR) would be repatriated at the end of the day. "Ultimately, they have to repatriate, as the situation in their country has improved and life returned to normalcy," he remarked.

To another query, the minister said there will be no human crisis after this exercise, adding that with this practice, we want to make our house in order by improving law and order situation and effective border management.

"We are ensuring world practices in our country by deporting and repatriating aliens," he maintained.

He said the government wants this process accomplished without anyone suffering.

In response to another question, Bugti said those being expelled from the country would only be allowed to carry their local currency, amounting to Rs50,000 per family. In the case of Afghan families, they can carry 50,000 Afghan Afghani, he added. Meanwhile, The repatriation process of undocumented immigrants was expedited through Torkham border where illegal refugees are being seen returning to their homes in significant numbers with only two days left in the October 31st deadline.

The return process of undocumented Afghans through the Torkham border has been accelerated from where 33,555 illegal immigrants went to their home country between October 1-23, 2023 in a safe and dignified manner. Lateefur Rehman, spokesman of KP Home and Tribal Affairs Department told APP on Sunday that repatriation of undocumented Afghan refugees was accelerated as the October 31 deadline approaches fast and approximately 33,555 undocumented Afghan immigrants have left for their home country between October 1-23 through Torkham border that connect Pakistan and Afghanistan through Khyber district of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa.

Canada alerts Khalistan activist to potential Indian threat post-Nijjar's killing

VANCOUVER (APP): Canadian authorities have warned a close associate of the late Sikh leader, Hardeep Singh Nijjar, that the Indian government may intend to focus on him due to his involvement in Khalistan activism, following Nijjar's assassination on June 18 this year.

Gurmeet Singh Toor, a close friend of the slain Sikh leader Hardeep Singh Nijjar, said that the Canadian intelligence visited him in August this year, after the assassination of the pro-Khalistan movement activist Nijjar, and told him in writing that a foreign government (India) was after his life and that he should stop going out and stop being active.

Gurmeet Singh Toor told that Nijjar's killing by India has increased interest in a Khalistan Referendum and Sikhs For Justice movement rather than dampening the movement's momentum. Toor spoke about threats to his life from the Indian agents, a day before the Khalistan Referendum voting at Guru Nanak Sikh Gurdwara on 29th October, set to attract tens of thousands of

Canadian Sikhs.

Following Nijjar's assassination by Indian agents on June 18, 2023, Gurmeet Singh Toor actively joined the Sikh For Justice (SFJ) campaign for a Khalistan Referendum in British Columbia. Nijjar, who led the Guru Nanak Sikh Gurdwara and coordinated the Khalistan Referendum campaign in Canada, was murdered by Indian agents under the direction of Indian diplomats based in Vancouver and Toronto, according to Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau.

Talking to media, Toor, a senior member of the management committee of the Guru Nanak Sikh Gurdwara, emphasised the pursuit of justice for Nijjar, even as the common Indian belief suggested that Nijjar's assassination would signal the decline of the Khalistan movement. Contrary to expectations, the movement has not diminished but, instead, has experienced a significant increase in strength and momentum.

Gurmeet Singh Toor recalled that he was by Nijjar's side when the attack occurred, being among the ini-

tial three individuals to arrive at the scene immediately after the incident.

Indian attempts at coercion, intimidation, or bullying will prove futile, as the Sikh nation consistently strives for the betterment of humanity, he said. He said he received a warning letter from Canadian law enforcement during their urgent visit to his home on August 24, 2023. The letter conveyed a grave concern for his safety, citing the presence of Indian agents in Canada acting on behalf of the Indian state.

Indian High Commission to Canada, Sanjay Kumar Kumar Verma and his fellow diplomat Manish, Indian operatives, were identified as the key figures engaging assassins on their payroll. However, Indian intelligence agencies failed to provide evidence of Nijjar's alleged involvement in anti-India activities. Toor said that he has been more active in Khalistan activism and visiting the Gurdwara more often after the warning. "Indian threats cannot scare us. India has killed tens of thousands of us Sikhs. It's martyrdom for us.

PDB expedites work on 43 development projects

LAHORE (APP): The Planning and Development Board (PDB) Punjab has geared up its round the clock working to complete the 43 development projects in the province, within the timeline, official sources told APP on Sunday. It is worth to notify that in a recent meeting with PDB, the Caretaker Punjab Chief Minister Mohsin Naqvi, the progress on ongoing development projects across the province was reviewed in which the CM Punjab observed the development progress on 43 projects.

The meeting was informed that 92 percent of the work on Shadara Multigrade Flyover project, 65 percent on Imamia Colony Overhead Bridge had been completed. The construction of Akbar Chowk flyover and Bedian underpass had been completed 80 percent, Main Boulevard Gulberg to Walton Road 80 percent while Ghorra Chowk flyover had been completed 34 percent.

The meeting reviewed the up-gradation of Services Hospital, Gangaram, Mayo Hospital, General Hospital, Lady Willingdon and other hospitals. A report was presented on the upgradation of Lahore Zoo and Safari Park while orders were issued to speed up the upgradation of Darbar Baba Bulleh Shah, Shah Shams Tabriz, Baba Farid and Bibi Pakdamam.

Provincial Ministers-Bilal Afzal, Dr. Javed Akram, Mansoor Qadir, Aamir Mir, Azfar Ali Nasir, Chief Secretary and Secretaries of departments attended the meeting.

Ali Zafar, Ushna criticise celebrities

LAHORE (APP): Pakistan showbiz stars Ali Zafar and Ushna Shah came hard on local and international celebrities for not raising their voice against the genocide of Palestinians by Israel. "Habs" star Ushna Shah recently joined a rally of hundreds of marchers, with a placard reading, "This is not a conflict, it is genocide", as they walked to express their support to Palestinians.

Speaking to the media at the march, Ushna Shah criticized local and global celebrities for not raising their voice to support innocent children being murdered daily by Israel in Palestine.

Ushna said, "It is our collective responsibility being a Muslim, and being a human to raise our voice when it is not even a war, rather genocide, apartheid, or murder. We need to continue our protest until it stops, and I am not talking about a temporary ceasefire, but an absolute freedom." Renowned singer and actor Ali Zafar, in a media statement on Sunday, criticised Nobel laureate Malala Yousafzai for not highlighting the Palestine issue. He urged global celebrities and Muslim superpowers to speak up on the matter instead of adopting a neutral stance. "It is the need of the hour for the common people to take to the streets and demand the West to openly condemn unprecedented atrocities on Palestinians by Israeli forces. It is no more a Muslims vs. Jews war, but a 'Zionist' propaganda to put the Palestine people through ethnic cleansing.

Governor urges mothers to encourage daughters to pursue their career

KARACHI (APP): Governor Sindh Kamran Khan Tessori has urged mothers to encourage their daughters to pursue their chosen fields even after their marriage. This he said while speaking at a women's festival organized by PINKtober, an NGO working for awareness about breast cancer.

"It is a reality that after marriage the girls are expected to only look after their homes as a housewife and leave behind their professional degrees and aspirations for the future", he observed.

Governor Sindh said that this trend is depriving girls to contribute towards national economy. "Their degrees and higher education are wasted as they are not allowed to work in their chosen fields after getting married", he opined.

He said that despite all odds and hurdles the women in Pakistan are performing brilliantly in every walk of life with distinction. "From politics to business, civil service to sports and social work to armed force, their contributions are not less than men", he added.

He said that NGOs play a vital role in the social sector and their contributions especially in health and education are immensely important for the provision of better facilities to the masses especially the poor and downtrodden, he remarked.

The Governor said that lack of awareness about breast cancer was the root cause of deaths from this disease, which was higher as compared with other Asian countries, "These deaths can be prevented with timely diagnosis and mammography", he added.

He lauded PINKtober and its head Shama Rashid for setting a record for making a cancer symbol pink ribbon with the help of 5,000 cupcakes and said that Governor House would support any initiative aimed at inclusiveness and integration of our women in nation-building activities.

Shama Rashid head of PINKtober thanked the Governor for attending this event to encourage women especially cancer patients. She also informed the Governor about the workings of her organization and its plans.

Lahore faces dangerously high levels of smog

LAHORE (APP): The air pollution in Lahore has increased to an alarming level as the overall Air Quality Index (AQI) of the city reached 483, the worst in the world in terms of pollution.

A blanket of smog which had been hovering over Lahore since the last few days thickened on Sunday, causing thousands to complaints about breathing problems, eye irritation and reduced visibility on roads.

The Met Office here has released a weather warning describing smog, comprising various toxic oxides including nitrogen oxide, carbon monoxide, sulphur dioxide and other aerosols-- as a result of cold-high-pressure in the upper atmosphere. According to the Meteorological Department, in provincial metropolis on Sunday, the highest AQI was recorded at 594 AQI on Mall Road. Also, the Cantt area to 537 AQI, while Gulberg recorded an AQI of 501. On early Sunday morning, smog covered various industrial and polluted areas and the rush at hospitals increased due to related diseases.

The most affected areas included Manawan, Ravi Road, Salamapura, Daroghawala, Nishtar Town, Badami Bagh, Shahdara and Thokar Niaz Baig, etc. Urban areas on weekend morning were worst hit by smog, said Nasim-ur-Rehman Shah, Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) director. The situation is particularly bad at Yateem Khana Chowk, Azadi Chowk, and all busy arteries in the city. The World Health Organisation (WHO) has set the benchmark for suspended particulate matter at less than 150 micrograms per cubic metre. In these areas, it has exceeded 370.

Residents of the affected areas have complained that there had been no improvement in the situation as the Environmental Protection Department (EPD) and other agencies were not paying heed to control smog in the city. The worst effects of smog are seen in morning hours.

According to environment experts, construction work across the city, burning of tires and tubes in factories and the failure of the traffic police to remove substandard vehicles from roads are the main reasons for smog in Lahore. Health experts have advised citizens to take precautions in going out of their homes. The experts say schoolchildren and elderly people are the most vulnerable with a large number of them suffering from cough, eye diseases and breathing problems.

However, the district administration has intensified an anti-smog operation and raids. On instructions of Commissioner Muhammad Ali Randhawa, anti-smog operations are going on. In the last 24 hours, cases have been filed against eight people for setting fire to solid waste. In Lahore, 75 industrial units were checked during the last 24 hours, eight were sealed for violation of instructions.

Meanwhile, the district administration on Saturday issued notices to eight industrial units in Lahore, and a case was registered against a unit for not having an emission control system. Over 185 vehicles were checked at pickets and 108 of them were challaned, while 25 were impounded.

The Lahore High Court (LHC) recently barred the government from granting no objection certificates (NOCs) for any development project until January.

Consumption of nuts can reduce risk of depression

LAHORE (APP):The middle-aged and older adults who eat 30 grams of nuts per day have a lower risk of depression, experts suggested on Sunday.

Nuts include walnuts, almonds, cashews, hazelnuts, and pistachios. Talking to APP, they viewed that people who made a habit of eating nuts were less likely to take antidepressants.

Citing the views and various researches published in the noted journal Clinical Nutrition, they speculate that the anti-inflammatory and antioxidant properties of walnuts may have a protective effect.

The experts suggesting other remedies emphasised the importance of commitment and proactive measures in the context to avoid depression.

Director of Medical Services at Fountain House, Brig (ret'd) Dr Sultan M. Abid underscored the significance of maintaining a normal and happy life. He reminded that there were viable alternatives to avoid depression and by taking action, we could foster hope and bolster efforts to remain happy.

Dr Iftikhar, former Mayo Hospital

Medical Superintendent, stressed the need for raising awareness among the public about effective ways to address social and psychological issues.

Individuals facing a multitude of socioeconomic factors may experience both support and obstacles to their recovery. These complexities add intricacy to the evaluation of the effectiveness of services, treatments, and support systems.

Recent research highlights depression as a significant global health concern, leading toward more mental complexities. The majority of depression patients are associated with psychiatric illnesses, he said adding that particularly this issue (depression), substance use disorders, and psychosis, which are the most prominent risk factors. Nonetheless, anxiety, personality, eating, and trauma-related disorders, along with organic mental disorders, also contribute to this grave issue. Urgent research into risk factors among individuals with depression or mental disorders is imperative in our efforts to predict and prevent deaths related to it, he added.



LAHORE: Leaders of Muslim League Q. Chaudhry Sarwar and Chaudhry Shafa Hussain, are addressing to the participants of the rally which is organized to express solidarity with the Palestinians in front of the Press Club.

Punjab CM orders speedy completion of upgradation of two Lahore hospitals

LAHORE (NNI): Chief Minister Mohsin Naqvi inspected the construction works of the upgrading projects of General and Mayo Hospitals during a 3-hour visit on Sunday.

During his visit, the CM reviewed the construction works of the emergency block and the upgradation of the old building of the General Hospital.

Chief Minister Mohsin Naqvi also inspected the construction and renovation of operation theaters in Old Block and New Block of General Hospital.

Chief Minister Mohsin Naqvi ordered to compile a record of removed items, especially AC, lights, fans and an inventory of all equipment and items should be prepared. He further ordered that beds and other items

should be stored in a safe place during the construction work. Chief Minister Naqvi also directed for high quality wiring.

The CM inspected the three floors of the emergency block and gave necessary instructions regarding the construction works.

During his visit, he was briefed that floors, washrooms, electrification and drainage will be rehabilitated. CM Naqvi expressed his indignation on conducting the test from outside on the citizen's complaint and he ordered to return the money spent on tests to the citizen. He reached Mayo Hospital after completing his visit of General Hospital.

In the Mayo Hospital, the chief minister reviewed the upgradation of emergency block, inspected operation theatres, consultant room and reception area. Naqvi went to all

four floors and inspected the ongoing construction activities.

The CM ordered that a state-of-the-art emergency blocks consisting of 250 beds is being constructed in both hospitals. He shook hands with the workers and instructed them to work in 3 shifts to complete the upgradation work as soon as possible. Secretary Construction and Communications gave a briefing on the progress on the upgradation projects of the two hospitals.

The secretary briefed that special EPOXY tiles and anti-bacterial paint will be used in the main emergency block of Mayo Hospital.

Provincial Ministers Dr Javed Akram, Amir Mir, Secretary Health, Secretary Information, Secretary, Vice Chancellors, MS and related officials were also present on this occasion.

Lahore Science Mela concludes

LAHORE (APP): A 2-day 'Lahore Science Mela' on Sunday concluded at Crescent Model Higher Secondary School organized by the Khwarizmi Science Society (KSS).

Khwarizmi Science Society General Secretary Dr Muhammad Sabieh Anwar while speaking on the occasion said that the KSS was established with an aim to promote culture of science in country's educational institutions and general public.

Lahore Science Mela was started in 2017 and from then it has become a regular annual event.

He said that people attended Science mela to gain knowledge and it was really a big achievement that almost 100,000 people along with their children had come to this event in two days just for the sake of science and education.

Muhammad Sabieh said that in

this two days event there were 125 exhibitors from all over the country. "International exhibitors also took part in it. Science is everywhere in our surroundings and Khwarizmi Society is trying to create moments which let people and children witness innovating science models and demonstrations. Such initiatives create sense among students that they could do miracles in the field of science."

He further said that Lahore Science Mela was not specifically for children or students, adding that people of all age groups could benefit from it. "There is a need to promote science literacy among people," he added. Pakistan Atomic Energy Commission spokesperson Shahid Riaz Khan said that there was a need to work for the promotion of science in the country and Khwarizmi Society had arranged the event for

promotion of science.

He said that stalls had been set up in the Lahore Science Mela to educate visitors that how science is important in today's world.

"The Pakistan Atomic Energy Commission is playing its role in minerals exploration, agriculture and health sectors. Pakistan-CERN efforts were also highlighted in the Lahore Science Mela and the initiative related to laser technology. Six nuclear power plants of the commission were working in the country producing more than 3500 MW of electricity. We informed students and visitors about the initiatives and encouraged students to pursue science as their career." It is pertinent to mention here that Lahore Science Mela featured new and captivating exhibits, demonstrations and performances.

Lok Mela 2023; A true depiction of country's rich cultural diversity

ISLAMABAD (APP): The biggest folk festival, "Lok Mela 2023," being organized by the National Institute of Folk and Traditional Heritage, Lok Virsa, from November 4-12, will serve as a cultural treat for the people, featuring a variety of activities including provincial pavilions, shopping and food stalls, and musical programmes. The festival, under the theme 'Peace and Harmony through Cultural Diversity', offers a great opportunity to witness the richness of cultural diversity in all regions of Pakistan. This unique event has now become a symbol of the federation's unity by promoting folk music, traditional dances, arts and crafts, and traditional skills of the people of Pakistan. With an objective to foster provincial harmony and national integration, the Lok Mela will highlight the contribution of people from diverse communities towards enriching the country's cultural identity.

A large number of master artisans, folk artists, musicians, and folk dancers from all over Pakistan, including far-flung areas, are expected to participate in the festival, showcasing their creativity and innovation.

The daily attractions of the festival include provincial pavilions portraying various cultural themes, traditional food stalls, folk music and dances, shopping stalls, kids' corners, and concerts in the open-air theatre among several other programmes that will take place at each provincial pavilion. The art and craft bazaar, featuring a rich variety of unique handicrafts, souvenirs, antiques, and decorative art, will be an exciting feature of the Mela. Arieab Azhar, who is a famous Sufi and folk artist, said, "My favourite Mela is going to start in the capital, where the cultural heritage, food, art and craft, and music with representation of all the provinces will be showcased".

For him, "this will be an 'Awami Mela' in a true spirit, and those who

have not visited this Mela have not actually experienced the beauty of this city". At Lok Virsa's annual cultural festival, the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa pavilion, featuring a traditional tea stall, will captivate the attention of visitors through its aromatic tea of different flavours.

The variety of tea available at this pavilion offers a sensory journey, blending rich flavours that evoke the region's distinctive culture.

The melodious chimta and thundering dhol beats will set the stage alive during the festival. These traditional instruments promise a rhythmic journey into cultural heritage, elevating the festival's spirit.

The festival will also present a blend of music, from traditional to fusion, featuring different musical instruments, especially "suroz".

Suroz is a traditional Balochi musical instrument from Balochistan, Pakistan, and is meticulously crafted by skilled artisans, featuring intricate carvings that reflect the region's rich cultural heritage.

The Multani Kashi work, a form of blue pottery, is ready to take centre stage at Islamabad's highly anticipated cultural festival. This artistry, blending Persian and indigenous influences, creates mesmerizing ceramics with vivid hues and intricate patterns. The festival's cultural mosaic is incomplete without the allure of these exquisite creations, celebrating diversity. The festival offers a unique opportunity to experience pottery making, which will be a delightful blend of fun and learning, making it perfect for children.

This hands-on activity allows them to explore their creativity while gaining insight into traditional crafts, fostering a deep appreciation for cultural heritage. Stone carving, which is a timeless art form, will be showcased at the festival. At Lok Virsa, the stone carving exhibit becomes a living testament to the art's significance.

Skilled artisans tirelessly work, their hands breathing life into rugged blocks of stone.

Each tap of the chisel unveils hidden beauty, and every curve and groove capture the essence of Pakistan's diverse culture. This cultural exchange and preservation of heritage are at the heart of Lok Mela, fostering appreciation for the artistry and heritage of stone carving.

In this Lok Mela, the Lehri brothers will once again set up their Sajji stall. The tantalizing aroma of Lehri Sajji wafts through the air as the annual Lok Virsa Mela approaches, and all eyes turn to the talented Lehri brothers, Hafeez and Kamran.

At Lok Mela, the Lehri brothers offer a slice of Balochistan's rich culture on a plate, inviting festival-goers to savour the flavors of tradition. Their sajji is more than just a meal; it's a connection to a heritage that transcends borders, uniting people in the joy of food.

Hafeez and Kamran Lehri's presence at Lok Mela is a culinary celebration not to be missed, a testament to the enduring power of cultural cuisine. This year, artists from all across Pakistan will gather at the Lok Virsa Mela to exhibit and sell a wide range of handcrafted products as they celebrate Pakistan's folk heritage. Craftspeople (artisans) will also demonstrate their techniques in every pavilion at Lok Mela Mela.

So this goes to all who think they have the talent to sing on the big stage. This year, Lok Mela 2023 will also bring an opportunity for talented singers to showcase their voices at the Open Mic programme that will be held daily at the Anarkali Facade during the festival. Lok Mela is not only featuring artists and artisans from all provinces of Pakistan, but this year, the long-lost elements of its mela, the Folk Theatre and Putli Tamasha, will be revived.



LAHORE: Students visit different stalls displayed during the Science Exhibition 2023 by Khwarizmi Science Society at Crescent School.

Mayor vows student issue resolution

PESHAWAR (APP): Mayor Peshawar Haji Zubair Ali Sunday assured the protesting students that their all problems related to the examination of MBBS and BDS and others would be resolved and in this connections talks would held with Governor KP and Vice Chancellor Khyber Medical University.

Mayor Peshawar visited Peshawar Press Club and held talks with the protesting students demanding delaying of examination of MBBS and BDS and others. Mayor Peshawar assured that the examination would be delayed for 14-days and notification in this connection would be issued in a day after his talks with Governor KP and Vice Chancellor KMU.

Mayor Peshawar said that the students should focus on their studies and don't waste their valuable time. Problems related to MBBS and BDS and other examinations under KMU would be solved very soon.

He said it would be ensured that a delegation of the protesting students would meet with Governor KP Haji Ghulam Ali and would discuss in detail their problems. He said the youth are the future builders of the nation and they would keep concentration on their studies.

The government, Mayor Peshawar said, always encouraged the youth to go ahead and play their full role in brightening the country and nation and can serve their nation and humanity.

During the students' protest, Mayor Peshawar called VC KMU and Governor Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Haji Ghulam Ali informed them about the problems of the students, taking action on this, promised to delay the MBB and BDS exam for 14 days.

The notification will be issued soon, a five-member committee has been established in this regard, in which all the problems of the students will be solved. The students, after hearing this, thanked Mayor Peshawar Zubair Ali, and ended their protest. The students thanked Mayor Peshawar and appreciated his efforts and chanted slogans in sports of Mayor Peshawar.



PESHAWAR: Provincial president of Majlis-e-Muslimen Agha Jehanzeb Ali Jafri addressing a press conference. — F.P. photo by Ghulam Murtaza

Agri varsity hold women awareness workshop

PESHAWAR (APP): The Directorate of Student Counselling, Placement and Human Resource Development of the University of Agriculture Peshawar, with the cooperation of Weather Vale and Informed Farmers Islamabad, organized an awareness program for university students in the University of Agriculture Peshawar on the topic of "Smart Climate Change and Women in Agriculture".

A one-day workshop was held in which Vice Chancellor Professor Dr. Jahan Bakht graced the occasion as chief guest. Registrar Dr. Rizwan Ahmed, Director Students Counselling, Placement and Human Resource Development Dr. Anwar Ali Shad, Director Quality Assurance Dr. Khuram Shehzad Saduzai, Deputy Director Planning and Development Dr. Dawood Nazim, Weather Vale representatives, Fawzia Hussain and Areeba Arif, representative of informed farmer Malik Adnan and Additional Director of Pakistan Science Foundation Ghazala Ali Khan and a large number of students attended.

Vice-Chancellor Prof. Dr. Jahan Bakht while speaking said that whenever climate change occurs, agriculture is the first target, agriculture is the source of livelihood for most of the women. Women have a great responsibility for agriculture, rural women, associated with agriculture.

He said that climate change is happening rapidly, Pakistan is facing many problems due to climate change, including population growth, floods, droughts and extreme heat waves etc. "If climate change continues like this, the world will face a lot of problems in the future," he added.

He emphasized that the students said: "It is your responsibility to inform the women around you about these issues, the whole family is associated with a woman." Highlighting the importance of water, she said that she herself should act sparingly in the use of water and also educate other women about sparing and understand the importance and use of water in agriculture.

Registrar Dr. Rizwan Ahmed thanked the participants.

Vice-Chancellor Professor Dr. Jahan Bakht, Registrar Dr. Rizwan Ahmed and representative of Weather Vale Fawzia Hussain distributed certificates of appreciation among the participating students.

Malik Adnan, representative of informed farmers, presented the objectives of the awareness workshop and gave a lecture on the role of women in agriculture and there was a question and answer session by the students, which was highly appreciated by the students.

Profiling of non-customs paid vehicles in integrated tribal districts continue

PESHAWAR (APP): The process of profiling of non-custom paid vehicles in the integrated tribal districts of Peshawar, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa is ongoing and in current month 3113 non-customs paid vehicles were profiled, the excise officials told media men here on Sunday.

