

Tribesmen hold protest F.P. Report

LANDI KOTAL: The tribesmen held a protest demonstration for Pakistani passengers, trapped across the border for the last three days, in front immigration center at Torkham border on Friday. The Afghan custom Commissioner at Torkham border, Ismatullah Yaqoob had snatched passports from more than two hundred Pakistani citizens and had left them helplessly under an open sky.

@thefrontierpost

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LPG shortage likely

KARACHI (PPI): In a stark announcement on Friday, the Sui Southern Gas Company (SSGC-LPG) issued a cautionary alert to stakeholders, signaling a potential shortage of Liquefied Petroleum Gas (LPG) during the impending winter season. The gas company underscored the imperative for stakeholders to proactively book LPG shipments in advance, shedding light on the looming crisis.

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RIYADH: Caretaker Prime Minister Anwar-ul-Haq Kakar meeting with President of Palestine Mahmoud Abbas on the sidelines of 8th extraordinary summit of OIC.

Israeli strikes on Al-Shifa hospital compound Gaza deaths cross 11,000

GAZA: A World Health Organization (WHO) spokesperson said on Friday that the Al-Shifa hospital was "coming under bombardment," adding that 20 other hospitals in Gaza were also completely out of action. Asked about the Gaza health ministry's allegation of an Israeli strike on the hospital courtyard, WHO spokesperson Margaret Harris said: "I haven't got the detail on Al-Shifa but we do know they are coming under bombardment."

Asked to elaborate, she said there was "intense violence" at the site, quoting colleagues on the ground. The Hamas government in the Gaza Strip said Friday an Israeli strike on the territory's largest hospital killed 13 people. "Thirteen martyrs and dozens wounded in an Israeli strike on Al-Shifa compound today" in central Gaza City, a government statement said, giving a toll AFP was not immediately able to independently verify. Al-Shifa hospital director Mohammad Abu Salmiya said "Israeli tanks fired on Al-Shifa hospital," while the Israeli military did not offer an immediate comment.

Graphic video shared on social media and verified by Reuters on Friday shows a number of dead and wounded, including children in an area of Al-Shifa hospital in Gaza. A Reuters correspondent said video appeared to have been made in a covered, outdoor area near the hospital's outpatient department, where displaced people had been sleeping. The Israeli army has repeat-

edly accused Hamas of using hospitals, particularly Al-Shifa, to coordinate their attacks against the army and also as hideouts for its commanders. Hamas authorities and doctors deny the accusations.

"With ongoing strikes and fighting nearby (Al-Shifa), we are gravely concerned about the well-being of thousands of civilians there, many children among them, seeking medical care and shelter," Human Rights Watch said on social media site X. Al-Rantisi Pediatric Hospital and Al-Nasr Children's Hospital have been witnessing a series of direct attacks and bombardments on Friday.

Indonesia's foreign ministry said on Friday there were explosions near the Indonesian Hospital overnight, which damaged parts of the hospital, located at the northern end of the narrow coastal enclave. It did not say who was responsible for the explosion and it did not report any deaths or injuries. "Indonesia once again condemns the savage attacks on civilians and civilian objects, especially humanitarian facilities in Gaza," the ministry said in a statement.

The month-old Israeli military campaign aimed at wiping out Hamas left Gaza's hospitals struggling to cope, as medical supplies, clean water and fuel to power generators had been running out. Gaza's health ministry has said 18 of Gaza's 35 hospitals and 40 other health centers were out of service either due to damage from shelling or lack of fuel. — Arab News

SC to hear appeal against Musharraf's death sentence

F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: A four-member bench of the Supreme Court of Pakistan (SC) led by Chief Justice of Pakistan (CJP) Qazi Faez Isa bench will hear appeals filed by former president Pervez Musharraf against his 2019 death sentence.

The bench comprising CJP Isa, Justice Mansoor Ali Shah, Justice Amin-ud-Din Khan, and Justice Athar Minallah will hear the former ruler's appeals against his 2019 death sentence. The former president was sentenced to death by a special court on December 17, 2019, under Article 6 of the Constitution after a case of high treason was filed against him during Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz's (PML-N) tenure for his "unconstitutional" decision to impose an emergency in November 2007.

Musharraf had been residing in the UAE after leaving Pakistan for medical treatment — with the PML-N government's approval — in March 2016. He passed away in Dubai in February 2023 and was laid to rest in Karachi's Malir Cantonment. During today's hearing, CJP Isa lamented why the cases from 2019 were still not fixed for hearing until now and questioned Salman Safdar, Musharraf's lawyer, as to why his petition was not allotted any number for hearing.

IMF for implementation of anti-money laundering laws

F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: The International Monetary Fund (IMF) has 'asked' Pakistan to ensure strict implementation of anti-money laundering laws, sources said on Friday.

During talks here for the next review for delivery of the \$700 million loan tranche, Federal Board of Revenue (FBR) and the State Bank of Pakistan (SBP) officials briefed the IMF regarding anti-money laundering and suspicious bank transactions. SBP briefed the international lender on Pakistan's economic performance from July to March while the FBR officials briefed the visiting delegation about tax crimes and also presented a report, the sources said.

IMF staff directed Pakistan to devise a clear policy to detect 'suspicious transactions' in tax crimes and asked to pass clauses for strict punishment in the upcoming finance bill. The delegation was briefed that Pakistan is already awarding strict punishment and blockage of bank accounts for money laundering.

The FBR was urged upon by the IMF mission for strict enforcement to end money laundering. Earlier it emerged that the International lender has demanded more recovery of income tax from retailers and real estate sectors while increasing income tax recovery on agriculture income.

Kakar, Abbas demand ceasefire, end to siege of Gaza

RIYADH (APP): Caretaker Prime Minister Anwar-ul-Haq Kakar on Friday met with President of Palestine Mahmoud Abbas in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia. The two leaders are attending the Extraordinary Summit of the OIC convened to discuss the dire situation in occupied Palestine resulting from the aggression of the Israeli occupation forces both in Gaza and the West Bank.

The Prime Minister conveyed unflinching solidarity of Pakistan with the Palestinian people. He strongly denounced the indiscriminate use of force by Israeli occupation forces and bombing of hospitals, refugee camps, schools and residential buildings, resulting in the loss of more than ten thousand precious lives and forced displacement of Palestinian families.

President Abbas appreciated Pakistan's expression of solidarity in this difficult time and its principled stance on the right of self-determination of the Palestinian people. The two leaders emphasized the urgency of an unconditional ceasefire, end to the siege of Gaza and smooth delivery of vital humanitarian aid and medical assistance to the affected population. They underlined the need for international collaboration to stop Israel from further bloodshed.

Prime Minister Kakar and President Abbas noted the timeliness of the Extraordinary Summit of the OIC and appealed to the global community, particularly the United Nations and its pertinent organizations, to take resolute measures to uphold principles of justice and humanity and end the carnage of the Palestinian people.

Prime Minister Kakar underscored Pakistan's unwavering commitment to a fair and enduring resolution of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, founded on the two-state solution, leading to the establishment of a sovereign and viable

Palestinian state with Al Quds Al Sharif as its capital, along borders that existed prior to 1967 enshrined in several OIC resolutions.

Meanwhile, the Caretaker Prime Minister Anwar-ul-Haq Kakar has said that despite India's lack of interest, Pakistan is focused to reap the benefits from the long-pending four-nation energy corridor, TAPI.

About the multibillion-dollar project involving Turkmenistan, Afghanistan, Pakistan, and India (TAPI), the prime minister said the corridor could prove as a source of cheap and sustainable supply of energy for the region. "On TAPI, there is a lot of enthusiasm from Turkmenistan, Afghanistan, and Pakistan. But if India chooses to remain out of the benefit of this whole arrangement, they still can do it," Kakar said in an interview with Turkiye's Anadolu news agency.

Kakar said, "With or without India, the Turkmen gas can be exploited for the economic benefit of this region, and we are very much focused on achieving that target." The \$7 billion project aims to bring natural gas from the Gylkynish and adjacent gas fields in Turkmenistan to Afghanistan, Pakistan, and India, the Anadolu reported.

The Asian Development Bank is facilitating and coordinating the project, which is proposed to lay a 56-inch diameter 1,680-kilometer (1,044-mile) pipeline with a design capacity of 33 billion cubic meters of natural gas per annum from Turkmenistan through Afghanistan and Pakistan up to Indo-Pak border. On relations with Turkiye, the prime minister called for enhanced coordination and cooperation, calling the bilateral relations "fabulous."

He emphasized improvement in areas including trade, agriculture, and defence between Pakistan and Turkiye. Also, he said, developing connectivity

corridors among Turkiye, Pakistan, and Iran could offer many opportunities to these nations and the whole region. Regarding the situation in Gaza, the prime minister warned of a "spillover effect" of the catastrophe, which he said could extend beyond the region.

Kakar called for an "immediate" cessation of the hostilities and incessant attacks of Israel and stressed the need for establishing a humanitarian corridor for an uninterrupted supply of food, medicines, and other essential items. He said Islamabad was looking forward to attending a forthcoming special session of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation, adding that the body should deliberate upon the situation, and come up with a "collective response."

On Pakistan's move to deport illegal foreigners, Kakar said the decision was meant to have a regulated movement across the borders. He mentioned that illegal immigration was never encouraged by any country in the world and Pakistan's step was in the same context. About relations with India, he said the resolution of the Jammu and Kashmir dispute was vital for the normalization of ties between the two neighbours.

"Kashmir is an outstanding issue between India and Pakistan. Pakistan's traditional position is that it should be resolved in accordance with the United Nations Security Council resolutions," he said. "They (Kashmiris) have got every right to determine their future, their destiny ... and Pakistan would always stand, diplomatically and politically, to support that stance," he said.

Caretaker Prime Minister Anwar-ul-Haq Kakar also said that an enhanced air, road and rail connectivity between Pakistan and Uzbekistan was vital to strengthen the bilateral trade and commercial ties, besides bringing the two peoples closer to each other.

MQM-P-PML-N alliance will benefit PPP: Bilawal

F.P. Report

KARACHI: Reacting to the recent "electoral alliance" between Pakistan Muslim League Nawaz (PML-N) and Muttahida Quami Movement Pakistan (MQM-P), Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP) Chairman Bilawal Bhutto-Zardari on Friday claimed that the coalition will be more beneficial for his party in the upcoming general election.

During an interaction with journalists in Safari Park, the PPP chairman said: "We worked hard to make him [Shehbaz Sharif] prime minister. It was the need of the hour."

He clarified that the decision was aimed at improving the situation as the country was facing a political and democratic crisis.

The PPP leader said that they benefited Sindh during the PDM-led government.

Responding to a question, Bilawal — without naming the Istehkam-i-Pakistan Party and the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf Parliamentarians — predicted that the "king's party" would meet the same fate as that of the 2008 elections. Hitting out at the establishment, the PPP leader said that the "king's party" is fielded in every election, adding: "Creating such parties sends a wrong message to the public and political circles"

Talking about the no-confidence motion against former prime minister Imran Khan, Bilawal said that PPP believed in democracy.

He said that former army chief General (ret'd) Qamar Javed Bajwa had asked them to withdraw the no-trust motion and in return, he would hold early elections in the country. PPP, however, rejected the offer.

Speaking on the occasion, Bilawal raised objections over the ongoing countrywide drive against illegal immigrants, saying he did not see clarity in the state policy on Afghanistan.

Tehreek-e-Taliban Pakistan and terrorists should be dealt with "iron hands", he said, adding that if there were strictness everywhere, then it would be difficult to hit the target. He was of the view that illegal immigrants should be sent back to Afghanistan with "respect".

Court orders to unseize Nawaz's properties

F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: In a major relief, an accountability court in Islamabad on Friday ordered to unseize properties, vehicles, and bank accounts owned by Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) supreme Nawaz Sharif in the Toshakhana reference filed by the National Accountability Bureau (NAB).

At the outset of Friday's hearing, accountability court judge Muhammad Bashir ordered the authorities to return Nawaz's seized properties, and vehicles and unfreeze his accounts.

In 2020, an accountability court ordered the confiscation of the property owned by the former prime minister in the Toshakhana vehicles reference after he was declared an absconder by the

Islamabad High Court.

The property includes a 1,650-kanal agricultural land in Lahore, a Mercedes, a Land Cruiser, two tractors, local and foreign bank accounts, a bungalow in Murree, and 102-kanal land in Sheikhpura.

The NAB reference filed against Zardari and Nawaz accuses them of obtaining cars from Toshakhana (the gift depository) by paying 15% of the price of the cars. Zardari also received cars as gifts from Libya and the UAE when he was president and used them for his personal use instead of depositing them in the treasury, the anti-graft body has alleged.

Former premier Yousuf Raza Gillani has been accused of facilitating Zardari and Nawaz in this matter. The anti-graft body

has accused Gillani of relaxing the procedure for acceptance and disposal of gifts. Khawaja Anwar Majeed and Khawaja Abdul Ghani Majeed, owners of the Omni Group, are also nominated as accused in the reference.

According to reports, Nawaz was not holding any public office in 2008 but was given a vehicle without any justification. NAB said the leaders have been charged with corruption under sub-sections 2, 4, 7 and 12 of Section 9 (A) of the NAB Ordinance. A gift from any country to the head of the state and deposited in the Toshakhana remains the property of the government unless sold at an open auction. Rules allow officials to retain gifts with a market value of less than Rs10,000 without paying anything.

A TASTE

of things to come

FLY BETTER

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EMIRATES BUSINESS

Rain brings respite from smog in Lahore

LAHORE (APP): The provincial capital on Friday received light to moderate rain which cleared the sky and subsided smoggy conditions, which had been prevailing for the last few weeks. The early morning shower turned the weather pleasantly cool, providing relief to the citizen in breathing.

Widespread rain covered various areas of the city including Airport, Qartaba Chowk, Ferozpur Road, Green Town, Walled City, Shadman, Mughalpur, Harbanspura, Defence, Iqbal Tow, Samanabad and Sabzazar.

The air quality of the city is expected to improve after the shower, while the Air Quality Index (AQI) was recorded very unhealthy with Lahore College for Women University 336, Town Hall 329 and Punjab University 287 during last 24 hours, as per the report of the Environment Protection Department, Punjab.

The collective impact of this weather phenomenon has not only reduced pollution levels but also brought relief to residents, allowing them to enjoy a much-needed break from persistent smog that had blanketed the city. According to a spokesman for the Pakistan Meteorological Department, mainly dry weather is expected in most parts of the province including the city during the next 24 hours, while fog/smog is likely to occur in plain areas in morning hours.

Training session at CPO focuses on inspection registers in police stations

KARACHI (APP): A training session emphasizing the significance and efficacy of inspection registers in police stations regarding crime prevention was conducted at the Central Police Office (CPO) in Karachi.

During the session, master trainers from Punjab directly provided guidance to SSPs in Investigations, District SSPs of Karachi, as well as training branch trainers, said a news release on Friday. Police officers from various districts in Sindh received training through a video link.

The participants received comprehensive insights into daily police operations, covering the utilization of registers in police stations, FIR registration, opportunities for personal inspection, and managing various cases such as statements, remands, challans, and FIRs. Inspector General of Police (IGP) Sindh Riffat Mukhtar Raja, Additional IGP Karachi Khadim Hussain Rind, and other senior police officers graced the occasion with their presence.

IGP Sindh highlighted the crucial role of FIR registration following a crime and the day-to-day activities carried out by the case investigation officers during the investigative process, which generates numerous consequential effects. He emphasized that as a case progresses towards its conclusion, a concrete challan, comprising supporting documents and police actions, evidence, witness statements, etc., is issued from the concerned court, ultimately leading to the punishment of the accused involved.

‘WTM resonates positively with Pakistani community in London’

ISLAMABAD (APP): Caretaker Minister of State for Tourism Wasi Shah's dynamic participation and strategic engagements during the three-day World Travel Mart (WTM) in London have resonated positively with the Pakistani community.

Notably, the pivotal meeting with Indonesia's Minister of Tourism, Sandiaga Salahuddin, at the Pakistan Pavilion marked a significant milestone, said a news release issued here on Friday. Upon Salahuddin Sandiaga's arrival, the state minister and the entire Pakistan Pavilion extended a warm welcome. The subsequent discussions, described as memorable and historic, emphasized the potential for fostering new avenues of tourism collaboration between Pakistan and Indonesia.

CM, IG pin promotion badges on five police officers

LAHORE (APP): A ceremony was held at the Chief Minister's Office here on Friday to pin promotion badges on police officers promoted as superintendent of police (SP). Caretaker Punjab Chief Minister Mohsin Naqvi and Inspector General of Police (IGP) Punjab Usman Anwar pinned the promotion badges on newly promoted five assistant superintendents of police.

Among the officers promoted to the position of SP were Salman Zafar, Taimoor Khan, Bushra Nisar, Sidra Khan and Munazza Karamat. The chief minister felicitated the officers and said that promotion was the right of police officers which had been given to them. He said that the promoted officers were expected to serve the people and hoped that they would utilize their capabilities

for the purpose. Additional IG Special Branch, Capital City Police officer Lahore and other police officers attended the ceremony, besides families of the promoted officers.

CM inspects Pindi Ring Road project, orders timely completion: Punjab Caretaker Chief Minister Mohsin Naqvi Friday made his third visit to the Rawalpindi Ring Road project in the past 25 days. Conducting an aerial tour of the entire 38-km route, he meticulously inspected the Khasala Khurd Adiala Interchange site and assessed the progress of earthwork, said a handout issued here on Friday.

Colonel Ayaz of Frontier Works Organisation (FWO) provided a comprehensive briefing to CM Mohsin Naqvi, highlighting that heavy machin-

ery for the Rawalpindi Ring Road construction had arrived, and the project was advancing at a rapid pace. The construction of subways, drainage channels, and roads section had commenced, with the allotted land for the project fully handed over to the contractor. Nespak has also supplied the necessary drawings related to the project.

CM Naqvi issued pertinent instructions to Commissioner Rawalpindi and FWO officials, emphasising the need for swift completion of the Ring Road project. He underscored that the expedited completion of the ring road would significantly enhance convenience for the citizens of Rawalpindi and Islamabad. During the briefing, it was informed that the Rawalpindi Ring Road spans 38.3-km with six lanes.

KPCTA stall garners praise & appreciation at Lok Mela

F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: The pavilion of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, established by the KP Culture Tourism Authority (KPCTA), at the ongoing Lok Mela in Shakarparian, Islamabad, has received praise and appreciation from both foreign and domestic visitors. The ten-day Lok Mela has been organized by the KPCTA and the National Heritage and Culture Division in Islamabad. KPCTA is participating in the event with the aim of projecting a positive image of KP and informing the world about the rich cultural and traditional heritage of the province. KPCTA has also arranged a traditional hujra (a common sitting

place) where visitors can enjoy traditional music. People are also enjoying traditional Khattak Dance and Rabab music in the hujra.

A total of 30 stalls have been set up by KPCTA showcasing products from artisans of Abbottabad, DI Khan, Charsadda, Haripur, Swabi, Peshawar, Chitral, Manshera, and merged districts. Visitors are enjoying foods from various regions at stalls offering traditional cuisines, including Chapli Kabab, Karahi, Tikka Boti, and various traditional dishes established by KPCTA. A special segment of the pavilion is the famous Qissa Khawani Bazar, where visitors can enjoy Qehwa and storytelling alongside beautifully displayed items made of

brass by expert craftsmen from KP.

The traditional items displayed in the KP pavilion include wax paintings, pottery, Mughal art, Charsadda Chappal and Khaddi, woodwork, Chitrali cap, Hazara phulkari and bags, Swati Shawl, truck art, handicrafts, stone mosaics, calligraphy, straw work, stone decoration pieces, dry fruits, sugarcane juice, and traditional KP items.

KPCTA also providing information about the province via different promotional Videos showcasing various tourist attractions and traditional cuisines and artisans of KP are also screened. Stalls displaying items from merged districts and Kalash are also part of

the pavilion.

The aim of Lok Mela is to bring artists and artisans together on a platform that enables them to introduce their work and art to the world. The event will also help artisans explore new markets for their work and find opportunities for growth and development. KPCTA is providing necessary assistance and support to artisans to achieve this objective.

The most enchanting Khyber Pakhtunkhwa musical night will be held on November 12 (Sunday), at Lok Virsa Islamabad, aiming to promote cultural traditions among people. It is worth mentioning that the KP pavilion secured the first position in the last mega event held in Islamabad.

‘Traditional shawls, Khusa footwear’ at Lok Mela stalls attracting number of visitors

ISLAMABAD (APP): As ongoing 10-day ‘Lok Mela’ folk festival is fascinating public from all walks of life, mostly stalls showcasing colourful traditional hand-made shawls and ‘Khusha’ footwear are serving as a major attraction for local as well as foreign visitors.

Dozens of stalls have been set up where Sindh, Balochistan, Punjab and KPK related traditional dresses specially, hand-made wool shawls are selling like hot cakes and gripping the attention of customers in the Mela.

This Lok Mela is not only awe-some interpretation of cultures but it gives entertainment and employment opportunities to many people, said an artistic work related seller belongs to Punjab. Punjabi traditional dresses

are incomplete without wearing embroidered Khosa, Lala Muhammad Aslam Khosa maker at Lok Mela talking to PTV news channel said. The prices of these footwear are reasonable and the designs are fashionable, which can well show the characteristics of Pakistani Khusha which is the main attraction for female customers, he added.

Every province has set up its own aesthetically designed cultural pavilion to depict its indigenous folk heritage but i love to prefer for buying traditional Khosa footwear in the Mela which is unique design and hand-made durable product, said a female visitor while purchasing it.

Sindhi and Gilgilt-Beltistan embroidery, Ajrak, block printing,

traditional shawls are on display at the Lok Mela, said a foreigner visitor, these embroidered shawls are available in comfortable stuff and attracting mostly visitors.

‘Mela’ proving us an economic opportunity to poor and under-privileged craftspeople, said another female customer, adding, i am buying a Pashto related traditional dress for my girls which has very attractive and colourful work.

A stall holder while displaying typical and traditional Punjabi khusha commented that this product is generally made by artisans, adding, it is mostly made of vegetable-tanned leather while the uppers are made of fabric embroidered with shells, mirrors, gems and stones.

Seminar on Shakespeare, Urdu literature at PU

LAHORE (APP): Punjab University Urdu Development and Translation Centre (PUUDTC) organized a seminar on ‘Shakespeare and Urdu literature’ on Friday.

On this occasion, Prof Dr. Shahab Yar Khan from Bosnia and Herzegovina, Dean Faculty of Arts and Humanities Prof Dr Amra Raza, Director Urdu

Development and Translation Centre Prof Dr Zahid Munir Aamir, former Director of Iqbal Academy Pakistan Muhammad Sohail Umar, faculty members and students were present.

In his address, Dr Shahab Yar Khan said that there were many intellectuals in the world of literature but no other could make such an impact as

Shakespeare on world literature. He said that the idea of the well-known Urdu drama ‘Waris’ was borrowed from Shakespeare. He said that every region of the world tries to adopt Shakespeare because the universality of his works is not seen in any creator. Prof Dr Zahid Munir Aamir welcomed the distinguished guests.

Obituary

To Allah's mercy and kindness, we all must return.

With the humble acceptance of Allah's will, we share the sad news of the passing away of **Syed Inam Ur Rehman** on Friday 10th November 2023.

Inam was widely known and respected in the media industry as a man of great integrity and strength and his loss will be felt by all who knew him, especially at EBM where he was a cherished team member. Beyond the workplace, Inam Bhai was a loving son, brother, husband, and devoted father.

Inam was truly an Inam (Gift) for all who knew him.

Funeral prayer for our most beloved and loving Syed Inam ur Rehman s/o Syed Shabbir Hussain will be held at the following Mosque address after Zuhr prayer
at 1:15 pm on 11th November 2023.

Madni Masjid, Clifton Block 9, Karachi

May Allah Almighty bless him with eternal peace, with an abundance of His mercy and forgiveness, and grant him gardens of Heaven as his eternal resting place. Ameen

To pay your respects and to offer condolences, please contact: Imran- 03018231334

Haris emphasizes collaboration for enhanced security measures

KARACHI (APP): The Sindh Caretaker Minister for Home and Prisons, Sindh Brig. (R) Haris Nawaz, convened a special meeting on Friday to assess the law and order situation in the province, with a focus on matters related to the repatriation of illegal immigrants and foreign nationals. The meeting was attended by senior officials from the Sindh Home Department, Karachi Police, Pakistan Rangers (Sindh), and various intelligence agencies, as well as a representative from the National Database and Registration Authority (NADRA).

The Home Minister commended the roles of various departments and institutions, especially the Rangers, Police, and district administration, in providing facilities and accommodations for the returning migrants. He instructed to expedite the deportation process and proposed holding a follow-up meeting every Tuesday to monitor the progress of repatriating illegal immigrants.

During the meeting, it was reported that the Finance Department Sindh has disbursed the estimated funds necessary for the ongoing repatriation process in the province. Stressing the importance of transparency

in all expenses related to the illegal immigrants' evacuation process, the Home Minister emphasized strict adherence to the rules and regulations governing these expenses and suggested devising a mechanism to ensure transparency.

The Home Minister highlighted the government's primary responsibility to safeguard the lives and property of the people and maintain peace. He urged the relevant authorities to take all possible measures to ensure the smooth flow of daily life,

economic activities, and a peaceful environment. He also stressed the need for enhanced security measures at all levels, in coordination with police, rangers, and intelligence services. The meeting also discussed the issue of drug trafficking in the city, especially within educational institutions. While reviewing the police progress report on actions and arrests against drug cartels, the Home Minister instructed to intensify ongoing operations against those involved in drug trade and their supporters.



Khyber Pakhtunkhwa
Employees Social Security Institution

CORRIGENDUM

Reference to the Advertisement No. INF(P)2638/23 “**SELECTION AND RATE CONTRACTING (CONTRACT FRAME WORK AGREEMENT) OF DRUGS MEDICINES, MEDICAL DEVICES, SURGICAL DISPOSABLES & NON-DRUG**” published in newspaper i.e., Daily Express and KP-PPRA's websites i.e. (www.kppra.gov.pk) tender # 24339 on 26 Oct, 2023. Tender Documents has been modified for Information. Modified tender documents are available on www.kppra.gov.pk
All the firms shall be registered with Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Revenue Authority (KPRA) where applicable.
Opening and Closing dates of Tender will remain the same.
Note: The competent Authority has the right to reject all bids under the rule 47 of the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Public Procurement Regulatory Authority (KPPRA) Procurement Rules 2014.

Vice Commissioner INF(P) 2747/23
Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Employees Social Security Institution Peshawar
Tel No: 091-9212913



GOVERNMENT OF KHYBER PAKHTUNKHWA
KHYBER PAKHTUNKHWA CITIES IMPROVEMENT PROJECT
LOCAL GOVERNMENT ELECTIONS & RURAL DEVELOPMENT DEPARTMENT
KHYBER PAKHTUNKHWA, PESHAWAR

RE. EXPRESSION OF INTEREST (EOI)
Hiring of Services of INCREII, IENTAL STAFF and INDIVIDUAL CONSULTANTS for Project Management Unit and City Implementation Units Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Cities Improvement Project (KPCIP), Local Government Elections & Rural Development Department (LGE&RDD).
Government of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (GoKP)

Applications are invited from highly qualified and experienced individuals for the recruitment of **Project Incremental Staff** on contract basis initially for a period of one (1) year (extendable based on satisfactory performance) under the subject Project and **Individual Consultants**. Detailed Terms of Reference (TORs) for the positions can be downloaded from KPCIP website (<https://kpcip.org.pk>) under the link **Opportunities**, **ADB CMS** (<https://selfservice.adb.org/OA/HTML/adb/adpos/jsp/ABDCMSHomepage.jsp>) Interested / eligible candidates shall submit their complete EOI through **ADB's Consultant Management System (CMS)**

PROJECT MANAGEMENT UNIT (PMU), PESHAWAR - (INCREMENTAL STAFF)
Director Finance & Administration
No of Position: 01
Qualification: Preferably Master's degree in Economics, Finance, MBA Finance or equivalent qualification. **Experience:** Preferably 12 years' experience in Finance, HR and General Administration. Experience in setting up new accounting systems, book-keeping, computerized accounting systems is desirable. Experience in making improvements to financial systems, reporting to donors and good understanding of the laws of Pakistan and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa related to Tax, insurance will be considered favorably along with experience in HR Policies and procedures & administration systems. Preference will be given to those who possess relevant experience with multilateral donors (ADB & WB etc.) or their funded projects & overseas relevant experience / relevant experience with international organization & Government Institution.

Project Development Officer
No of Position: 01
Qualification: Preferably Bachelor degree in Civil Engineering / Water & Sanitation/ Environmental Engineering or equivalent qualification. Preferably Master's degree in the above-mentioned fields or Project Management, Construction Management or Business Administration. **Experience:** Preferably 7 years relevant experience in Water Supply or Sanitation infrastructure Projects or Urban Development Projects. Adequate knowledge of engineering and project management practices. Preference will be given to those who possess relevant experience with multilateral donors (ADB & WB etc.) or their funded projects & overseas relevant experience with international organization & Government Institutions.

Landscaping Architect
No of Position: 01
Qualification: Preferably Bachelors' degree in Architecture, Landscaping Designing, Urban Architecture and Design. A Master's degree in the above disciplines will be considered favorably. **Experience:** Preferably 10 years of experience in urban design, sustainable architectural design and landscape/site planning & design. Experience and interest in hard & soft landscape construction and interior design experience. Preference will be given to those who possess relevant experience with multilateral donors (ADB & WB etc.) or their funded projects & overseas relevant experience / relevant experience with international organization & Government Institutions.

PROJECT MANAGEMENT UNIT (PMU), PESHAWAR - (INDIVIDUAL CONSULTANT)
Information, Communication & Technology (ICT) Specialist
No of Position: 01
Qualification: Preferably Master's degree in ICT, Computer Sciences, or equivalent qualification in a relevant field
Experience: Preferably 10 years of relevant experience in managing IT Projects, development and implementation of smart cities applications enterprise resource planning implementations & other technological deployment. Prior experience in managing ICTs implementation in government sector is desirable. Preference will be given to those who possess relevant experience with multilateral donors (ADB & WB etc.) or their funded projects & overseas relevant experience / relevant experience with international Organization & Government Institutions.

CITY IMPLEMENTATION UNITS (CIUs), INCREMENTAL STAFF
Contract Admin. Management Officer
No of Positions: 04 (Kohat, Mardan, Mingora (Swat) and Peshawar)
Qualification: Preferably Bachelors' degree in Civil Engineering, Procurement, Business Management, Law or Finance or equivalent qualification.
Experience: Preferably 10-year experience in procurement and contract management/ FIDIC based contract administration of civil works and consultancy services with focus on ADB procedures is an added advantage, experience & knowledge of procurement procedures of international organizations / agencies, especially of ADB, GoP & ADB procurement guidelines for works, goods & services.
Working experience in the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa region will be considered favorably. Preference will be given to those who possess relevant experience with multilateral donors (ADB & WB etc.) or their funded projects & overseas relevant experience / relevant experience with international organization & Government Institutions.

IT OFFICER
No of position: 05 (Abbottabad, Kohat, Mardan, Mingora and Peshawar)
Qualification: Preferably Bachelor's degree in information Communication Technology (ICT) Computer Sciences, or equivalent qualification.
Experience: Preferably 5 years of general experience and 4 years demonstrated relevant professional experience at the national level in IT projects, development and implementation of smart cities applications and other technological deployment. Prior experience in ICTs implementation in government sector is desirable. Preference will be given to those who possess relevant experience with multilateral donors (ADB & WB etc.) or their funded projects & overseas relevant experience / relevant experience with international organization & Government Institutions.

MIS Officer No of Positions: 01 (Mingora (Swat))
Qualification: Preferably Bachelors' degree in Computer Sciences, Systems Engineering, Electrical Computer/Software Engineering, Project Management, Business Administration, Economics etc. or equivalent qualification.
Experience: Preferably 5 years of general experience with five years of particular experience of preparation of MIS. Excellent written and spoken communication skills in English, and working experience in the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa region will be considered favorably. Preference will be given to those who possess relevant experience with multilateral donors (ADB & WB etc.) or their funded projects & overseas relevant experience / relevant experience with international organization & Government Institutions.

Monitoring & Evaluation Officer
No of Positions: 02 (Abbottabad, and Kohat)
Qualification: Preferably y Bachelors' Degree in Civil Engineering, Development Studies, Economics, Finance, Business Administration or equivalent qualification. Master's degree in any of the above fields and Project Management, Business Administration etc. will be considered favorably.
Experience: Preferably 5 years of general experience with three years of particular experience of undertaking M&E activities. Excellent written and spoken communication skills in English, & working experience in the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa region will be considered favorably. Preference will be given to those who possess relevant experience with multilateral donors (ADB & WB etc.) or their funded projects & overseas relevant experience / relevant experience with international organization & Government Institutions

CITY IMPLEMENTATION UNITS (CIUs) – (INDIVIDUAL CONSULTANTS)
Environment Specialist
No of Positions: 01 (Abbottabad)
Qualification: Preferably graduate degree in environmental engineering or post graduate degree in environmental science or equivalent qualification in a relevant field is required.
Experience: Preferably 5 years of experience in environmental management and monitoring of projects, environmental assessment and/or design and implementation of environmental mitigation measures. Excellent written and spoken communication skills in English and working experience in the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa region will be considered favorably.

Social Safeguard Specialist
No of Positions: 01 (Peshawar)
Qualification: Preferably, bachelor degree in Social Sciences or equivalent qualification in a relevant field. Master's Degree in above fields will be preferred.
Experience: Preferably 7 years' experience in resettlement planning and implementation preferably in projects financed by multilateral finance institutions. Well conversant with preparation & implementation of LARPS & preference will be given to those who possess relevant experience with multilateral donors (ADB & WB etc.) or their funded projects and overseas relevant experience / relevant experience with international organization & Government Institutions. Working experience in the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa region will be considered favorably
Detailed Terms of Reference can be downloaded from <https://kpcip.gov.pk>, and **ADB'S CMS** (<https://selfservice.adb.org/OA/HTML/OA.jsp?OAFAunc=XXCRS CSRN HOME PAGE>) free of charge. The Expression of Interest (EOI) must be submitted online via ADB's CMS not later than 27 November 2023. Direct submission of EOIs to PMU, CIUs, WSSCS and LGE&RDD are not acceptable and will be rejected.

PROJECT DIRECTOR (PMU, KPCIP, LGE&RDD)
Ground Floor, Afzal Apartments, Jamrud Road, Phase 3 Chowk, Hayatabad Peshawar Pakistan
Tel No. +92 (91) 5845555, Email: pdpcip@gmail.com

INF (P) 2755-23



PESHAWAR: KP Caretaker Chief Minister Muhammad Azam Khan called on by a delegation of UNHCR.

Archeological wonders: Exploring Buddhist heritage of stupas

PESHAWAR (APP): In the tranquil landscape of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa where every stone speaks about Ghandhara civilization, ancient relics and Bhuddha stupas whisper tales of the Buddhist heritage soon after entering its northern districts with plenty of archeological sites reminding tourists about the lifestyle of Lord Bhuddha, the founder of Bhuddism. Bestowed with numerous Buddhist sites including centuries' old monasteries and stupas, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa has served as a living testament to historical, cultural and religious importance where leaders and followers of different faiths came for propagation of their religions.

"These stupas, varying in size and architectural designs, offer a fascinating glimpse into the ancient Buddhist past," said Bakht Muhammad, Assistant Director, Archeology and Museums Department KP while talking to APP. He said Khyber Pakhtunkhwa was the 26th province of Ghandhara civilization in the region as evident of the Persian inscriptions mentioned by archaeologists and historians Rigveda and Atharveda in 2nd Millennium BC.

In 7th century BC, he said, three Chinese historians: Fahien, Xiuntsang and Sanune had talked about 1,000 stupas in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa where monks and archeologists mostly from east southern countries came for performance of religious obligations. He said semi-nomadic Aryansh had entered KP from the Afghanistan side and settled along rivers Swat, Gomal, Kurram, and Kabul where Gandhara civilization gained roots after Persians conquered it and made it one of the provinces of the Achaemenid Empire.

He said reading and writing in Swat, Dir, Mardan, Charsadda, Peshawar and Malakand, famous for Gandhara civilization, were started as evidence of the inscriptions mostly made on stones by Iranians. Ghandhara civilization and Bhuddha stupas witnessed construction as well as onslaught of warriors during different eras including Indo-Greeks

with 41 kings and queens, Sethians, Hindus, Parthians, Khushans, Sikhs, Turks Shahi and Muslims who marched to subcontinent for establishment of dynasties.

"The Alexander the Great invaded the subcontinent through Khyber Pass and faced tough resistance while trying to subdue Youafzai tribesmen at Swat and Kunar valleys in 327 BC. Alexander the Great constructed two new cities Wazira (Barikot) and Ora (Odigram) in Swat district in 327BC where stupas were built. The White Huns that came from Central Asia in 558 century inflicted great losses to Buddhists sites including stupas and monasteries while the Hindus rulers destroyed stupas in existing India in different wars," he said.

The existing Charsadda (Pushkalavati), Peshawar and Hund Swabi were the capital cities of Ghandhara where Bhuddha stupas were constructed. He said that a Bhuddha stupa was also built at Sulthankhel in Khyber district that attract tourists from Nepal, Sri Lanka and other countries. Bakht Muhammad said that excavation at Shahgee Kadhari, Peshawar conducted by British archaeologists in 1909 led to recoveries of bones of the Lord Bhuddha.