Likewise, the excise authorities completed profiling of vehicles in South Waziristan 1304, Malakand 207, Swat 541, Lower and Upper Dir 177, Khyber 109, North Waziristan 751, Buner 28 while the process of profiling of non-customs paid vehicles would soon be started in Mohmand, Bajaur, and Khurram Districts, Excise department officials said.

The December 31 deadline for profiling of non-custom paid vehicles has been given and action will be taken against unregistered non-custom paid vehicles after the due date, Excise officials said.

SNGPR's crackdown continued

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: During the ongoing crackdown against gas pilferers, SNGPL continued raids in Punjab, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and Islamabad, disconnecting another 149 connections and 253 under billing cases processed.

In Lahore, the regional team disconnected 5 connections on illegal use of gas and another 7 on use of compressor, 72 under billing cases have been processed. In Bahawalpur, the regional team disconnected four connections on use of compressor while another 41 connections on illegal use of gas and 7 Under billing cases have been processed. The company disconnected 7 connections on illegal use of gas, 89 under billing cases have been processed in Multan. In Sheikhupura, 21 on illegal use of gas and 43 under billing cases have been processed and team also lodged IFIR against gas thieves.

In Peshawar, the company disconnected 45 connections on account of direct use of gas and illegal connections. The regional team also lodged 2 FIRs against gas thieves. In Rawalpindi the regional team disconnected 2 gas connections on illegal use. In Mardan four connections were disconnected against illegal use of gas.

The regional team in Gujranwala 30 under billing cases processed and 2 meters were disconnected on the use of compressor and 2 on illegal use of gas.

The company disconnected seven connections on illegal and direct use of gas in Islamabad. In Sahiwal, two connections were disconnected on illegal use of gas. The regional team in Faisalabad processed 12 under billing cases.

9.6kg hashish seized

PESHAWAR (INP): The Excise Intelligence Bureau has foiled an attempt to smuggle large quantities of drugs by arresting a suspect and recovering 9600 grams of hashish from a vehicle at H Goal Chowk.

According to a spokesperson of the Excise Department of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa on Sunday, the surveillance squad of the Excise Intelligence Bureau conducted a major operation foiling a massive drug smuggling bid.

During the operation, the squad recovered 9600 grams of hashish from the vehicle at H Goal Chowk and arrested the accused, Qasim, son of Gul Muhammad, resident of Saifan Budh Bir, on the spot.

Anti-polio campaign

PESHAWAR (INP): A five-day anti-polio campaign will begin in Peshawar, Khyber and Hangu districts today (Monday).

Over one point two million children up to five years of age will be administered anti-polio drops during the drive. About four thousand five hundred teams have been constituted to vaccinate the children from door to door.



PESHAWAR: Director Narcotics Control Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Sufian Haqqani presiding over an emergency meeting with Circle Officers and SHOs of Excise Police Stations.

Instructions issued to all circle to intensify crackdown

PESHAWAR (APP): The meeting was given a detailed briefing on the performance of the excise police stations against drugs and the measures taken.

The Director Narcotics control said that Instead of traditional anti-narcotics operations, modern and scientific lines and technological operations will be launched against drugs smugglers.

In the meeting, a plan of action was drawn up for the complete elimination of drugs from the province, to break the smugglers mafia and big networks.

On this occasion, the Director Narcotics Control Sufian Haqqani said that the investigation system should be improved and drug cases should be followed thoroughly so that the drugs accused can be severely punished by the courts and this scourge can be eradicated from the root, while the officers and officials will be given Modern training for operations, investigation and intelligence information will be utilized to improve competence.

He furthered that reports should be prepared as soon as possible for amendments in laws which drug dealers take advantage of such laws.

Sufian Haqqani has said in his address that the implementation of strict laws, punishments and regulations is now inevitable for the complete elimination and prevention of drugs.

Addressing the meeting, he referred to the profiling of the main centers of drugs and big traffickers.

He has said that negligence in duty, carelessness and violation of discipline will not be tolerated in any case while there is no place for black sheep in the department, all circle officers and SHOs should identify such officers and personnel so that strict action be initiated against them.

He has also directed the Excise Intelligence in-charge to immediately prepare an intelligence report regarding main drug dealers, while an effective and comprehensive strategy should be developed to keep the students and youth of educational institutions away from drugs, especially from ice.

Express solidarity with Kashmiris: Tribal youth hold walk, car rally and photo exhibition

PESHAWAR (APP): A walk and photo exhibition depicting India forces brutality in illegal occupied Kashmir was organized by District Sports Officer Kashif Farhan in collaboration of district administration Khyber wherein hundreds and thousands of athletes of different games, tribal youth and people from different walks of life participated.

The photo exhibition highlighted the true pictures of the Indian forces' brutality against innocent Kashmiris was held, followed by a walk and car rally expressing solidarity with the people of illegally held Kashmir.

The participants of the walk and car rally chanted slogans against India forces for killing of innocents' women and children and other people in occupied Kashmir. The walk and car rally was led by District Sports Officer Kashif Farhan along with athletes of different Games.

Addressing the participants, Kashif Farhan said that the sacrifices of Kashmiris would not go in vain, Pakistan is incomplete without Kashmir. The entire nation is with the Kashmiris in their right of self-determination and freedom struggle, he said. He said that the Kashmir issue should be resolved according to the resolutions of the United Nations.

He said, on October 27, the Pakistanis successfully observed Black Day to protest against the Indian illegal occupation and to remind the world community of its commitments regarding the implementation of United Nations Security Council resolutions that advocate the right to plebiscite for Kashmiris.

The participants of the walk tied black bands on their arms and carried flags of Pakistan and Azad Kashmir. A one-minute silence was also observed by the athletes to express solidarity with Kashmiris and the participants carried banners with anti-Indian slogans. Pakistan does not accept Article 370, which provides special status to the occupied region because they seek the independence of Kashmir, as it is not part of India, Kashif Farhan added.

International footballer Najeib Shinwari lamented that the Narendra Modi Government repealed the law and changed Article 35. Najeib Shinwari along with other leading players from Khyber District actively participated in the walk alongside other athletes. Najeib Shinwari further emphasized that the observance of photo exhibition, walk and car rally was to condemn the Indian illegal occupation of the state and to reiterate their unwavering support for the Kashmiri people struggling for their right to self-determination.

He added that the Indian Illegally Occupied Jammu and Kashmir (IIOJK) was an integral part of Pakistan and the day was not far when Kashmiris would be able to break the shackles of subjugation and join Pakistan.

He also stressed that the ongoing barbarism of Indian forces against the Kashmiris cannot be concealed from the eyes of the international community and soon the oppressed Kashmiris will attain their right to self-determination.

The Indian Army invaded the state of Jammu and Kashmir on this day in 1947 in an attempt to subjugate the Kashmiri people, Najeib Shinwari said, adding, the tribal stood with the people of Kashmir and ready to avenge the Indian forces killing innocent people.

Pakistani youth stands with the Kashmiris, and the time was not far when occupied Kashmir would be freed from Indian oppression. They noted that India usurped the identity of Kashmiris four years ago and imposed the world's longest curfew in occupied Kashmir, which is a total violation of the International law and against the United National resolutions passed in favor of the people of Kashmir.

The youth condemned the state terrorism in Indian Illegally Occupied Jammu and Kashmir (IIOJK), and expressed solidarity with the oppressed people of occupied Kashmir.

The participants in their address said that the people of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa had supported the Kashmiri people before and would continue to give moral, political and diplomatic support to their struggle for freedom. They said that the Indian army attacked Kashmir and started persecuting the Muslims there, and this process of oppression had not stopped till date. They said Oct 27 was the darkest day in the history of Kashmir.



PESHAWAR: Awami National Party's leader Arsalan addressing worker convention. — F.P. photo

Time for all undocumented immigrants to voluntarily repatriate

PESHAWAR (APP): The repatriation process of undocumented immigrants were expedited through Torkham border where illegal refugees are being seen returning to their homes in significant numbers as only two days left in the October 31st deadline.

The return process of undocumented Afghans through the Torkham border has been accelerated from where 33,555 illegal immigrants went to their home country between October 1-23, 2023 in a safe and dignified manner.

Lateefur Rehman, spokesman of KP Home and Tribal Affairs Department told APP on Sunday that repatriation of undocumented Afghan refugees were accelerated as the the October 31 deadline approaches fast and approximately 33,555 undocumented Afghans immigrants have left for their home country between October 1- 23 through Torkham border that connect Pakistan and Afghanistan through Khyber district of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa.

The Afghan families included including 2,772 families, consisting of 8,309 men, 5,457 women, and 19,789 children, reflecting the diverse demographic nature of the Afghans population.

The voluntarily repatriation process through busy Torkham border was started after the government instructed all unregistered immigrants to return their native countries by October 31, 2023.

He said Additional Chief Secretary Home and Tribal Affairs Department, Muhammad Abid Majeed has presented Afghan Refugees camps at Torkham border and Landi Kotal teshil in District Khyber and reviewed all the arrangements for the smooth return of undocumented refugees.

Deputy Commissioner Khyber, Abdul Nasir Khan briefed the Additional Chief Secretary on the preparations and facilities of the district administration for the efficient return of all illegal foreign nationals at Landikotal and Torkham border.

The Additional Chief Secretary inspected the facilities and arrangements including water, tents and food services made for their smooth and voluntarily return of the immigrants.

He reviewed preparations for repatriation in relief camps established at Torkham border and Landikotal and expressed satisfaction on all necessary measures, which were put in place for the smooth return of Afghan refugees.

Deputy Commissioner Khyber, Abdul Nasir Khan presented a detailed briefing to the Additional Chief Secretary on the steps taken by district administration to facilitate the dignified repatriation of Afghan refugees to their home country.

The ACS expressed satisfaction over the work done so far and directed for providing facilities to Afghan refugees.

Pakistan is hosting over 4.4 million Afghan refugees since 1979 after USSR invasion in Afghanistan and sharing all essential services including hospitals, schools, colleges, transport, business and jobs with Afghans brothers and sisters during last 44 years.

Pakistani in order to provide speedy relief and humanitarian assistance to over 4.4 million Afghans refugees mostly settled in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and Balochistan, had setup Commissionerate for Afghan Refugees (CAR) at Peshawar that provided food, shelter, healthcare, education, and other essential services to Afghan refugees accommodated in 43 camps and urban areas during this long period in a dignified manner.

Meanwhile, the residents of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and seven merged tribal districts are fully behind of the government's decision to evacuate all illegal immigrants, citing the anticipated improvements in economy, employment opportunities and law and order situation.

Besides food, roads, higher education and water services, all provincial Govts in Pakistan had provided psycho-social support, skills training for livelihood opportunities and opened schools to facilitate Afghans refugees.

Khyber Pakhtunkhwa's residents while lauding the government's decision, expressed the hope that the departure of illegally residing foreigners will help bring about positive changes in their region, which has been grappling with poverty, socioeconomic imbalances, unemployment and other socioeconomic challenges.

Riaz Khan, a resident of Nowshera district highlighted the problems faced due to the presence of influx of illegal refugees in KP and expressed the hope that prices and rent of properties and daily use commodities would be reduced after returning of all illegal immigrants to their home countries.

He said the poverty prevalent in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa especially in merged tribal districts would be slashed with positive impact expected from the departure of these illegal foreign residents.

He said illegal foreigners' departure will pave the way for greater prosperity and employment opportunities for local workforce.

The Commissionerate for Afghan Refugees, Peshawar official told APP that over 1.5 million Afghan nationals had entered Pakistan after August 15, 2021 when Afghan Taliban took over Kabul.

He said almost half of those Afghans got themselves registered with the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) seeking resettlement in Europe, UK, United States and other countries, while the rest stayed undocumented.

The official said most of the undocumented Afghan nationals lived in urban areas, especially Peshawar, Karachi and Mardan districts and bringing them under documentation net was a big challenge.

Lateef Rehman said that as per Government decision, no extension in the deadline of undocumented immigrant repatriation would be made and all illegal foreigners have to return to their home country by October 31.

The spokesman said that all suspects have been identified through mapping and geo fencing for deportation.

Barrister Faroz Jamal Kakakhel, caretaker Information Minister KP said that repatriation of undocumented immigrants was not any country specific, and that no country in the world can allow illegal stay of immigrants.

By Thursday last, he said about 60,000 undocumented immigrants returned to their home countries voluntarily.

The Minister said that clear order was issued to all illegal immigrants to leave Pakistan by October 31, adding Federal Government policy would be followed after expiry of the deadline in letter and spirit.

Manzoorul Haq, former Ambassador told APP said that he had visited many countries but never seen immigrants living without legal and viza documents.

He supported Govt of Pakistan decision to expel all illegal immigrants including undocumented Afghans refugees after October 31.

He said Foreign Office spokeswoman had clarified that deportation deadline was not Afghans specific rather it was for all unregistered immigrants that was highly positive approach.

Ambassador Manzoor said that keeping inview of the region geopolitical situation, it was a right time to addressed the refugees issue once and for all.



In brief

Beggar crushed to death

MUZAFFARGARH (INP): A beggar was crushed to death under a speeding truck at Chaman Bypass here Sunday. According to Rescue 1122, a beggar named Nazeer of Ghulam Sarwar, resident of village Qaziwala was sitting along the road side. All of a sudden, a speeding truck crushed the beggar to death. Sadar Police Muzaffargarh registered the case and started investigation against the driver.

Train service restored

SIBI (INP): Federal Minister for Railways Shahid Ashraf Tarar and Caretaker Chief Minister Balochistan Mir Ali Mardan Khan Domki inaugurated Sibi to Harnai railway train service after 18 years from District Sibi. Speaking on the occasion, the Chief Minister said restoration of train service will provide better transport facilities to people besides creating job opportunities. He said that the government is taking every possible step to facilitate people of the province.

Girl killed on suspicion

FAISALABAD (APP): A teenage girl was killed over suspicion in the area of Balochi police station whereas the police arrested the accused within 12 hours. A police spokesman said on Sunday that Hasnain, of Chak No.376-GB, suspected that her aunt had illicit relations with someone. He killed the girl and escaped. However, the police arrested the accused within 12 hours. The CPO appreciated the performance of the police.

Three robbers arrested

SARGODHA (APP): The police arrested three members of a dacoit gang and recovered stolen bikes, mobile phone, weapons and goods from their possession. The police on Sunday day said teams of Bhagatwala and Bhera police stations had arrested Shahid, Rizwan and Ijaz and recovered five bikes, a mobile, two pistols and goods worth Rs 730,000. The accused were involved in dozens of cases of robbery. An investigation is ongoing.

Five drug peddlers held

B A H A W A L P U R (APP): Bahawalpur police have arrested five alleged drug peddlers and recovered hashish and liquor from their possession. A spokesman for Bahawalpur police said that acting on a tip-off, the teams of PS Baghdad-Ul-Jadid and PS Sadar conducted a raid at dens within their jurisdiction, respectively and arrested three drug peddlers. The police recovered over three kilograms of hashish from the possession of the accused. The suspects were identified as Zahid, Aslam and Saeed.

Illegal petrol pumps sealed

NAROWAL (APP): Two illegal mini-petrol pumps and a refilling shop were sealed on Sunday. Cases have been registered against owners of two illegal petrol pumps, one refilling shop, two petrol shops and two gas decanting shops.

Toddler drowns in water tub

TAXILA (APP): A toddler who died on Sunday incidentally fell into a water tub in his house in Jameelabad, Taxila. Police, while quoting the family members of the victim, said that one and a half-year-old Qasim Noman was playing in the courtyard of his house when he incidentally fell into the water tub.

KP Governor inaugurates projects

PESHAWAR (APP): Governor of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Haji Ghulam Ali on Sunday visited to Abbottabad University of Science and Technology (AUST) reaffirming his commitment to advancing education and research in the province.

During his visit, Governor Ghulam Ali inaugurated various projects worth one billion rupees, funded by the Higher Education Commission in the university. These projects included the establishment of the Institute of Space Technology and initiatives to harness solar energy for the university.

The Governor unveiled a new Academic Block and a Regional Anti-Terrorism Center at the university, emphasizing the importance of research and security efforts.

He distributed laptops among the university's stu-

dents and Higher Education Commission scholarships.

The inaugural ceremony was attended by numerous dignitaries, including Vice Chancellor Abbottabad University, Dr. Majid-ur-Rahman, faculty members, and representatives from the Higher Education Commission, along with a large gathering of students.

In his address, Governor Ghulam Ali highlighted the substantial allocation of the national budget towards the education sector and encouraged all universities to prepare surplus budgets. He stressed that guidelines for budget preparation had been provided to universities after consultation with the Governor's Secretariat.

In an unprecedented move, the Governor's Secretariat has prepared a comprehensive financial report related to university budget matters, which will be presented to the univer-

sities for review, said Governor Ghulam Ali.

Governor Ghulam Ali underlined the importance of universities engaging in commercial research, showcasing how universities worldwide are generating billions through research commercialization. He urged universities in the province to make a name for themselves in the research field.

He also commended Abbottabad University for its successful research endeavors, particularly in the field of cybersecurity, and expressed his hope that such research initiatives would not only enhance the university's reputation but also contribute to its financial well-being.

In closing, Governor Ghulam Ali emphasized the pivotal role that educated youth must play in the nation's development and prosperity.

IREN squad confiscates illegal imported cigarette

ABBOTTABAD (APP): The Inland Revenue Enforcement Network (IREN) Squad of the Regional Tax Office Abbottabad confiscated a huge quantity of illegally imported cigarettes during a raid in Abbottabad on Sunday.

This operation was part of a broader effort to combat tax evasion, extending to the Hazara region, under the directives of Chief Commissioner Abid Mahmood and conducted under the supervision of

Zonal Commissioner Fazal Sabhan.

According to details, the IREN Squad team, led by Audit Officer Sajid Ahmad and Senior Inspector Arshad Ahmad, carried out a planned operation in various markets in Abbottabad city and confiscated a huge quantity of illegally imported cigarettes. The seized cigarettes were shifted to the Regional Income Tax Office while a legal action was initiated against the accused.

The case of illegally imported cigarettes was transferred to the Regional Tax Office in Abbottabad, following orders from Additional Commissioner Jauhar Ali Shah.

The Regional Tax Office had issued warnings to potential tax evaders throughout the Hazara region. They also distributed informative pamphlets to shopkeepers in local markets, aiming to raise awareness about the consequences of tax evasion.

Food department cracks down on profiteers

ABBOTTABAD (APP): In a concerted effort to combat profiteering and ensure affordable access to food and beverages for the public, the Food Department in Abbottabad district has initiated an operation against profiteers.

Cases have been filed against many shopkeepers, and shops in various markets have been sealed as part of this operation.

According to the details, following the directives of the Secretary of the Food Department for Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, inspection

teams from the Food Department have intensified their market inspections in the region.

District Food Controller Abbottabad, Shad Mohammad Khan, led the teams, which, in collaboration with local law enforcement agencies, have conducted raids in various areas across Abbottabad district.

Assistant Food Controller Qazi Bilal has issued instructions to shopkeepers, compelling them to ensure a consistent reduction in the prices of

food and beverages. The crackdown on profiteers was conducted in various areas, including the City Police Station, Mangal Police Station, Nawanshahr Police Station, and Cantt Police Station.

Profiteers in these areas have been apprehended, and First Information Reports (FIRs) have been registered against them. Officials have made it clear that the Food Department in Abbottabad is committed to maintaining ongoing checks and balances.

Deadline extended for providing maps to MC

SARGODHA (APP): On the request of business community, Commissioner/Chairman Municipal Corporation Sargodha Muhammad Ajmal Bhatti has extended the deadline for providing commercial maps to the Municipal Corporation. He made this decision in a meeting with the presidents of various markets of the city at his office here on Sunday.

Deputy Commissioner Captain Retired Shoaib Ali, Chief Officer Municipal Corporation Tariq Paroya and Deputy Director Technical of MC Rana Shahid Imran were also present on the occasion.

Traders had requested the Commissioner to delay the period of checking the shop maps to let them remove the loopholes.

Talking on the occasion, the Commissioner said the shopkeepers who possess the maps should send their copies immediately to the MC section concerned while completing the process of other maps as soon as possible.

He made it clear to the businessmen that no one would be allowed to occupy an inch of government land and similarly, action would be taken against those who do commercial construction without prior approval of the map.

He said that footpaths would be constructed in all markets and where the footpaths had been destroyed would be rebuilt with the help of traders.

It was decided in the meeting that in the first phase, along with the con-

struction of the footpath on the city road, electricity and other wires including telephone would be made underground, after which the campaign would be started in other markets as well. "We have to work together to make the city beautiful and free from encroachments", he added.

The business leaders appreciated the Commissioner Muhammad Ajmal Bhatti for launching an indiscriminate drive to clean the city from encroachments, and assured their full cooperation.

On the occasion, several proposals were considered to resolve the parking problems in the inner markets and to moderate the business activities in the best interest of traders as well as citizens.

FESCO issues shutdown schedule

FAISALABAD (APP): FESCO has issued a shutdown notice for Tuesday for necessary repair, maintenance and expansion of electricity lines.

According to the notice issued by the company, power supply from Sir Syed and Tata Bazaar feeders linked with 132-KV Factory Area grid station will remain suspended from 8 a.m. to 1 p.m. while S-II feeder attached with Scarp Colony grid station, Kanwanwala feeder connected with 132-KV Lalian grid station, Khanuana feeder originating from 132-KV Bhowana grid station, Abdullah Fiber, Iqbal

Rice Mills, Jhumra Road/Raza, Faisalabad Road, Badshahi Masjid, Beeranwala, Lahore Road, Sakhi Abdul Wahhab, Dawar, Shah Burhan, Jani Shah, Jhok Millian, Jhang Road, Rajoa and WASA Tube Well feeders linked with 132-KV Chinot grid station, Bungalow, City Mamonkanjan, Ghausia Colony, al-Awal, Khawaja Habib Ullah and Khuda Yar/Masoor feeders attached with 132-KV Mamonkanjan grid station, Pir Salah-ud-Din feeder connected with 132-KV Manjhala Bagh grid station, Depot Bazaar and Nishat Mill-I feeders originating

from 132-KV Old Thermal grid station, Hajwairi Park feeder linked with 132-KV Tariq Abad grid station, Chenab Steel, Ghazi Abad, Ashraf Abad, Mughal Pura, Misaq-ul-Mall, Rehmat Abad and Johar Colony feeders attached with 132-KV Nishatabad grid station, Jhumra Road feeder connected with 132-KV SPS grid station, Edan Valley, Makkoana, Sultani Elasto, Jaranwala Road, Akbar, Lal Kothi, Nazir Shaheed and Kararwala feeders originating from 132-KV Scarp Colony grid station will observe shutdown from 8 a.m. to 2 p.m. on Tuesday (October 31).



MULTAN: Railway workers busy laying stones around railway tracks during maintenance work near Timber Market.

Two cops among four booked

FAISALABAD (APP): Sadr police claimed on Sunday to have booked four people including two police officials on charge of abduction for ransom, and arrested one of the accused.

Constable Umar Daraz and constable Qaisar posted at Ghulam Muhammad Abad police station, along with his two accomplices Zeeshan Younus, etc. had allegedly abducted a citizen Waris Ali, resident of Kaleem Shaheed Colony and released him after receiving ransom money of Rs 700,000.

Asima Bibi, the wife of Waris Ali in her complaint contended that the accused carried her spouse to Chak No.230-RB where they detained him in a house. The accused also hurled threats of implicating her husband in a fabricated murder case, besides the threat of killing him in a police encounter.

On the complaint, SHO Sadr police station Rae Aftab Waseem arrested Zeeshan Younus and started investigation for the arrest of remaining accused.

Meanwhile, City Police Officer (CPO) Capt (Retd) Muhammad Ali Zia suspended Muharrar Ghulam Muhammad Abad police station Head Constable Ata Sandhu on the charge of his negligence.

The CPO directed the police to arrest the accused without any delay.

DC to hold open court today

NAWABSHAH (APP): In order to listen and resolve the issues of government employees and pensioners pertaining to treasury office on the special directives of Sindh Chief Minister, the Deputy Commissioner Shaheed Benazirabad Zahid Hussain Rind has announced on Sunday to hold an open court (katchehry) at DC Office premises today (Monday).

Secretary Finance Ghulam Ali Soomro, Deputy Inspector General Treasury Habibur Rehman Arain, Deputy Commissioner Zahid Hussain Rind and Assistant Accountant General Adeel Ahmed would hear the issues of government employees and pensioners.