These bones were later gifted to Myanmar while the clay pot where these bones were kept had been preserved at Peshawar Museum being the lone museum of Ghandhara art in the world. Following death of Lord Bhuddha, he said that five stupas carrying his relics were constructed in existing Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. Butkara Stupa in Swat constructed in 2nd century BC was an architectural masterpiece adorned with intricate carvings and motifs reflected the artistry of that ancient time.

Butkara Stupa stands as a symbol of the region's historical significance and is a must-visit destination for history enthusiasts. In the serene town of Takht-i-Bahi (Mardan), the ruins of an ancient Buddhist monastery and stupas take visitors on a journey back in time. These structures, a UNESCO World Heritage Site, are remarkably

well-preserved by Pakistan and provide a unique opportunity to explore the architectural grandeur and spiritual importance of the region's Buddhist past.

Khushan Stupa, situated near Peshawar, constructed around the 3rd century AD, is a testament to the enduring legacy of Buddhism in the area. The intricate carvings and inscriptions on the stupa narrate stories of the Buddha's life and teachings, offering a window into the spirituality and artistry of ancient Khyber Pakhtunkhwa.

As these stupas are historical treasures for many, they are also places of spiritual significance for Buddhists around the world. Pilgrims and tourists alike visit these sites to pay their respects and gain a deeper understanding of Buddhism's roots in the region. Despite the challenges of time and nature, the Buddha stupas in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa continue to stand proudly, echoing the voices of the past and inviting curious travelers to uncover its secrets.

Incharge Sub-Regional Office Archeology Malakand district, Nawazuddin said that there are a lot of heritage sites in Swat including Bazira, Shigardar Stupa, Ghelegay Buddhist monument, Butkara Stupa 1 and 2, Saidu Stupa and its proper projection through social and digital media can turned KP into a hub of heritage tourism. Ikram Marwat, a tourist who visited Budha Stupas in Swat said that the government should start an awareness campaign and give the opportunity to Tik Tokers and documentary makers to shoot in these sites.

Dr Abdul Samad, Director Archeology and Museums KP said that conservation of Bhuddha Stupa at Sultankel Khyber was underway to restore its architectural wonder. He said conservation of stupas at Cheena, Shangal Dagh, Amlak Dara, Abassi Cheena in Swat, Takht Bhai, Jamal Ghari in Mardan, Aziz Dheri and Baja Swabi completed. He said signboards on Swat Expressway were installed to help tourists in reaching these archeological wonders of KP with ease.

PHC stops recovery from tube-well operator Humayun Khan

PESHAWAR: A divisional bench of Peshawar High Court (PHC) comprising of Ijaz Anwar and Justice SM Attique Shah stopped recovery of Rs7 lac from Market Committee tube-well operator as received salary.

The counsel Imad Nasir Kundi advocate argued that petitioner named Zulfiqar was born in 1958 and would be retire in 2017 but his retirement ordered didn't issued while he had continued duties till 2021 as tube-well operator of the Market Committee. The petitioner receiving his salary till 2021 then Market Committee stopped his salary and ordered for recovery of Rs7 lac for four years, counsel argued.

The counsel further argued that recovery of salaries of four years isn't right because the petitioner had served as tube-well and obtained benefit of his services. It is responsibility of competent authority to declare retirement of servant and petitioner had nothing to do with it, the counsel stated.

PHC's divisional bench comprised Justice Ijaz Anwar and Justice SM Attique declared that High Court had granted several decisions in this regard while stopped recovery of Rs7 lac from tube-well operator despite his date of retirement and dispose of the writ plea.

IKD, PAUS launch Journal of Urology

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: The Institute of Kidney Diseases (IKD), Hayatabad Medical Complex (MTI-HMC) in collaboration with Pakistan Association of Urological Surgeons (PAUS) has started the publication of Pakistan Journal of Urology (PJU) - which is the first ever journal of its kind in the country.

The PJU is a biannual publication. Its editor-in-chief is internationally acclaimed urologist Prof Dr Liaquat Ali, while the team of editors, writers and other staff is comprised of seasoned urologists from all over Pakistan. The journal covers most of the urological problems of Pakistan by researching and analyzing multiple topics of larger public interest. The first issue includes five original articles, one review article and two case reports.

The Editor-in-Chief, PJU, Prof Dr Liaquat Ali while talking to this correspondent told, "Pakistan Journal of Urology is a dream come true both for IKD and PAUS.

It is a very good addition to the field of medical science in Pakistan that will be proved very helpful for budding urologists to understand complex urological issues." He further stated that it was hoped that soon the PJU will be recognized by PMDC, HEC, and other national and international accrediting bodies to produce and promote quality research in the area of urology.

Cold and dry weather to prevail in KP

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: The Provincial Meteorological Center Peshawar on Friday predicted that dry and cold weather is expected in most districts of the province.

It said foggy conditions are expected over Charsadda, Nowshera, Mardan, Peshawar, Swabi and DI Khan districts, as well as, over Motorway (M1)/Highways in late night and morning. Travelers on Motorway and highways are advised to take precautionary measures.

School students fail in class 9 exams, CM takes notice

PESHAWAR (APP): The Chief Minister Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Muhammad Azam Khan in view of the present poor performance wherein majority of the government school students failed in class 9th board examinations, has decided to increase the efficiency of the teachers.

A letter in this connection was issued to discuss in detail the reason behind such a huge failure of the students in the board exam besides submit reasons of the closers of some of the schools in different districts across Khyber Pakhtunkhwa.

It was decided to implement teacher capacity building programs, teachers can be equipped with necessary skills and knowledge so that in future such situations could be overcome and ensure quality education to the students in parts of the government schools in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. To directly improve the quality of education, Student Learning Outcome (SLO) standards can be delivered according to the post and complaints about students failing in the board

examinations of government schools in the 9th examinations were reported.

Teacher training is crucial to effectively prepare students for SLO-based exams and in case of any failure in providing education based on SLO, the concerned officials will have to face severe consequences. Action will be taken against all the responsible employees including teaching and administrative cadre under E&D Rules 2011. In this regard, direct to share regular updates with the Education Department about the progress and any challenges faced in implementing these measures.

In North Waziristan, South Waziristan Upper Lower, the closure of closed schools without any reason has been revealed and complaints have been received regarding closure of schools in Upper and Lower South Waziristan and North Waziristan, said an official of the Education Department. He said that no specific response has been received from the EDOs of the three districts regarding the issue and clo-

sure of the schools in these districts.

The Education Monitoring Authority has been instructed to conduct regular inspections in the above districts until the winter vacation. A letter issued to the District Administration and Monitoring Authority and DEO of Lower and Upper South Waziristan and North Waziristan and instructed them to take immediate steps to save precious times of the students part of the schools in these districts.

Through this letter, the monitoring authority of the Education Department has directed the DCs and EDOs of the three districts to inspect the schools. A giant investigation team has been formed to investigate the matter, the DCs will lead the JIT in their districts and discuss in detail the reasons for the closure of the students, the official of the education department told APP. "If there is any omission during the inspection or if someone else is found in place of the teacher, a show cause notice will be issued on the spot," the letter directed.

Homoeopathy natural method for treatment

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: Homeopathy is a priceless gift of nature, from which not thousands of millions but millions of people are cured today. Increasingly, homoeopathy is not only a natural method of treatment, but it is also much cheaper and more effective than other conventional methods of treatment.

These views were expressed by prominent homoeopathy professional Dr. Col. Iqbal Shaheen during the lecture series held in

Peshawar under the Recog Professional Development Program. The event was organized by Dr. Yeloge Germany who delivered a lecture on Mental Health in Homoeopathy.

Addressing the event, Dr. Najam Al Thaqib, Head of Dr. Saleem Ahmed & Co., Pakistan's business partners of Dr. Recog Germany, said that the preparation of medicines at Dr. Yeloge goes through a rigorous testing, quality control and research process. Even today, Dr. Recog's band potentiation

is performed under the same principles as the traditions of 200 years ago.

This is the reason why our medicines have a prominent position compared to other local and international medicines. 10-7 and cash prizes of 5 thousand were awarded. Colonel Iqbal Shaheen Director Frontier Homeo Medical College and Dr. Ghulam Habib were also given lifetime achievement awards. A large number of teachers, students and doctors participated in the event.



PESHAWAR: Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Caretaker Minister for Health Dr. Riaz Anwar addressing a press conference at Civil Secretariat after special meeting of Provincial Cabinet.

ECO conference and Azerbaijan's victory day

Mazhar Karim Dad

THE main point in the foreign policy of any country is the politics of interests. These interests can be economic, military or of any nature. Foreign policy is not permanent but keeps changing as a result of circumstances and events and changes happening in the world.

It is difficult for countries with weak economy and political instability to form an independent foreign policy, but a successful country is the one that protects its interests and does not spoil relations with any country even in difficult times.

The member countries of Economic Cooperation Organization include Pakistan, Iran, Turkey, Uzbekistan, Turkmenistan, Afghanistan, Tajikistan, Kyrgyzstan, Kazakhstan and Azerbaijan. The headquarters of the organization is in Tehran. This organization was established in 1985 by Iran, Pakistan and Turkey, then in 1992, 7 countries of Central Asia were given membership in the organization.

Although the Economic Cooperation Organization has not fully achieved its goals, it is sure moving towards the accomplishment of its goals. At the organization's head-to-head conference in Islamabad, the goals of doubling the trade between member countries in the next 5 years under Western 2025 were set. The

organization can play an important role in the development and prosperity of the region. The current conference will consider the steps taken so far and their results.

Routes will be discussed while measures will be taken to expedite the movement of people and goods between member countries. The member countries should try to end the economic sanctions on Iran and establish peace in Afghanistan. Addressing a press conference before leaving for Tashkent, Prime Minister Anwar Haq said that after the formation of the Afghan government, terrorism in Pakistan increased by 60 percent. Afghanistan did not take any steps. We have concrete evidence in this regard. He described the statements of Afghan leaders as deplorable.

The Prime Minister will present Pakistan's position on ECO Vision 2025 in the conference. On this occasion, he will hold important meetings with the leaders of Turkey, Iran, Afghanistan, Uzbekistan and Tajikistan, in addition to the business community of Uzbekistan. Pakistan and Azerbaijan also have excellent relations. Both countries are strategic partners. Military relations between Azerbaijan and Pakistan are increasing.

Azerbaijan is interested in buying JF Thunder 17 fighter jets from Pakistan and progress is also being made in this regard. Both countries are working to continuously increase trade and coopera-

tion. Pakistan fully supported the position of Azerbaijan in the war with Armenia. Relations between Pakistan and Azerbaijan are also growing in religious and cultural fields. Pakistan recognized Azerbaijan on December 12, 1991 after its independence from the Soviet Union.

Caretaker Federal Minister for Information and Broadcasting Murtaza Solangi has congratulated the Caretaker Prime Minister Anwarul Haq Kakar, the Government of Pakistan and the people of Pakistan on the Victory Day of Azerbaijan and said that it was a historic day when Azerbaijan, which was under occupation for 30 years, became independent. The Minister of Information said that the dynamic leadership of President Ilham Aliyev transformed the Republic of Azerbaijan into a regional center and economic power. Azerbaijan has left no stone unturned to develop these recently liberated areas. Azerbaijan has built air bases and modern infrastructure in its liberated areas. Azerbaijan's progress is due to the visionary initiatives taken by its far-sighted leadership, which has led the country on a journey of development, and there are many lessons for Pakistan to learn from this chapter. The caretaker government seems willing to work in this regard and there are numerous opportunities for improvement in the relationship with Central Asian Countries.

Gas connections disconnected

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: During the ongoing crackdown against gas pilferers, SNGPL continued raids in Punjab, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and Islamabad, disconnecting another 109 connections while 182 under billing cases processed ; Rs 9.771 million fine imposed

In Lahore, the regional team disconnected 07 connections on illegal use of gas and another 6 on use of compressor and 79 Under billing cases have been processed. The team also imposed fine of Rs 0.1750 million against gas theft and under billing cases. In Bahawalpur the company disconnected 3 connections on the use of compressor. The regional team in Multan disconnected 3 connections on illegal use of gas while another two on the use of compressor. 45 Under billing cases have been processed. The team imposed fine of Rs 0.095 million against gas pilferers.

In Peshawar and Karak, the company disconnected 39 connections on account of direct use of gas and illegal use of gas and amount of Rs 6.53 million against gas theft and under billing cases. The regional team in Islamabad disconnected 21 connections on illegal use of gas. The team in Gujranwala 1 connection was disconnected on illegal use of gas, 11 under billing cases billing cases have been processed and 0.02 million amount have been booked against under billing cases.

In Sahiwal, one connection was disconnected on illegal use of gas and 1 on compressor. In Faisalabad 10 under billing cases have been processed. In Sheikhupura disconnected 25 connections on illegal use of gas while 37 under billing cases processed. The team booked amount of Rs 2.951 as against gas theft and under billing cases.

Citizens faced hardship because of no electricity

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: The people of many areas across Peshawar faced hardship at the hands of PESCO officials as there was no light in the day time and during the night.

However, it was a routine matter when even Peshawar City received a light rain, the electricity gone for an undefined period. On complained to the area SDOs and to the officials of the Grade Station, they did not accept the said breakdown for an unidentified period, just replying that "Rain Han ", and so as the electricity is missing in many areas due to light rain.

Electricity has been missing in Main Charsadda Road, including Lala Zar Colony, Shero Jangi, Larama, Budani area, Bashirabad,

Zaryab, Danishabad and Canal Road areas, Khazana, Nasapa areas since last day and till filing of this report 24 hours passed of no electricity.

There were also reports from other areas across the city and when contacted the officials of the Shahi Bagh Grade Station, Charsadda Grade Station, they said in a surprise that the electricity is continue from our side but when contacted the area SDOs, they replied that actually electricity stopped by the officials at grade station. Electricity was missing in various areas including Safid Dheri and Bara Gate areas as well, one Adnan Khan, when contacted, said, "We are too in the darkness and no the UPS and the light Solar system stopped working because of the long breakdown during the day and night

time. Adnan said that 24 hours have passed but there is no electricity, creating problems at home, no phone charge, no water and surprisingly no official of the PESCO available to contact. "Today is Friday and there is no water at home, still no electricity till 1225 pm," Adnan said.

Citizens are facing severe problems due to power outages, he said. When a Wapda official contacted he replied that due to rain several feeders have been damaged due to rain and work is going on for power restoration.

The citizens of Peshawar appealed to Chief Minister Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Muhammad Azam Khan to set up a probe committee to investigate the long breakdown as a result of 30 minute rain in Peshawar.



PESHAWAR: Chief Traffic Officer Qamar Hayat Khan awarding certificate of appreciation to Public Relation Officer Shahab Khan Umarzai for good performance.



In brief

Army setup four medical units F.P. Report

MIRAN SHAH: Pakistan Army in assistance with Mari Petroleum Company Limited (MPCL) has established four medical units in North Waziristan to facilitate the population of this far-flung area. The mobile units, prepared under the CSR were equipped with lab tests systems, ECG, Ultrasound and blood pressure testing systems. A team of specialist doctors including lady doctors and paramedical staff have been deployed at these medical units to provide medical cover to the local people. In charge medical units said, initially, the medical units were established in Gardai and Shewa areas of North Waziristan that would later be extended to other areas. Reason behind establishing these medical units was to provide better medical facilities to the locals at their doorstep. So far 402 patients including 129 male, 77 female and 96 children have been provided medical cover through these medical units. Apart from treatment, the locals were also provided awareness regarding preemptive measures against diseases and free of charge medicines at these medical units. The area elders were highly obliged to the Pakistan Army for providing them with the best possible medical facilities at their doorstep.

Naanbais business shut

QUETTA (INP): Pakistan Tandoor owners in Quetta have announced to close their shops indefinitely due to a 200% increase in gas prices. The decision was taken in a meeting of the Tandoor Association on Friday. According to media reports, the association said that the price of LPG and electricity has also increased, making it difficult for them to run their businesses. The price of 200 grams of bread has been fixed at Rs 30, while the price of single bread is Rs 40 and that of double bread is Rs 80. The association added that around 300 ovens have been closed in Quetta since November 1. They said that the price control committee fixed self-imposed rates without taking the confidence of the tandoor owners and the representatives of Anjuman Traders. The closure of tandoors has caused inconvenience to the people of Quetta, who rely on them for their daily bread.

2 killed as mini truck turns turtle

MULTAN (INP): A mini truck overturned early in the morning, killing two including while injuring one. Rescuers said the accident occurred after over-speeding a suburban area, Mamori Carpet Road near Manik canal. The rescue team took out all of the three victims entrapped into the truck after the truck overturned. The two among the three including Mohammed, 12, son of Shamsuddin and Arsalan, 20, son of Ramzan succumbed to injuries while shifting to Allama Iqbal Teaching Hospital. However, the third injured Yaseen, 25, son of Lal Khan remained safe despite getting brutal bruises. He was given medical aid when he was admitted to the hospital. Bodies of the deceased were handed over to the heirs after informing the police station concerned.

DPO holds open kutchery

SIALKOT (INP): District Police Officer (DPO) Muhammad Hasan Iqbal held an open kutchery at the airport police station on Friday.



QUETTA: A view of accumulated rain water after recent rain.

Rally in solidarity with Pakistan army held

F.P. Report

LOWER DIR: The Istehkam e Pakistan Tahreek (IPT), a body of apolitical elders working for disputes' resolution in the area, arranged a motorcycle and car rally in solidarity with the Pakistan army at Timergara here the other day. The IPT chief Haji Wasil Khan was warmly welcomed at Chakdara and brought to the Khaima area of Timergara in a procession of motorcycles and cars.

The participants also shouted slogans in favour of the Pakistan army. The gathering at the residence of Haji Abdul Haq was addressed by the IPT chief Haji Wasil Khan, deputy chief Fazal Khaliq, divisional coordinator Umar Khitab, Tariq Jamil and others. The speakers said the IPT was an apolitical organization that worked for political and economic stability and strengthening of the country.

They said the IPT had no political designs but it wanted to keep protecting the state and its institutions. The speakers said that anti-state elements had been

active to malign the Pakistan army, its leadership and state institutions through social media platforms which could not be tolerated. They said the enemies of Pakistan wanted to create and widen the gap between the state and its people.

They said the IPT was active to counter the negative propaganda through the support of people. They said that 'first the state' should be the slogan of all political parties because without state no politics was possible. The speakers asked the participants to keep a vigilant eye on the activities of the anti-state elements and report them instantly.

The speakers urged the state to behave politely and kindly with the repatriation of Afghan nationals as they had been in this country for decades.

Iqbal Day function: The Lower Dir administration and education department arranged a function at government high school Khungi to mark Iqbal's Day here the other day. The additional assistant commissioner Muhammad Tariq was chief guest on the

occasion. The District Youth Officer Malik Shahzad Tariq, traffic in-charge Khan Nazar, principal of GHS Khungi Jan Muhammad, school teachers, parents and students participated in the event. The speakers paid tributes to Allama Iqbal and said that he wanted to see the youth as Shaheen (eagle).

They said that Iqbal considered the new generation to be the symbols of progress and success. "The active role of the youth is the guarantor of national development", AAC Tariq said, adding that the main reason for the extent to which the Muslim Ummah was suffering from helplessness was the inactiveness of the Muslim youths.

He said the youth should have the capacity to adopt the passion and determination to build their lives accordingly. He said the poetry of Iqbal had such a fascinating effect on the Muslim youth that they stood up for the demand of a separate state with enthusiasm, desire, courage and became active. The guests also distributed certificates, shields and cash prizes among the students.

Govt school's students obtained 106 winter kits F.P. Report

BUNER: As many as 106 winter uniform kits were provided to orphans and poor students of Government Primary School Ambela Bala by teachers with the help of donors to ensure that no child shall leave education due to lack of facilities and uniform.

The school winter kit was comprised of bag, winter cloth, boot, toothpaste and warm sweaters. The winter kits were distributed in ceremony in which Hamd, Na'at and speech competition was held among students. Sub Divisional Education Officer (SDEO) Saeed Mahmood was chief guest of ceremony while Parent Teacher Council (PTC) chairman Amir Zeb and Headmaster Muhammad Salah were present.

The chief guest Saeed Mahmood said that education is right of every child while the government is providing free books to secondary level to higher literacy in the country. He added that teachers of GPS Ambela Bala had set an example for rest of the country to resolve hurdles facing by students in every aspect of life.

SDEO said that co-curriculum activities are helpful for development of spirit and tolerance while GPS Ambela Bala had proved it. He added that such teachers can uphold standard of government institution which can develop best perception among public.

Headmaster GPS Ambela Bala Muhammad Salah said that the initiative of providing school uniform to students was started in 2014 with help of donors to ensure that no child can leave education due to economic hurdles. He added that the faculty members are committed to assist students in every walk of life.

Govt strengthening primary healthcare hospitals: Nadeem

F.P. Report

CHARSADDA: Caretaker Federal Minister for Health Services, Dr Nadeem Jan here Friday said the government was strengthening primary healthcare hospitals by equipping it with all modern medical and surgical equipment to facilitate patients of rural areas of the country including Khyber Pakhtunkhwa.

He expressed these views after inaugurating a community health centre near Tangi Hospital here today. Speaking on the occasion, the minister said that reforms in the health sector were the top priority of the existing government and solid measures were being taken to increase healthcare facilities in all public sector hospitals in the country.

The Minister said that an inclusive and integrated strategy has been formulated to strengthen the primary health care system to reduce load on hospitals in big cities of Pakistan including Peshawar. He said about 500 basic pri-

mary healthcare hospitals would be equipped with all necessary equipment including X-Rays, ultrasound, ambulances, labs and other diagnostic services in the next two months.

He said the community healthcare centre Tangi would be made state-of-the art where all modern healthcare services would be available for patients. The Minister said with expansion in the building of Tangi Hospital, a modern cardiology unit and cath lab would also be established where latest facilities would be ensured for patients of heart related diseases.

He said solid efforts were being made to completely equip these primary healthcare hospitals by January next year with financial assistance of donors and philanthropists. Dr Nadeem Jan said that 400 hospitals would be solarized in the country including Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and practical work on it would commence from the first month of 2024. He said solariza-

tion of hospitals was aimed to provide 24/7 healthcare services to patients and uninterrupted power supply to healthcare units.

The Minister said that great responsibilities rest on the shoulders of elders of the area to educate people about the significance of polio's eradication and reproductive health programs in KP. He said polio was a crippling disease and vaccination was the best option to protect children from permanent disabilities. The Minister urged parents and guardians to vaccinate their children imperative to win the fight against polio.

He said that the aim of these healthcare initiatives was to strengthen healthcare services at tehsil, village and union council level for facilitation of rural population. Later, he was briefed about the facilities by the authorities of KP Health Department in the community healthcare centre Tangi. He directed the administration to provide best healthcare services to all patients.

JSQM announces sit-in against Dawood Varsity

F.P. Report

LARKANA: Jai Sindh National Front has announced a sit-in in front of the main gate to protest against the cancellation of admissions of 14 Sindh students by the administration of Dawood Medical University on November 28 to remove the vice-chancellor and incompetent staff of the university.

According to the details, Ashraf Kalhoro, the central president of Jeay Sindh Students Federation, JSQM Athar Soomro, the central leader of, Azizur Rehman Sheikh, the president of Jeay Sindh Students' Organization Larkana, and others addressed the press conference at the Larkana

Press Club and made the alleged allegations. Sindh speakers in Karachi and Sindh students in educational institutions are being targeted, while the vice-chancellor of Dawood Medical University, Samreen Asim, who is wanted by NAB authorities in corruption of 450 billion, has been jointly targeted by other senior officers.

But three months ago, on the basis of bigotry, the admissions of 14 Sindh students were unjustifiably cancelled. By exploiting their rights, 135 seats in the rural areas of various districts of Sindh have been eliminated, while the university administration is engaged in corruption in

petrol and other causes. While the university administration has stopped the point buses for the Sindh students for the facilities of the students, while the fixed fee has been increased from 22 thousand to 96 thousand rupees because the poor students are unable to study.

The students are depriving while the movement of unusual persons in the rooms of the students staying in the hostels to study from faraway areas has become normal. He further said that the admissions of the students should be restored after the immediate suspension of Dawood Medical University Vice Chancellor.



JAMSHORO: Artists performing on stage during 36th Annual Conference of Pakistan Society of Neurosurgeons at LUMH.

Pakistani teacher wins prestigious award

GUIJRANWALA (INP): Pakistani school teacher Sister Zeph has won the prestigious Global Teacher Prize 2023 for educating the underprivileged children. She established a school in the courtyard of her home in Gujranwala at the age of just 13.

"We are delighted to announce that Sister Zeph, an English, Urdu, culture, inter-faith harmony, climate change teacher at Gujranwala, Punjab in Pakistan, has been named the winner of the Varkey Foundation Global Teacher Prize 2023..." the organisa-

tion announced in a statement.

The prestigious award was organised in collaboration with UNESCO and in strategic partnership with a UAE-based global philanthropic organisation named Dubai Cares. Sister Zeph was selected from over 7,000 nominations from 130 countries around the world. She received her award at a ceremony that took place at UNESCO's General Conference in Paris on November 8.

UNESCO's Director General Audrey Azoulay also congratulated the

Pakistani teacher on receiving the prestigious award. "We all remember a teacher who has had an impact on our life and changed our future.

It may sound like a truism but it's true: teachers are life-changers. Congrats to Sister Zeph from Pakistan, 2023 Global Teachers Prize Winner. Thanks to her for her commitment as a life-changer!" she wrote on her X handle. Sister Zeph founded her own school for underprivileged children in the courtyard of her home at the age of just 13.

Out of frying pan into fire: Tobacco harm reduction narrative

Dr. Waseem Janjua & Sana Ahmad

TOBACCO Harm Reduction (THR), a concept initially aimed at mitigating the health risks associated with tobacco use, has become a polarizing and contentious subject in recent years. While on the surface, THR appears to offer a compromise between public health and individual choice, there is a growing body of evidence suggesting that the tobacco industry has exploited and usurped this narrative to advance its own interests. This write-up delves into the complex terrain of THR, examining its origins, the tactics employed by the tobacco industry, and the implications for public health.

The roots of "Harm Reduction" can be traced back to medical practices whereby health-related harm can be prevented or reduced. For example, in the case of HIV/AIDS, one harm reduction measure would be to prevent the usage of infected syringes, etc. However, THR can be traced back to the 1970s when health professionals and advocates began seeking alternatives to traditional tobacco products. The idea was to pro-

vide smokers with less harmful nicotine delivery mechanisms, such as nicotine replacement therapy (NRT), to reduce the health risks associated with smoking. The early intentions of THR were noble, aiming to offer a path for smokers to quit, and indirectly, to prevent the health of others due to secondhand smoke.

Dr. Arnold Russell who proposed the idea of THR, generated considerable attention and debate. While Dr. Russell's research and advocacy have made significant contributions to the discussion surrounding THR, it is essential to critically examine whether his ideas have been misconstrued and twisted to meet the tobacco industry's profit-centric agenda. THR is a concept that suggests smokers can reduce their health risks by transitioning to Nicotine Replacement Therapy and NOT to another nicotine-containing product. Instead of replacing nicotine, the industry continues to promote unregulated devices and other tobacco/nicotine products. This practice makes the entire concept of harm reduction ethically questionable and very clearly profit-centric.

As per the World Health Organization, the long-term health effects of electronic nico-

tine and tobacco products are not yet fully understood, and there are concerns about the increasing use of these devices among youth and even children. Furthermore, the tobacco industry has seized the THR narrative as an opportunity to promote its alternative products, often with aggressive marketing tactics that target young people. The pursuit of such questionable narratives needs utmost caution and transparency – something missing in the case of THR.

Major tobacco companies around the globe began investing, acquiring and producing electronic devices using chemicals as refills and are positioning themselves and these devices as stakeholders in the THR movement. This marked the beginning of a complex and troubling relationship between the tobacco industry and THR. One of the tobacco industry's most insidious tactics in the THR arena is what can be aptly called "health-washing." By branding their products as "reduced-risk" or "safer" without conclusive scientific evidence, they prey on smokers' genuine desire to quit or switch to a healthier option. In doing so, they blur the lines between scientifically proven THR methods, like nicotine replacement therapy (NRT), and

electronic tobacco and nicotine products with unknown long-term health consequences.

One of the tobacco industry's most concerning tactics is the promotion of "safer" products without proper scientific evidence. By marketing products as less harmful or reduced risk, the industry has tapped into the genuine desires of many smokers to find a healthier alternative i.e., "quitting". This strategy blurs the lines between genuine THR products, like nicotine replacement therapy, and electronic nicotine and tobacco products, such as heated tobacco and vaping devices, which may not be safe, as there is no scientific evidence to prove their safety or as a smoking cessation aid.

Furthermore, the tobacco industry has exploited regulatory gaps and loopholes to market these products, often employing marketing techniques that appeal to youth, children, and non-smokers. The mushrooming of flavored electronic devices and aggressive advertising campaigns have led to an alarming increase in usage, sparking a new public health crisis. While this concept might seem like a reasonable compromise, a closer examination reveals that the tobacco industry has skillfully manipulated and exploited THR

to its advantage, leaving us with an "out of the frying pan into the fire" scenario.

The tobacco industry's involvement in THR has also raised ethical questions. Can an industry that has profited from addiction and disease genuinely be committed to harm reduction? Critics argue that the industry's history of deceit, concealment of health risks, and manipulation of nicotine levels in cigarettes raises concerns about their true intentions.

Relatedly, it is noteworthy that TI has tried to outwit the tobacco control measures by producing Heated Tobacco Products (Veo containing Rooibos Tea by British American Tobacco, and LEVIA containing zero tobacco by Phillip Morris). EU has banned most of these products and has stringent regulations in place to control sales and spread of these products. More interestingly, Austria, besides banning flavored heated tobacco products, and heavy restrictions on electronic cigarettes (implemented during the last week of Oct 2023 throughout the EU), has also banned Veo and LEVIA because these products are neither pharmaceutical products nor tobacco products.

The tobacco industry's influence has extended to shaping

public policy and influencing regulations related to THR. By funding research and advocacy groups sympathetic to their cause, the industry has sought to undermine evidence-based public health policies. This has created a situation where THR, which was initially seen as a potential public health solution (by offering replacement and possible elimination of nicotine products), is now viewed with skepticism by health professionals and policymakers.

In conclusion, while the concept of Harm Reduction holds the potential for reducing the harm caused by tobacco and nicotine use, the tobacco industry's involvement has muddled the waters. Their exploitation of the THR narrative, marketing of potentially harmful products, and influence over public policy raise critical questions about their commitment to public health. As the debate over THR continues, it is essential to scrutinize the industry's actions and motives and to prioritize evidence-based public health policies that genuinely prioritize harm reduction.

The authors are Tobacco control advocates while Dr. Waseem Janjua works at the Sustainable Development Policy Institute and Sana Ahmad works at Blue Veins.



News organisations reject charges of complicity in attacks

GAZA: Four international media outlets have denied accusations they had prior knowledge of the October 7 attacks by Hamas on southern Israel after an article by a pro-Israel media watchdog group HonestReporting questioned their work with Gaza-based freelance photojournalists.

After the publication of the article by HonestReporting, which describes itself as "a charitable organisation" with a mission to "expose anti-Israel media bias", the Israeli government also demanded explanations from Reuters, The Associated Press, The New York Times and CNN. In an article published, the website pointed out that the presence on October 7 of Gaza-based photojournalists in the border area breached by Hamas raises "serious ethical questions". It went on to allege that their presence could have been "coordinated with Hamas" and questioned whether the news outlets "approved of their presence inside enemy territory". "Reuters categorically denies that it had prior knowledge of the attack or that we embedded journalists with Hamas on October 7," Reuters said, responding to the article and subsequent allegations by Israeli government officials.

"Reuters acquired photographs from two Gaza-based freelance photographers who were at the border on the morning of October 7, with whom it did not have a prior relationship," it said. "The photographs published by Reuters were taken two hours after Hamas fired rockets across southern Israel and more than 45 minutes after Israel said gunmen had crossed the border."

Reuters staff journalists were not on the ground at the locations referred to in the HonestReporting article," Reuters added. More than 1,400 people, most of them civilians, were killed in the assault on military posts and border communities. Since then, Israel has launched an air and ground assault on Gaza, which has so far killed at least 10,812 Palestinians, including more than 4,400 children. Israeli government spokesperson Nitzan Chen said in a statement that



Israel was demanding explanations from the four news outlets regarding the HonestReporting article, saying what the report had described "crosses every red line, professional and moral". The AP also rejected allegations that its newsroom had prior knowledge of the attacks. "The first pictures AP received from any freelancer show they were taken more than an hour after the attacks began. No AP staff were at the border at the time of the attacks, nor did any AP staffer cross the border at any time," a statement said.

"The role of the AP is to gather information on breaking news events around the world, wherever they happen, even when those events are horrific and cause mass casualties." The news agency also said it was "no longer working" with photographer Hassan Eslaiha, one of the four photographers who documented the attacks. CNN has also cut ties with the photographer, who was pictured in a photograph alongside Hamas leader Yahya Sinwar. In a tweet, HonestReporting said it was not accusing Reuters of collusion but had raised "some serious ethical issues regarding news outlets' association with these freelancers and asked important and relevant questions that everyone deserves answers to".

Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's office said it viewed with "utmost gravity" the suggestion that journalists working with international media had joined in covering the Hamas attacks. "These journalists were accomplices in crimes against humanity; their actions were contrary to professional ethics," it said. Former Israeli ambassador to the UN Danny Danon went further and called on the four photojournalists to be added to the list "of participants to the October 7 massacre" to be "eliminated" by Israel's security services.

The New York Times, which works with Yousef Masoud, another of the four photojournalists, called the accusations that its newsroom had advance knowledge of the attacks "untrue and outrageous". "We also want to speak in defense of freelance photojournalists working in conflict areas, whose jobs often require them to rush into danger to provide first-hand witness accounts and to document important news. This is the essential role of a free press in wartime," a statement by the newspaper said. "We are gravely concerned that unsupported accusations and threats to freelancers endangers them and undermines work that serves the public interest," it added. — Aljazeera

Amhara Fano militia and Ethiopian army clash

LALIBELA (BBC): Fighting has erupted in the historic Ethiopian town of Lalibela, as government forces and local militia have clashed, residents told the BBC. Lalibela is home to 13th Century churches that are registered as Unesco world heritage sites. Fano, a militia in the surrounding Amhara region, has been battling the army since it was ordered to disband. Government spokesperson Legesse Tulu has disputed reports of violence in the city, according to Reuters news agency.

But witnesses told the BBC that fighting was intense and a plane due to land at the airport failed to do so. The Amhara region around Lalibela has been a battleground between the Fano militia and the military for several months. Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed's government imposed a six-month state of emergency in early August to try to stop the clashes. This allowed the government to regain control of major towns and cities including Lalibela which had been seized by Fano. Federal government forces and the militia group were allies in the fight against Tigrayan forces from northern Ethiopia, who launched a rebellion in 2020. The conflict ended with the signing of a peace accord last year between the federal government and Tigrayan forces. Tension then arose between Fano and federal authorities when the government attempted to integrate the group into the military. Forces in Amhara say the federal government's decision will prevent the region from providing armed resistance to any future threat. The Ethiopia Human Rights Commission found that 3,000 people have fled their homes since the start of the conflict.

El Nino set to last at least til April: UN

El NINO (AFP): The El Nino weather phenomenon, which triggers higher global temperatures, is expected to last until at least April 2024, the United Nations said. El Nino is a naturally occurring climate pattern typically associated with increased heat worldwide, as well as drought in some parts of the world and heavy rains elsewhere. The UN's World Meteorological Organization said the current El Nino, which developed rapidly during July-August this year, was likely to peak between now and January.

"There is a 90-percent likelihood it will persist throughout the upcoming northern hemisphere winter/southern hemisphere summer," it said in its latest update, adding that it was expected to last until at least April. The weather phenomenon typically occurs every two to seven years, and it usually increases global temperatures in the year after it develops. But, while most of the El Nino impact is not expected to be felt until 2024, WMO highlighted that the phenomenon was occurring in the context of rapid climate change. Currently the hottest year ever recorded was 2016 -- the year after an exceptionally strong El Nino developed -- but the world is already on track to beat that record. "As a result of record high land and sea-surface temperatures since June, the year 2023 is now on track to be the warmest year on record," WMO chief Petteri Taalas said in the statement, warning that "next year may be even warmer". "This is clearly and unequivocally due to the contribution of the increasing concentrations of heat-trapping greenhouse gases from human activities," he said. "Extreme events such as heatwaves, drought, wildfires, heavy rain and floods will be enhanced in some regions, with major impacts," he cautioned, stressing the importance of efficient early warning systems. El Nino last occurred in 2018-2019 and was followed by an exceptionally long La Nina -- El Nino's cooling opposite -- which ended earlier this year.

Ex-Biden campaign staffers call for Israel-Hamas truce

WASHINGTON: More than 500 former campaign staffers who helped elect Joe Biden in 2020 have called on the United States president to work towards a ceasefire in Gaza and end the violence that has killed more than 10,800 Palestinians. The letter released adds to the growing calls from sources close to the Biden administration to push for an end to the war.