The DC has appealed all the affected employees and pensioners to attend the open katchehry and present their problems and issues so that steps could be taken to resolve the same. Letters for participation have been dispatched to the officials of District Accounts and all all concerned government departments.

One crushed to death by speedy train

TAXILA (APP): A man was died when a passenger train runs over him on Sunday near Chak Muzaffarabad, Taxila.

Railway police sources said that when Karachi bound Awam Express reached the level crossing, a 40 years old man was trying to cross the railway track, resulting the train runs over him and he died on the spot.

Taxila Police registered a case and launched further investigation. The man was not identified yet.

Earthquake jolts Swat, adjoining areas

SWAT (INP): An earthquake of 3.9 magnitude on the Richter scale jolted Swat and its adjoining areas on Saturday.

The National Seismic Monitoring Centre (NSMC) confirmed that tremors were felt in Swat and the adjoining areas.

However, no loss of life and damage to property was reported from any part of Swat so far.

People came out of their houses in fear by reciting Kalma-e-Tayyaba. No loss is reported as per initial

reports.

According to NSMC Islamabad, the depth of the quake was recorded at 120 kilometres and the epicentre was Hindukush mountain range.

Last week, a mild earthquake jolted different parts of Karachi on Monday. No loss was reported as per initial reports.

A mild earthquake of 3.1 magnitude on the Richter Scale jolted different areas of Karachi – the capital of Sindh province – on Monday night.

According to the National Seismic Monitoring Centre Islamabad, the depth of the quake was recorded at 15 kilometres and the epicentre was near the Quaidabad area of Karachi.

The areas where tremors were felt include Gulshan-e-Hadeed, Cattle Colony, different areas of Malir District, Quaidabad, Shah Latif Town, Sherpao Colony, Landhi, Muzaffarabad Colony, Muslimabad Colony, Steel Town and their adjoining areas.

Two dacoits held; stolen bikes, cash recovered

TANK (APP): The Tank police on Sunday claimed to have arrested two dacoits and recovered four stolen motorcycles, cash, and weapons from them in a successful operation conducted within the limits of the Malazai police station.

According to a police spokesman, District Police Officer (DPO) Tank Iftekhar Ali Shah took notice of sev-

eral bike-snatching incidents at Sharbatti Adda on Tank-Malazai Road and formed a special team to trace the dacoits.

The special team led by Malazai Police Station SHO Sami Ullah Khan and supervised by DSP Rural Chan Shah traced the dacoit group using modern scientific techniques and arrested two alleged dacoits,

namely Muhammad Din, son of Sifat, and Mutti Ullah, son of Malley Khan.

The police also recovered four motorcycles, Rs 4,000 cash, and one mobile phone that was snatched from citizens at gunpoint. Besides, another motorcycle and a pistol, along with five cartridges that were used in the crime, were also recovered from them.

40 tons dead meat seized in Gujranwala

GUJRANWALA (INP): The Punjab Food Authority (PFA) seized 40 tons of dead meat from Bakarmundi Lahore, while cracking down on traders involved in the supply of dead meat.

According to media reports, DG PFA told on Sunday that the PFA team found the meat being prepared for supply on the floor. The defective meat was seized and destroyed.

On the same day, the PFA team in Gujranwala caught nine consignments of dead chickens being supplied to hotels. The chickens were checked at Sadhoki near Gujranwala

and all were found to be dead.

The PFA team said that the chickens were being supplied from Sadhoki to Gujranwala. When the supplier's vehicle was checked on the basis of suspicion, all the chickens in it were found dead.

The PFA team registered a case against the people in the vehicle and confiscated the vehicle. The dead chickens in the vehicle were destroyed.

A few days ago, the PFA team in Sheikhupura recovered 8,615 kg of dead chickens from a truck during the checking. The team destroyed all the dead

chickens. A case was registered against the accused named Asif.

Meanwhile, the Food Department in Peshawar arrested three suppliers who supplied dead chickens across the city.

The suppliers were transferred to jail. 410 dead chickens were recovered from the suppliers.

Live and dead chickens kept by the suppliers in Datson were taken into government custody.

Senior officials of the Food Department and the Deputy Commissioner Peshawar Shah Fahad expressed satisfaction over the action.

2nd phase of pre-entry tests conducted

HYDERABAD (APP): Sindh University Jamshoro and its campuses conducted pre-entry tests for admission to bachelor's degree programs in the academic year 2024. A total of 12,096 candidates, including 3,751 female students, participated in the test.

According to the spokesman of the university, the tests were simultaneously held at the University of Sindh and its campuses in Larkana, Naushero Feroz, Badin, Dadu, Thatta, and Mirpurkhas. During the second phase at the University of Sindh, a total of 10,049 candidates, including 3,186 female students and 6,863 male students, appeared in the test. Candidates from Jamshoro, Hyderabad, Mirpurkhas, Badin, Tando Muhammad Khan, Tando Allahyar, Matiari, Umerkot, and other provinces participated in the test for admission, while special permission was granted in the main campus test to those candidates who could not participate in the first phase due to unavoidable circumstances.

The Vice-Chancellor, Professor (Meritorious) Dr. Muhammad Siddique Kalhor, along with the Registrar, Prof. Dr. Mushtaque Ali Jariko, Director of Admissions, Prof. Dr. Ayaz Keeroyo, Inspector Colleges, Prof. Dr. Zulfiqar Ali Zaidi, Prof. Dr. Irfana Begum Mallah, Abdul Majeed Panhwar, Dr. Rabiaa Asma Memon, Dr. Altaf Nizamani, and other faculty members, oversaw the test arrangements. Speaking to the media, VC Dr. Muhammad Siddique Kalhor expressed satisfaction with the transparent conduct of the second phase of the test. He mentioned that separate exam blocks were established for male and female candidates, with different routes for their entry to the university.

On this occasion, stringent security measures were implemented, the security staff of the university, along with police, were deployed to different areas, and ambulance services remained in a standby position to face any emergency. Notably, students also cooperated admirably in maintaining a conducive and orderly testing environment.

The spokesman apprised that at the Larkana campus, 513 candidates, including 139 female students, participated in the entry test, while at the Naushero Feroz campus, 74 candidates, including 17 female students, at the Thatta campus, 100 candidates, including 25 female students, at the Dadu campus, 458 candidates, including 126 female students, at the Mirpurkhas campus, 471 candidates, including 134 female students, and at the Laar campus, Badin, 431 candidates, including 124 female students, participated in the entry tests under the supervision of focal persons and pro vice chancellors.

According to the spokesman, overall, a total of 21,327 candidates, including 5,511 female students, appeared in both phases of the entry tests for bachelor's degree programs at Sindh University and its affiliated campuses. Moreover, for the B.S. third-year program, 2,789 candidates, comprising 1,117 female students and 1,672 male candidates, who submitted online admission forms were declared qualified in the entry test.



Russians remember Stalin’s victims amid crackdown on dissent

MOSCOW (AFP/APP): Russians commemorated the victims of Stalinist terror on Sunday, more than 20 months into Moscow's Ukraine offensive that has been accompanied at home by a major crackdown on dissent. The Kremlin has doubled down on its version of history as troops fight in Ukraine, which often glosses over Stalinist crimes, with public commemoration of Soviet-era repression seen as unpatriotic.

Many Russians took part in the "Returning of the Names" event organised by Nobel Prize winning Memorial -- a rights and historical memory group shut down weeks before Moscow launched its 2022 military campaign.

Every year, the event sees people taking turns to read out the names of people executed during Stalin's Terror between 1936 and 1938.

In Moscow, it is traditionally held at the Solovetsky Stone memorial to victims, opposite the Lubyanka headquarters of the KGB, now occupied by its modern successor FSB.

But Memorial said ahead of the event that authorities banned it from holding the commemoration on the central Lubyanka Square.

AFP reporters said the site was encircled by metal barriers, with police gathered there.

Oleg Orlov, Memorial's co-chair recently fined for denouncing the

Ukraine campaign, still came to the stone to pay his respects.

Several Western ambassadors, including the US envoy, laid flowers there.

Banned from gathering on Lubyanka, Memorial had instead organised the reading of the names at symbolic places associated with dissidents around the Russian capital.

This year's event comes as Memorial says there is a growing number of political prisoners in Russia. Thousands of Russians have been detained, jailed or fined for opposing the conflict in Ukraine.

Memorial displayed a live video feed of the event which was held in Russian cities and abroad on October 29 -- when Russia marks Remembrance Day of the Victims of Political Repressions.

The reading of the names was held in Russian cities including Volgograd and Siberia's Novosibirsk, Tyumen and Irkutsk.

Events were also held in European cities, where many Russians who oppose the Kremlin's Ukraine offensive have fled to.

In Moscow, participants gathered to read the names outside the homes of late Soviet dissidents, at a symbolic prison and in cemeteries.

Orlov read out the names of victims at the Vvedenskoye Cemetery in northern Moscow, at the grave of one

of Memorial's founders -- Soviet dissident and historian Arseny Roginsky.

"It is not the first year that authorities ban the ceremony at the Solovetsky Stone," he said.

"But it is held in many place across Russia and not only," he added, before reading out the name of a victim.

"Dmitry Kuzmich Pragin. 34 years old. The director of the Nudolskaya textile factory. Shot on August 16, 1937, in Moscow."

The aim of the event is to humanise and remember the hundreds of thousands of people who were executed under Stalin's Terror.

Participants are given pieces of paper with a name of a victim, with some also reading out a family member's name.

In Moscow, people read names outside the home of writer and Gulag survivor Varlam Shalamov and Soviet lawyer Sofiya Kalistratova, who had defended dissidents in the 1970s.

Participants also read out names outside Moscow's Butyrka Prison -- one of the capital's largest remand prisons that dates back to the Soviet era. "Ivan Petrovich Prosevizh. 56 years old. Mechanic at a garage at the Kuybyshev factory. Shot on August 9, 1938 in Moscow," one woman read outside the red-brick prison, Memorial's live video showed.

India police probe bomb blasts that killed two in Kerala

KOCHI (Reuters): A man claiming to be a former member of the Jehovah's Witnesses was detained for questioning about his alleged involvement in setting off homemade bombs at a meeting of the group in the southern Indian state of Kerala on Sunday, killing two women and injuring dozens of other people, police said.

A second woman had died, chief minister Pinarayi Vijayan told reporters at a briefing, adding that 17 people were in intensive care with five in a critical condition.

Health minister Veena George earlier told Reuters a 12-year girl with 95% burns was also in a critical state.

Dominic Martin posted a video on Facebook claiming responsibility for the attacks, before surrendering shortly after noon at a police station in Thrissur district, about 40 km (25 miles) from the site of the explosions.

"Dominic is still being questioned in Kochi. He is in our custody but we have not recorded his arrest so far," police public relations officer Pramod Kumar told Reuters. "We are still trying to ascertain the veracity of his statement, it will take some time. We are not in a position to confirm his involvement in the case right now, investigation is ongoing," he added.



The incident took place during a Jehovah's Witnesses convention in Kalamassery, about 10 km (6 miles) northeast of Kochi city.

TA Sreekkumar, regional spokesperson for the Jehovah's Witnesses, told Reuters that Martin was not a registered member of the group. He said about 2,300 people attended the three-day event but he was unaware if Martin was present. Sreekkumar confirmed to Reuters that there were at least two big explosions at the centre.

"I am taking full responsibility for this. I carried out the bomb explosion. I am making this video to make it clear why I did this," Martin

said in a near-six-minute Facebook video which was online for about 4 hours before it disappeared. Martin said about he believed the Jehovah's Witnesses' teachings were "antinational" about six years ago and that he had tried to talk to the group about changing their views.

Preliminary investigation showed that an improvised explosive device was used, Kerala Director General of Police Shaik Darvesh Saheb told reporters earlier.

Chief Minister Vijayan said police were taking the incident seriously, a special team of 20 members was investigating, and he would have more

clarity at an all-party meeting on Monday morning. "The explosions occurred seconds after the end of a prayer as part of the day's event. The first blast took place in the middle of the hall. Seconds later, two more explosions rocked simultaneously on either sides of the hall," Sreekkumar had earlier told mathrubhumi.com, a local media outlet.

Jehovah's Witnesses are an international Christian denomination founded in the United States around 1870. They are best known in many countries for door-to-door evangelism.

The group said it has about 60,000 followers in India.

‘George Orwell Library’ shines a light in Russia

IVANOVO (AFP/APP): The librarian scans the shelves and quickly picks out a few works -- Orwell, Sorokin, Dostoevsky -- the authors she thinks can best help cast some light in a dark time for Russia.

The scene is in Ivanovo, an industrial city five hours' drive from Moscow, where the "George Orwell Library" was set up last year in an effort to counter growing propaganda and censorship.

The simple library housed in the ground floor of a run-down building has a computer, a few hundred books and a lingering smell of the perfume used by the librarian, Alexandra Karaseva.

"Books help to see what is human, even in an enemy, and reject any form of dehumanisation," the 67-year-old said as she handles the tomes.

The library was opened by Dmitry Silin, a local businessman and opponent of the conflict in Ukraine who has since fled Russia fearing he could be imprisoned for his outspoken views.

Karaseva showed off the collection of books about dystopias, the Soviet prison system, the works of contemporary writers critical of the Kremlin as well as some lighter novels to "lift

spirits".

"The more you read about dystopias, the more freedom you have. They show the dangers, as well as ways of avoiding them and of resisting," Karaseva said.

The books are not banned and can therefore be loaned to readers just like a normal library.

Among them are works by authors now classified as "foreign agents" under Russian law which in bookshops have to be sold with their covers hidden.

The librarian, with her turtleneck and thick glasses, is a wellspring of knowledge. Only her pronunciation is uneven because of her damaged teeth. With a blond fringe falling over her eyes, she talks about Orwell's masterpiece "1984" which describes an ultimately futile attempt at resistance in a highly effective dictatorship.

She talks about the revolutionary self-destruction in Dostoevsky's "Demons" and the explosive dystopias in Vladimir Sorokin's works, as well as the Laverick works of Harper Lee and Erich Maria Remarque.

Karaseva is a retired historian of ancient Rome, specialising in "the transition from the Republic to the dictatorship".

She does not only deal in high-brow and even shares her thinking on the blockbuster film "Barbie" which she said was "deeper than it seems".

The film was recently shown in the library meeting room.

Dmitry Shestopalov, 18, an activist for the opposition party Yabloko, attended the screening and regularly visits the library to watch films and meet other young people.

"You can develop yourself here despite everything that is happening in our country. You can forget fear, feel free, feel comfort, feel that you are not alone in the enormous system that is devouring us," he said.

Lawyer Anastasya Rudenko, 41, a co-founder of the library, said she sees in modern Russia "signs" of the same totalitarianism described in "1984".

Above all, she feels a sense of "fear that shackles". She is also struck by the contemporary relevance of the slogan from the book "Ignorance Is Strength".

In Russia "people who try not to understand what is going on live very well," she said. In Ivanovo's central square, near a plaque for those killed by Tsarist Russia during an anti-war demonstration in 1915, Rudenko reflects on her

own "personal tragedy" as an icy wind lashes her face.

Her brother and her husband are both Russian army officers serving in the "special military operation" -- the euphemism used by the Kremlin to classify Russia's offensive against Ukraine.

She cannot speak openly about the topic.

The slightest sensitive comment could mean a sanction or even a prison sentence. Being a lawyer or the wife of an officer would not protect her.

In June 2023, Rudenko was sentenced to pay a fine for "discrediting" the Russian army for some Telegram posts where she said she had watched a documentary by opposition leader Alexei Navalny.

Her husband came to the court hearing to support her.

A normally smiling, energetic woman with a Ukrainian father, she breaks down when she talks about the "great pain" of being powerless confronted by the conflict.

But she said she loves her husband "without a doubt even more" since he left to fight.

To anyone who might question the contradiction and ask why they are still together, she replies: "And you? What would you have done?"

W A S H I N G T O N (AFP/APP): Bala Sivaraman drives an electric car around the US capital Washington, buys used clothes and furniture and cooks his vegan meals on an induction stove he bought after parting ways with his gas oven.

Khalistan Council president aligns Sikh rights with Junagarh’s annexation

VANCOUVER, CANADA (APP): A large Azad Khalistan rally against India was held in Surrey, British Columbia, a day before the Khalistan Referendum scheduled for October 29, (Sunday).

Members of the Sikh community, both men and women, bearing Khalistan flags, marched covering a two-kilometer distance to Guru Nanak Sikh Gurdawara where Shaheed Hardeep Singh Nijjar Centre has been formed for the voting.

During the charged Khalistan rally, the Sikhs enthusiastically voiced slogans such as "Delhi bane ga khalasa," "Lay ke rahain gay Khalasa," "Punjab Banay Ga Khalistan" and "Azad Khalistan," filling the air with their fervent chants.

At the rally, the participants voiced a strong demand for justice in the case of Hardeep Singh Nijjar, urging the authorities to bring his killers to account. The attendees appreciated the stance of Canadian PM Justin Trudeau who has publicly accused India of killing Sikh leader Nijjar and hunting several other Canadian Sikhs.

Rally participants vowed to preserve the values and vision of Nijjar, who met a tragic end at the hands of Indian agents in June last. The rally participants passionately chanted slogans such as "Hardeep Nijjar tera khatil kon Hindustan, Hindustan?"

They expressed their appreciation for Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau's condemnation of state terrorism by the Indian government that occurred within Canada.

Looking ahead, several thousand

Sikhs are set to take part in the upcoming October 29th referendum. A mere three months ago, 135,000 Sikhs rallied in support of the Sikh cause at Gurunanak Sikh Gurdwara in British Columbia.

Addressing the Council of Khalistan President Dr. Bakhshish Singh Sandhu stated that the Sikh nation is seeking from India the identical right employed by India during the annexation of the Junagadh state in 1948. He said the global community stands in solidarity with the Sikh nation in their pursuit of Punjab's freedom. Dr. Sandhu, emphasized their intent to achieve Punjab's freedom through a referendum, wherein the right to vote would be exercised. Dr. Sandhu suggests that the right to conduct a referendum is granted by countries to their citizens.

He stated that the assassination of Hardeep Singh has united the entire Sikh nation.

Dr. Bakhshish Singh Sandhu has conveyed that, according to the Canadian government, the Indian government has a connection to the murder of Hardeep Singh Nagar. The Prime Minister of Canada has indicated that his country possesses significant evidence related to the murder of Hardeep Singh Nijjar.

Sikhs memorialized Hardeep Singh, who lost his life before the referendum, by displaying his pictures outside the Gurdwara.

A massive board featuring pictures of Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi and India's Ambassador to Canada, Jay Krishna, was erected in

front of the Gurunanak Singh Sikh Gurdwara in Vancouver.

The pictures serve as a means of conveying that the individuals responsible for Hardeep Singh Nagar's murder are of Indian origin, as stated by Dr. Bakhshish Singh Sandhu, President of the Council for Khalistan. Nijjar served as the Chief Coordinator of the Khalistan Referendum campaign in Canada and had a strong affiliation with Gurbatwant Singh Pannun, a Khalistani leader based in the United States. Pannun holds the position of Counsel General within Sikhs For Justice (SFJ), the advocacy group overseeing the global Khalistan Referendum efforts.

Nijjar, Pannun, UK based Paramjeet Singh Pamma and others were designated Terrorist by the Indian government in 2020. Nijjar was also President of Guru Nanak Sikh Gurdwara in British Columbia -- Canada's biggest Gurdawara.

The Khalistan Referendum voting campaign is being organised under the supervision of the independent Punjab Referendum Commission (PRC) which will announce the results when all phases are completed. The voting started on October 31, 2021 from London UK and have so far been held in several cities across UK, Geneva Switzerland, Rome and Milan (Italy), Australian cities of Melbourne, Brisbane and Sydney; and Canadian cities of Brampton, Mississauga, Malton (Ontario), and Vancouver (British Columbia).

1.5C goal on the line as countries gear up for key climate talks

PARIS (AFP/APP): Facing record-shattering temperatures and a geopolitical tinderbox, countries are scrambling to lay the groundwork for crucial UN climate talks next month tasked with salvaging global warming goals laid out in the landmark Paris deal.

Ministers meet next week in the United Arab Emirates to grapple with flashpoint issues, including the future of fossil fuels and financial solidarity between rich polluters and nations most vulnerable to the devastating impacts of climate change.

World leaders meeting in Dubai for the COP28 summit between November 30 and December 12 will also have to respond to a damning progress report on the world's commitments under the Paris Agreement.

The 2015 deal aims to limit global warming to well below two degrees Celsius since the pre-industrial era and preferably a safer 1.5C.

The results are already in on that "global stocktake": the world is far off track.

"The challenge we face is immense," incoming COP28 president Sultan Al Jaber acknowledged in October.

Keeping the Paris goals in reach needs an enormous collective effort to slash greenhouse gas emissions this decade.

But that may be even more challenging in a world roiled by geopolitical storms, with conflict

between Israel and Hamas adding to tensions over Russia's invasion of Ukraine, United States-China rivalry and a mounting debt crisis.

This year has seen a catalogue of climate extremes and the highest global temperatures in human history, stoked by the El Nino weather phenomenon that is warming temperatures.

That may serve to focus minds, making clear that the dangerous changes to Earth's fragile life support systems are already in motion.

The question is whether countries perceive climate change as a "collective threat", Alden Meyer of think tank E3G told AFP.

The climate talks, which will kick off with a two-day world leaders summit, are expected to be the biggest ever, with predictions of 80,000 attendees.

Observers have raised concerns that eye-catching initiatives on the sidelines of the meeting could obscure the main negotiations, which this year should reflect the poor performance on the Paris goals.

"The risk is that we will be sold a whole raft of declarations and side coalitions," said Lola Vallejo, of the Institute for Sustainable Development and International Relations.

The focus should instead be on "an ambitious agreement on the stocktake of the Paris Agreement, including fos-

sil fuels and loss and damage", she said.

The UAE has proposed targets to triple global renewable energy capacity, double the annual rate of energy efficiency improvements by 2030 and called for massive scaling up of climate finance.

Rich polluters are under pressure to finally meet their promise to provide \$100 billion in funding by 2020 for poorer nations to prepare for climate extremes and fund the energy transition.

An agreement to help vulnerable countries cope with climate "loss and damage" is also a key point of contention.

The flagship achievement of last year's COP27 in Egypt, it was mired in disagreement during recent talks to flesh out the details -- like who pays, how much and the fund structure.

But the biggest tussle is likely to be over weaning the world off coal, oil and gas -- the main drivers of global warming.

Jaber, who heads the UAE state-owned oil firm ADNOC, has said he believes the phasing down of fossil fuels is "inevitable", without specifying when.

ADNOC last year announced plans to invest \$150 billion in oil and gas expansion over five years.

Meyer said technology to capture emissions at source or remove them from the atmosphere touted by the UAE and others are

not anywhere near at a scale to make a significant contribution in the years to 2030.

"You can have a pathway to 1.5C or you can expand oil and gas production. You can't have both," he told AFP.

"The UAE is trying to pretend it doesn't have to choose."

There are some positives.

The International Energy Agency has said world fossil fuel demand is forecast to peak this decade due to the "spectacular" growth of cleaner energy technologies and electric cars, helped by ambitious policies in China, the United States and Europe among others.

But that is not enough.

On our current trajectory the world will still warm by far more than 2C.

With nearly 1.2C of warming so far, scientists warn some impacts are hitting harder and faster than expected.

Climate change should be viewed as an "existential threat", according to a recent study by prominent researchers.

Co-author Johan Rockstrom, director of the Potsdam Institute for Climate Impact Research, said he now expects the world to blow past the 1.5C threshold, before attempting to drag temperatures back down again by 2100. "That will be a very jumpy ride, a real gauntlet for humanity," he told AFP.

How climate conscious Americans reduce their carbon footprints

W A S H I N G T O N (AFP/APP): Bala Sivaraman drives an electric car around the US capital Washington, buys used clothes and furniture and cooks his vegan meals on an induction stove he bought after parting ways with his gas oven.

Sim Bilal relies exclusively on public transit -- no easy feat in car-centric Los Angeles -- uses refurbished tech and lives in an apartment with solar panels. As world leaders prepare to meet for crunch COP28 climate talks in the United Arab Emirates next month, some environmentally-conscious Americans are demonstrating it's possible to rein in their carbon emissions, aligning their actions with their values in a country where such lifestyle choices are rare.

"When we are inundated with a lot of climate doomsday news, it can be really difficult to feel we have something to ground us," Sivaraman told AFP.

"What is so powerful about living a sustainable life or committing our-

selves to zero waste living practices is that it gives us that sense of hope, because it reclaims our power."