"As President of the United States, you have significant influence in this perilous moment," the letter, first reported by Vox, said. "You must call for a ceasefire, a hostage exchange, and de-escalation, and take concrete steps to address the conditions of occupation, apartheid, and ethnic cleansing at the root of the horrific violence we are witnessing now." While the Biden administration and Congress remain steadfast in their support for Israel, staff members, grassroots organisations and activists have been expressing growing opposition to the war. The American Postal Workers Union, which represents US Postal Service employees, also backed calls for a ceasefire. "We call on our government, which is the primary foreign benefactor of the Israeli government, to use all its power to protect innocent lives and to help bring about peace in the region, and not use our tax dollars for more war," the union said in a statement. "We join the calls for an immediate ceasefire, the release of hostages, and urgently needed massive humanitarian aid to the people of Gaza. The cries of humanity demand nothing less." The two statements follow earlier efforts from within the govern-

ment to push for an end to hostilities.

Last week, employees at the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) circulated a letter calling for an immediate ceasefire, it had surpassed 1,000 signatures. Hundreds of Congress staffers also staged a walk-out to demand an end to the war. Letter by people who worked on Biden's campaign highlighted the mounting death toll in Gaza and the mass displacement of residents in the territory's northern reaches, noting that scholars have raised alarm about the risk of genocide in the conflict. The Democratic staffers also said they were "horrified by the devastating Hamas' attack against Israeli civilians on October 7". United Nations agencies and rights groups have also urged a ceasefire, with UN chief Antonio Guterres warning that Gaza is becoming a "graveyard for children". But, Biden ruled out any definitive stop to the conflict. When reporters asked about the possibility of a ceasefire in Gaza, the US president said, "None, no possibility."

Biden has voiced unconditional support for Israel and requested more than \$14bn in additional assistance for the country since its war in Gaza started on October 7, angering US progressives, Palestinians, Arabs and Muslims. Last month, the US president sparked outrage among Palestinian rights supporters when he cast doubt over the death toll in Gaza, saying that he has "no confidence in the number that the Palestinians are using". Rights experts and fact-checkers defended the

numbers, which are released by the Palestinian Health Ministry in Gaza based on hospital and morgue records. They explained that, in previous conflicts, the Health Ministry's numbers matched the findings of independent researchers. A senior State Department official also said that the actual Palestinian death toll may be even higher than the official numbers. "In this period of conflict and conditions of war, it is very difficult for any of us to assess what the rate of casualties are," Barbara Leaf, assistant US secretary of state for Near Eastern affairs, told lawmakers. "We think they're very high, frankly - and it could be that they're even higher than are being cited."

The Health Ministry has also said that its current statistics do not account for people who remain under the rubble or who were buried without being registered. When Biden ran for president, his supporters often portrayed him as a "decent" man aiming to restore unity in the US after the presidency of Donald Trump. Biden has suffered personal grief in his life, having lost his wife and young daughter in a car accident in 1972 and his son Beau, a politician and army veteran, to cancer in 2015. The campaign staffers' statement called out the US president for appearing to play down - if not dismiss - civilian casualties in Gaza. "Mr President, you have spoken intimately about the unbearable pain and grief of losing a child," the letter said. "We were shocked and saddened to see you justify the death of Palestinian children as 'the price of waging a war'." — Aljazeera

Calls to sack Braverman grow amid furore over pro-Palestine remarks

LONDON: The political future of British Home Secretary Suella Braverman hangs in the balance as she faces anger within her own Conservative Party after making unauthorised comments about the country's pro-Palestine demonstrations, which she called "hate marches" and for criticising the police.

In an opinion piece published in The Times, Braverman said that the police "play favourites" and have taken a soft stance towards rallies in support of Gaza, which she described as "pro-Palestinian mobs". "The content was not agreed with Number 10," a spokesperson for Prime Minister Rishi Sunak told reporters, referring to the prime minister's Downing Street office. The ministerial code is clear that any ministerial media interventions need approval from No 10.

Sunak is under pressure to sack Braverman, but his spokesperson Max Blain also said the prime minister still had full confidence in her. Sunak's deputy held meetings this week to discuss plans for changes to his cabinet. Bloomberg News reported, adding that a reshuffle could come as soon as next week. Braverman is seen as a potential future leader of the governing Conservative Party, and has consistently

staked out far-right position on issues such as multiculturalism and immigration. The opposition Labour Party has drawn on such incidents to paint a picture of a weak and divided government, with Yvette Cooper, the shadow home secretary, calling Braverman "out of control" and Labour leader Keir Starmer saying that Sunak is too weak to challenge her. Sunak "must know that this isn't the way that a home secretary should behave," said Starmer. "He must know in himself that the role of responsible government is to reduce tension and to support police in the difficult decisions they have to make." In an open letter to Sunak, Labour's national campaign coordinator Pat McFadden noted that "no previous Home Secretary has ever launched such an attack on the police". There was no further update from Sunak's office about what action it would take, if any, against Braverman, according to British media reports. Braverman's stance towards pro-Palestinian political activity has previously drawn criticism, including comments suggesting that waving a Palestinian flag could be a criminal offence.

"I do not believe that these marches are merely a cry for help for Gaza," Braverman wrote in The

Times. "They are an assertion of primacy by certain groups - particularly Islamists - of the kind we are more used to seeing in Northern Ireland." Conservative members have said that her comments are divisive and undermine the police. Critics have said Braverman is trying to position herself for a party leadership contest that could come if the Conservatives lose power in an election that is expected next year. Opinion polls have for months put the party 15 to 20 points behind Labour. London has witnessed massive weekend demonstrations over the past month, with tens of thousands of people taking to the streets to denounce Israel's relentless bombing campaign in the Gaza Strip and demand the United Kingdom government call for a ceasefire. A large rally in support of Palestine is expected to take place on Saturday, coinciding with Armistice weekend, an annual remembrance of World War I. Police Commissioner Mark Rowley has said there were insufficient grounds to ban a pro-Palestine march on Armistice Day. "At a time when we should be seeking to unite communities - the Home Secretary is dividing them. Language matters - and the Home Sec's comments are inaccurate,

inflammatory and irresponsible," London Mayor Said Khan posted on X. Since the war between Israel and Hamas broke out on October 7 - following an attack on Israel by the Palestinian group that Israeli authorities say killed more than 1,400 people - Jewish, Muslim, and Arab communities around the world have expressed fear that tensions could spill over into their own communities.

At least 10,812 Palestinians have been killed in Israeli attacks on Gaza since. It is not the first time the right-wing minister has been the subject of controversy. Braverman recently called homelessness a "lifestyle choice" and previously drew censure from Pakistan's foreign minister after saying that Pakistani men "hold cultural values at odds with British values" and worked in abuse rings that target "vulnerable white English girls". She was in Rwanda this year to discuss an agreement in which the UK will relocate undocumented refugees and migrants there as she doubles down on a plan that has been mired in legal challenges and controversy, and was faced scathing criticism for describing the arrival of asylum seekers on the UK's southern coast as an "invasion". — Aljazeera

Why Latin America's 'pink tide' is taking a stand against Israel

BOGOTA: As Israel's bombardment of Gaza enters its second month, world leaders have increasingly voiced concern over the rising death toll and suspected human rights violations in the Palestinian territory. But in the West, few have been as vocal - or as severe in their criticism - as the leftist leaders in Latin America, many of whom came to power as part of a progressive wave known as the "pink tide".

On October 31, Bolivia severed its diplomatic relations with Israel, citing "the aggressive and disproportionate Israeli military offensive taking place in the Gaza Strip". Colombia and Chile echoed that criticism, recalling their diplomats from Israel the very same day. "If Israel does not stop the massacre of the Palestinian people, we cannot be there," Colombian President Gustavo Petro posted on the social media platform X. His message came minutes after his Chilean counterpart,

Gabriel Boric, denounced the Israeli offensive as a "collective punishment on the Palestinian population in Gaza". Analysts said these acts of censure send a powerful signal from Latin America, a region that has largely maintained close, if sometimes tense, ties with Israel. "It speaks to a Latin America that is not willing to tolerate such obvious violations of human rights and international humanitarian law," said Mauricio Jaramillo, an international relations expert. The Latin American leaders' sharp rhetoric, he added, stood in stark contrast with statements from other Western leaders, like United States President Joe Biden, who have been more circumspect in their criticism of Israel. In response to Latin America's diplomatic backlash, the Israeli Ministry of Foreign Affairs called on Colombia and Chile to support its right "to protect its citizens". To do otherwise, Israel suggest-

ed, would be to align "with Venezuela and Iran in support of Hamas terrorism". It also called Bolivia's decision to cut relations altogether "a surrender to terrorism". Bolivia, Chile and Colombia were not alone in their criticism. By Friday, the leftist government in Honduras had likewise pulled its ambassador from Israel for "consultations". And after last week's bombing of Jabalia, Gaza's largest refugee camp, more left-leaning leaders from Latin America spoke out against the Israeli violence.

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Argentina, for instance, home to the largest Jewish community in Latin America, condemned the attack in a statement: "Nothing justifies the violation of international humanitarian law." The current conflict in Gaza, however, is not the first time Latin America's leftist leaders have taken a stand against Israel. Jaramillo pointed out

that Cuba's Fidel Castro became the first Latin American leader to break relations with Israel back in 1973. Announced in the midst of the Cold War, Castro's decision served as a rebuke both to Israeli aggression in the Middle East and to its biggest ally, the US - Cuba's adversary at the time. The legacy of the Cold War has primed Latin America's leftist leaders to be sympathetic to the Palestinian cause, according to Jihad Jusef, the vice president of the Palestinian Union of Latin America, an association of Palestinian diaspora groups. During the Cold War, the US backed military dictatorships in Latin America that suppressed leftist movements, Jusef said. That history, he argued, serves as a parallel for the modern-day situation in Gaza, where the US is supporting Israel in a campaign that has raised grave human rights concerns. — Aljazeera

Portugal's president calls snap elections

LISBON: Portugal's President Marcelo Rebelo de Sousa has dissolved parliament and called snap elections, two days after the country's prime minister resigned amid a continuing corruption investigation. Rebelo de Sousa said that the country would hold snap elections on March 10, the second in as many years. "I have chosen to dissolve the Assembly of the Republic and hold elections on March 10," he said in a televised address.

The announcement comes after Socialist Prime Minister Antonio Costa offered his resignation, following the arrest of his chief of staff as part of an anticorruption investigation that includes allegations of malfeasance and influence peddling. The 62-year-old Costa, who first took power in 2015, denied any wrongdoing but said that he could no longer continue in his role. Prosecutors have said that

he is the subject of a separate investigation. The state prosecutor's office has said that the country's Supreme Court is looking at the "use of the prime minister's name and his involvement to unlock" the activities being investigated. "I totally trust the justice system," Costa said. "If there are suspicions, then the judicial authorities are free to look into them... I am not above the law." By law, an election must take place within 60 days of the issuing of a presidential decree dissolving parliament. Rebelo de Sousa had said that he would only disband parliament, where the Socialist Party holds a majority of seats, after a vote on the budget for 2024. That budget, which includes tax cuts for the middle class, spending on social programmes for the poor, and a 24 percent increase in public spending amid flagging economic growth, was passed by the house on October 31. It

must be finally approved by November 29.

After meeting with the main political parties and the Council of State, a consultative bod, the president said that allowing lawmakers time to pass the budget will help "meet the expectations of many Portuguese". The corruption probe is focused on allegations of improper behaviour around the development of lithium mining and hydrogen projects in the country, and Costa's chief of staff, Vitor Escaria, was arrested as police conducted raids on several public buildings and additional properties. Prosecutors also named Infrastructure Minister Joao Galamba as a formal suspect, and issued arrest warrants for the mayor of the town of Sines, where some of the projects were to be located, and two executives at the company Start Campus, tasked with building the hydrogen production project and data centre. — Aljazeera

Sudan conflict: Many flee fresh ethnic killings

KHARTOUM (BBC): Thousands of people have been forced to flee the Sudanese region of West Darfur amid fears of ethnic cleansing, a medical charity says. Witnesses have accused the paramilitary group Rapid Support Forces (RSF) of targeting and killing non-Arabs, with reports of hundreds of deaths. This comes after the RSF captured the Sudanese army headquarters in West Darfur capital of El Geneina.

The RSF says it is not involved in what it describes as a "tribal conflict". It has been battling the army for control of the country since April. Medecins Sans Frontieres (MSF) says that most of the 7,000 people who have crossed into Chad in the past three days are women and children who are fleeing with nothing. Hatim Ali, a local human rights monitor, said he had fled to Chad after the RSF and allied militias arrived on horses, camels and motor-

bikes and besieged Erdamta, just across a river from El Geneina. He said they "killed so many men and raped a lot of women", adding that hundreds of people may have been killed. Since the capture of El Geneina, the RSF and allied Arab militias have been accused of murdering ethnic Masalit people, looting homes and raping women.

The RSF and Arab militia even reportedly attacked a camp for internally displaced people in Erdamta, where some 800 people are said to have been killed. A man who fled the camp with his family before the attack told the BBC: "I'm still alive, but I lost a lot". Alaa Babikr, a resident of El Geneina, told the BBC that civilians had no way to escape the fighting. While many people have fled to Chad, thousands remain trapped in Sudan as Arab militias demand huge sums of money to cross the border, an aid

worker told BBC. Pierre Honnorat, the head of the World Food Programme (WFP) in Chad, told the BBC the key challenge was feeding the thousands of refugees. "We need support, and we need it now. We do need to secure a meal a day to them all. They have nothing," he said. The RSF originated in Darfur and has been accused of atrocities against non-Arabic groups in the region during this year's conflict. The paramilitary group has been gaining more territory in Darfur since the beginning of this month, taking control of four of the region's five states. Peace talks in Saudi Arabia have been unfruitful as efforts to secure a ceasefire have failed, according to Reuters. The UN refugee agency says "an unimaginable" humanitarian crisis is unfolding in Sudan. Nearly six million people have been forced from their homes since the war began.

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The ECO, lisps and scopes

THE caretaker Prime Minister Anwaar-ul-Haq Kakar has reiterated Pakistan's commitment to the ECO Vision 2025, calling for collective efforts and accelerated reforms to achieve the Organisation's objectives and the region's trade potential for bringing colossal economic and peace dividends. The Prime Minister urged the bloc nations to make the ECO an effective organisation by implementing their words and commitments into actions, practicable and visible reality. According to him, regional countries must work collectively and diligently to realise the goals and objectives of the Organisation. He noted that the ECO region, if well connected and fully aligned can bring colossal economic and peace dividends for our people.

The 16th Summit of the 10-member Economic Cooperation Organisation (ECO) was held in Tashkent, the capital of Uzbekistan in recent days. The summit was attended by the heads of the states/governments of member nations including Azerbaijan, Uzbekistan, Tajikistan, Iran, Turkey, Pakistan, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan and Turkmenistan. The huddle held an in-depth discussion aimed at promoting bilateral and multilateral ties among the member nations through enhanced connectivity, high-level cooperation and creating ease of doing business and trade for people and businesses in the region. Meanwhile, regional trade, transport, energy, agriculture, tourism and cultural exchanges have been identified as major avenues for bilateral cooperation and collaboration to realize shared and sustainable progress and development in the region. The two-day session concluded with the repetition of the prospects for the huge untapped potential for regional trade and cooperation, flimsy claims, high hopes and fewer practical steps to realize that daydream and grasp the definite destiny of the people of the region.

Historically, the 10-member bloc of Muslim developing countries comprises over 8 million square kilometres of land, representing 15% of the world population, possesses huge mineral deposits and vast untapped energy reservoirs with a scanty share in global trade, least technological development, and a rare contribution in science and modern innovations. Unfortunately, ECO intra-regional trade stands at less than 8 per cent of the region's aggregate trade, which is in great stark to other regional blocs such as the European Union, ASEAN and the Asia Pacific Economic Forum that is a matter of concern for the member states, their leadership and bloc Secretariat in Istanbul.

Although, the bloc has specifically set its targets and anticipated goals aimed at boosting intra-regional trade, travel, tourism, and multilateral cooperation but all those endeavours proved futile because of certain administrative, technical and trade issues because all member states are developing agricultural economies, facing problems in bilateral trade except energy and defence sector. The bloc adopted a landmark preferential trade arrangement between the member states and embraced the historic ECO Vision 2025 at the 13th ECO Summit about a decade ago. Unfortunately, all those same ideas, prophecies and promises are still far from reality and physical existence.

During the past four decades' journey, the bloc could only achieve limited economic integration, least infrastructural development and insignificant regional connectivity. The inadequate institutional capacity and high tariff barriers among the member states marred the scope for regional economic integration, shared growth and collective prosperity. Meanwhile, domestic political instability in the member nations and the Afghan conflict seriously restricted regional trade and connectivity within the ECO.

In fact, the ECO is a unique mechanism which provides the neighbouring Muslim nations with a sizeable forum for regular interaction, close cooperation, and strengthening of ties in their region. It also continues to hold the promise of a bright future for our succeeding generations with an enormous geo-political significance of their region. The ECO member nations must recognize the importance of their bloc, and the strength of their unity while identifying the causes for their failures to effectively tackle those hurdles to achieve their defined destiny as early as possible.

Sikh Yatra and Junta business

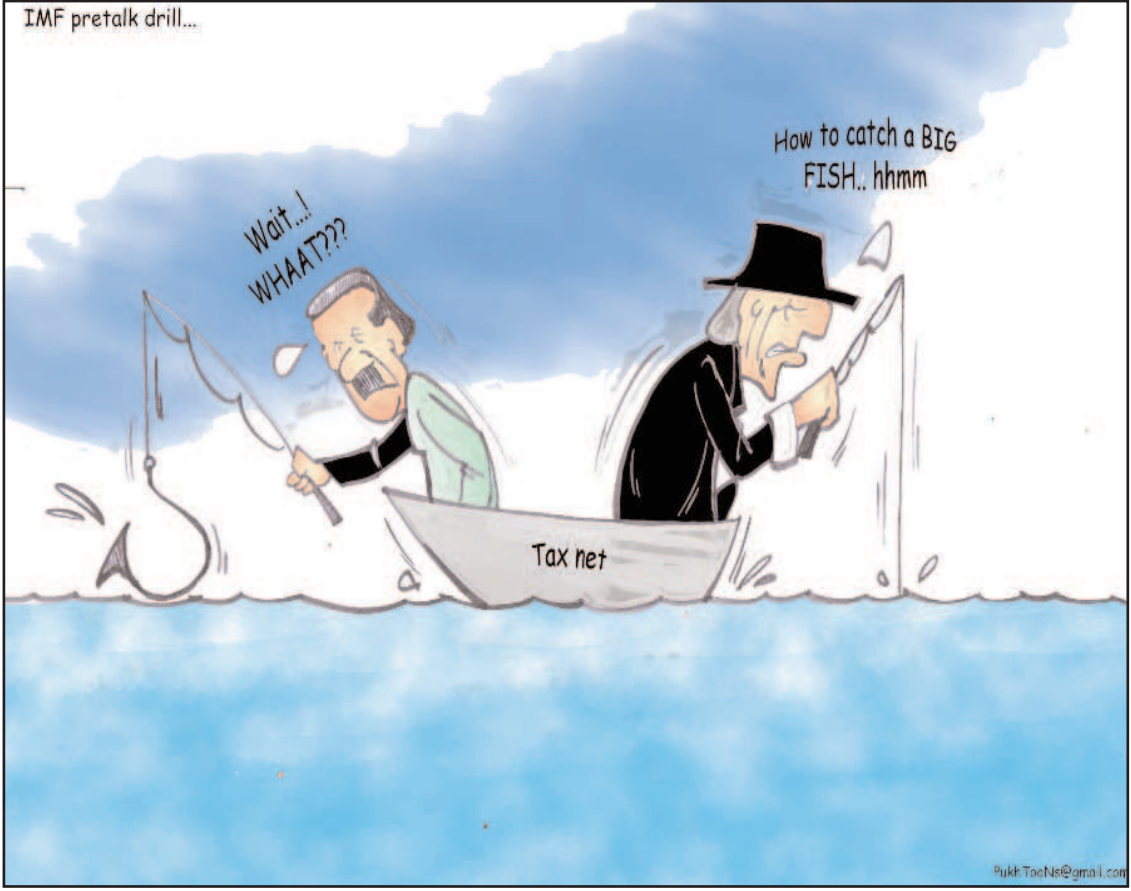
RECENTLY, the Chief Minister of Punjab, Honourable Mohsin Naqvi inaugurated the booking portal for Sikh pilgrims to Nankana Sahib yatra and other sacred Gurdwaras in Pakistan. As the provincial information ministry apprised the media, the CM instructed the authorities to launch the first-ever religious tourism program to facilitate the Sikh pilgrims and promote interfaith harmony. Through this portal, Sikh pilgrims around the world would be able to access online hotel booking, transportation, and hire security and Taxi services making their pilgrimage planning more efficient, easy and cost-effective. Addressing the media, CM Punjab stated that Sikh pilgrims will receive warm hospitality and VIP treatment, ensuring a fulfilling and memorable experience during their religious journey. He also announced the establishment of a Tourism police in order to enhance the security of religious and general tourists in the province.

The caretaker Chief Minister Punjab is a talented journalism icon and tactful politician. The incumbent ruler kicked off his political legacy and public service with the renovation of religious shrines, and the inauguration of graveyards in a bid to provide the public with state-of-the-art facilities for religious rituals and funeral services to the Muslim populace. Punjab rulers have tirelessly worked to remove hurdles of Sikh Yatrees during their visits to Pakistan. Although, the PTI government established a few kilometres long Kartarpur Corridor to provide Sikh Yatrees with safe, secure and easy access to the Gurdwara Kartar pur Sab, but the previous government ignored the difficulties confronted by the thousands of affluent Sikh Yatrees coming from wealthy destinations in Europe, Australia and North America in booking local hotels, taxis and hiring security guards. Thus, the interim leader has officially launched a portal to offer the Sikh Yatrees all essential luxuries at one touch in their nations.

While considering CM's interest in religious businesses it would be more important to highlight that Buddhist and Hindu communities from across the globe visit their holy religious sites in Pakistan every year. Those historic religious sites might need renovation, whilst, Hindu and Buddhist monks also need such facilitation upon their arrival to Pakistan that essentially needs to be catered for at the earliest. The incumbent government has almost three months on its credit and all those plans can easily be implemented along with the facilitation of family and friends.

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Israel's war crimes in Gaza are by design, not default

Marwan Bishara

THE gruesome scenes of death and destruction in Gaza are a reminder that for Israel, violence is not incidental, accidental or coincidental. It is part and parcel of its colonial DNA. Like the French in Algeria, the Dutch in Indonesia and South Africa, the Belgians in the Congo, the Spaniards in South America and the Europeans in North America, the Zionists have also dehumanised the natives of the land as a precursor to or justification for guilt-free repression and violence. But colonialism must not be conflated with Judaism. If anything, the Jews have historically been the victims of racism for centuries, rendering many of them anti-colonialists.

In 1948, Israel was established on the ruins of another people, the Palestinians. It was made into a Jewish majority state through the deliberate ethnic cleansing of the land's 750,000 Palestinian inhabitants. Since then, Israel has maintained security through state repression, military occupation, bloody wars and countless massacres against civilians. Nazareth, the city of my birth, was one of the few to be spared from ethnic cleansing but only because a military commander named Benjamin Dunkelman, a Canadian Jew who led the 7th Brigade of the Israeli army, refused to carry out his superiors' evacuation order for this Christian majority city, as he later wrote, mainly out of fear of the international repercussions.

About 400 other Palestinian towns and villages were not so lucky. They were all depopulated, and a majority was entirely decimated. Their inhabitants were either killed or kicked out. The properties in them were either demolished or confiscated. They were given new Hebrew names. Those Palestinians who tried to return to their homes were either shot or forcibly sent to neighbouring countries. In his book, Sacred Landscape: The Buried History of the Holy Land Since 1948, Meron Benvenisti, an Israeli political scientist, writes: "Not since the end of the Middle Ages had the civilised world witnessed the wholesale appropriation of the

sacred sites of a defeated religious community by members of the victorious one."

Since then, Israel has set its eyes on the people per se, regardless of its leadership or theirs. Palestinians are seen by Israel either as an enemy from within that must be eradicated or as a demographic threat that needs to be removed. It is no coincidence that since its inception, Israel has

a deterrence strategy, deliberately aimed at harming civilians to distance them from their leaders and the groups fighting in their name. Today, the Israeli propaganda machine is busy collating desperate and angry cries, real and manufactured, from Gaza residents projecting blame on Hamas for bringing Israel's wrath upon them. Israel never accepts an "eye for an eye" in its confronta-

Those Palestinians who tried to return to their homes were either shot or forcibly sent to neighbouring countries. In his book, Sacred Landscape: The Buried History of the Holy Land Since 1948, Meron Benvenisti, an Israeli political scientist, writes: "Not since the end of the Middle Ages had the civilised world witnessed the wholesale appropriation of the sacred sites of a defeated religious community by members of the victorious one." Since then, Israel has set its eyes on the people per se, regardless of its leadership or theirs. Palestinians are seen by Israel either as an enemy from within that must be eradicated or as a demographic threat that needs to be removed. It is no coincidence that since its inception, Israel has established an oppressive regime of "Jewish superiority". This regime was extended after the 1967 war and occupation to the entirety of historic Palestine, from the Jordan River to the Mediterranean Sea. Hence the Palestinian cry, "From the river to the sea, Palestine will be free." For decades, Israel has used disproportionate force and carried out countless massacres against Palestinian civilians as a form of revenge, punishment and deterrence. Last month, the Palestinians commemorated the 70th anniversary of the massacre of Qibya, where, in retaliation for a Palestinian attack on an Israeli settlement that killed three people, including two children, Israeli forces under the leadership of Ariel Sharon attacked the West Bank village of about 2,000 inhabitants, killing 69 Palestinians, mostly women and children. That same vengeful mindset has been applied 70 years later in Gaza. It is

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tions with the Palestinians. It insists on a ratio of 1 to 10 or 20 when it comes to its civilian casualties vs Palestinian civilian casualties. Hence, the Palestinian civilian must pay a heavy price in each and every clash, regardless of any moral or legal consideration.

Nowhere is the dissymmetry more pervasive than in Israel's 56-year military occupation of the West Bank and Gaza, which by its very nature is a perpetual system of violence against civilians. Generation after generation of Palestinians have had to endure a racist, gruesome and illegal military occupation that has included daily humiliations, collective punishment, land confiscations, and the destruction of lives and livelihoods. For Gaza, this has meant a 17-year siege of the strip through a dreadful and inhumane military blockade, military incursions, bombings of civilian infrastructure and more.

Although Israel claims it has "no choice", its occupation is in fact driven by strategy, not by necessity. Throughout the past six decades, Israel has controlled the Palestinian territories in part to colonise them through hundreds of illegal settlements on stolen Palestinian lands, in part to hold their population hostage until their leaders accept its political dictates, which is by definition a form of state terrorism, which means using violence against civilians for political ends.

Another important factor behind Israel's violence against Palestinian civilians, as I explained here, is hatred - hatred that is propelled by fear, envy and anger. Israel fears all that is Palestinian: steadfastness, Palestinian unity, Palestinian resistance, Palestinian poetry and all Palestinian national symbols. Such fear generates hatred because a state that is always afraid cannot be free. Israel is angry at the Palestinians for refusing to give up or give in, for not going away - far away. They refuse to cede their basic rights, let alone concede defeat. Israel is also envious of Palestinian inner power and outward pride. It is envious of their strong beliefs and readiness to sacrifice.

In short, Israel hates the people of Palestine for impeding the realisation of the Zionist utopia over all historical Palestine. And it especially hates those living in Gaza, as I wrote last year, for turning the dream into a nightmare. But the answer in Gaza and the rest of Palestine cannot be more killing and more occupation. In fact, Israel's ongoing industrial-scale slaughter and nationwide repression of the Palestinians, in retaliation of Hamas's gruesome October 7 attacks in southern Israel, is both utterly criminal and terribly foolish. Israel has tried to live by the sword for the past 75 years, but it has sowed more of the same insecurity, infamy and anger. Repeating the same strategy again and again and expecting different results is indeed stupid. If it continues to deny the Palestinians a life and a future, Israel also will end up with no life or future worth living in this Arab region.

Aljazeera

Saudi-Africa Summit: Laying foundations for an enduring partnership

Yahaya Lawal

FROM time immemorial, even long before the establishment of modern nations states in Africa and the Middle East, these two regions have had age-old interactions as neighbors bound by history and geography. Africa and the Arab world are known to have maintained fruitful exchanges in trade, culture and civilization through people-to-people contact.

With their shared space and populations, Africa and the Arab world are also tied by a common destiny and shared interest which, obviously, demands that they mutually cooperate for the benefit of their peoples. It was, therefore, not surprising that after the attainment of independence by most African countries in the 1960s, relations were prioritized with their Arab neighbors. It should be recalled that the struggle for freedom in Africa was also supported by Arab nations. The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, a major and strategic Arab state and African neighbor, was one of the first countries with which the emergent independent African states hurried to establish formal diplomatic relations.

Africa-Saudi cooperation, which was initially Hajj-centric, has over the past six decades witnessed significant diversification, covering a number of mutually beneficial areas such as sustainable development, trade, investment, education, health, sports, culture, agriculture, mining and oil and gas. It is gratifying to note that today, a large number of professionals from several African countries, including some of the most valued football players, are actively working and contributing silently in building ties and strengthening cooperation in the various fields of human endeavor. At the multilateral level, Saudi Arabia, the Middle East and Africa, as members of the Global South, share a common vision for a just and equitable international order as they also strive to promote South-South cooperation.

They coordinate their positions and collaborate on regional and international issues of mutual interest and concern. They are also known to be supporting each other at various international fora. On economic cooperation, Saudi Arabia, a prominent leader in the Arab world, has been an active contributor to Africa's developmental aspirations. For years, the Kingdom, through the Saudi Fund for Development, has made significant and visible interventions in many African countries in the domain of socio-economic and infrastructure development. The fund is known, laudably, to have financed development projects in more than 44 African countries, through which the Kingdom has contributed to the concessional financing of development projects in several African countries.

Furthermore, it is important to highlight that Saudi Arabia, which became a

member of the African Development Bank in 1983, is partnering with the bank on co-financing initiatives through the Saudi Fund for Development. The bank has also approved several co-financing projects with institutions largely supported by Saudi Arabia, including the Islamic Development Bank Group, of which the Kingdom is the largest shareholder, the OPEC Fund for International Development and the Arab Fund for Economic and Social Development. With the Kingdom's transformative Vision 2030 underway, it has become imperative for both Saudi Arabia and Africa to work to unlock the enormous opportunities in their relationship that have long remained untapped. As the Kingdom pursues comprehensive economic reforms to diversify away from oil in favor of a more competitive and sustainable economic base founded on manufacturing, innovation, ICT, trade, tourism and investments, Africa, as the continent of the future, highly endowed in enormous human and material resources, is the natural obvious choice for such a partnership.

The Kingdom, a member of the G20, seeking to be the 15th largest economy by 2030 with close proximity to Africa, should be expected to logically consider African states as the right destination for Saudi and Middle East investments. Africa, where far-reaching reforms and liberalization of the investment environment are taking place, would, in turn, be excited to bolster economic cooperation with the Kingdom. The African Union Agenda 2063 provides a perfect basis for this collaboration. This is why the initiative to convene the Saudi-Africa Summit in Riyadh, as a new platform for cooperation, is not only welcome, but also timely. It is a clear demonstration of the Kingdom's sustained faith in the continent and its huge potential.

The two sides must not be limited in their budding cooperation. Its frontiers should be extended to cover all areas including regular bilateral political consultations and coordination, climate, the environment, energy, transport, peace and security, combating violent extremism and terrorism, health, education, humanitarian affairs, food security and more. Therefore, it is our hope that the upcoming historic fora will lay the foundations for a new era of enduring partnership between the Kingdom and Africa, especially with the coming into force of the Africa Continental Free Trade Area, a massive single continental market blessed with more than 876 million talented and smart young African men and women. The maiden Saudi-Africa Summit will not be an ordinary event. With the great interest it has generated, much will be expected by our people on both sides. I am confident that the historic meeting will achieve its set objectives.

Planet Earth also a victim in times of war

Dr. Majid Rafizadeh

IN 2001, during Kofi Annan's tenure as secretary-general of the UN, Nov. 6 was declared to be the International Day for Preventing the Exploitation of the Environment in War and Armed Conflict by the UN General Assembly. As this important date passed again this week, it is necessary to examine the impact that wars have on our endangered planet.

Wars destroy humanity and inflict unimaginable damage and pain on people, particularly children and the most vulnerable. But there are also other victims of armed conflicts, including the environment and other forms of life on our planet. Firstly, heavy modern military vehicles, particularly those deployed by air forces, rely on a large quantity of petroleum to operate. The US Department of Defense is reportedly considered to be the single largest consumer of such fuel across the world.

The use of these heavy military vehicles in wars causes high levels of carbon dioxide emissions, in addition to nitrogen oxides, sulfur dioxide, hydrocarbons and carbon monoxide. In fact, some of the largest militaries in the world produce more carbon dioxide than entire nations - for example, the US military is thought to emit more than Denmark or Portugal. Carbon dioxide emissions are the primary driving force behind climate change and global warming. It is important to point out that climate change does not recognize borders and one country's militaristic policies and actions can affect not only the country it is waging war on, but other nations too. Unfortunately, developing countries and communities with lower socioeconomic classes, older people, women and children disproportionately experience the impacts of losses and damages caused by global warming.

Secondly, wars can disrupt water systems, creating a sig-

nificant impact not only on the environment but also on the well-being of humans and wildlife. For example, the oil from heavy military vehicles, weapons residue and attacks on water facilities can lead to the contamination of water sources. According to a report by the Watson Institute at Brown University, which studied the impact of the wars in Iraq, Afghanistan and other conflict-affected zones, "the water supply in the war zones has been contaminated by oil from military vehicles and depleted uranium from ammunition. Along with the degradation of the natural resources in these countries and a radical destruction of forest cover, the animal and bird populations have also been adversely affected." Intentionally disrupting or cutting off water supplies is also used as a weapon of war by some parties. Another tool employed is targeting a country's oil infrastructure in order

to deliberately pollute water supplies and impose fear. The consequences of this have become critical as the world is now increasingly facing water stress or scarcity, with demand frequently being higher than supply in some areas. Today, about one in four people globally do not have access to safe drinking water. In addition, it is alarming that the UN estimated in 2016 that half of the world's population could be living in areas facing water scarcity by 2025. Not only does this affect humans, but it also negatively impacts the overall ecosystem.

Thirdly, wars often play a key role in the destruction of forests. For example, the enormous repercussions of the destruction that the two world wars had on forests in Europe can still be felt to this day. Trees and forests play a vital role in absorbing carbon dioxide, lowering the quantity of greenhouse gases

released into the atmosphere. In other words, increases in deforestation have severe consequences for people, the environment and the planet. Fourthly, bombs and other explosive weapons create a significant amount of debris and rubble and lead to air, land and soil pollution. The destruction of agricultural lands exacerbates food insecurity and increases starvation. This pollution of the land caused by war not only leads to soil erosion, impacting humans and their food production, but it also harms other species and can cause mass extinctions.

According to the Conflict and Environment Observatory, scorched earth techniques in wars include "the destruction of agricultural infrastructure like canals, wells and pumps and the burning of crops. Tactics like these threaten food security and livelihoods, increasing the vulnerability of rural communities." Finally, wars can cause the massive dis-

placement of people and lead to the creation of large refugee camps. The environmental impact of such developments should be noted, as large numbers of people try to flee to neighboring countries that often do not have the necessary resources to meet their basic needs, such as water, food and sanitation.

In a nutshell, armed conflicts not only destroy humanity but also create significant environmental harm. The environmental damage caused by wars include the contamination of water, soil and air, the harming of wildlife and biodiversity, and the release of greenhouse gases into the atmosphere. They also negatively affect the ecosystems of the world by depleting resources and causing a rise in the rate of deforestation, along with the degradation of agricultural and natural landscapes. It is critical for us to reassess and reaffirm our duty and commitment when it comes to protecting our planet.

Will we see a joint Iranian-Arab front on Gaza?

Dr. Dania Koleilat Khatib

IT has been announced that Ebrahim Raisi will attend the Organization of Islamic Cooperation meeting in Riyadh on Sunday to discuss Gaza. This will be the first visit by an Iranian president to Saudi Arabia since Mahmoud Ahmadinejad in 2012. The inclusion of Iran in the meeting on Gaza stems from the desire to make the Islamic Republic part of the solution and not part of the problem. However, there is a major trust issue between Iran and the Arab Gulf states and they each look at events from a zero-sum perspective. Will Raisi convince the Arab states that Iran has good intentions and cares for the well-being of the Palestinians, rather than using them as a card to improve its position vis-a-vis its neighbors and the US?

Iran has been invited to the Gaza discussion because its neighbors realize that, if it were not included and left isolated, Tehran could act as a spoiler. The Iranian participation should be examined against the Arab backdrop. Dennis Ross wrote in an op-ed for The New York Times last month that several Arab officials had told him they wanted Israel to eradicate Hamas because they perceived any win for Hamas as being a win for Iran and the Muslim Brotherhood. Here, it is important to analyze the Arab position.

Gaza is a dilemma for Arabs. On the one hand, they feel for the Palestinians and want a just solution to this problem, but on the other hand they despise Hamas. Arab states view Hamas as a dangerous actor. Its political wing is affiliated with the Muslim Brotherhood and its military wing,

the Al-Qassam Brigades, is linked to the Iranian Revolutionary Guard Corps and is part of the much-loathed "axis of resistance."