Living on opposite ends of the country, both young men work as environmental activists and have carbon footprints of three to four tons per year, according to self-reported estimates generated by carbonfootprint.com.

That's well below the average Americans' annual footprint of around 15 tons, which is roughly three times the global average.

On a brisk autumn day, Sivaraman brings his compost to a local community garden, unlocks a sorting bin, and begins placing leftover vegan hotdogs, paper plates and other biodegradables inside.

"This was from a party at my friend's animal refuge the other day," the 28-year-old, who works in communications for the nonprofit Earthjustice, says, covering the pile with the dry brown waste to aid in the decomposition process.

After six months, the nutrient-rich soil is used in

the neighboring plots to help tomatoes, cilantro and other vegetables grow.

"Composting diverts organic waste out of landfills," he explains, and because it decomposes in the presence of oxygen, it produces far less climate-impacting methane. It also helps foster a sense of common purpose and community, he adds. Bilal, 21, got his first taste of direct action last year after disrupting the LA mayoral debates, making local news as he led demands for candidates to release their climate action plans.

"This is the number one problem for my generation," he told AFP. He now organizes for the California Green New Deal coalition and Youth Climate strike in Los Angeles.

Though getting a driver's license is a rite of passage for US teens, Bilal decided when he turned 16 the climate cost was too great to bear. When he's not riding the LA Metro or taking intercity trains, he can be found on his One Wheel: a self-balancing electric

skateboard he finds essential for the last mile in a city where public transport can be lacking.

The clothes he's wearing during a video interview are four years old and his iPad is a five-year-old model that he recently had repaired after cracking its screen, instead of buying a new one -- measures that embody his philosophy of buying less, and buying to last.

"It is hard because some things look really cool -- maybe you want to jump on a trend, but for me it's not worth the cost," he adds.

Sivaraman -- who also participates in direct action with the Sunrise Movement and was arrested for the first time in September at the Federal Reserve building in New York -- said his health and wellbeing had only improved since he made more climate-aware choices.

The idea that weaning off fossil fuels would cause people to have "miserable, sad lives" is a "very effective PR tactic" pushed by the industry, he said.

The Frontier Post

JALIL AFRIDI
Managing Editor

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

Peshawar Office: 091-5700095, 0300- 9009001

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

E-mail: fppeshawar@thefrontierpost.com

Lahore Office: 0335-4026284

Email: fplahore@thefrontierpost.com

Islamabad Office: 0321-5066253

Email: mahmoodafridi@thefrontierpost.com

Karachi Office: 021-32213411, 0300-8340907

Email: fpkarachi@thefrontierpost.com

“USA and Canada Toll Free Number 415-3704551

Palestine issue and inefficacy of Muslim rulers

Turkiye's Strongman President Recep Tayyip Erdogan led a massive pro-Palestinian rally at Istanbul Ataturk Airport and condemned Israel's inhumane atrocities and war crimes against innocent unarmed Palestinians for consecutive three weeks. Erdogan called Israel an occupier state and declared Hamas is not a terrorist organization. Turkish President applauded himself by saying Erdogan speaks clearly because Turkey does not owe Israel anything. He told the crowd that Western powers were the main culprit behind the Israeli army's massacre of innocent Palestinians in Gaza and the West Bank.

The Hamas-Israel conflict has entered its fourth week, Gaza presents the scenes of devastation and wreckage as the continuous bombardment and shelling has turned the city into rubble. Israeli air strikes have killed over 7000 Palestinians, injuring several thousands of people over the past three weeks. The armed clashes between Palestinian freedom fighters and Israeli troops continue on the Israel-Palestine border from Rafah in the South to Beit Hanoun in the North. Israel's military has pushed forward with its expanded ground operation amid a near-total communications blackout in the Gaza Strip. Meanwhile, Israeli troops made several incursions in the West Banks, carried out raids in the Cities of Jehin, and Nablus and killed several Palestinians.

Amid heightened hostility in Palestine, the United Nations and the global community failed to achieve a ceasefire mainly due to a lack of consensus over a draft resolution, and conflicting opinions about the Israel-Hamas war. The Western bloc led by the United States is fully backing Israel and calling Hamas a terrorist organization, while the Muslim world and non-aligned nations including China, Russia and the African Union have a different perspective and see the current escalation as an extension of broader Palestine-Israel dispute. Presently, the Biden Administration faces stern opposition at the UN in implementing its pro-Israel agenda, while US high-level shuttle diplomacy in the Middle East failed to achieve its goals so far. The US administration is currently urging the Chinese government to use its influence for the resolution of the Middle East crisis. During the ongoing talks to reach a cease-fire, the United States and Israel intend to secure the release of Israeli captives before striking a ceasefire deal while Hamas demands a ceasefire agreement before it releases Israeli soldiers. Meanwhile, Israeli Intelligence Mossad is making all-out efforts to recover Israeli captives through intelligence-based military operations and several armed raids have been carried out in Gaza and West Bank over the past days.

Unfortunately, the helplessness and impotence of Muslim nations including the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, Turkey, Iran, Pakistan, Egypt and several others had been exposed to the world. The Ale-Saud, the successors of Ertural Ghazi and Sultan Salah-ud-din are leading the protest demonstrations and begging for a ceasefire from their worst enemy instead of issuing ultimatums and ordering their militaries to prepare for a war. The so-called Mujahideen-e-Islam who waged jihad against innocent people in Pakistan and Afghanistan during the past two decades are currently unable to utter a single word against Israel as no Khilafat or Emarit/Riasaat awaited them in Gaza or West Bank and Jewish Army was well trained to deal with them. Hence, in the absence of any foreign military or economic assistance to Palestinian freedom fighters, the determined Israelis enjoy full freedom and impunity to wage a crusade of their own choice against unarmed Palestinians. Amnesty International has accused Israel of using Phosphorus incendiary bombs in residential areas of Gaza which is a serious risk to human lives and a grave violation of the Geneva Convention of War. In fact, a lot of time has passed, and the war's suffering and ruin increase every other day. The United Nations and its executive arm the UN Security Council must stand up to their primary obligation by conceiving a truce between Hamas and Israel as early as possible. So, the hostility comes to a pause and relief, reconstruction and rehabilitation activities could be initiated in war-torn Gaza.

Leaders' guilt, Naya or old Pakistan

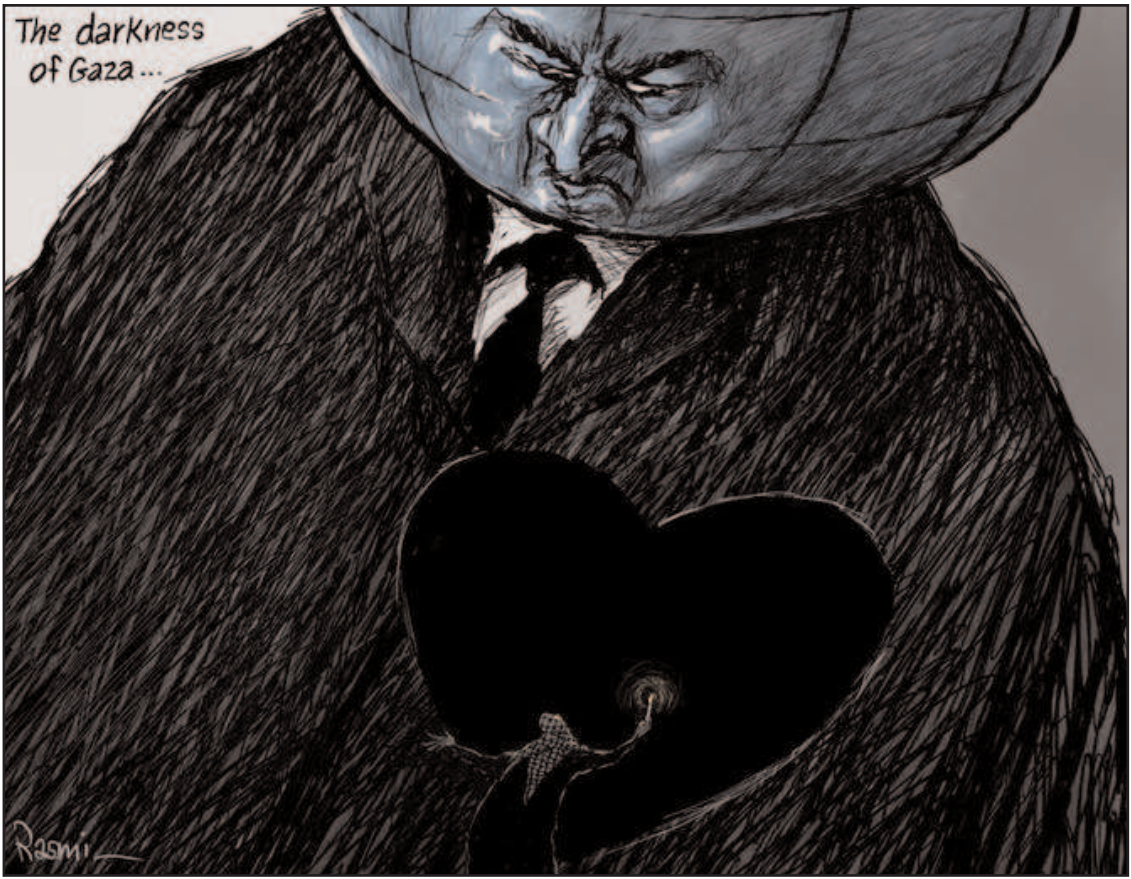
Istehkam-e-Pakistan Party (IPP) Patron-in-Chief Jahangir Khan Tareen has expressed his commitment to fulfill the 'dream of a Naya Pakistan,' in the party's maiden power show on Saturday. Addressing the IPP's rally in Jehanian, Jahangir Tareen highlighted ideals and ambitions that initially drove the now IPP leaders to join Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI). According to him, they all came together to make Pakistan better about ten years ago and devised a comprehensive plan and put best efforts to envision the idea of economically stable and financially prosperous Pakistan. However, these dreams remained unfulfilled and after coming to power all ideological leaders were gradually replaced one by one and strangers with no vision and political ideology took the reins of the government.

The lories of Naya Pakistan, a better Pakistan, a stable and prosperous Pakistan are the fascinating words and attractive terminology that arrested the hearts and minds of young Pakistan over the past one and half decade. In pursuit of the mission Naya Pakistan, the enthusiastic Pakistani youth not only lost their morality and patience but betrayed their family, friends and the nation as well. Although Tareen and Aleem parted their ways with the Naya Pakistan mission during the early months of the PTI rule, several leaders joined his cabal as political rituals to pay off their blunder of launching a crusade against the state and national institutions.

Politics is a unique business, in which nationalist politicians present themselves all time green and portray their adversaries red and round. Former PTI leaders lambasted their colleagues from other political parties calling them infidels, corrupt and thieves during their tenure in office. Tareen himself faced allegations of involvement in a sugar scam but escaped accountability due to his jet jargons and elite services to his previous party. Interestingly, all so-called pure have now joined the Istehkam-e-Pakistan Party to work for Tareen's Naya Pakistan after actively lobbying for an exclusive version of Khan's Pakistan. Historically, nationalist ideas, hatred, intolerant behaviors and radical politics have brought the country to the verge of collapse, however, a cabal of politicians still mulling the same ideology to carve out a nation of their choice. The Qaid-e-Azam had founded one and real Pakistan, if a leader has some guts to serve the nation he must contribute in good faith but no one should mislead the public in the ploy of Naya, old or Asili Pakistan.

Important Notice

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



Turkiye celebrates Saudi friendship on its centennial

Fatih Ulusoy

One hundred years ago, on Oct. 29, 1923, the Turkish nation, under the visionary leadership of Mustafa Kemal Ataturk, laid the foundations for a sovereign, modern, democratic and progressive Turkiye. After the First World War and following its dedicated sacrifices during the Independence War, Turkiye was reborn as a modern republic thanks to the strong commitment and tireless efforts of the Turkish people. As members of the Turkish nation, we are proud of this extraordinary journey and the remarkable progress our nation has made in the first century of the republic.

Turkiye's centennial marks a significant milestone in the nation's history, reflecting a journey of resilience, progress and enduring friendships. One such deep-rooted historical connection is with the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, a partnership that spans decades and continues to flourish. Turkiye and Saudi Arabia stand out as evidence of the enduring power of diplomacy and cooperation. These two countries share a rich history of diplomatic, economic and cultural cooperation. Our bilateral relations have consistently deepened, guided by mutual respect and shared interests. Both nations have played pivotal roles in promoting peace and stability in the region.

Turkiye was among the first countries to recognize the Kingdom of Hejaz and Nejd in 1926. In the same year, Turkiye established its diplomatic representation and appointed Suleyman Sevket Bey as charge d'affaires to Saudi Arabia. Turkiye and Saudi Arabia were among the few independent Muslim states during the interwar period. This recognition laid the foundation for a lasting friendship. On Aug. 3, 1929, a Treaty of Friendship was signed between the two countries. In September 1932, the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia was established and Ataturk was one of the first leaders to send a congratulatory message to King Abdulaziz.

Also in 1932, King Faisal, then a young prince, met with Ataturk in Ankara, further strengthening the bonds of brotherhood between the two nations. On that day, the Turkish leader received Faisal and hosted a dinner in his honor. During his stay in Turkiye, he attended Turkish army maneuvers in Ankara and visited the Turkish military industry's facilities in Kirikkale. This historic visit set the stage for future collaborations and cooperation in various fields between the two countries. King Faisal also paid a visit to Turkiye in 1966. Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan received the 2010 King Faisal International Prize for Service to Islam from the late King Abdullah. In the same year, the two countries signed an agreement on military cooperation. Erdogan visited Saudi Arabia in 2011, 2012, 2017 and 2022. In July this year, he again visited the Kingdom, this time accompanied by ministers, senior

Turkiye's appeal extends beyond its economic power. It ranks fourth in the list of most-visited countries in the world, attracting tourists with its rich cultural heritage and attractive landscapes. Additionally, Turkiye has emerged as a leader in health tourism, boasting cutting-edge medical technology. Since January, more than 700,000 Saudi Arabian citizens have visited our country for tourism purposes. We are committed to welcoming more Saudi brothers and sisters to our country in the coming years, hopefully at least 1 million per year. In this regard, Saudi citizens will benefit from not only single but multiple-entry electronic visas for Turkiye, which can be obtained in two minutes via a mobile phone.

officials and more than 200 business people. During this visit, Turkiye and Saudi Arabia signed a series of deals relating to investment, the defense industry, energy and the media, among others. Turkiye's growing cooperation with Saudi Arabia is evident in the increasing frequency of high-level visits. Collaborations between ministers, private sector executives and businessmen are expanding, indicating that the relationship between our nations will continue to strengthen.

The depth of the bond between Turkiye and Saudi Arabia was evident when Ankara was struck by a severe earthquake in early February. The Kingdom

experience with brotherly Saudi Arabia in all the projects within the massive transformation going on in the Kingdom under Vision 2030. Erdogan has already announced the support of Turkiye for Riyadh hosting Expo 2030. In a similar manner, the Turkish Football Federation has expressed its strong support for Saudi Arabia hosting the FIFA World Cup in 2034. The strategic location of Turkiye at the crossroads of Europe, the Middle East, Africa, the Caucasus and Central Asia makes it a vital actor on the global arena. Its customs union with the EU has provided Turkiye with access to multiple markets. Ankara has

also established essential energy transit lines for oil and natural gas, enhancing its importance in the global energy landscape.

Turkiye's appeal extends beyond its economic power. It ranks fourth in the list of most-visited countries in the world, attracting tourists with its rich cultural heritage and attractive landscapes. Additionally, Turkiye has emerged as a leader in health tourism, boasting cutting-edge medical technology. Since January, more than 700,000 Saudi Arabian citizens have visited our country for tourism purposes. We are committed to welcoming more Saudi brothers and sisters to our country in the coming years, hopefully at least 1 million per year. In this regard, Saudi citizens will benefit from not only single but multiple-entry electronic visas for Turkiye, which can be obtained in two minutes via a mobile phone.

Moreover, Turkiye boasts an impressive defense industry, with about 80 percent localization. This achievement has positioned Turkiye as a significant global exporter in the defense sector. This industry will be a key component in the further strengthening of our bilateral cooperation with Saudi Arabia.

In addition to its NATO membership and contributions to missions in the Balkans and Afghanistan, Turkiye is a valued member of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation. As members of the OIC,

Turkiye and Saudi Arabia continue to address the challenges of our time side by side within the framework of the organization.

Turkiye is also strengthening its relations with the Gulf Cooperation Council. The strategic dialogue mechanism between Turkiye and the GCC was signed in Jeddah in 2008, making Turkiye the first country to establish such a mechanism with the bloc. We now look forward to the next Turkiye-GCC High-Level Strategic Dialogue.

Turkiye has consistently demonstrated its commitment to global peace, stability and prosperity. The Mediation for Peace initiative, launched within the UN in 2010, underscores Turkiye's dedication to conflict resolution and international mediation. Turkiye and Saudi Arabia both support peace and stability in the region and the world.

Erdogan and the crown prince have both highlighted the need for a diplomatic solution in Ukraine. Last year, an agreement was signed with the mediation of Turkiye for Ukraine's grain exports to reenter the world market. Thanks to this agreement, many Middle Eastern countries were able to avoid the worst of the global food crisis.

Regarding the ongoing conflict in Gaza, Turkiye and Saudi Arabia are both working hard to ensure peace and stability, prevent civilians from being targeted and allow humanitarian access. Both countries also emphasized the importance of addressing the root cause, which is the need for a two-state solution based on the 1967 borders.

Turkiye's core objective is to promote peace, stability and prosperity globally — a vision that closely aligns with that of the Kingdom. Together, the two nations strive to create a better future for our region and beyond. Turkiye is actively engaged in counterterrorism efforts, as is evident in its tireless efforts to maintain regional and global security.

The occasion of Turkiye's centennial is not just a celebration of a nation's 100 years of history, but a testament to its enduring friendships. In particular, the deep-rooted historical ties and shared visions between Turkiye and Saudi Arabia serve as a testament to the importance of diplomacy, cooperation and solidarity on the world stage. These two nations stand together, committed to a brighter and more prosperous future for the region and the world.

Let us commemorate this significant milestone in the spirit of friendship and collaboration, with the hope that the next century of Turkish-Saudi friendship will be even stronger than the last.

I want to express my heartfelt gratitude to the people and leadership of the Kingdom for their friendship and cooperation. I am confident that the future holds even greater promise for our bilateral relations and that together we will continue to work toward peace, prosperity and progress in the region and beyond.

A distracted world cannot afford to ignore Sudan's growing plight

Hafed Al-Ghwell

As the world takes stock of six months of unrelenting civil war in Sudan, the scale of human suffering and devastation is staggering and impossible to ignore. The conflict has claimed up to 9,000 lives and displaced almost 6 million people, forcing them to seek refuge in neighboring countries. An estimated 25 million people are in dire need of aid. However, the world's priorities have largely been drawn away from this catastrophe.

The war in Ukraine and the escalating crisis in the Middle East have diverted the focus of the international community, leaving Sudan's conflagrations suffering an inadvertent "visibility crisis." Irrespective of how profound the devastation in Sudan may be, its plight is likely to worsen, as pleas for empathetic global intervention and support get suffocated under the weight of the world's divided attention.

Adding to the complexity of this situation is a growing health crisis. The conflict-ridden parts of Sudan are already grappling with cholera outbreaks, with more than 1,000 suspected cases reported. Continued fighting not only hampers aid efforts but also exacerbates the spread of this and other communicable diseases, creating a vicious cycle of violence and despair. As the war rages on, there is also the potential for significant long-term damage, creating another "lost" or displaced generation. Basic services are crumbling, infrastructure is devastated, and the social fabric torn asunder. The underfunding of humanitarian efforts, with just 33 percent of the required \$2.6 billion received, further compounds these challenges.

Extensive research has consistently shown that neglecting conflicts of this nature not only exacerbates the dire humanitarian crises, but also leaves room for the propagation of extremism, the threat of regional destabilization, and generational loss to an entire nation. If left to fester, Sudan's tumult could mature into a crisis of unimaginable proportions.

So, after six months of escalation, sporadic violence and brief lulls, what is the situation in Sudan today? At the heart of the conflict remain the two powerful entities: the Sudan Armed Forces and the paramilitary Rapid Support Forces. Both were instrumental in the overthrow of the Omar Bashir regime in 2019, and engineering a subsequent military takeover that effectively sidelined civilian participation in the post-Bashir interim government just two years later. However, a deep-seated power struggle over the integration of the RSF into the SAF has resulted in these erstwhile allies becoming enemies, with catastrophic consequences for Sudan's civilian population.

As it stands, the SAF has managed to secure its base in Eastern Sudan, headquartered at Port Sudan along the Red Sea coast. This strategic positioning gives the SAF a degree of control over maritime trade routes, which could potentially be leveraged for military advantage. However, the capital Khartoum, once the emblem of a unified Sudan, is under the control of the RSF. The SAF's ability to dislodge the RSF from Khartoum (or not) will be a critical determinant of the conflict's trajectory.

On one hand, the RSF's control of the city is significant, not just symbolically, but also for the practical control it offers over the country's remaining, still-functional administrative apparatus. Moreover, the RSF's seizure of the town of Kas in South Darfur has allowed it to strengthen its foothold in Sudan's peripheries, highlighting the group's ability to expand operational reach. Tragically, a "return" to Darfur with unremitting violence, much attributed to the RSF, paradoxically surpasses the brutality of the Janjaweed, the RSF's notorious predecessor, intensifying the damage to Sudan's social fabric.

Meanwhile, the SAF's control of Eastern Sudan and Port Sudan offers it a strategic advantage. This region's proximity to the Red Sea could potentially facilitate foreign military assistance, notably from Egypt, with which the SAF has a well-established historic relationship. This rush to establish competing areas of influence risks transforming Sudan into a disastrous mirror image of neighboring Libya, yet another casualty of a chaotic post-2011 era, and now torn apart by internal conflict and external meddling.

Foreign patrons, with vested interests and reduced deterrence from a distracted global community, will likely continue fueling this conflict, or hardening the resolve of either side in hopes of tilting the balance of power and gaining an upper hand in ceasefire negotiations. The SAF, for example, still maintains a few stubborn strongholds in and around Khartoum. A haunting anxiety hangs over the city, its fate relying on the unknown pendulum of military strategy. Will the SAF employ artillery or muster air power to expel the RSF? Failure to negotiate a credible truce and the need to up the stakes would only deepen the humanitarian catastrophe, as civilians and critical infrastructure are caught in the crossfire.

Clearly, the international community's role in this conflict is influential. The UAE's documented relationship with the RSF and Egypt's ties with the SAF could potentially tip the scales in either direction. After all, the possibility of foreign reinforcement for either of the combatants could drastically alter more than just the military landscape in Sudan — it could also shape the contours of an enduring settlement. Unfortunately, despite renewed attempts, encouraging diplomacy and conciliatory efforts at conflict resolution, the quest for an enduring peace remains elusive.

Thankfully, efforts persist to bring the feuding sides together at the negotiation table. It is much too premature to opine on whether the latest iteration of talks will either establish a durable ceasefire, freeze the conflict in an uneasy stalemate, or simply sow more discord. Still, the imminent return of Sudan's army and RSF to negotiation talks convened by the US and Saudi Arabia does offer some hope, with both sides indicating a readiness to resume discussions. The military's declaration that it will not stop fighting raises serious concerns, but it could just be more bluster to eke out greater leverage before engaging in dialogue behind closed doors.

However, the situation on the ground remains as precarious as ever. Prolonged inaction has planted the seeds of disillusionment and distress, while intense battles and the fog of war nurture fertile grounds for malign actors to emerge in pursuit of interests diametrically opposed to Sudan's stabilization. As it stands, the balance of power seems to oscillate between the SAF and the RSF, with both sides showing an uncanny resilience and a troubling defiance when neighboring Libya's woes are a stark reminder of the kind of future that awaits Sudan.

The international community's role in this conflict, particularly that of regional powers, will be crucial in determining the eventual outcome. It is a grim situation, and the world must act swiftly and decisively to quell the violence and restore peace in Sudan. Should fighting resume, as always, it is civilians who will endure unimaginable suffering amid this power tussle. Thus, the global community must develop a coordinated response, not only to broker a lasting peace but also to address the unfolding crisis, while taking care not to repeat the mistake of facilitating Sudan's stabilization and transformation with deadlines and ultimatums. The conflict in Sudan is not merely a localized squabble to be compartmentalized and dismissed, but a regional crisis with potential global implications.