When Hezbollah Secretary-General Hassan Nasrallah gave his speech last week, he said that a win for Hamas was a win for the Palestinians and for surrounding Arab countries. He indirectly sent assurances to Arab states, insinuating that if Israel suffered a setback and did not achieve its objectives, then it would be forced to come to the negotiating table to discuss a state for the Palestinians, something it has been avoiding for years. While meeting with US Secretary of State Antony Blinken, the Arab states expressed the need for a ceasefire and the resumption of negotiations to reach a two-state solution. However, according to sources, they wanted to keep Iran out of it and they also had divergent views on the role of Hamas.

The ideal scenario for many Arab states as well as the US would be as follows: Israel takes out Hamas and the Arabs then negotiate a two-state solution, taking the Palestine card away from Iran. However, things are not as simple as that. Iran cannot be ignored, as it can very much play the spoiler. It can complicate the situation for everyone. One thing is for sure: neither Iran nor the Arab Gulf states want war. Iran would probably want a situation from which it can improve its negotiating position with the US and the Arab states. As the tragedy in Gaza unfolds, Arabs are realizing more and more that the Palestinian question cannot go unanswered and that the current situation is not sustain-

able. They want to find a solution; however, they have many questions regarding Iran. Will Iran accept the two-state solution? If Israel suffers a setback, will that reinforce the axis of resistance and increase Iran's grip on Iraq, Lebanon, Syria and Yemen? Will Iran's belligerence increase? The other issue is: If a political settlement is conceived in which Palestinians are given a sovereign state but part of the deal is to dismantle Hamas, would Iran accept it? Would Iran accept losing the Hamas card in exchange for the overall well-being of the Palestinians?

Obviously, if a deal is to be conceived with Israel, it will be difficult for Hamas - or at least its military branch that is affiliated with Iran - to remain in charge of the Gaza Strip. Would Iran accept the disbandment of the Al-Qassam Brigades? If so, what would it want in return? It is important to understand that Hamas, like Hezbollah, acts as deterrence for Iran against Israel. If it were to go, Iran would need to be compensated. What would it ask for in return?

If Iran convinces the Arab states that it is part of the solution and not part of the problem, then there is a good chance that together they can create a front that can pressure the US to seriously push Israel to accept a two-state solution. Nevertheless, Iran has to present a clear political vision. Its declared aim is to liberate Palestine. If the Palestinian problem is solved, what would its position be on other files?

The US also does not want war. President Joe Biden is trailing Donald Trump in the polls in major

swing states and a prolonged war would definitely not help him. Accusations of supporting a genocide against Palestinians do not sit well with the principles Biden wants to convince the electorate he stands for. He needs a solution.

In a way, if the Arabs and Iran were to agree on a solution, it would make life easier for the US. Despite the unequivocal US support for Tel Aviv and the emotional attachment that both the president and secretary of state have for Israel, they also want a solution and they know that the occupation is not sustainable. Though submarines and destroyers have been dispatched to the region, the US hopes not to use them.

So, what should Raisi present to the Arab states in order to appease them? What kind of reassurances do they need? Iran has to have a clear position on whether it will accept the Arab Peace Initiative. It also needs to explain what its endgame is with the Houthis, the Shiite militias in Iraq, Hezbollah and Bashar Assad. For example, will it pressure Assad to accept UN Security Council Resolution 2254 to end the Syrians' suffering?

On the other hand, Iran needs to be clear about what security guarantees it wants in return. Saudi Arabia is very well positioned to offer Iran security guarantees. Tehran has always asked Riyadh for its position in case of a confrontation with Israel. The Kingdom could always give Iran a guarantee that it would close its airspace as a result of any Israeli aggression on Iran, but in return Tehran would have to cooperate with Saudi Arabia on the region's files - and the most pressing file today is Palestine.

Arab News

Ukrainian letter of solidarity with Palestinian people

WE, Ukrainian researchers, artists, political and labour activists, and members of civil society stand in solidarity with the people of Palestine who for 75 years have been subjected to and resisted Israeli military occupation, separation, settler colonial violence, ethnic cleansing, land dispossession and apartheid. We write this letter as people to people.

The dominant discourse on the governmental level and even among solidarity groups that support the struggles of Ukrainians and Palestinians often creates separation. With this letter we reject these divisions, and affirm our solidarity with everyone who is oppressed and struggling for freedom. As activists committed to freedom, human rights, democracy and social justice, and while fully acknowledging power differentials, we firmly condemn attacks on civilian populations - be they Israelis attacked by Hamas or Palestinians attacked by the Israeli occupation forces and armed settler gangs. Deliberate targeting of civilians is a war crime.

Yet this is no justification for the collective punishment of Palestinian people, identifying all residents of Gaza with Hamas and the indiscriminate use of the term "terrorism" applied to the whole Palestinian resistance. Nor is this a justification for continuation of the ongoing occupation. Echoing multiple UN resolutions, we know that there will be no lasting peace without justice for the Palestinian people. On October 7, we witnessed Hamas's violence against the civilians in Israel, an event that is now singled out by many to demonise and dehumanise Palestinian resistance altogether. Hamas, a reactionary Islamist organisation, needs to be seen in a wider historical context and decades of Israel encroaching on Palestinian land, long before this organisation came to exist in the late 1980s.

During the Nakba ("catastrophe") of 1948, more than 700,000 Palestinians were brutally displaced from their homes, with entire villages massacred and destroyed. Since its creation, Israel has never stopped pursuing its colonial expansion. The Palestinians were forced to exile, fragmented and administered under different regimes. Some of them are Israeli citizens affected by structural discrimination and racism. Those living in the occupied West Bank are subjected to apartheid under decades of Israel's military control. The people of the Gaza Strip have suffered from the blockade imposed by Israel since 2006, which restricted movement of people and goods, resulting in growing poverty and deprivation.

Since October 7 and at the time of writing the death toll in the Gaza Strip is more than 8,500 people. Women and children have made up more than 62 percent of the fatalities, while more than 21,048 people have been injured. In recent days, Israel has bombed schools, residential areas, a Greek Orthodox church and several hospitals, Israel has also cut all water, electricity, and fuel supply in the Gaza Strip. There is a severe shortage of food and medicine, causing a total collapse of a healthcare system. Most of the Western and Israeli media justifies these deaths as mere collateral damage to fighting Hamas, but is silent when it comes to Palestinian civilians targeted and killed in the Occupied West Bank. Since the beginning of 2023 alone, and before October 7, the death toll on the Palestinian side had already reached 227. Since October 7, 121 Palestinian civilians have been killed in the occupied West Bank. More than 10,000 Palestinian political prisoners are currently detained in Israeli prisons.

Lasting peace and justice are only possible with the end of the ongoing occupation. Palestinians have the right to self-determination and resistance against Israel's occupation, just like Ukrainians have the right to resist Russian invasion. Our solidarity comes from a place of anger at the

injustice, and a place of deep pain of knowing the devastating impacts of occupation, shelling of civil infrastructure, and humanitarian blockade from experiences in our homeland. Parts of Ukraine have been occupied since 2014, and the international community failed to stop Russian aggression then, ignoring the imperial and colonial nature of the armed violence, which consequently escalated on February 24, 2022.

Civilians in Ukraine are shelled daily, in their homes, in hospitals, at bus stops, in queues for bread. As a result of the Russian occupation, thousands of people in Ukraine live without access to water, electricity or heating, and it is the most vulnerable groups that are mostly affected by the destruction of critical infrastructure. In the months of the siege and heavy bombardment of Mariupol, there was no humanitarian corridor. Watching the Israeli targeting civilian infrastructure in

Russian occupation, and therefore international assistance serves a just cause and the protection of international law. Israel has occupied and annexed Palestinian and Syrian territories, and Western aid to it confirms an unjust order and demonstrates double standards in relation to international law. We oppose the new wave of Islamophobia, such as the brutal murder of a Palestinian-American six-year-old and assault on his family in Illinois, US and the equating of any criticism of Israel with anti-Semitism. At the same time, we also oppose holding all Jewish people all over the world accountable for the politics of the state of Israel and we condemn anti-Semitic violence, such as the mob attack on the airplane in Daghestan, Russia.

We also reject the revival of the "war on terror" rhetoric used by the US and EU to justify war crimes and violations of international law that have undermined the international security system and

This position is a retreat from the support of Palestinian rights and condemnation of the Israeli occupation, which Ukraine has followed for decades, including voting in the UN. Aware of the pragmatic geopolitical reasoning behind Ukraine's decision to echo Western allies, on whom we are dependent for our survival, we see the current support of Israel and dismissing Palestinian right to self-determination as contradictory to Ukraine's own commitment to human rights and fight for our land and freedom. We as Ukrainians should stand in solidarity not with the oppressors, but with those who experience and resist the oppression. We strongly object to equating of Western military aid to Ukraine and Israel by some politicians. Ukraine doesn't occupy the territories of other people; instead, it fights against the Russian occupation, and therefore international assistance serves a just cause and the protection of international law. Israel has occupied and annexed Palestinian and Syrian territories, and Western aid to it confirms an unjust order and demonstrates double standards in relation to international law. We oppose the new wave of Islamophobia, such as the brutal murder of a Palestinian-American six-year-old and assault on his family in Illinois, US and the equating of any criticism of Israel with anti-Semitism.

Gaza, the Israeli humanitarian blockade and occupation of land resonates especially painfully with us. From this place of pain of experience and solidarity, we call on our fellow Ukrainians globally and all the people to raise their voices in support of the Palestinian people and condemn the ongoing Israeli mass ethnic cleansing.

We reject the Ukrainian government statements that express unconditional support for Israel's military actions, and we consider the calls to avoid civilian casualties by Ukraine's MFA belated and insufficient. This position is a retreat from the support of Palestinian rights and condemnation of the Israeli occupation, which Ukraine has followed for decades, including voting in the UN. Aware of the pragmatic geopolitical reasoning behind Ukraine's decision to echo Western allies, on whom we are dependent for our survival, we see the current support of Israel and dismissing Palestinian right to self-determination as contradictory to Ukraine's own commitment to human rights and fight for our land and freedom. We as Ukrainians should stand in solidarity not with the oppressors, but with those who experience and resist the oppression.

We strongly object to equating of Western military aid to Ukraine and Israel by some politicians. Ukraine doesn't occupy the territories of other people; instead, it fights against the

caused countless deaths, and has been borrowed by other states, including Russia for the war in Chechnya and China for the Uighur genocide. Now Israel is using it to carry out ethnic cleansing. We urge the implementation of the call to a ceasefire, put forward by the UN General Assembly resolution.

We call on the Israeli government to immediately stop attacks on civilians, and provide humanitarian aid; we insist on an immediate and indefinite lifting of the siege on Gaza and an urgent relief operation to restore civilian infrastructure. We also call on the Israeli government to put an end to the occupation and recognise the right of Palestinian displaced people to return to their lands. We call on the Ukrainian government to condemn the use of state-sanctioned terror and humanitarian blockade against the Gazan civilian population and reaffirm the Palestinian people's right to self-determination. We also call on the Ukrainian government to condemn deliberate assaults on Palestinians in the occupied West Bank.

We call on the international media to stop pitting Palestinians and Ukrainians against each other, where hierarchies of suffering perpetuate racist rhetoric and dehumanise those under the attack. We have witnessed the world uniting in solidarity for the people of Ukraine and we call on everyone to do the same for the people of Palestine.

Watching the watchdogs: Israel's siege, bombs drown out its PR stunts

Rami G Khouri

THERE is a problem with Israel's new propaganda and PR techniques that aim to burnish its military's image in the West as one of the world's most "moral armies". The problem is that the world sees the inhuman severity and scale of Israel's killing, starvation, and siege of Palestinian civilians on TV and social media, which has an impact that outstrips its PR capabilities. Even its most ardent supporters, like the United States, now call for a "humanitarian pause" to allow ravaged Palestinian civilians to access life-sustaining essentials like food, water, and medicine.

As Israel keeps attacking hospitals, schools that shelter women and children, and the few remaining water tanks and bakeries, its propaganda includes "warning" civilians in northern Gaza to vacate their homes and neighbourhoods before it bombs them. On October 13, the army dropped leaflets and sent phone messages to the 1.1 million inhabitants in and around Gaza City, giving them 24 hours to leave for the south. Otherwise, the leaflets said, they could be considered "accomplices in a terrorist organisation". It repeated the warning several times since then, but many Palestinians did not evacuate.

Israel says its warning aims to minimise risk to civilians. Such claims are widely discounted by anyone who follows these conflicts, but they seem to play well to Western audiences (which may be why some leaflets are in English as well as Arabic). Yet this amateurish public relations stunt is belied by the fact that most Israeli missile attacks are not preceded by warnings. That may be one reason why

an average of nearly 1,000 Palestinians are killed or injured every day, of whom nearly half are children - and half of Gaza's population of 2.2 million has been internally displaced.

Israel's forcing civilians to leave their homes could well be a war crime, according to Amnesty International representative Saleh Higazi, who noted after the flyers started to be dropped on Gaza in October: "Deliberate attacks on civilians and civilian property and infrastructure are war crimes, as are disproportionate attacks. The International Criminal Court has an active investigation into the situation in Palestine and should urgently investigate these attacks as war crimes."

"Israel's genocidal intent is clear," Rutgers University law professor Noura Erekat told me in an interview this week. "Any 'warnings' are meaningless and inadequate, because it's clear that the aim is to drive the Palestinians out of Gaza, or force them into its southernmost region." These "warnings" are not credible efforts to reduce the number of civilian deaths, for many reasons:

- o Israel remains the "occupying power" in Gaza, despite its 2005 withdrawal, because it still exercises key elements of authority over the Strip as it maintains total control of its borders. The use of force by a state is only allowed by international law and conventions in proportion to the force used against it, and international law also prohibits bombing occupied lands.
- o The Fourth Geneva Convention requires the occupying power to ensure the food and med-

ical needs of the civilian population under its occupation. Israel does exactly the opposite.

- o If Israel really wanted to kill or capture individual Hamas leaders, it has many other options than collapsing entire neighbourhoods on their inhabitants.

- o If Israel really wanted to safeguard civilians, it would direct them to safe roads that lead to safe areas, rather than killing them as they try to flee south.

- o No safe places exist in all of Gaza, so asking people to flee for safety is a cruel hoax.

- o Thousands of civilians are unable to leave for the south even if they wanted to, due to their physical condition or their status in hospitals or schools turned into shelters.

- o Considering those who refuse to leave their homes, hospitals, or shelters as accomplices to terrorism is a form of collective punishment that is prohibited by international law.

- o Even if Israel warns civilians to move, it does not have the right to attack them. Omar Shakir, the Israel and Palestine director for Human Rights Watch, told The New York Times recently: "Many who left found that they were still in the line of fire ... Giving warning does not absolve parties from the requirement to protect civilians."

- o Amnesty International noted in 2014, after examining Israeli attacks against alleged military targets within civilian areas of Gaza: "In those cases where Amnesty International has been able to determine the possible intended target, it has found either that it was not in fact a military objective, that the

devastating toll on civilians and civilian property was out of all proportion to any military advantage from the attack and/or that Israel failed to take necessary precautions to minimize harm to civilians and damage to civilian objects."

Israel's charade of advising residents in Gaza to leave their homes for their safety looks to informed analysts like a sign of Israel's intent to empty all or most of Gaza by driving its residents into Sinai or elsewhere - otherwise known as ethnic cleansing, even genocide. Palestinians see in this a gruesome repeat of their 1948 Nakba which saw half the Palestinian population become permanent refugees.

Lex Takkenberg, who for decades was UNRWA's general counsel and chief of ethics and is now a senior adviser to the NGO Arab Renaissance for Development and Democracy, said in an interview, "Beyond revenge and trying to destroy Hamas, the Israeli government sees a golden opportunity to rid itself of Gaza once and for all."

"Israel cannot easily pursue such ethnic cleansing and genocidal goals while the world watches the immense suffering of Palestinian civilians. They might need, with US backing, a humanitarian pretext to push many or all Gazans into Sinai. Or they keep creating panic, as they did in 1948, this time by cutting all communications and depriving Gazans of food, water, or medicine, while the bombings continue. This forces desperate and fearful people to move elsewhere to survive." If this is Israel's aim, the world can see through its stunts like flyers asking Palestinians to move to safety - when Israel has made sure there is no safety for them in Gaza.

crime measures in this week's king's speech.

Everything Sunak now says and does seems directed not at wisdom but at publicity. In this he is a parody of Tony Blair. He clearly lacks an experienced old-timer murmuring caution in his ear, of which all prime ministers have long felt the need. Every move he makes seems orchestrated by a press office. In policing the coronation, the Met did possibly get it wrong in overreacting to anti-monarchist protesters. But the risk to an overwhelmingly popular occasion was genuine and the price of disruption would have been appalling. If now the prime minister thought Rowley was going off the rails, he should not have behaved like a banana republic president and summoned his police chief. He should have had a private chat with the home secretary or the mayor and discussed it with them.

Rowley's accountability - which they have now put on the line - should have been reserved for the outcome, not questioned beforehand. As it was, both Sunak and Braverman in their different ways clearly just wanted to be seen hanging tough. They wanted to be able to say, should anything go wrong, "I told him so," Sunak would best guard his reputation by abandoning these daily gestures of populist appeal. He may have just a year to run, and his future is uncertain. But he would serve that future best by obeying the rigours of the constitution, sustaining his dignity and not playing to the gallery.

Simon Jenkins

Rowley has come down on the side of freedom.

Of course, he may have misjudged. The wrong people may turn up and bad things may happen. He can deploy police to guard against this, up to a point, but beyond that point he is himself taking a risk. That is his job. What can only distort his decision is to have senior politicians interfering with it. On Wednesday, Sunak summoned Rowley to Downing Street and promised to hold him "accountable" for the decision not to ban the march. The prime minister added that he regards the demonstration as "provocative and disrespectful" and "completely inappropriate". He was seeking "reassurance" that the police would behave "robustly". He claimed he was not "putting pressure" on Rowley in the matter, but that is rubbish. Why else was Rowley summoned to Downing Street? In the event, Sunak backed down and accepted Rowley's "reassurances".

That clearly had no effect on Braverman. She promptly leapt into print in the Times, flagrantly disagreeing with her boss, whose suggested changes to her article she apparently rejected. Her position in office must be near untenable. She called the rally a "hate march" and accused the Met police of bias against Israel, comparing its approach unfavourably with the tough treatment meted out by police to sectarians in Northern Ireland,

football supporters and anti-lockdown campaigners. The Met were just a bunch of leftwingers. Home secretaries are not media commentators. We shall never know what pro-Israeli demonstrations there might have been if Israel had stayed its hand after the horrors of 7 October. We know only where we now are. Pleading for an end to war, any war, cannot be regarded as a sin - or be suppressed for the risk of attracting agitators.