Despite domestic pressures, foreign affairs dominate agenda at EU summit

With 2024, a big election year for the EU, fast approaching there is much important domestic policy business for the bloc to attend to. However, it was foreign policy that ultimately topped the agenda during the European summit of presidents and prime ministers of the 27 member states in Brussels on Thursday and Friday, in what might be a prelude to some troubled months to come, internationally.

The growing proliferation of foreign challenges is a huge headache for the bloc's leaders, because only a very limited political window of opportunity remains for them to get major pieces of domestic policy approved before the European Parliament election campaign kicks into top gear. These include finalization of the bloc's multiyear financial framework covering the period until 2027.

During the summit, there was some after-dinner discussion of this, along with the EU economy and its competitiveness in terms of driving longer-term prosperity.

The EU single market was founded on an open, liberal model but leaders of member states are increasingly aware of a fast-changing international context in which other key nations are heavily subsidizing industry through measures such as the US Inflation Protection Act.

There was also a brief, related discussion with the presidents of the European Central Bank and the Eurogroup (the finance ministers of eurozone nations) to discuss the economic and financial landscape, and continued close coordination and governance of macroeconomic policies. This included a review of the progress of Europe's Capital Markets Union and Banking Union, plus the work to establish a

digital euro.

Yet, these critical topics were largely overshadowed by the urgency of developments in global affairs. This reflected a recent warning by Jamie Dimon, the CEO of JPMorgan Chase, that the world might be living through "the most dangerous time in decades ... the war in Ukraine, compounded by the unfolding situation in the Middle East, may have far-reaching impacts on energy and food

Andrew Hammond

Nathalie Loiseau, a European lawmaker and senior member of French President Emmanuel Macron's Renew Europe group, said: "I don't understand what the president of the commission has to do with foreign policy, which is not her mandate."

Perhaps the biggest criticism of von der Leyen's trip is the perception by some that she did not place

The country's president, Volodymyr Zelensky, voiced this sentiment on Thursday and said that "we must do everything to prevent an even larger international fire from breaking out in the Middle East. The enemies of freedom are very interested in bringing the free world to the second front ... the sooner security prevails in the Middle East, the sooner we will restore security here in Europe."

A third reason for the migration crisis, during which about 1 million Syrian refugees crossed from Turkey into Greece alone, according to UN estimates.

The huge amount of time spent on the Middle East at the summit is tinged with irony, given the relative present-day weakness of Europe in the region. For much of the 20th century, European nations were key players there. The Venice Declaration of 1980, for example, moved momentum toward international recognition of the Palestinian right to statehood.

However, it has been decades since Europe had such significant political influence in the region. Now, the US is the only nation, even when we consider China, with the diplomatic and military clout to affect the brewing crisis in the region.

The relative powerlessness of Europe is underlined by the likelihood that — despite visits by several European leaders to Israel recently, including Germany's Olaf Scholz and France's Emmanuel Macron — Netanyahu will probably ignore the summit outcomes. These include the much debated European compromise language for "humanitarian pauses" to allow more aid to flow into Gaza, and "support for the holding of an international peace conference soon."

Taking all of this together, it is clear that much has changed in Europe since Mark Eyskens, the former prime minister of Belgium, said in 1991 that the bloc was "an economic giant, a political dwarf and a military worm."

The EU's relative lack of influence during the current Middle East crisis underlines that it has a long way to go in its ambition to become a genuinely global geopolitical player in the aftermath of Russia's invasion of Ukraine.

enough emphasis on the need for Tel Aviv to respect international law during its military operations in Gaza.

The EU's top diplomat, Josep Borrell, even dared to issue a public criticism of her in which he stated that foreign policy is decided by the leaders of the EU's 27 member countries during international summits, and discussed by foreign ministers in meetings "chaired by me."

A second reason for the lengthy discussions about the Middle East was that Ukrainian authorities and a growing number of EU leaders are concerned that the crisis in Gaza will distract or undermine the political focus of the West on Ukraine. The country's president, Volodymyr Zelensky, voiced this sentiment on Thursday and said that "we must do everything to prevent an even larger international fire from breaking out in the Middle East. The enemies of freedom are very interested in bringing the free world to the second front ... the sooner security prevails in the Middle East, the sooner we will restore security here in Europe."

markets, global trade and geopolitical relationships." Ukraine is now high on the agenda at every EU summit, and this was supplemented by discussions about the respective challenges in Kosovo-Serbia relations, the South Caucasus, and the Sahel. Yet it was the dramatic current situation in the Middle East that took up much of the available time at the summit.

There were a number of reasons why the discussions on the topic took so long, including diplomatic concerns about European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen's unscheduled trip to Israel this month.

The Israeli war against Hamas must not be a war against Gaza and its people

Yossi Mekelberg

achieving this will be no easy task, in light of the intensity of the situation and the ever-rising number of casualties.

The instant support shown by the US in particular, and personally by Biden, not only in terms of solidarity with Israel and its people but also regarding arms supplies and naval vessels being moved into position off Israel's shores, means that Washington is best placed to have the last word on when the ground offensive starts and how it is conducted.

Yet, wars inevitably have their own dynamics, and one knows how they start but rarely how they will end. In a way, the focus on the timing and nature of an Israeli ground attack has diverted and sedated the response to Israel's non-stop aerial bombardment of Gaza over the past three weeks, which has already claimed, according to the Health Ministry in Gaza, more than 6,000 lives, many of them civilians with

minister, his Cabinet and his military commanders have committed themselves to the sole objective of destroying all of Hamas' and Islamic Jihad's military capabilities, leaving very little room for them to mitigate this decision.

In light of the events of Oct. 7, which shocked Israeli society to the core, spread fearful doubt in the ability of its security forces to defend its citizens, and broke whatever little trust was left in the government and, especially, Netanyahu, Israel's excessive use of force in its response was expected, even if not justified.

Yet, three weeks into this response, the worst war between Israelis and Palestinians since 1948, there is a need to ensure that it does not become a matter of saving Netanyahu from the anger of his own people and his inevitable political downfall, not only for failing so spectacularly to defend the nation but also for showing such flaccid leadership abilities since the attack.

It is mystifying that while Washington has been hesitant to give Israeli authorities the green light to send ground forces into the Gaza Strip — in part because it does not think Israel is adequately prepared for such an intense and exacting operation, but also because of the potential for further loss of life — it has not called on those authorities to be more surgical in their aerial bombardment campaign, to prevent widespread civilian casualties, or to allow more aid convoys to enter Gaza. A wholesale ground incursion into the Gaza Strip might be inevitable, not only for military purposes (a number of very targeted actions have already taken place) but also because Israel's prime minister, his Cabinet and his military commanders have committed themselves to the sole objective of destroying all of Hamas' and Islamic Jihad's military capabilities, leaving very little room for them to mitigate this decision.

nothing to do with Hamas or militancy. It has also inflicted huge swaths of destruction on Gaza's infrastructure, which was already on the brink of collapse before Oct. 7.

Moreover, the lives of about 220 hostages, many of them foreign nationals, are dependent on how this conflict, dubbed the "Iron Swords War" by Israel, unfolds.

It is mystifying that while Washington has been hesitant to give Israeli authorities the green light to send ground forces into the Gaza Strip — in part because it does not think Israel is adequately prepared for such an intense and exacting operation, but also because of the potential for further loss of life — it has not called on those authorities to be more surgical in their aerial bombardment campaign, to prevent widespread civilian casualties, or to allow more aid convoys to enter Gaza.

A wholesale ground incursion into the Gaza Strip might be inevitable, not only for military purposes (a number of very targeted actions have already taken place) but also because Israel's prime

Looking at the bigger picture, which is usually forgotten, preventing extremism and violence of the kind committed by Hamas will not be achieved by treating the entire population of Gaza as mere collateral damage. This would be immoral and, equally, counterproductive.

Netanyahu might be correct that the war with Hamas will be a long one, but it must avoid hurting the innocent in the process because that would also compromise any future attempt to embark, in due course, on talks that could result in peaceful coexistence and reconciliation in the aftermath of the war.

Israel's response must be one that builds hope for a better future that guarantees its own security, not one that will deliver Palestinians into the hands of the very people who would like to see the destruction of Israel.

This is where the international community can, and must, play an important role in restraining Israel's use of force against civilians, ensuring the delivery of humanitarian aid, and negotiating a ceasefire and a political plan for the day after.

Turkiye's guarantor proposal should be considered

Turkish Foreign Minister Hakan Fidan on Wednesday warned that the Middle East is "at a turning point," adding: "We will either move toward a larger war or a greater peace." This statement was critical because a larger war involving regional states and nonstate actors would be a dire scenario. This situation is compelling Middle Eastern countries to focus on a second option: finding ways to achieve a greater peace.

One of these approaches was put forward by Ankara. Türkiye's top diplomat has engaged in shuttle diplomacy over the past week, visiting Egypt, Lebanon, Saudi Arabia, the UAE and Qatar. During his visit to Egypt, he proposed a new mechanism of guarantors to resolve the decades-long Israeli-Palestinian issue and suggested Türkiye could be one of the guarantors.

This proposal is very important, as it seems to be one of the most effective and concrete so far put forward, particularly given the deep divisions within the international community over the conflict. While some parties are exacerbating tensions, others are striving to achieve a ceasefire as quickly as possible to prevent the crisis from

spreading throughout the region. Türkiye and the countries that view its guarantor proposal positively definitely belong to the second group. To date, no other country has put forward a proposal that is as constructive.

The messages conveyed by Ankara this week made it evident that Türkiye is ready to act as a guarantor for the Palestinian side. Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan, in his strongest comments on the conflict since the events of Oct. 7, stated that Hamas is not a terrorist organization but a liberation group fighting a battle to protect Palestinian lands and people. Erdogan's statement came after several reports claimed that Ankara had asked Hamas members in Türkiye to leave the country; claims that were denied by the Turkish side.

There are actors in the first group that are fanning the flames of the ongoing conflict, primarily the Western backers of Israel. France, for example, proposed expanding the Global Coalition Against Daesh, created in 2014, to fight Hamas as well. Israel is not a member of this coalition.

French President Emmanuel Macron's proposal, made during a visit to Israel, took regional

Sinem Cengiz

states by surprise, especially since many said they had not been consulted. However, associating Hamas with Daesh would be considered unacceptable in Palestine and highly inflammatory in the region, as several actors have been involved in discussions with the group regarding the release of hostages and ending the conflict.

Oct. 7 marked a turning point for the Middle East, altering the dynamics of Turkish foreign policy as well as the region's balances. Ankara had been in the process of normalizing relations with Israel, while some other regional countries were also considering such a move.

Erdogan, for instance, said he had canceled a plan to visit Israel due to its inhumane war on Gaza. Moreover, Erdogan is expected to participate in a massive rally in Istanbul on Saturday to defend the rights of Palestinians.

Erdogan has also proposed an international peace conference for the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. Türkiye hosted a similar international conference on Palestine in late 2017, in which all influential actors in the region participated. There is currently wide-

spread solidarity with the Palestinian people in Türkiye, both at the state and public levels. Fidan's proposal of the country being a guarantor for peace aligns with this context.

However, within the framework of the guarantor formula, there must also be a guarantor for Israel. Türkiye seems to view the US, which is also in favor of a two-state model, as a suitable candidate for this role, although Washington is playing a very different tune at the moment.

The involvement of a Western state in the diplomatic process is essential for achieving a ceasefire and a peace settlement that all actors can accept. While the regional countries' efforts are crucial, the participation of Western actors — as long as they aim to ease tensions, not fan the flames — could be a game-changer.

But it would be naive to expect much from the Western world, given its conflicting stances on Syria, Libya and elsewhere. Most Western politicians, for the sake of their political interests, have offered unconditional support to Israel, following in the footsteps of the US. However, this ongoing conflict puts the interests of the Western actors in jeopardy,

as its expansion into a regional war would harm their interests.

Therefore, the involvement of Western states that have adopted a balanced policy toward the conflict, such as Spain, Italy and Greece, is important this time, for the sake of Palestine and the region. Fidan's meeting with his German counterpart, Annalena Baerbock, during his visit to Egypt was important in this regard. It must be assumed that Fidan discussed the guarantor proposal with her. While there has not yet been any enthusiasm from the Western world regarding the Turkish proposal, Russia has expressed its readiness to discuss and consider Ankara's initiative.

The guarantor system entails substantial responsibilities and duties. It requires a mechanism of dialogue in case one side violates its rules.

Therefore, when a ceasefire is achieved, who assumes the guarantor role is highly important. Although it remains uncertain whether the guarantor proposal will be reciprocated, at the very least it is a proposal that could be possible if Western actors genuinely considered being part of it.

Luke Coffey

years.

Ukraine's actions on the Black Sea have also allowed important grain shipments to Africa and Asia to continue. Before the invasion, Ukraine was one of the largest agricultural exporters in the world. When the war began, the future of its agricultural exports was in doubt. Last year a Turkish-led diplomatic effort brokered the Black Sea Grain Initiative between Russia and Ukraine. In July, Moscow withdrew from the deal, gain throwing the safety and security of Ukrainian grain exports in doubt. After a short pause, however, Ukraine resumed grain shipments. Clearly, this would not have been possible without Ukraine's success against the Russian Navy.

The Battle for the Black Sea has been a reminder of two important geopolitical realities in the region. First, the Crimean Peninsula remains the most strategic piece of territory in the Black Sea. Recognized internationally as part of Ukraine but annexed and under Russian control since 2014, it was originally thought by Moscow to be a safe distance away from Ukrainian strikes. The peninsula has been used as a springboard for Russia's attacks against the rest of Ukraine. If Russia maintains a military presence in Crimea, Ukraine will never be fully safe. This is why any end to the conflict, whether militarily or diplomatically, must result in Crimea being returned to Ukraine.

Secondly, Türkiye has an irreplaceable role in the region. For hundreds of

years, Türkiye has been in competition with Russia over influence and control in the Black Sea. The 1936 Montreux convention granted Türkiye sovereignty over the straits that connect the Black Sea to the Mediterranean. When the Ukraine war began, Türkiye used the authority granted to it in the convention to prevent Russian warships from entering the Black Sea. This has stopped Russia from reinforcing its Black Sea Fleet with additional ships. Türkiye has also played an important role in developing Ukraine's naval capabilities. Currently, two warships for Ukraine are being manufactured in Türkiye. While Ankara has strived to maintain a delicate balance between Ukraine and Russia in this war, Ankara knows that a weaker Russia in the Black Sea is better

for Türkiye.

When Russia first invaded, few could have imagined that it would lose so many warships against a country effectively without a navy. Ukraine's success was made possible by technological advancements that the Russians were not expecting. Even some of Ukraine's partners were skeptical of some of its new concepts, such as the development of maritime drones or the ability to produce affordable anti-ship missiles.

The lessons learned from Ukraine's experience in the Black Sea can be applied to other regions in the world, such as the Gulf, the Caspian Sea, or the South China Sea. There is no doubt that policymakers in these regions are taking note. Ukraine is changing the future of naval warfare. Because of this, it is winning the battle of the Black Sea.

How Ukraine is winning the battle of the Black Sea

Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky told the annual Crimean Platform Summit last week: "The Russian military fleet can no longer operate in the western part of the Black Sea and is fleeing from Crimea. This is a historic achievement." He was correct.

Much of the international focus in Russia's invasion of Ukraine has been on the brutal fighting taking place on land. This is to be expected: thousands of videos showing tanks and armored vehicles being destroyed are available for the world to see online. At times, both sides are firing more artillery shells in one week than some European countries produce in one year, and drones drop bombs on troops hiding in trench systems reminiscent of the First World War.

One area overlooked,

therefore, is the fight for control of the Black Sea. While Ukraine's counteroffensive on land is making slower progress than many had hoped, Kyiv's actions at sea are having significant success. This is interesting because Ukraine barely has a navy to speak of. Of the few ships it had, most were destroyed by Russia in the early days of the invasion in February 2022. However, the absence of its own fleet has been compensated for by creativity, ingenuity and determination, enabling Ukraine to deliver significant blows to the Russian Navy.

There is publicly available evidence that Ukraine has damaged or destroyed at least 16 Russian vessels since the war began. This includes the Moskva, the flag ship of Russia's Black Sea Fleet, which was sunk in April 2022 with a cre-

ative combination of Turkish-made Bayraktar TB2 drones and Ukrainian-produced Neptune anti-ship cruise missiles.

Last month, Ukraine used British-supplied air-launched cruise missiles to destroy a Russian attack submarine undergoing repairs in a drydock in occupied Crimea. This vessel was worth an estimated \$300 million, but is now a heap of scrap metal. It was the first time a Russian submarine had been lost in combat since the Second World War. In the same strike, the Ukrainians also destroyed a Ropucha-class landing ship. A month before, the Ukrainians severely damaged another Ropucha-class landing ship with a maritime drone packing 450 kilograms of explosive. These strikes significantly reduced Russia's ability to perform

an amphibious landing against Ukraine's largest port city, Odesa.

Ukraine's ability to hit naval targets has had an impact on where the Russian Navy can freely operate in the Black Sea. Commercially available satellite imagery shows that most of the Russian Navy has relocated from its bases in Crimea to a smaller base in Novorossiysk on the Russian mainland. This port is primarily for civilian use and is not equipped to handle so many warships. Consequently, the de facto leader of Abkhazia, a region of Georgia along the Black Sea that has been under Russian occupation since 2008, said recently that a new Russian naval base will be built there. Even if this does happen, construction will take



Review imposition of blended gas policy in KP

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: Sarhad Chamber of Commerce and Industry president Fuad Ishaq said imposition of blended gas policy on Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, where in surplus gas production and also a net exporting province is tantamount to push its industries towards destruction and usurp the constitutional rights.

The SCCI chief called the policy as a complete unjust, deplorable and detrimental, which should be reviewed, and to keep the wheel running of industries.

If in case not do so, Fuad expressed fear that the terrorism and Coronavirus pandemic lockdown battered industries of the province will come to a complete halt and will give birth to massive unemployment in the KP.

Fuad Ishaq expressed these apprehensions and opposition toward the policy during a meeting with former All Pakistan Textile Mills Association (APTMA) former provin-

cial chairman Afan Aziz here at the chamber's house, said in a press release issued on Sunday.

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

Fuad Ishaq said central government after increasing gas prices by 193 per cent, is mulling to impose the blended gas policy, which is sheer unjust and unfair with the business community and industrialists of the region/province, like KP, wherein the gas production is surplus and also a net exporter province of the natural gas, which is unacceptable.

During the discussion, the SCCI chief said the government plans to supply natural gas to Khyber Pakhtunkhwa by implementing a blended gas policy with a ratio of 80/20 under which gas rates will further surge up for different sectors in the province.

Apart from implementation of the blended policy, Fuad Ishaq said RLNG rates will also impose on

the KP region, which is highly unfair with this province, and a complete negation of article 158-A that gave guarantee to KP that it should first use its indigenous natural resources.

Not a single industrial gas connection was given to Khyber Pakhtunkhwa over the past 13 years, contrary to that industrial gas connections were provided in Punjab, which was tantamount of discriminatory attitude, Fuad Ishaq said.

The SCCI chief said the terrorism and coronavirus pandemic lockdown suffered KP industries are still reeling while the industries have also confronted with several others difficulties owing far away from seaport and central market and now KP industries will come to verge of complete closure after the recent increase by 193 per cent gas prices, with imposition of the blended gas policy that will also generate unemployment in the province.

He enumerated the total gas production of KP is

approximately 400mmcfds against its 200mmcfds consumption despite the fact that gas was providing on highest rates to consumers of the province, which open violation of the article 158-A, and tantamount to usurp the constitutional rights of smaller federating units.

Fuad Ishaq lodged a protest over imposing the blended gas policy on KP, asking the government to review this policy, and withdraw it in the best interest of industries, trade and businesses and national economy.

The chamber president was of the view that KP business community and people have rendered countless sacrifices for the country and its defence, so now in this difficult time, small province should give status of small brother and be treated KP province with compassion so that people business and wheel of industries should keep running and this province hardworker, shopkeepers and industrialists continue to earn livelihoods for their families.

Massive hike in gas prices feared to accelerate already high inflation

F.P. Report

LAHORE: The Pakistan Industrial and Traders Associations Front (PIAF) has anticipated that taking the effect of gas price hike into account, the average Consumer Price Index for FY24 will likely reach 25% as the announcement of a massive hike of up to 193% in gas tariff for different sectors of the economy is feared to accelerate the already high inflation.

PIAF Chairman Faheemur Rehman Saigol said that the caretaker government has increased gas tariff with effect from Nov 2023 just before the first IMF review under the \$3 billion short-term loan program. This is the second gas price increase in 10 months.

The gas price hike is a condition attached to the loan programme. It may pave the way for the release of second IMF tranche of \$700 million.

Calling for reverting the decision, he said that the industries that may resort to price increase include fertiliser, cement and steel,

which will make agricultural production and construction material more expensive.

The inflation forecast is higher than the State Bank of Pakistan's (SBP) projection of 20-22%. The central bank governor has said that the expected gas price hike has been incorporated into the inflation forecast.

Faheem Saigol said that feed and fuel stock prices are forecast to increase to Rs580 per million British thermal units (mmbtu) from the current price of Rs510, and to Rs1,580 per mmbtu from the current price of Rs1,500, respectively.

Earlier, the Oil and Gas Regulatory Authority (Ogra) had notified revised gas prices in February 2023 for consumers of Sui Southern Gas Company (SSGC) and Sui Northern Gas Pipelines Limited (SNGPL), after which Fauji Fertiliser Bin Qasim Limited (FFBL) and Engro Fertilisers jacked up fertiliser prices.

As per proposed revised gas tariff for other categories of gas consumers,

the gas price for bulk consumers is proposed to be raised from Rs 1,600/mmbtu to Rs 2,000/mmbtu, while the gas price for special commercial (Roti Tandoor) will remain the same at Rs 697/mmbtu and gas price for commercial consumers is proposed to go up from Rs 1,650/mmbtu to Rs 3,900/mmbtu. Similarly, gas tariff for Liberty Power is proposed to increase from existing Rs 2,406/mmbtu to Rs 3,890/mmbtu while the gas price for Liberty Power is based on HSFO linked formula and not fixed by the government. Likewise, gas price for fertilizer plant of FFBQL (feed) is proposed to be increased from existing Rs 510/mmbtu to Rs 580/mmbtu while no change in gas price for Engro is proposed as Engro Fertilizer Ltd (new plant) has a claim of extended period for feed gas concessionary tariff of US\$ 0.7/mmbtu due to non-supply of gas by SNGPL and Sindh High Court has granted stay order to maintain the status quo.

However, gas price for fertilizer (fuel) is proposed to be increased from existing Rs 1,500/mmbtu to Rs 1,580/mmbtu. Furthermore, gas price for cement category of gas consumers is proposed to be revised from existing Rs 1,500/mmbtu to Rs 4,400/mmbtu.

He informed that the gas price for export industry (process & captive) is proposed to be revised from existing Rs 1100/mmbtu to Rs 2,050/mmbtu and the gas price for non-export industry (process & captive) is proposed to be increased from existing Rs 1,200/mmbtu to Rs 2,600/mmbtu. Also, the gas price for the category of CNG is proposed to be revised from Rs 1,805/mmbtu to Rs 4,400/mmbtu.

Sui Southern Gas Company Limited (SSGCL) and Sui Northern Gas Pipelines Ltd (SNGPL) are public sector gas utility companies licensed from Oil and Gas Regulatory Authority (OGRA) for purchase, transmission, distribution and sale of gas to consumers in the country.

Private sector asked for investing in technology advancement

ISLAMABAD (APP): Coordinator to Federal Tax Ombudsman Meher Kashif Younis Sunday emphasized the paramount significance of innovation in propelling Pakistan's technology sector to greater heights with sole active participation of private sector.

Speaking at a seminar on "Innovation for development led Economy" organised under the aegis of Gold Ring Economic Forum, he said In today's rapidly evolving global landscape, innovation stands as the cornerstone of progress, enabling nations to adapt, compete, and thrive.

He said technology parks have played a central role in these efforts. Technology parks and inno-

vation clusters are physical locations where businesses, research institutions, and entrepreneurs can collaborate and innovate, he added.

He said Finlan, Singapore, South Korea, German, China, California, Ankara, Bangaluru in India and Cambridge are excellent living examples of promoting innovation that played magic in propelling their economies to new heights globally.

Pakistan, with its vast pool of talent and untapped potential, has a unique opportunity to harness innovation for economic growth, he said adding that by investing in research and development, fostering a culture of creativity, and providing adequate support

to startups and entrepreneurs, Pakistan must unlock new avenues in technology.

He said Innovation not only drives advancements in sectors such as healthcare, agriculture, and education but also enhances the nation's overall competitiveness on the international stage.

He said while promoting innovation for economic development is crucial, there are challenges and considerations that must be addressed.

Meher Kashif Younis who is also Chairman Kyrgyzstan Trade House said embracing innovation will address pressing societal challenges, create high-skilled employment opportunities, and attract foreign

investments. Collaborative efforts between the government, private sector, and educational institutions are essential in creating an ecosystem that nurtures innovation and entrepreneurship, he added.

He said socio-economic development must be lby private sector-led innovation, adding that private-sector engagement in innovation is vital for economic development.

Pakistan, he said needs to encourage this involvement through various incentives by public sector, adding that It is essential to implement policies that ensure that the benefits of innovation are widely distributed and not concentrated in the hands of a few.

confiscated.

However, risk remains as investors brace for possible unrest as the nation prepares to hold national elections in the first few months of next year, he said, adding that the muted growth in country's export and remittance inflows have made Pakistan more dependent on foreign inflows from friendly countries in the Middle East as well as China.

Pakistan is set to receive the IMF mission, led by Nathan Porter, on November 2 to discuss the first review of the country's current \$3 billion standby arrangement (SBA), which has been seen as providing stability to the economy in distress.

On the back of a crackdown on smuggling and illegal exchanges, the



PESHAWAR: President Sarhad Chamber of Commerce and Industry president Fuad Ishaq talking to a business delegation at Chamber's House.

Need urged to support research

ISLAMABAD (APP): Chairman of Pakistan Hightech Hybrid Seed Association (PHHSA), Shahzad Ali Malik Sunday urged to continue supporting research and development in seed technology, enabling farmers nationwide to harness the full potential of these remarkable innovations.

He said hybrid seeds have made remarkable contributions in boosting agricultural production worldwide including Pakistan.

Talking to a delegation of progressive farmers, he said in recent years, the agricultural sector has witnessed a transformative revolution in Pakistan due to the innovative advancements in seed technology, particularly the development and utilization of hybrid seeds.

He said its significance in enhancing agricultural productivity cannot be overstated. He said Guard hybrid rice seed, engineered through meticulous research and cutting-edge techniques, has proven to be a game-changer for farmers in Pakistan.

Their unique genetic composition, combining desirable traits from different varieties, empowers farmers to cultivate crops that are more resilient, disease-resistant, and high-yielding, he remarked.

This resilience not only ensures a stable food supply but also minimizes the environmental impact of farming practices, he added.

He said one of the most commendable aspects of these seeds is their adaptability to diverse agro-climatic conditions.

Farmers now grow a variety of crops in regions where traditional seeds struggle to thrive. This adaptability fosters agricultural diversification, which is crucial for food security, he added.

Moreover, the increased yield and quality of crops resulting from these seeds provide a sustainable solution to the growing demand for food in our ever-expanding population.

Shahzad said by enhancing crop yields and reducing the susceptibility to pests and diseases, these seeds contribute significantly to the income of farmers. This, in turn, strengthens rural economies and uplifts the living standards of farming communities, he added.

Furthermore, the increased agricultural output facilitates the growth of related industries, including food processing and distribution, thereby creating employment opportunities and stimulating economic development, he added.

Traders holds jewelry preview for CIIE

SHANGHAI (INP): In a bid to give full play to the spillover effect of the China International Import Expo (CIIE) to promote Pakistani jewelry culture, Aqeel Chaudhry, founder of Pakistani jewelry band WINZA, who has been residing in China for the past 22 years, organized a grand Pakistani jewelry brand preview of the CIIE at New World DAIMARU, one of the first class shopping malls in Shanghai.

The preview drew attendees including potential buyers, industry professionals, and enthusiasts, Gwadar Pro reported on Sunday. Aqeel Chaudhry showcased a stunning collection of traditional and contemporary Pakistani jewelry, highlighting the rich heritage and craftsmanship of the country.

Guests were captivated by the display of exquisite necklaces, earrings, bracelets and rings, all reflecting the diversity and beauty of Pakistani jewelry. The sixth CIIE will be held at the National Exhibition and Convention Center?Shanghai? from November 5 to 10, which is the fifth time for Li Long to participate in the CIIE.

Recognizing the immense potential of the Chinese market, Aqeel has seized the opportunity to introduce Pakistani jewelry to a wider audience.

He sees the CIIE as a platform to keep abreast of the latest trends, urge his product progress and learn from peers.

This year, he will display rubies, sapphires from the world's major producing regions as well as peridots and most famous emeralds from Pakistan at his 36-

square-meter booth at CIIE.

With the success of this preview, Aqeel believes that Pakistani jewelry is poised to make a lasting impression at the upcoming CIIE, further strengthening the cultural and economic ties between Pakistan and China.

In 2019, WINZA established its first boutique in Shanghai, won the honorary title of "Jewelry Star" of the 3rd CIIE, and the second boutique was set up in Shenyang in March this year.

Aqeel collects data on the behavior of Chinese jewelry consumers by attending major exhibitions in China, which gives him confidence in the prospects of the Chinese market.

"We are also considering opening a branch in Beijing according to the actual market situation," he added.

PFC taking steps to address issues

ISLAMABAD (APP): Chief Executive Officer Pakistan Furniture Council (PFC) Mian Kashif Ashfaq Sunday said that the Council was making efforts to address the issue of a skilled workforce for the development of the local furniture industry.

He said that the furniture industry was currently grappling with a shortage of skilled workers, leading to significant delays in meeting export targets.

Chairing a board of directors meeting he said this shortage has posed a substantial challenge for the industry, hindering production capacities and impacting the timely delivery of orders.

He said PFC recognizes the urgency of addressing this issue and is actively exploring measures to enhance skill development programs, collaborate with vocational training institutes, and attract more tal-

ent to the furniture sector.

He said overcoming this skilled labor deficit is vital not only for the growth of the furniture industry but also for fulfilling export commitments, ensuring customer satisfaction, and bolstering the country's economy.

The PFC is committed to finding sustainable solutions and fostering a skilled workforce to boost productivity and meet international market demands effectively, he added.

Ministry bolsters efforts for agri sector projects

ISLAMABAD (APP): Considering the agriculture sector's paramount importance, already identified as a priority by the Special Investment Facilitation Council (SIFC), the Ministry of Planning, Development, and Special Initiatives has intensified its efforts to execute agriculture-related projects.

In the current fiscal year, several projects worth billions of rupees were allocated for the agriculture sector under the Public Sector Development Program (PSDP 2023-24) to tap huge potential in the agriculture sector, according to the Planning Ministry.

Pakistan has vast potential for foreign investment

in the field of agriculture as the country is a semi-industrialized economy with a well-integrated agricultural sector that contributes 22.9% to GDP and creates 37.4% of jobs, ensures food security and provides raw materials for industries.

While gearing up the efforts, the Planning Ministry asked the ministries concerned to accelerate the implementation so that the projects could be completed timely, especially at a time when the SIFC took the lead and agriculture was the top priority besides the other key sectors.

The SIFC was established earlier this year to attract foreign and local investments while targeting

five key areas which include Agriculture, Defence Production, Mining/Minerals, Information Technology and Telecommunication and Energy.

Prime Minister's Initiatives for Green Revolution 2.0 worth Rs 5000 million is a landmark project initiated to address the key constraints to the productivity of agriculture.

The government emphasized on promotion of technology to reduce post-harvest losses, value addition for grain, fruits and vegetables, productivity enhancement of major crops, engagement of women and youth in agriprenure, agri-business and to promote and support agricultural research.

Crackdowns must against dollars' hoarding as rupee gets volatile again: BMP

F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: The Federation of Pakistan Chambers of Commerce and Industry' Businessmen Panel (BMP), while calling for tightening the noose of law through constant crackdowns on smuggling and hoarding of dollars to maintain stability of rupee, has said that the local currency has once again started declining mode after emerging among the world's top-performing currencies in the past two months.

FPCCI former president and BMP Chairman Mian Anjum Nisar said the rupee appreciation run is to be attributed to government's administrative measures against dollar smuggling and hoarding. The appreciation comes amid a crackdown against informal

channels that are used to smuggle currencies into neighboring countries. These administrative measures have clamped down speculative and hoarding practices of informal markets.

FPCCI former president and BMP Chairman Mian Anjum Nisar said that in the past few sessions the rupee has lost around 1% and this development came after the interim government cracked down on smuggling and hoarding of foreign currency, while the central bank suspended the authorization of nine exchange companies for noncompliance of rules and regulations and serious violations, which need to continue to stable the rupee.

He said that the rupee recently saw one of the longest appreciation runs

against the US dollar, surging around 10% since the start of September, making it the best-performing currency globally after Afghanistan's afghani. The improvement came after the State Bank of Pakistan (SBP) announced a list of structural reforms last month, targeting the Exchange Companies (ECs).

The recent appreciation of the Pakistani rupee will likely be short-lived, given soaring interest costs and only short-term arrangements with the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and bilateral financing to support the external balance, he said.

Countrywide raids were also reported with dozens of illegal currency exchanges barred from running operations and foreign currency worth millions

confiscated.

However, risk remains as investors brace for possible unrest as the nation prepares to hold national elections in the first few months of next year, he said, adding that the muted growth in country's export and remittance inflows have made Pakistan more dependent on foreign inflows from friendly countries in the Middle East as well as China.

Pakistan is set to receive the IMF mission, led by Nathan Porter, on November 2 to discuss the first review of the country's current \$3 billion standby arrangement (SBA), which has been seen as providing stability to the economy in distress.

On the back of a crackdown on smuggling and illegal exchanges, the

Pakistani rupee emerged as the best-performing currency in the world in September.

The currency appreciated from Rs305.54 against the US dollar on August 31 to Rs287.74 on September 28 against the greenback, an increase of Rs17.8 or 6.2%. The rupee is currently also on a winning run of 17 sessions, in which it has gained nearly 7% after it hit a record low of 307.1 on September 5.

Moreover, during the month, the State Bank of Pakistan (SBP) also announced structural reforms targeting Exchange Companies (ECs) sector.

Among the measures announced is the central bank directive for the commercial banks to establish their own ECs, as wholly-owned subsidiaries.

Moreover, the SBP also directed to raise the minimum capital requirement for ECs from Rs200 million to Rs500 million.

The rate between the open- and inter-bank market is narrowing. We could possibly see remittances improve, and reach up to \$2.4 billion in coming months, he added.

The materialisation of external flows would further subsidize pressure on the rupee. He said the improvement comes after the government and regulator started taking steps to control illegal currency trade and smuggling.

The rupee gained 6-9% in the inter-bank market against three major currencies i.e. USD, UK Pound, Euro, in last few weeks, he said.

In the open market, it

gained 11-13%, eliminating the premium of open-market rate in spite of the US Dollar index reaching a 10-month high," he added.

A market-based exchange rate is one of the key conditions agreed upon by the Pakistani authorities as they inked the much-needed \$3 billion Stand-By Arrangement (SBA) with the IMF in July to help avert a sovereign default.

Anjum Nisar observed that besides increasing exports and controlling imports the government will have to take administrative measures, as a large demand of cash dollars are seen in the market.

He argued that this devaluation of the currency was dictated by the IMF through prior actions and it has nothing to do with macroeconomic fundamen-

tals. He said that there was a complete breakdown of economic policymaking, as the country's fiscal policy had become subservient to monetary and exchange rate policies.

He urged the government to control volatility of rupee against the US dollar, as the industrial revival and economic growth is not possible without stability of local currency.

He said that the massive devaluation of currency fuelled inflationary pressures, adding that two major factors contributed to the price hike. First, the prices of food and commodities as well as fuel prices skyrocketed in the international market, and second, the depreciation of the exchange rate by 30 percent also led to higher inflation, he added.



In brief

Multan, Lahore teams qualify

MULTAN (APP): Lahore and Multan teams qualified for the last league final match under the Prime Minister's Talent Hunt Youth sports Squash League, which will be held tomorrow, October 30. The men's and women's teams of Multan also completed the hat-trick of victories by defeating the Rawalpindi team. According to the results of the matches, Multan and Lahore were unbeaten in the event by defeating Sialkot and Faisalabad. The final match played between Multan and Lahore would decide the champion in the women's category on the last day. Sargodha and Faisalabad will compete for the third position today. In the men's categories, the teams of Multan and Lahore have also beat Faisalabad, Rawalpindi, and Sialkot in their first three league matches.

Chameera to replace Kumara

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Event Technical Committee of the ICC Men's Cricket World Cup 2023 has approved Dushmantha Chameera as a replacement for Lahiru Kumara in the Sri Lanka squad. Chameera, who has played 44 ODIs, was named as a replacement after Kumara was ruled out due to a left thigh muscle injury sustained during training in Pune, said a press release. The replacement of a player requires the approval of the Event Technical Committee before the player can be officially added to the squad. The Event Technical Committee of the ICC Men's Cricket World Cup 2023 consists of Wasim Khan (ICC General Manager - Cricket, ETC Chair), Chris Tetley (ICC Head of Events), Hemang Amin (Acting CEO - BCCI), Gaurav Saxena (General Manager - Operations, BCCI), Russel Arnold and Simon Doull (Independent Representatives).

Tyson Fury wins split decision

RIYADH (AFP/APP): World heavyweight champion Tyson Fury beat mixed martial arts fighter Francis Ngannou in a split decision after their boxing bout went the distance in Saudi Arabia on Sunday. Ngannou knocked Fury down in round three but the 35-year-old British fighter, though shaken, was able to continue. The undefeated Fury earlier this week laughed off his opponent as a "big fat sausage" but afterwards acknowledged that the 37-year-old Cameroonian had effectively kept him off-balance. "He's a very awkward man, and he's a good puncher and I respect him a lot," Fury said of Ngannou, adding that it was "probably one of the toughest" fights he has had in a decade. Fury was the overwhelming favourite against boxing novice Ngannou. "This was my first boxing match, great experience -- I'm not giving any excuse," Ngannou said in a ring-side interview. "I know I come up short, I'm going to come back and work harder... now I know I can do this." Fury's WBC heavyweight belt was not on the line in the "Battle of the Baddest" in the Saudi capital Riyadh, but Saudi officials nevertheless hoped it would further boost the Gulf kingdom's reputation as a top-flight boxing destination. With all parties desperate to lend the contest some sporting legitimacy, the WBC had fashioned a "Riyadh Champion" belt to allow the winner to strut around the ring at the end with something other than a big, fat pay cheque.

World Cup 2023

England beaten by India in latest capitulation

LUCKNOW (Agencies): England's miserable World Cup campaign slumped further as they collapsed to a 100-run defeat by hosts India in Lucknow.

Chasing 230 on a tricky pitch, the defending champions were bowled out for 129 amid raucous home support in their latest batting capitulation.

It is their fourth defeat in succession in India and their fifth overall - the first time they have lost five times at a World Cup.

After a steady start, Jasprit Bumrah dismissed Dawid Malan and Joe Root in consecutive deliveries to ignite the crowd and spark a horrible collapse of four wickets for nine runs in 27 balls. All 10 wickets went for just 99 runs.

Ben Stokes, like Root, was out for a duck.

He struggled for nine balls before being bowled playing an ugly slog to Mohammed Shami, who also knocked over Jonny Bairstow for 14 via an inside edge. England had earlier been much improved with the ball in keeping to India to a score that looked just below par. Rohit Sharma scored a

composed 87 from 101 but David Willey's 3-45, including Virat Kohli for nought, kept India's star-studded batting line-up in check. The results sends the unbeaten hosts back to the top of the table. They have also all but secured a semi-final spot.

England, meanwhile, are bottom and while they are still not mathematically out of the competition it is a matter of when not if. Only the top seven teams at this tournament will join hosts Pakistan in the Champions Trophy in 2025 so England have work to do.

Another miserable day for England

Unlike their previous defeats, England played well for more than half of this game, but those losses have sapped all of the confidence of a once great batting line-up. India's bowling was superb and the pitch not easy. There was turn and uneven bounce and England's top order fell lack a pack of cards after Malan played on to Bumrah.

Root emerged to a cauldron of noise, horns blaring and Indian flags waving, and missed a straight ball. He reviewed and thought a slight spike on the review

system was an inside edge but the third umpire disagreed. Stokes was beaten four times by Shami before swinging across the line and having his stumps splattered.

Captain Jos Buttler was bowled by a ripper from wrist-spinner Kuldeep Yadav while Moeen Ali nicked off on 15 to become Shami's third victim. Liam Livingstone was the highest scorer with 27.

It is the fourth time in a row England have been bowled out in this competition and they are getting worse. Against Afghanistan they made 215, against South Africa 170, Sri Lanka 156 and now in Lucknow 129. The decisive blow could now come on Saturday at the hands of old rivals Australia in Ahmedabad.

A bowling performance wasted

England had put in their best performance in India so far - eight days after conceding 399 against South Africa, their most expensive bowling effort in 50-over cricket. Willey set the tone by beginning with a maiden. When Rohit struck two sixes and a four in his next over England did not panic.



RIYADH: Tyson Fury punches Francis Ngannou during the Heavyweight fight between Tyson Fury and Francis Ngannou at Boulevard Hall.

Messi eyes an eighth Ballon d'Or with Bonmati set to win women's award

PARIS (Agencies): Lionel Messi is the favourite to win the eighth Ballon d'Or of his remarkable career when this year's ceremony to crown the planet's best footballer takes place in Paris on Monday, while Spain's World Cup-winning star Aitana Bonmati is tipped to take the women's prize.

The prestigious award has been dominated over the last 15 years by Messi and his old adversary Cristiano Ronaldo, who have won it 12 times between them.

Only two other players have won the Ballon d'Or since Ronaldo claimed his first in 2008 - Luka Modric won it in 2018 and Karim Benzema was crowned last year following a brilliant season with Real Madrid.

Messi is set to benefit from a recent change which means the award is now based on a player's record over the last season, rather than over the course of the calendar year. Last season saw Messi lead Argentina to glory at the World Cup in Qatar, where

he scored seven times and was named the tournament's best player.

It was the crowning moment of his astonishing career, and is likely to mean Messi sees off the considerable competition elsewhere among the 30 nominees.

Most notably, there are seven members of the Manchester City team that won the English Premier League, FA Cup and UEFA Champions League under Pep Guardiola. The obvious candidate among them is Erling Haaland, who scored 52 goals in 53 games and has already won the UEFA Player of the Year award for last season.

"I always said that the Ballon d'Or should be in two sections, one for Messi, and after that look for the other one," Guardiola said recently. "Haaland should win. We won the treble and he scored, I don't know, 50 million goals."

"But of course if you tell me the worst season of Messi, it would be the best season for the rest of the

players. "Both deserve it, so what can I say? Selfishly I would say I want it to be Erling because he helped us to achieve what we achieved. I would love it."

The case for Mbappe? Messi's season at club level with Paris Saint-Germain was underwhelming, even if he won Ligue 1 alongside Kylian Mbappe and Neymar. He scored 21 goals for the French club, but was clearly never happy in Paris and was even jeered by his own supporters at times, before moving to Inter Miami in Major League Soccer earlier this year.

There is at least a case to say this should be Mbappe's time. He was clearly PSG's most important player last season, scoring 41 goals, and was also the World Cup's top scorer with eight goals after his incredible hat-trick in that epic final. The French lobby is strong in favour of Mbappe, 24, winning a prize organised in France and handed over in Paris.

South Africa beat New Zealand by a point to win record fourth Rugby World Cup

PARIS (AFP/APP): Handre Pollard kicked four penalties to help South Africa to a nail-biting 12-11 victory over 14-man New Zealand in the Rugby World Cup final on Saturday to claim a record fourth title.

As is so often the case with finals, the match proved to be a tight, edgy encounter at a rain-soaked Stade de France where defence ruled and the All Blacks lost captain Sam Cane to a first-half red card for a high tackle.

The game, with tennis stars Roger Federer and Novak Djokovic among the 80,065 spectators, got off to a dramatic start. All Black flanker Shannon Frizell was yellow carded by referee

Wayne Barnes after just two minutes for an illegal ruck clearout that saw Bok hooker Bongani Mbonambi, the sole specialist number two in the squad, leave the pitch with an injured right knee.

Pollard kicked the penalty as Deon Fourie, a 37-year-old flanker, replaced Mbonambi, who was cleared earlier in the week of using a racial slur against England flanker Tom Curry in the semi-final. Pollard, who kicked 22 points in South Africa's final victory over England four years ago in Japan, booted a second penalty after Codie Taylor failed to roll away in a ruck.

The opening quarter was not for the faint-hearted, each side

delivering a succession of eye-watering hits as the Boks, whose aggressive defence was led by the outstanding Pieter-Steph du Toit, pinned the All Blacks in their own territory.

A late Faf de Klerk hit on Mark Tele'a saw Jordie Barrett kick for the corner and from a series of drives, the Boks infringed and Richie Mo'unga got the All Blacks on the scoreboard with an easy penalty.

Pollard hit straight back after Ardie Savea flopped over a ruck, connecting perfectly to convert a monster 49-metre effort. New Zealand's woes were compounded when Cane was yellow carded in the 29th minute for a high tack-

le on Jesse Kriel, later upgraded to red for a high degree of danger with no mitigation, according to the television match official.

Cane became the first player red-carded in a World Cup final and the All Blacks were reduced to 14 men for 46 minutes of the match. Yet another punishing hit by Du Toit, this time on Will Jordan, piled the pressure back on New Zealand, Pollard kicking his fourth penalty.

Mo'unga kicked a second penalty to make it 12-6 at 40 minutes, the All Blacks trudging back to the changing rooms without their skipper and in full knowledge that no team has ever come back from behind at half-

time to win a final. South Africa then saw two clear try-scoring chances go a-begging.

Firstly, Siya Kolisi was guilty of butchering a clear five-point-er just seconds into the second period, keeping hold of the ball as the whitewash beckoned despite Cheslin Kolbe racing up inside and Kriel on the flank.

Kurt-Lee Arendse then went close, just failing to gather a clever Kolbe grubber as the Boks dominated possession. Kolisi was rightly yellow carded for a high tackle on Savea, who led the All Black charge back up the pitch. Mo'unga spilling the ball in a rare attack after Tele'a had soared to take a towering up-and-under.

Another All Black kick to the corner eventually paid off as the ball was recycled left to Tele'a, who beat three men before offloading. Beauden Barrett scooping up the ball to dot down. Mo'unga missed the touchline conversion but the game was suddenly a one-point affair.

Kolbe's ambitious 50-metre drop-goal -- one of four increasingly desperate Bok attempts -- fell well short as both sides looked for an opening to close down the game. The winger was then shown yellow for a deliberate knock-down of an Anton Lienert-Brown pass which meant the two teams would finish with 14 players.



LUCKNOW: Ben Stokes ran out of patience against a searing Mohammed Shami.

Pakistan beat New Zealand

LAHORE (APP): Pakistan beat New Zealand by 3-2 goals in Sultan of Johar Under-21 hockey tournament in Malaysia on Sunday.

A total of eight teams are participating in the tournament, which will continue till 4th of November, 2023. Pakistan Hockey Federation (PHF) sources told APP. The 2023 Sultan of Johar Cup is the eleventh edition of the series, an international men's under-21 field hockey tournament being commenced in Malaysia.

The tournament is being held in Johor Bahru, Malaysia from 27 October to 4 November 2023. In previous editions, a total of 8 teams competed for the title. In group A Australia, Germany, Great Britain and South Africa are contesting in the tournament, while in Group B India, Pakistan, New Zealand and Malaysia are contesting

Pakistan receive boost

ISLAMABAD (Monitoring Desk): Pakistani pacer Hasan Ali is recovering well from a fever and will be available for training ahead of his side's match against Bangladesh in 2023 Cricket World Cup, the Pakistan Cricket Board said on Sunday, raising some hope for the green shirts' campaign in the tournament.

Pakistan were forced to leave out Ali in the match against South Africa and brought Mohammad Wasim in his stead. Pakistan's chances of qualifying for the semi-finals decreased further after their loss to South Africa by a wicket in Chennai.

Azam's side came into the match against the Proteas with three successive defeats against India, Australia and Afghanistan. However, Ali's possible inclusion in the squad has given some hope to Pakistani fans for the side's to continue in the World Cup. "Hasan Ali is recovering well under the guidance of the team's medical panel. He will be available for training tomorrow," the PCB said in a statement on Sunday. Pakistan squad arrived in Kolkata from Chennai to play the match against Bangladesh on October 31 at the Eden Gardens stadium. "The Pakistan team will take part in the practice sessions on October 30, ahead of the match [against Bangladesh]," the PCB said on Saturday.

Muneeba's 61 sets up consolation win for Pakistan

CHATTOTGRAM (Agencies): Muneeba Ali's 49-ball 61, and her 106-run partnership with Bismah Maroof for the second wicket, laid the platform for Pakistan to end the T20I leg of their tour of Bangladesh with a consolation win.

The partnership - Pakistan's highest for the second wicket in Women's T20Is - was the sole passage of play where bat dominated ball in a low-scoring third T20I, which ended with Pakistan, defending a total of 132, winning by 31 runs.

Maroof joined Muneeba in the second over of the match, after Pakistan had been sent in, and the pair

controlled the innings for the next 14.4 overs, going at just over 7.2 an over. Maroof played second fiddle, scoring 48 off 49 balls with only two fours, while Muneeba took on the bowling, hitting eight fours and striking at over 120.

Pakistan seemed poised for a big finish at 101 for 1 after 16 overs, but the wicket of Muneeba brought Bangladesh into the game: the last four overs brought just 31 runs, with Fariha Trisna picking up 2 for 14 across the 18th and 20th overs and Nahida Akter 1 for 9 across the 17th and 19th.

Bangladesh's response contained the second-high-

est partnership of the match: 33 for the second wicket between Shamima Sultana and Sobhana Mostary. It put Bangladesh in a reasonable position at 38 for 1 in the seventh over, but the chase lost all momentum after Nashra Sandhu broke the stand, with the last 14.4 overs only bringing 63 runs for the cost of eight wickets.

Sadia Iqbal and Aliya Riaz picked up two wickets apiece, while Sandhu (3-0-8-1) and Nida Dar (3-1-9-1) led the way in curbing Bangladesh's run flow. Shamima (26 off 38) was the only Bangladesh batter to pass 20.

KP players qualified for National Junior Badminton Championship final

PESHAWAR (APP): The budding youngsters of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa qualified for the National Junior Badminton Championship being played at Karachi, international badminton player Mian Sadagat Shah told APP here on Sunday.

Khyber Pakhtunkhwa players have qualified for the final by performing brilliantly. Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Najam Al Saqib defeated Punjab's Sulaiman 21-14 and 21-19 to qualify for the final. The second semi-final was also played between Khyber

Pakhtunkhwa players in which Abdul Haseeb of KP defeated Ryan Khan 21-19, 23-21 and won the honor of playing the final.

In the U-19 semi-final, Muhammad Zaid of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa defeated Saad Amir of HEC 21-19, 21-19. In the U-19 doubles, Muhammad Zaid of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and Taimur Khan beat Ibrahim and Abdullah of Punjab 21-19 and 23-21 and qualified for the final. The provincial team is participating in the Championship under the

coaching of international coach Hayatullah and female coach Bushra Khan.

Results: U15 Single Semi-finals Najmul us Saqib KP beat Suliman Punjab 21-14, 21-19 Abdul Haseeb Khan KP beat Reyan Khan KP 21-19 21-23 and 21-16. U19 Single semi-Finals M. Zaid KP beat Saad Amir HSC 21-19 21-19 U19 Double Semi-Finals M.Zaid & Tamoor Khan KP beat Ibraheem & Abdullah Punjab 21-19 22-20.



Record-breakers: Dominant South Africa are the first team ever to win the Rugby World Cup four times.



In brief

4,275 FIRs for violating SOPs

RAWALPINDI (APP): As many as 4,275 FIRs had been registered on violations of anti-dengue SOPs from January 1 to date in various areas of the Rawalpindi district, said District Coordinator Epidemics Prevention and Control Dr Sajjad Mehmood here Sunday. Giving details of the penalty actions, the health officer said that the district administration, in collaboration with allied departments, had sealed 631 premises, issued tickets to 1,267 and a fine of Rs 92,90,304 was imposed on violations of dengue SOPs in 2023. Dr Sajjad informed that around 2,262 confirmed cases had been reported in the district this year, while the number was 1,502 in 2021, and 4,230 in 2022 during the period. The health officer further stated that presently 73 patients were admitted to the district's hospitals, including 51 to the Holy Family Hospital, 16 to the District Headquarters Hospital, three to Wah General Hospital, two to Kalar Syeda and one to the Taxila Hospitals. Dr Sajjad informed that 2,212 patients were discharged after treatment while presently one patient was in critical condition.

AIOU to organize three-day int'l moot

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Department of Islamic Thought, History and Culture of Allama Iqbal Open University (AIOU) will organize a three-day international conference on Islamic Finance from 1st November. During the conference, the national and international speakers will present research papers on various Islamic finance systems, said a press release issued here Sunday. Founder Akhuwat Foundation, Dr. Amjad Saqib will grace the inaugural session as the chief guest while, Vice Chancellor AIOU, Prof. Dr. Nasir Mahmood will preside over the session. Dean, Faculty of Arabic and Islamic Studies, Prof. Dr. Mohyuddin Hashmi will host the event. Renowned economists will shed light on the topic of Islamic banking. Dr. Fawad Khalil from Edinburgh Napier University, UK and Dr. Usman Ghani, Director, Institute of Management Studies, Peshawar will be the speakers of the session. Various panel discussions and working sessions will be held at the conference. As per the vision of vice chancellor, Prof. Dr. Nasir Mahmood, different seminars/conferences and other educational activities are being organized continuously in the university for the guidance and awareness of the students and this conference is a continuation of this initiative.

IRSA releases 102,200 cusecs water

ISLAMABAD (APP): Indus River System Authority (IRSA) on Sunday released 102,200 cusecs water from various rim stations with inflow of 59,700 cusecs. According to the data released by IRSA, the water level in River Indus at Tarbela Dam was 1526.30 feet and was 128.30 feet higher than its dead level of 1,398 feet. The water inflow and outflow in the dam was recorded as 31,000 cusecs and 52,000 cusecs respectively. The water level in River Jhelum at Mangla Dam was 1205.00 feet, which was 155.00 feet higher than its dead level of 1,050 feet. The inflow and outflow of water was recorded 8,500 cusecs and 30,000 cusecs respectively. The release of water at Kalabagh, Taunsa, Guddu and Sukkur was recorded as 48,800, 44,000, 45,900 and 14,400 cusecs respectively.



ISLAMABAD: Artists from diverse backgrounds were invited at the Off-Grid Residency where they can work without the usual distractions and pressures of daily life.

Ashrafi highlights Saudi Arabia's crucial role in resolving Palestinian issue amid escalating conflict

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Special Representative to the Prime Minister on Religious Harmony and the Pakistani Diaspora in the Middle East and Islamic Countries, Hafiz Muhammad Tahir Mehmood Ashrafi, said on Sunday that Saudi Arabia had emerged as a crucial player in finding a solution to the long-standing Palestinian issue in a tumultuous region marred by conflict and uncertainty.

In an exclusive interview with APP, he said the recent escalation in violence, exemplified by a deadly missile strike on Al-Ahli Baptist Hospital just hours before President Biden's visit to Israel, underscored the urgency of addressing the Palestinian crisis.

Ashrafi, who is also the chairman of the Pakistan Ulema Council, said for the Palestinians in Gaza, each passing day brought more suffering, with a continuous toll of lives lost since October. Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's commitment to a potential ground offensive on Gaza added to the tension,

while journalists had become casualties in targeted attacks, he added. In a heartbreaking turn of events, he said Al Jazeera Arabic's Gaza bureau chief lost his wife, son, daughter, and grandson in an Israeli airstrike on his home. He said the absence of foreign journalists in Gaza amplified the courage of Palestinian journalists, who were risking their lives to report on the situation in a region under Israeli siege.

Ashrafi said the Arab leadership, once poised for a new chapter in Israeli-Palestinian relations and the prospect of a self-governing Palestinian state, had witnessed Israel's disproportionate response to recent events. He said the Saudis had taken a stand by informing Washington of their decision to freeze normalized talks, as this gesture emphasized that the Palestinian issue could not be dismissed in the pursuit of normalizing relations with Israel. He said Saudi Arabia's involvement in the Palestinian issue had primarily centered on regional stability and de-escalation. He said

worldwide condemnation of Israel's use of force against civilians was continuing to mount as Jordan's Queen Rania Al Abdullah criticized the West's double standards in the conflict during an interview with CNN.

Ashrafi said Israel's actions in the ongoing conflict seemed to be part of a broader strategy to justify further territorial expansion into Palestinian territories. Amid these developments, he said the Arab world had rejected Israel's suggestion for Gazans to flee to Egypt or Jordan, fearing that compliance could lead to an expansionist agenda. He underlined that permitting Israel to displace hundreds of thousands of Palestinians could risk extinguishing the two-state solution forever. In a meeting with Egyptian Prime Minister Mostafa Madbouli and Russian President Vladimir Putin, Chinese President Xi Jinping expressed his disagreement with the Western leadership's support for Israel and advocated for a diplomatic solution, he added.

Admin to launch operation to deport illegal foreigners on Nov 1: Commissioner

RAWALPINDI (APP): Commissioner Rawalpindi Division, Liaquat Ali Chhatta has said that all the arrangements are being finalized to launch an operation to deport illegal foreigners from Rawalpindi Division on November 1.

He said that the administration was collecting data of foreign nationals across the Rawalpindi Division.

The data of foreign nationals residing across the division was being compiled, the Commissioner said. The deadline given by the government was ending, so regular action would be launched from November 1, Liaquat Ali Chhatta added.

He informed that the Deputy Commissioners and District Police Officers of the four districts of the division had been directed to submit their final lists to the

Commissioner's office as soon as possible. A specific place should also be identified to gather the foreigners in one place, Liaquat Ali Chhatta said.

According to the data collected so far, the number of illegal residents across the division is over 24,018, Liaquat Ali Chhatta informed.

10,000 illegal foreign nationals were identified in Attock district, 1200 in Chakwal, 818 in Jhelum and 12,000 in Rawalpindi district, he said.

He informed that before the grand operation, a comprehensive awareness campaign was started by the administration.

The Regional Police Officer, Rawalpindi Syed Khurram Ali said that illegal foreign nationals across the division must go back on

their own to avoid a massive crackdown.

No illegal foreigner would be allowed to stay in the division, he added.

The government had approved the eviction orders under the Foreign Act from November 1, Syed Khurram Ali informed.

Arrest, detention and deportation of Afghan citizens had been decided under the Foreign Act, Syed Khurram Ali said adding that Afghan nationals under trial and convicted of serious crimes would not be deported while under trial Afghan nationals and convicted of minor crimes would also be deported, he added.

Illegally residing Afghans have no option but to leave Pakistan till October 31, the RPO said.

ANF recovers 137 kg drugs in six operations

RAWALPINDI (APP): Anti-Narcotics Force (ANF) while conducting six operations managed to recover over 137 kg of drugs and arrested three accused including a woman, said an ANF Headquarters spokesman.

He informed that 3.6 kg hashish was recovered from the possession of an accused, a resident of Karachi arrested in Dera Ghazi Khan. The accused was trying to smuggle 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. 59 heroin and ice filled capsules were recovered from her possession.

In the third operation, 85 kg heroin and 10 kg ice drug, hidden in a house in the Batizai area of Pishin were recovered.

In the fourth operation, 26 kg of ice concealed in a house near Turbat was recovered which was concealed to smuggle abroad.

The spokesman informed that in the fifth operation, 2 kg crystal meth drug was recovered from the possession of an accused, resident of Chagai, who was going to Sukkur from Quetta.

CDA plans to develop Festival Square in F-9 Park

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Capital Development Authority (CDA) has planned to develop Festival Square in F-9 Park which would not only provide food outlets but also folk musicians to the residents of the federal capital.

"The Authority has asked the interested well-established food brands and firms to submit their applications to become a part of this Festival Square till November 01 on the official @ CDAThecapital," an official in the CDA told APP here Sunday.

He said that the Festival Square would feature food trucks, street performers, folk musicians and handicraft stalls. The CDA has asked that only well-established brands with at least experience of five years would be preferred. The official informed that the Authority had allocated a quota for establishing stalls in the Festival Square including 40 percent for men, 55 percent for women and five percent for Transgenders.

He said the Authority intends to develop state-of-the-art facilities in F-9 Park by providing more recreational opportunities to the residents of the capital as all available resources would be utilized to create a model park of the city, which is spread over an area of 750 acres.

The official said that in pursuance with the directions of Chairman CDA Capt @ Anwar ul Haq, the concerned official directed to ensure a proper lighting system in the park particularly along the jogging and walking tracks, kids play and other areas. He said the CDA chief has also directed to depute more security guards within the park, in addition to the guards deputed at entry gates, so that the visitors could be provided a safe and secure environment. The official said the Authority has also installed more light poles, plantation of more shady and fruit trees particularly along the natural stream flowing through the park in addition to the cleanliness of the stream.

Pakistan's space technology to help social-economic development, minister

ISLAMABAD (APP): Minister for IT and Telecommunication Dr Umar Saif Sunday Pakistan's space technology will play a critical role in confronting numerous challenges in the fields of climate change, resource monitoring, disaster management, and health and education mitigation.

Talking to a private news channel, he said Pakistan's space sector would devote its prominent position to supporting the national economy, enhancing the country's attractiveness for investments, and highlighting global skills and innovations in this field.

"Minister also expressed confidence in Pakistan's capabilities and affirmed the nation's commitment to scaling new heights in space exploration."

He explained that the provision of timely and reliable information through satellite will also help in better decision-making. The Minister also underlined several development projects in which Space technology played a vital role in the saving

cost of the projects.

Replying to a question, he said the strong developments of science and technologies and digital transformation globally have presented both opportunities and challenges to nations.

He said digital transformation is a sound trend which will help to keep the new normal in the digital space while contributing to economic recovery.

To another question, he added that Pakistan's strong developments of science and technologies and digital transformation to compete globally will present both opportunities and challenges to nations globally. He said that technology zones will also be established in the federal capital as well as in all provincial capitals.

Plans for the digital economy sector will focus on creating a financial cooperation economy, freelance economy, digital markets, sharing economy, digital content economy, and information and data economy, he added.

Restoration of Sibi-Harnai track to boost economic activities in region

ISLAMABAD (APP): The restoration of strategic Sibi-Harnai railway track for traffic after the completion of renovation and rehabilitation work by the Pakistan Railways will help boost economic and commercial activities in the region.

"The long-awaited Sibi-Harnai railway track was restored for traffic after the completion of reconstruction and renovation work of the project by Pakistan Railways with the support of the National Logistics Cell (NLC)", said an official of the Ministry of Railways. "The railway's track was made dysfunctional after a series of bomb blasts which damaged 22 steel bridges in the highly rugged and inaccessible area. The restoration of the railway between the twin historical cities of Sibi and Harnai will have a positive impact on the economy and agriculture of the entire region," the official added.

The rehabilitation of the railway track will not only enable the students of district Harnai and Ziarat acquire higher education

but boost the economic and commercial activities in the region. "Pakistan Railways restored the Sibi-Harnai section, with the support of Pakistan Army, connecting people and business in the remote areas of the country." Secretary Railways Syed Mazhar Ali said in a tweet. The official said the department had shown a keen interest in the completion of the reconstruction and renovation work of the project. In March 2016, he said that a contract for rehabilitation and restoration of the Sibi-Harnai railway track along with the up-gradation of railway stations was awarded to the NLC as no other construction firm agreed to undertake the project due to the prevalent security situation and enormity of the task.

During the initial survey of the track, the official said it was found that 22 steel bridges of different sizes were destroyed and required replacement for the restoration of the train operation. He said in addition, massive river protection work was to be under-

taken to save the infrastructure. The quantum of work, non-availability of road access, and requisite resources made the project a formidable challenge, he added. The official said undertaking the project with the sincerity of purpose and utmost sense of duty, the NLC officers, engineers, and construction workers braved harsh weather conditions and a hostile security environment and subsequently completed the rehabilitation works in record time. Terming the fabrication of steel bridges as a major task, he said that the steel bridges were fabricated in Karachi and were transported to the project site after being painstakingly assembled by NLC engineers in a befitting manner.

He said a total of nine railway stations along with tracks had been upgraded by NLC engineers including the reconstruction of Harnai Railway Station and a complete renovation of Sibi Railways Station, which could be regarded as the finest railway station in Balochistan.

Public urged to take precautionary measures against seasonal influenza

ISLAMABAD (APP): Experts on Sunday advised various precautionary measures while citing immunity-boosting methods to help people stay healthy as the majority of patients are getting infected with flu-causing viruses, like influenza, RSV, adenovirus, and rhinovirus, ahead of the winter season.

Talking to a private news channel, A specialist for a chest infection, Dr Rashid Dawood, said that most parts of the country, especially Karachi hospitals, are witnessing a surge in cases of 'the influenza virus', adding that he advised people to take precautions and not panic given the rise in influenza cases.

The doctor also encouraged the public to get vaccinated and adhere to precautionary measures to

reduce the spread of the virus, thereby safeguarding their own well-being and that of the broader community and averting potential complications arising from influenza infections.

Every year, thousands of people are affected by seasonal fever or influenza, he said, adding that the virus infects and multiplies within the body's cells and impacts the respiratory system. Though it is not fatal, it can sometimes lead to hospitalization, he feared. Typically, the flu does not endure for more than two weeks, and the infection recedes at an average pace depending on the type of flu virus. In some rare cases, the flu virus can also adversely affect overall health by infecting the lungs, ears, sinuses, etc.

"It is important to take

extra care by following all the necessary precautions to prevent the spread of infection," he added.

Dr suggested that people should primarily avoid visiting crowded places, which include markets, offices, and family gatherings, and, in unavoidable situations, should wear face masks, maintain hand hygiene, and practice respiratory etiquette.

He said the public should remember how we dealt with COVID-19 times, adding that the same things should apply again and cover their mouth while sneezing and coughing. Replying to a question, he said that people with one or more of the following symptoms, like fever, cough, sore throat, body aches, headache, chills, and fatigue, may be infected with influenza or another virus.

Commissioner inaugurates city's first vegetable, fruit mandi

RAWALPINDI (APP): Commissioner Rawalpindi Division Liaquat Ali Chhatta here on Sunday inaugurated Rawalpindi's first vegetable and fruit mandi while regular business of the mandi would start on Monday, October 30.

Vegetable and Fruit mandi has been set up on 20 kanals land in Union Council Rawat on main G.T.Road near Chak Beli Mor. Special Secretary Agriculture, Syeda Kulsoom Hai, Deputy Commissioner, Rawalpindi Hasan Waqar Cheema, Director Agriculture Extension Rawalpindi, Shahid Bukhari and other officers were present on this occasion.

The Commissioner informed that the establishment of vegetable and fruit markets was a part of Chief Minister Punjab's public and farmer-friendly program.

The establishment of the first vegetable and fruit market in Rawalpindi would help promote agricultural trade at the regional level. Over three million population of Rawalpindi would benefit from the establishment of the first vegetable and fruit

market, he said adding, the establishment of a vegetable market near Rawat would facilitate the suppliers of fruits and vegetables. By setting up a vegetable and fruit mandi, the long-standing demand of the citizens of Rawalpindi had been fulfilled, Liaquat Ali Chhatta said.

The administration was taking solid steps for the convenience of the people, he informed. Rawalpindi is a big city which was in dire need of setting up vegetable and fruit mandi.

Establishing a vegetable market would provide employment to the local people of Rawalpindi, Liaquat Ali Chhatta said. People from Rawalpindi used to travel a long way to go to Islamabad's vegetable and fruit market. Special Secretary Agriculture said that the establishment of a vegetable and fruit market was a great step to facilitate the citizens of Rawalpindi. The administration had set up vegetable and fruit mandi as per policy of the people-friendly Punjab government, she added.

EU allocates 15m euros

KABUL (Agencies): The European Union announced Sunday it has allocated an additional 15 million euros for Afghans returning to their country. EU in Afghanistan in a post on X said that together the International Organization for Migration, “we want to assure that returnees feel safe & can access the support they need to feel home.” This comes as there has been a sharp increase in Afghans leaving Pakistan after it announced crackdown on illegal migrants.

The Frontier Post

Rabi-us-Sanni 13, 1445 — Monday, October 30, 2023

8,000 migrants returned

KABUL (Khaama Press): As the deadline to send Afghan migrants back to Afghanistan, the Ministry of Refugees and Repatriation of Afghanistan revealed that around 8,000 migrants have returned to their home country this week. The Ministry stated, through a press release, that approximately 7,910 Afghan migrants have entered the country during this week. The border authorities have clarified that 1,330 families released from prisons, have been set free.

Uplift projects in south wnderway: Ministry

KANDAHAR CITY (TOLONews): Worth \$600 million, development projects are underway in the southern provinces of the country.

The officials of the Ministry of Public Works says that these projects include Zabul-Kandahar, Kandahar-Uruzgan, and Helmand-Kandahar highways as well as bridges.

“The work started in the southern zone and is worth more than \$600 million,” said Sher Hussain Khosh-iwal, the head of the Ministry of Public Works projects in the southwest zone.

A number of citizens of the country want the offi-

cial to seriously survey the quality of work of these projects.

“It has to be good, well-made, so that we don’t have any problems in the future,” said Gulalai, a resident.

“Our request to the Islamic Emirate is to work on this project to bring facilities to the people,” said Nesar Ahmad, a driver. “There are lots of destroyed roads around the city, we ask the Islamic Emirate to pay attention to this place as well,” said Abdul Baqi Zahed, a Kandahar resident.

Local officials of Kandahar say that for the purpose of saving and pro-

tecting the highways they do not allow trucks that carry more than 2 tons of cargo.

If the trucks are overloaded we reduce their load, and we don’t allow any truck to bring too much weight and put us in trouble,” said Ahmad Ahmadi, Scales Manager of the Public Works Department of Kandahar.

According to the information of the Ministry of Public Works, with the completion of the road construction work from Arghandab district of Kandahar to Dehraawud district of Uruzgan, many problems will be solved.

IE optimistic about diplomatic presence

KABUL (TOLONews): The Islamic Emirate said that currently 17 Chargé d’Affaires of the current Afghan government are present in Afghan embassies in foreign countries.

The Islamic Emirate’s spokesman, Zabihullah Mujahid, told TOLONews that in addition to the ambassadors of previous governments, the Islamic Emirate has also sent new ambassadors to a number of nations, and these ambassadors are currently in contact with the foreign ministry of the current Afghan government.

“We kept active our embassies in many countries. These embassies are in sixteen or seventeen countries and provide consular services. We have sent new ambassadors to some countries, and in some countries former ambassadors are operating,” Mujahid told TOLONews.

According to some former diplomats, the appointment of these ambassadors to countries are effective in improving relations between the Islamic Emirate and other countries.

Meanwhile, some analysts pointed out some steps for the Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan so that its ambassadors will be accepted by other countries:

“No country will accept an ambassador of Afghanistan alone until all the countries reach a consensus on whether to recognize the Islamic Emirate or to accept the ambassador of the Islamic Emirate in their country,” said Zakiullah Mohammadi, a university lecturer.

This comes as, recently, the Islamic Emirate appointed Badrudin Haqqani as the new Chargé d’affaires of the Islamic Emirate’s embassy in the United Arab Emirates.

Amanullah tournament gets underway

JALALABAD (Agencies): The sixth edition of the Ghazi Amanullah Khan Regional List A Tournament 2023 started on Sunday in Nangarhar province.

The 50-over event features five regional teams competing in a double round-robin format with the top two teams advancing to the final on November 20 at the Ghazi Amanullah Khan Cricket Ground in Nangarhar province, Afghanistan Cricket Board said in a statement.

The defending champions, Mis-e-Ainak Region take on the Amo region in the opening match. The other three participating teams are Speenghar, Band-e-Amir, and Bost.

There will be 21 games in the tournament including the final. The tournament is a major part of the domestic cricket structure and contributes to the players’ and game development in Afghanistan. It is the second List A event of the year after the Green Afghanistan One Day Cup, held in May this year, according to ACB.

Uzbekistan economic team arrives in Afghanistan



KABUL (Khaama Press): The government’s Ministry of Industry and Commerce has announced that a 45-member economic delegation from Uzbekistan has officially arrived in Afghanistan on a diplomatic visit.

Abdul Salam Jawad, spokesperson for the Ministry of Industry and Commerce, has announced that this delegation, led by Jamshid Khojaev, the Deputy Prime Minister of

Uzbekistan, arrived in Kabul on Sunday morning.

According to Mr Jawad, the delegation includes ministers from mines, transport, commerce, and Uzbekistani traders, comprising 45 members.

Officials from the Ministry of Industry and Commerce have emphasized that the core focus of the Uzbekistani delegation’s visit to Afghanistan is the enhancement of bilateral trade ties and the collaborative resolution of transition-related challenges between the two countries.

This visit underscores the commitment of both Uzbekistan and Afghanistan to foster economic cooperation and address the practical logistics of cross-border trade for mutual benefit.

Furthermore, the ministry has indicated that during this trip, the Uzbekistani delegation will inaugurate an exhibition of their country’s commercial products in Afghanistan.

Meanwhile, earlier, several high-ranking delegations from Uzbekistan had also visited Afghanistan.

Since the resurgence of the Taliban administration in Afghanistan, Uzbekistan has maintained political and trade relations with the country.

World Bank reports 8 per cent rise in Afghanistan revenue collection

KABUL (Agencies): Revenue collection in Afghanistan for the first five months of the fiscal year 2023 reached 76 billion afghanis, which shows an 8 percent increase compared to the same period in the previous year, the World Bank said in a new report.

Revenue collection in the period, however, is lower than the five-monthly target by AFN 7 billion, the report said. Customs duty and

Business receipt tax accounted for 60 percent of the collection.

According to the report, for the first seven months of 2023, imports reached US\$4.4 billion, marking a 32 percent increase from the same period in 2022.

While exports grew three percent in the first seven months of 2023 compared to the same period in 2022, monthly export data indicates a decline in trend since

February 2023 due to a decrease in coal exports, the report said.

World Bank said that despite the widening trade deficit, Afghani has appreciated since the beginning of 2023. Between January and August 24, 2023, Afghani appreciated against the US dollar by 7.3 percent.

“In addition to unidentified external flows, the AFN’s gains partly stem from the ban on foreign

currencies for domestic transactions, limited domestic money supply, higher remittances, and UN dollar shipments. In 2023, UN inflows were around US\$1.12 billion,” the report said.

The report also said that since April 2023, the country has experienced deflation, likely due to improved supply, appreciating AFN, and the economy still adjusting to structurally lower aggregate demand.

Baradar instructs committee to continue aid to deserving beggars

KABUL (Agencies): The Deputy Prime Minister for Economic Affairs, Mullah Abdul Ghani Baradar Akhund, in a collaborative meeting held Saturday in Kabul stressed the importance of collecting beggars from Kabul city and subsequently conducting assessments to determine deserving recipients of cash and food aid, Baradar’s office said in a statement.

The meeting was attended by member ministries and agencies of the Beggar Collecting Committee.

Baradar underscored the Islamic Emirate’s commitment to addressing the challenges faced by underprivileged citizens, particularly beggars, with the aim of providing them with a more prosperous life, read the statement.

In addition, he instructed all committee officials, particularly those from the



Ministry of Information and Culture to diligently fulfill their responsibilities in accordance with the established committee procedures.

The Beggar Collecting Committee also decided that the Ministry of Hajj and Religious Affairs should engage in public awareness campaigns regarding the worldly and spiritual consequences of

begging during Friday sermons. Additionally, the committee asked this ministry to introduce its representatives to further enhance the effectiveness of these efforts.

Repair of third part of Salang Highway started



KABUL (TOLONews): The Ministry of Public Works announced the start of reconstruction work on the third part of the northern Salang highway.

According to the ministry, the road is more than 21 kilometers long and seven meters wide, with reconstruction work handed over to two private companies.

The Chamber of Industry and Mines emphasized the importance of Salang Highway in the development of trade, emphasizing the need for quality and speed of the reconstruction work of this highway.

The acting Minister of Public Works inaugurated the reconstruction work of the third part of the northern Salang highway during his visit to Parwan and Baghlan provinces.

According to the ministry’s information, the con-

tract for reconstruction of the 21-kilometer road has been given to two private companies.

“The steps taken so far to rebuild the Salang Highway are important and appreciated. We hope that speed, quality, and maintenance of this highway and other highways in Afghanistan to be the priority of the Ministry of Public Works,” said Sakhi Ahmad Paiman, First Vice President of Afghanistan Chamber of Industries and Mines.

However, some experts also consider the rebuilding the Salang highway to be beneficial for better transportation of goods and to facilitate the movement of all vehicles.

“The Salang Highway is important from different angles. Transit of commercial items with lower cost and short time is one of the

issues that adds to the economic and commercial importance of this highway and on the other hand, having a standard highway is considered an important condition for regional connectivity,” said Shaker Yaqubi, economic analyst.

“The Salang route plays an important role as a key route for the transit of goods and also the connecting point of the northern provinces of the country with the capital Kabul and as such, the connecting point of Central Asia with South Asia,” said Qutbuddin Yaqubi, economic analyst.

Work is currently underway on the Salang Tunnel.

According to the latest figures from the Ministry of Public Works, 85% of the reconstruction work of the tunnel has been completed and will be put into operation in the coming days.

Kabul calls for int’l stand against Israel’s attacks

KABUL (TOLONews): Some Islamic Emirate officials called on Islamic countries and the international community to clarify their position against Israel’s attacks on the Gaza Strip.

The scientific deputy of the Ministry of Higher Education, Lutfullah Khairkhwah, said during a scientific seminar in Kabul titled “Intellectual Education for Youth” that certain nations, particularly the United States, consider Israel’s war against Palestine to be legitimate.

Khairkhwah said that Islamic countries have remained silent and have not taken a stand on this issue. “America stood by Israel and is directly involved in the war and says that Israel has a legal right to defend itself and all Islamic countries look at it, and they can’t even take a position to say that this war should end,” Khairkhwah noted.

Speaking at the seminar, the deputy also asked youth to fulfill their responsibilities toward society and consider intellectual and moral principles.

“In our Islamic countries, a gap has been created between our history, culture and societies. The third issue is the true sense of responsibility that has disappeared and this feeling must be restored,” Khairkhwah added.

“It is the responsibility and mission of universities to work on the minds of youth,” said Sayed Abdul Hakim



Hekmat, chancellor of Bayazid Rokhan University. The scientific deputy of the Ministry of Higher Education, Lutfullah Khairkhwah, added that all students who return to Afghanistan from neighboring countries, especially Pakistan, will be provided with higher education.

Some professors who participated the seminar said that holding scientific seminars is important for youth and asked the officials to hold more such programs.

“A kind of science is useful for Muslim youth which has intellectual thought; without intellectual thought, all sciences are incomplete,” said Rahmatullah Seial, a university lecturer.

Earlier, the Deputy Minister of Youth Affairs of the Ministry of Information and Culture announced the approval of a decree in the intellectual education department of the youth by the leader of the Islamic Emirate.

KHOST (TOLONews): Officials of the Islamic Emirate said that the transfer of stored dried wood from the forests of Khost, Paktia, and Paktika provinces will be shipped to Kabul.

The spokesman of the Islamic Emirate adds that this decision was made for the purpose of addressing the problems of residents.

Some of the vendors and residents of Kabul welcomed this decision by officials in the Islamic Emirate.

The spokesman of the Islamic Emirate told TOLONews that cutting and smuggling of any tree from the country’s forests is prohibited and the government of the Islamic Emirate has allowed the transfer of dried wood from the forests reserves in Khost, Paktia and Paktika provinces for a

month to Kabul to address the challenges of fuel shortages.

“Cutting down trees in forests is strictly prohibited. But some of the mountainous areas where forests were dried up, and previously had stored wood, those deposits in Paktia, Paktika and Khost were allowed to be transferred to Kabul within a month. If the wood reaches the water, it will break down,” Zabihullah Mujahid said.

“For six months the wood transfer had been blocked to Kabul and my car was stopped. Then now the government said that for the sake of the people and to care for the poor people, they allowed wood to enter Kabul for another month,” said Abdullah, a wood seller.

“The roads were blocked, government officials would not allow wood to be brought to Kabul. That’s why the price of wood was raised in the markets,” said Sharifullah, a Kabul resident.

“Over the past few years, there has been positive change in the forests of the country. According to the collected figures, compared to previous years, there is a 32 percent increase in forests in the country, and in all soils, 389,000 hectares of land have been produced as new forests,” said Mohammad Halim Rafe, the spokesman of the National Statistics Administration.

According to information from a spokesman for the Islamic Emirate, the acting government has

Stores of dried wood in Khost, Paktia and Paktika to be transferred to Kabul



sponsored about 16,000 people under the name of ‘Green Unit’ to protect the

cutting down of forests in Kunar, Nuristan, Paktia, Khost, Paktika and some

other provinces to prevent the theft and smuggling of forests.

Siraj voices strong solidarity with Gaza at Islamabad March

ISLAMABAD (NNI): Jamaat-e-Islami Ameer Sirajul Haq has made it unequivocally clear that the people of Pakistan stand firmly with the people of Gaza in their time of struggle.

Addressing a massive gathering of supporters during the Gaza March held in Islamabad on Sunday, the JI Emir emphasized the importance of this gathering as a message to the United States.

"Today, a large number of people is sending a message to America: If the US stands with Israel, we stand with the Muslims of Gaza," he asserted.

Sirajul Haq touched upon recent events, referencing the US Deputy Secretary of State's call to the Pakistani leadership.

He questioned the intentions of the Pakistani rulers.

Sirajul Haq announced to organise a million march in Lahore on November 19. "On November 19, the next Million March will be held in Lahore. If Israel's terrorism does not end, we will continue our movement," he added.

He also acknowledged the sacrifices made by the Palestinian martyrs and expressed, "I feel the fragrance of Gaza martyrs in the atmosphere of Islamabad."

Haq also compared Pakistan's actions to those of the President of Turkey and the Secretary General of the United Nations, both of whom have spoken out against the occupation of Palestine.

He decried the extensive loss of life caused by Israel's siege and bombings, including attacks on hospitals and schools.

The JI chief blamed the Muslim rulers for not fulfilling their responsibilities towards the Palestinians. He slammed the silence of the international community over the illegal occupation of Israel on

Palestinian land, the martyrdom of over 250,000 Palestinians and the targeting of hospitals in Gaza.

Sirajul Haq said that Muslim rulers have a duty to save Gaza people and provide military and humanitarian aid to the Palestinians. The JI chief said that Pakistani nation donated over Rs1 billion to the Palestinians.

He said that Hamas fighters proved that war cannot be won by the technology and advanced weaponry but by the power of faith. He added that the Muslim rulers would be held accountable by their people if they failed to help Palestinians in Gaza.

"Choose between ruling American slavery or Allah," he remarked.

JI Pakistan Ameer Sirajul Haq and several political and religious leaders addressed the Gaza Solidary March which was scheduled to be staged before the US Embassy, however, the authorities blocked the routes citing security concerns.

The administration has not allowed entry of the rally participants to the Srinagar Highway, a high-security zone. Later, the JI staged its protest at Aabpara Chowk. The participants of the public rally also heard the special message of the Hamas top leader Ismail Haniyeh.

JI Ameer Sirajul Haq said that they stand side-by-side with the Muslims in Gaza. He said that JI announced to hold a protest before the US Embassy but the US deputy secretary of the state contacted the Pakistani rulers to stop the protest.

He said that JI workers faced police baton charge and arrests before the protest.

Haq announced to continue the series of protests against the Israeli barbaric moves against Palestinians across the country until an end to the war.

PTI's Wajiha Qamar announces joining PML-N

LAHORE (NNI): Former member National Assembly Wajiha Qamar bade goodbye to the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Pakistan (PTI) and announced to go with the Pakistan Muslim League Nawaz (PMLN).

The politician met the PMLN president Shahbaz Sharif at his residence announcing joining of the new party. Shahabaz welcomed Wajiha and greeted her on becoming the part of his party. Other bigwigs of PMLN including PMLN Secretary General Ahsan Iqbal and deputy Secretary General Attaullah Tarar were also present on the occasion. Wajiha expressed her full confidence in PMLN leadership and its manifesto. She said that PMLN had been leading the country to a path of progress and thus she decided to work with the forces of construction not with the forces of destruction. Meanwhile, former MPA of Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) Chaudhary Sajid Mehmood has announced quitting the party, condemning the May 9 incident.

"I condemn the anti-establishment statements of the PTI chairman and the responsible of May 9 incidents should be punished at all costs," he said. He apologised with the party workers and announced parting ways with the former ruling party.

DIG Shariq Jamal Khan's death declared a murder by family

LAHORE (NNI): The circumstances surrounding the death of former DIG Investigation Lahore, Shariq Jamal Khan, have once again taken a turn as the victim's family now declares his death a murder.

In a fresh development, the Nishtar Colony police acted on the request of Hania Shariq, daughter of Shariq Khan, and registered a case under the provisions of murder.

The case names seven accused, including a woman, Qaratul Ain, as prime suspects, along with Mansoor Elahi, Samiullah Niazi, Shoaib, Imran Javed Butt, Adeel, and Sagheer.

The plaintiff alleged that DIG Shariq Jamal Khan was deliberately poisoned as part of a sinister plan, and he pointed to his reception of death threats as evidence, backed by mobile messages.

According to FIR, the victim reportedly shared various details with his family members before his tragic demise on July 21.

According to the plaintiff's case, he disclosed the presence of one million US dollars, 5 lakhs rupees, and significant business-related documents stored in a safe. Shariq Jamal Khan had also invested in property and the fuel business.

The FIR revealed, following the murder, the safe was found open, and local and foreign currency, along with crucial documents, had mysteriously disappeared. The mysterious death of Shariq Jamal Khan was initially reported at 12:30 pm. The FIR further alleged that the main accused, Qurat-ul-Ain, orchestrated the crime with the aid of accomplices and attempted to stage the murder as an accident.



QUETTA: Jamiat Ulema-i-Islam-Fazl (JUI-F) chief Maulana Fazlur Rehman addressing during a protest against the Israeli attack on Gaza.

Turkey celebrates centenary under shadow of Gaza war

Alvi congratulates Turkiye people

ISTANBUL (AFP/APP): Turkey marks its centenary as a post-Ottoman republic on Sunday with somewhat muted celebrations held under the shadow of Israel's escalating war with Hamas militants in Gaza.

President Recep Tayyip Erdogan will be front and centre of day-long events that both honour the secular republic's founder and play up the achievement of the Islamic-rooted party running Turkey since 2002.

Erdogan and World War I-era military commander Mustafa Kemal Ataturk have become the seminal figures of the modern Turkish state.

Ataturk is lionised across Turkish society for driving out invading forces and building a brand new nation out of the fallen Ottoman Empire's ruins in the wake of World War I. Turkey was formed as a Western-facing nation that stripped religion from its state institutions and tried to forge a modern new identity out its myriad ethnic groups.

It eventually became a proud member of the US-led NATO defence alliance and a beacon of democratic hopes in the Middle East.

But Ataturk's social and geopolitical transformation of the overwhelmingly Muslim nation created divisions that weigh on Turkish politics to this day. Erdogan tapped into these as he led his conservative Justice and Development Party (AKP) to power over the leftist Republican People's Party (CHP) formed by Ataturk.

He has spent much of the past decade testing the limits of Turkey's secular traditions as well as its ties with the West.

These competing forces will be on full display as Erdogan starts the day by paying respects to Ataturk -- and ends it by overseeing celebrations of

Turkey's more recent achievements while he was prime minister and president. Sunday's celebrations have been partially eclipsed by Erdogan's increasingly fierce attacks against Israel over its response to the October 7 Hamas attacks. The militants killed 1,400 people and took 220 hostages in a surprise raid that Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu called the worst "since the Holocaust".

Israel has retaliated with ferocious air strikes and an unfolding ground offensive that the Hamas-run health ministry in Gaza says has claimed more than 8,000 lives.

Turkish state television has also scrapped the broadcast of concerts

and other festivities because of the "alarming human tragedy in Gaza".

Erdogan's lifelong defence of Palestinian rights has turned him into a hero across large parts of the Muslim world. He announced that 1.5 million people had come out for a pro-Palestinian rally in Istanbul on Saturday that ended up drowning out national television coverage of the centenary. Erdogan accused the Israel government of behaving like a "war criminal" and trying to "eradicate" Palestinians. "Israel, you are an occupier," Erdogan declared. His remarks prompted Israel to announce the withdrawal of all diplomatic staff for a "re-evaluation" of relations.

‘Travelling on border will be on visa and passport’

QUETTA (PPI): Caretaker Minister for Information, Jan Achakzai, has said that introducing "single-document regime" on all international border crossing with Afghanistan was the decision of the state of Pakistan and its implementation would be ensured, said a statement issued here on Sunday.

Travelling on all international border crossing with Afghanistan would be on visa and passport, said he, adding, "Protesters of sit-in staged in Chaman should know that "single-document regime" would be implemented". He said, "We are ready to provide

all the facilities for promotion of border trade between the two neighbouring countries Pakistan and Afghanistan, but no compromise would be made on single-document regime". Achakzai said that "single-document regime" was compulsory on all international border crossings in all the countries, hence, he added that the state of Pakistan also decided in the best interest of the country to implement "single-document regime" on all international border crossings with Afghanistan in order to monitor travelling along the border effectively.

It is pertinent to men-

tion that Afghans were travelling to Pakistan without visa at certain border crossings using "Tazkirah", a special permit used for decade under the British era easement rights which aimed at facilitating dividing families and tribes on both sides when Britain demarcated the border known as Durand Line. In order to get rid of British era system, government of Pakistan decided to implement a "single-document regime" to regulate the movement of people and goods on all international border crossing with Afghanistan.

PIA's financial crisis persists as over 50 flights cancelled

LAHORE (NNI): More than 50 flights of Pakistan International Airlines (PIA) were cancelled as the financial crisis of the national flag carrier persists.

A large number of tourists were stranded due to the closure of the PIA's domestic route. They kept waiting for the PIA flights in Gilgit and Skardu.

After Tourism Minister Wasi Shah took notice, flights to Gilgit were restored, and the PIA made ATR planes functional for Gilgit flights.

Meanwhile, the PIA resumed flights on domestic routes from Islamabad to Gilgit. PIA flight PK602 flew from Islamabad Airport to Gilgit with an hour's delay.

According to PIA sources, the national airline will operate 15 flights today.

It is to be noted here that as many as 650 flights of

the PIA have been cancelled during the past 13 days. The national airline has to bear the loss of Rs8.5 billion during the past 13 days due to the cancellation of the flights.

PIA restores flight operations to rescue stranded foreign tourists from Gilgit, Skardu: Pakistan International Airlines (PIA) restored its operations to the northern areas on Sunday to rescue the foreign tourists stranded in Gilgit and Skardu because of the airline's failure to operate flights as a result of the current financial crisis.

In this connection, the national flag carrier is scheduled to operate six flights from Islamabad to the two airports in the located in the northern areas, enabling the tourists to board the return flights.

Flight cancellations by the national carrier since

Oct 14 has forced hundreds of foreign tourists to stay in the mountainous towns while also affecting their travel plans after visiting the Gilgit-Baltistan region.

At the same time, the longer-than-planned stay also mean that these foreign tourists have to face additional cost for lodging and food. The PIA had to cancel another 53 flights on Sunday even after reaching a deal a day earlier with Pakistan State Oil (PSO) to smooth fuel supply.

It means a total of 650 PIA flights have been cancelled on domestic and international routes since the middle of this month as the PSO started providing less fuel as the airline failed to pay its dues. However, a PIA spokesperson on Saturday said they had reached an agreement with the PSO and that the fuel supply would return to normal in the coming days.

Shelling injures peacekeeper in south Lebanon: UN

BEIRUT (AFP/APP): A UN peacekeeper was injured Saturday by shelling in south Lebanon, the mission's spokesman said, hours after reporting a hit at its headquarters as Israel-Lebanon border skirmishes intensify amid war in Gaza.

"One peacekeeper was lightly injured" near the border village of Hula, said Andrea Tenenti, spokesperson for the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL).

Lebanon's official National News Agency (NNA) said a Nepalese peacekeeper was "moderately injured in the stomach and arm after two Israeli shells" fell in Hula.

Earlier on Saturday, Tenenti had told AFP that "a shell hit inside the base" in Naqura, where UNIFIL headquarters are located, indicating there were "no injuries but some damage".

He said UNIFIL was seeking to verify who fired the shells.

A Lebanese military source, who spoke on condition of anonymity as they were not authorised to talk to the media, said "an Israeli shell penetrated the cement wall" around

the UNIFIL headquarters.

The shell did not explode, a UNIFIL statement said, adding that "several of our other positions have also sustained damage in the past three weeks" and urging "all parties to immediately cease fire".

Since Palestinian militant group Hamas carried out an unprecedented attack on Israel from the Gaza Strip on October 7, Lebanon's southern border has seen tit-for-tat exchanges between Israel and the Iran-backed Hezbollah, a Hamas ally.

The cross-border skirmishes have killed at least 58 people in Lebanon, according to an AFP tally, mostly Hezbollah combatants but also four civilians, including Reuters journalist Issam Abdallah.

At least four people have been killed on the Israeli side, including one civilian.

The unrest has displaced nearly 29,000 people across Lebanon, according to the International Organization for Migration.

Hamas' shock attack saw gunmen pour from Gaza into Israel, killing more than 1,400 people, mostly

civilians, and taking 230 hostages, according to Israeli authorities.

Israel has retaliated with relentless strikes that Gaza's Hamas-run health ministry said have killed more than 7,700 people, also mostly civilians including some 3,500 children.

On October 15, UNIFIL said its headquarters was struck by a rocket but nobody was hurt.

Shiite Muslim group Hezbollah said it attacked a number of Israeli positions on Saturday, using artillery, guided missiles and other weapons.

Israel's army confirmed that "several anti-tank missile and mortar shell launches" had been fired at its posts along the border, indicating they "fell in open areas".

It said its tanks and artillery were "responding with fire toward the origin of the launches and striking Hezbollah military infrastructure in Lebanon". NNA reported Israeli shelling at several locations along the border, while "a hostile drone" carried out three strikes in an area more than 20 kilometres (12 miles) from the frontier.

Kazakhstan mourns for 45 dead in ArcelorMittal mine disaster

KARAGANDA (AFP/APP): Kazakhstan held nationwide mourning on Sunday after 45 people died in a blaze at an ArcelorMittal mine, the worst accident in the Central Asian country's post-Soviet history.

The tragedy, which struck at the Kostenko coal mine in the Karaganda region Saturday, came after a series of deadly incidents at ArcelorMittal mines and has prompted the nationalisation of the company's local affiliate. "As of 3 pm (0900 GMT) the bodies of 42 people were found," Kazakhstan's emergency services said on social media. "The search for four miners continues."

Later, authorities said the bodies of three others had been found and rescuers were searching for the last miner missing, with little hope of finding him alive.

Rescuers earlier warned that chances of finding the remaining miners alive were "very low", due to the lack of ventilation and the force of Saturday's explosion, which spread over two kilometres (1.2 miles).

The previous deadliest mine accident in post-Soviet Kazakhstan occurred in 2006, killing 41 miners at

another ArcelorMittal site. It came just two months after another incident killed five miners.

Anger and disbelief reigned after the disaster in Karaganda, central Kazakhstan. "Every miner is a hero, because when he goes down, he does not know if he will come back or not," said former miner Sergei Glazkov. Many welcomed the government's move towards nationalisation, angered by the company's safety record. Daniar Mustafin, a 42-year-old salesman, said he favoured "full nationalisation without material compensation for the current owners".

President Kassym-Jomart Tokayev has ordered cooperation with the Luxembourg-based company to be "brought to an end."

Speaking to victims' relatives at the mine, Tokayev called ArcelorMittal "the worst enterprise in Kazakhstan's history in terms of cooperation with the government".

The Kazakh government and the steel giant announced a preliminary agreement to "transfer ownership of the (local) firm in favour of the Republic of Kazakhstan". Prime Minister Alikhan Smailov stated.

"ArcelorMittal can confirm that the two parties have... signed a preliminary agreement for a transaction that will transfer ownership to the Republic of Kazakhstan," the global steel giant stated, adding it was committed to "finalising this transaction as soon as possible".

On Sunday, flags were at half-mast to mark the day of national mourning declared by Tokayev, an AFP correspondent saw.

Since the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991, about 200 miners have died in Kazakhstan, the vast majority at ArcelorMittal sites.

There were 252 people inside the mine when the fire started, ArcelorMittal said.

Outside a hospital in Karaganda, relatives of those who had survived the blast were thanking the heavens.

"His guardian angel saved him. He is alive," said Nikolai Bralin, the brother of an injured miner.

"Two of his ribs were slightly torn apart from the blow and he had surgery to put them back in place," he added. Local politicians also called for the immediate nationalisation of the company.