Rowley is appointed by and accountable to the mayor of London, Sadiq Khan, and to the home secretary, as well as to the Greater London Authority. He was appointed after his predecessor Cressida Dick's hamfisted ousting by Khan, with orders to clean up the Met after years of malfunction and scandal. His task compares to that of a predecessor, Sir Robert Mark, who was ruthless in his campaign in the 1960s to rid the force of corrupt officers. He later said that totally critical to this was the support - public and confidential - of the then home secretary, Roy Jenkins. Braverman is no Jenkins. With a law and order policy of her own, fashioned to her rightwing ambitions within the Conservative party, she is acting as Fool to Sunak's increasingly tragic Lear. She spouts weekly outbursts on asylum seekers, prisons, homelessness and police bias - anything to grab a headline. She clearly jolted Sunak into his bizarre tough-on-

The real reason Sunak and Braverman have criticised Mark Rowley? To boost their profiles

HOW to police a London demonstration should not be a political decision, whether for the prime minister, the home secretary or even an elected mayor. It is a decision for the police commissioner. The rally and march in London on Saturday is to protest against the stance of the government and the opposition on the Israel-Hamas war and to call for a ceasefire.

Staging it on the weekend of Armistice Day is certainly offensive to many people. It is a time normally reserved for honouring the dead of Britain's past wars - not today's wars in which Britain is not involved. But it will not clash, and the organisers of a Cenotaph event on the day have not objected.

Both Rishi Sunak and his home secretary, Suella Braverman, clearly wanted the demonstration banned. But expressing support for one side in a war and causing deep offence in doing so are not crimes in themselves. Being occasionally offended is the price that British citizens pay for living in a free country that values free speech. Crime is involved only when the consequences of that freedom get out of hand, when violence causes severe disruption to other people's lives. The Metropolitan police chief, Sir Mark Rowley, who also asked for the rally to be postponed, did not judge the risk of those consequences so great as to justify a ban. The organisers have undertaken to avoid the Armistice Day ceremonies both in timing and location.



PSX stays bullish with gain of 1,129 points

ISLAMABAD (APP): The 100-index of Pakistan Stock Exchange (PSX) continue with bullish trend on Friday, gaining 1,129.94 points, a positive change of 2.08 percent, closing at 55,391.37 points against 54,261.43 points the previous day.

A total of 640,836,781 shares valuing Rs21.146 billion were traded during

the day as compared to 482,744,893 shares valuing Rs20.129 billion the previous day.

As many as 380 companies transacted their shares in the stock market; 260 of them recorded gains and 103 sustained losses, whereas the share price of 17 companies remained unchanged.

The three top-trading

companies were Cnergyico PK with 103,458,035 shares at Rs.4.78 per share, Hum Network with 42,409,000 shares at Rs.7.23 per share and Pak Refinery with 31,064,288 shares at Rs.23.18 per share. Pak Tobacco XD witnessed a maximum increase of Rs.49.00 per share price, closing at

Rs.945.00, whereas the runner-up was Archroma Pak with a Rs.30.86 rise in its per share price to Rs489.31.

Rafhan Maize XD witnessed a maximum decrease of Rs.36.67 per share closing at Rs7,930.00, followed by Gadoon Textile with a Rs.8.90 decline to close at Rs.201.00.

Gold rates up by Rs 1,300 to Rs 213,100 per tola

ISLAMABAD (APP): The per tola price of 24 karat gold increased by Rs 1,300 and was sold at Rs 213,100 on Friday compared to its sale at Rs 211,800 on last trading day.

The price of 10 grams of 24 karat gold also increased by Rs 1,114 to Rs 182,698 from Rs 181,584 whereas the prices of 10 gram 22 karat gold went up to Rs 167,474 from Rs 166,452, the All Sindh Sarafa Jewellers Association reported. The price of per tola and ten gram Silver remained stagnant at Rs 2,580 and 2,211.93 respectively. The price of gold in the international market increased by \$7 to \$1975 from \$1,968, the Association reported.

Shipping Activity at Port Qasim

KARACHI (APP): Five ships namely, Singapore, Cosco America, Mandarin River, Zekreet and Ullswater, scheduled to load/offload Container, Rice, LNG and LPG, berthed at Qasim International Container Terminal, Multi-Purpose Terminal, Elengy Terminal and Sui Southern Gas Terminal respectively on Thursday.

Meanwhile another edible oil carrier 'Maritime Nordic' also arrived at outer anchorage of the Port on same day. A total of ten ships were engaged at PQA berths during the last 24 hours, out of them four ships, Bellini, Singapore, Cosco America and SG Pegasus left the Port on today morning, while another bulk cargo carrier 'Pacific Pride' is expected to sail on today afternoon.

A cargo volume of 164,539 tonnes, comprising 137,683 tonnes imports cargo and 26,856 tonnes export cargo carried in 2,984 Containers (1,604 TEUs Imports and 1,380 TEUs export) was handled at the port during last 24 hours.

There are 12 ships at Outer Anchorage of Port Qasim, out of them 03 ships, APL California, Southern Wolf and Hafnia Excellence carrying Containers, Palm oil and Gas oil are expected to take berths at Container Terminal, Liquid Terminal and Oil Terminal respectively on Friday. Meanwhile three more container ships, X-Press Salween, APL Antwerp and Maersk Pelepas are due to arrive at Port Qasim on Saturday.

Rupee sheds 14 Paisa against Dollar

ISLAMABAD (APP): Pakistani Rupee on Friday witnessed 14 paisa depreciation against US Dollar in the interbank trading and closed at Rs 287.03 against the previous day's closing at Rs 286.89.

However, according to the Forex Association of Pakistan (FAP), the buying and selling rates of the

Dollar in the open market stood at Rs 287 and Rs 289.5 respectively.

The price of the Euro increased by 26 paisa to close at Rs 306.26 against the last day's closing of Rs 306.00, according to the State Bank of Pakistan (SBP). The Japanese Yen lost one paisa to closed at Rs 1.89; whereas a

decrease of 95 paisa was witnessed in the exchange rate of the British Pound, which traded at Rs350.52 as compared to the last closing of Rs351.47.

The exchange rates of the Emirates Dirham and the Saudi Riyal increased by 03 and 05 paisa to close at Rs78.14 and Rs76.52 respectively.

TDA-2022 to establish a comprehensive regime for trade dispute resolution

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Trade Dispute Act of 2022 (TDA-2022), provided the establishment of a comprehensive regime in Pakistan for the swift and effective resolution of disputes relating to the exports and imports of goods and services including e-commerce trade.

Director General Trade Disputes Resolution Organization, Ministry of Commerce, Abdul Salam Shah on Friday told APP that the new law for the resolution of trade disputes was coming in the cabinet to define a time frame to resolve the different disputes of international trade through 'The Trade Dispute Act 2022.'

Under the new law, trade disputes would be decided in a time frame for providing 'Ease of Doing Business' to the Import and export business, he said. President of Faisalabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry Dr. Khurram Tariq, told APP that trade agreements must be strictly implemented.

Earlier, the joint sitting of the Parliament passed 'The Trade Dispute

Resolution Bill, 2023" to establish a commission attached with the Ministry of Commerce to settle the dispute between trading parties and "The Trade Organization's (Amendment) Bill, 2023".

The House passed the Bill with a majority incorporating minor amendments. The Trade Dispute Resolution Bill, 2023 provides for the establishment of a comprehensive regime in Pakistan for the swift and effective resolution of disputes relating to the export and import of goods and services including through E-Commerce.

Clause 61 of the bill described as "All law enforcement agencies and authorities in the federal and the provinces shall be under an obligation to provide and render complete assistance to the Commission as and when the secretariat thereof may require such assistance."

According to the objects and reasons of 'The Trade Dispute Resolution Bill, 2023', "as Pakistan embarks upon trade liberal-

ization and expansion so does the probability of trade dispute arise between trading parties. If left unsupervised and unguided, such disputes could lead to serious conflicts between governments in addition to damaging private sector business interests."

Moreover, the absence of a proper Trade Dispute Resolution Mechanism in Pakistan is adversely affecting its ranking in ease of doing business. In order to overcome this, a dedicated government body, legally mandated to resolve international trade disputes was approved by the Cabinet of Pakistan under the Strategic Trade Policy Framework (STPP).

The Trade Dispute Resolution Organization has been established as an attached department of the Ministry of Commerce. It is a platform that helps to prevent the detrimental effects of unresolved international trade conflicts and to mitigate the imbalance between stronger and weaker players by having their disputes settled based on rules.

EFU Life receives Consumers Choice Award 2023

F.P. Report

KARACHI: EFU Life Assurance Ltd., leading private sector life insurance provider in Pakistan, has been honored 'Best Life Insurance Company' at the 17th Consumers Choice Award 2022-23. Mr. Mustafa Hussain Oonwala, Senior Executive Director Sales Force, EFU Life received the award on behalf of the Company from Mr. Kamran Tessori, Governor of Sindh.

This is the 14th consecutive year that EFU Life has been conferred with Consumers Choice Award. The award reflects the Company's customer - cen-



tric approach, innovative products catering to the evolving needs of customers and the latest practices it adopts for providing superior services.

Consumers Association of Pakistan is a non-gov-

ernment, non-profit organization set up in 2000 to protect and educate consumers. It aims to safeguard the interest of consumers while ensuring that their needs are given a higher priority.



MULTAN: Vendors displaying seasonal fruit mosambi to attract the customers at fruit market.

Weekly inflation goes up by 0.73 percent

ISLAMABAD (APP): The weekly inflation, measured by the Sensitive Price Indicator (SPI), witnessed an increase of 0.73 percent for the combined consumption group during the week ended on November 08, the Pakistan Bureau of Statistics (PBS) reported on Friday.

The SPI for the week under review in the above-mentioned group was recorded at 281.12 points as compared to 279.08 points during the past week, according to the PBS data. As compared to the corresponding week of last year, the SPI for the combined consumption group in the week under review witnessed an increase of 29.86 percent.

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

The SPI for the lowest consumption group up to Rs 17,732, increased by 1.05 percent and went up to 289.19 points from last week's 286.19 points.

The SPI for consumption groups from Rs 17,732-22,888; Rs 22,889-29,517; Rs 29,518-44,175 and above Rs 44,175 increased by 1.02 percent, 0.88 percent, 0.80 percent and 0.59 percent respectively.

During the week, out of 51 items, prices of 20 (39.22%) items increased, 8 (15.69%) items decreased and 23 (45.09%) items remained stable.

The items, which recorded a decrease in their average prices on a week-on-week (WoW) included gur (2.43%), vegetable ghee 1 kg (0.36%), rice irri/69 (0.34%), vegetable ghee 2.5 kg (0.25%), rice basmati broken (0.13%), cooking oil 5 litre (0.13%), pulse mash (0.12%) and pulse moong (0.05%).

The items that recorded an increase in their average prices on a week-on-week (wow) basis, included tomatoes (15.43%), potatoes (4.47%), wheat flour (2.36%), garlic (2.16%), salt powdered (1.82%), chicken (1.60%), tea packet (0.96%), georgette (0.95%), banana (0.94%) and shirting (0.58%).

On a Year-on-Year

(YoY) basis, the items that witnessed decrease in prices included onions (32.27%), tomatoes (9.08%), mustard oil (3.88%), pulse gram (2.80%), and vegetable ghee 1 kg (1.69%).

The commodities which recorded an increase in their average prices on YoY basis included gas charges for q1 (108.38%), cigarettes (94.46%), chilies powder (84.11%), wheat flour (81.23%), rice basmati broken (77.93%), rice irri-69 (60.65%), garlic (58.23%) gents sponge chappal (58.05%), sugar (57.57%), gents sandal bata (53.37%), salt (53.02%) and gur (50.88%).

UK economy flatlines as higher interest rates bite

LONDON (Agencies): The UK economy failed to grow between July and September, figures show, after a succession of interest rate rises.

The chancellor said higher rates were hitting growth, but added that the economy had performed better than expected this year. Forecasters suggest the economy is set to be stagnant for several months yet. Last week, the Bank of England said the UK was likely to see zero growth until 2025, although it is expected to avoid a recession. Up until September, the Bank of England had raised interest rates 14 times in a row to try to tame soaring price rises.

However, while raising rates can reduce inflation - the pace at which prices rise - it also affects economic growth by making it more expensive for consumers and businesses to borrow money. Interest rates are at a 15-year high of 5.25%, and are expected to remain high for some time. Bank governor Andrew Bailey said last week it was "much too early" to be considering rate cuts. Paul Dales, the chief UK economist at Capital Economics, said the latest data suggested "the drag from higher interest rates.

SCCI demands action against sale of smuggled Iranian oil

PESHAWAR (APP): President Sarhad Chamber of Commerce and Industry (SCCI) Fuad Ishaq expressed grave concern over sale of smuggled Iranian petrol and diesel at dabba station and demanded the authorities concerned to take immediate action against the dabba stations and remove the concerns of genuine petrol pump owners.

Fuad Ishaq made this demand during a meeting with a high-level delegation of owners and dealers of petroleum pumps led by Sarhad Petroleum and Cartage Dealers Association Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (SP&CDA-KP) chairman Abdul Majid Khan and the patron-in chief of the association and former president SCCI Engr Maqsood Anwar Pervaz, held at SCCI House here Friday. Ijaz Khan Afridi, Vice President and Sajjad Aziz, General Secretary of the SCCI were also present on this occasion.

The delegation consisted of the SP&CDAPK General Secretary Gul Nawaz Khan, Khalid Khan, Mohammad Izhar Khan Afridi, Saifullah,

Faisal Irfan and others. Senior office bearers of the Association apprised the meeting about reservations of pumps owners and dealers regarding open sale of the smuggled Iranian oil and diesel at dabba stations, harassment by local administration through various means during checking the petrol measurement and enforcement of policies, delay in issuance of 'Form K', despite granting No-Objection Certificate (NoC) to petrol pumps.

Fuad Ishaq on the occasion, assured the Chamber will continue its efforts to resolve all the above-mentioned problems by taking up with the federal and provincial governments and related institutions and authorities in an effective manner. The SCCI chief stressed the need for correction and re-direction of policies, besides tariffs/duties should be reviewed that will help to prevent the menace of smuggling. He urged the government to take proactive steps to address the problems of the business community at all levels and to create a favorable environment for promoting businesses/investment and

to avoid such measures that are detrimental to economic development, stability of the country, and create hindrance in improvement of businesses and industries.

There is an urgent need to find a solution to all the problems through a coordinated dialogue between the government, administration and the business community, Ishaq asserted.

The President SCCI assured the delegation that they would take practical steps to solve the problems of the petroleum pump owners and dealers by effectively taking up with relevant authorities at provincial and central levels. Earlier, the Association's provincial Chairman Abdul Majid Khan, Patron-in chief Maqsood Anwar Parvez and General Secretary Gul Nawaz Khan and others also addressed and congratulated the President of SCCI Fuad Ishaq, Senior Vice President Sanaullah Khan and Vice President Ijaz Khan Afridi and expressed the hope that the newly elected cabinet would play a key role in immediate resolving the problems of the business community.

Equities in retreat as Powell warns rate hikes still on table

HONG KONG (AFP/APP): Asian stocks sank Friday and the dollar held gains after Federal Reserve boss Jerome Powell warned he "will not hesitate" to hike interest rates further in his quest to bring inflation to heel.

His comments brought down the curtain on a rally across equities sparked last week when officials hinted that their long-running tightening cycle may be at an end. They came as other key decision-makers have lined up to suggest that while recent data has suggested the hikes are kicking in, traders should be aware that more measures could be needed if prices remain elevated. Speaking at an International Monetary Fund conference Thursday, Powell said "progress toward our two percent goal is not assured". "If it becomes appropriate to tighten policy further, we will not hesitate to do so," he added.

While policymakers were "committed" to achieving a sufficiently tight monetary policy stance, "we are not confident that we have achieved

such a stance". He added that officials were aware of the need not to overtighten, which many fear could tip the world's top economy into recession.

The Fed decision last week to hold rates came as they acknowledged soaring Treasuries -- 10-year yields hit a 16-year high recently - were acting as a substitute for rate hikes.

Hopes for an end to the rate-hiking fuelled a rally in Treasuries -- yields fall as prices rise -- and Saxo's Redmond Wong said Powell's comments were "an attempt to push back on the dovish replying".

Other members of the policy board have hinted that more tightening could come, with governor Michelle Bowman saying some sectors continued to see strong inflation, while others wanted to see more data before making a decision. However, Richmond Fed chief Thomas Barkin said the full effects of more than a year of hikes had still not been felt. And his Atlanta counterpart Raphael Bostic thought

"our policy is restrictive, and likely sufficiently restrictive, but I think we're going to still have bumps along the way". All three main indexes on Wall Street ended in the red, with the S&P 500 falling after eight straight gains.

And Asia followed suit, with Hong Kong off more than one percent, while Tokyo, Shanghai, Sydney, Seoul, Singapore, Taipei, Jakarta, Wellington and Manila were also well down.

Still, JPMorgan Chase & Co. chief US economist Michael Feroli remained optimistic the hikes had come to an end.

"We still believe the Fed is done hiking for this cycle, but today's speech should serve as notice that their rhetoric must stay hawkish until they've seen further improvement in inflation," he said in a note.

The dollar rallied against its key peers after the remarks, and it held those in Asia on Friday.

Traders were keeping a particular eye on the green-

back's gains on the yen after it pushed back above the 151 level, with Japanese authorities saying they are ready to step in to support their unit if it weakens too far.

Tokyo - Nikkei 225: DOWN 0.6 percent at 32,450.03 (break)

Hong Kong - Hang Seng Index: DOWN 1.6 percent at 17,224.47

Shanghai - Composite: DOWN 0.6 percent at 3,035.56

Dollar/yen: DOWN at 151.23 yen from 151.35 yen n Thursday

Euro/dollar: UP at \$1.0674 from \$1.0671

Pound/dollar: UP at \$1.2227 from \$1.2223

Euro/pound: UP at 87.29 pence from 87.28 pence

West Texas Intermediate: DOWN 0.1 percent at \$75.64 per barrel

Brent North Sea crude: DOWN 0.1 percent at \$79.96 per barrel

New York - Dow: DOWN 0.7 percent at 33,891.94 (close)

London - FTSE 100: UP 0.7 percent at 7,455.67 (close)



MULTAN: People selecting and purchasing secondhand warm clothes at Landa Bazaar.



In brief

CNS Amateur Golf Championship

ISLAMABAD (APP): Rizwan Rashid of Margalla Green Golf Club (MGGC) continued his supremacy in the senior category on the second day of the 16th Chief of Naval Staff (CNS) Amateur Golf Championship 2023 at MGGC Islamabad on Friday. Rizwan's score was 154 after completing 36-hole games. Mohammad Aslam Khan was crawling behind him with a 158 gross score at the end of day two. Ami Qin excelled in the women's contest as she was on top with a score of 162. Zaibun Nisa (166) reached on second spot, as she was third on the opening day. Ana James Gill was in third position with a score of 167.

T20 Blind Cricket Trophy

ISLAMABAD (APP): Pakistan Blind Cricket Council (PBCC) was holding the 14th edition of National Bank of Pakistan (NBP) T-20 Blind Cricket Trophy Grade-I from November 13-17, here Friday. A total of eight top teams across the country would battle for the prime title. Teams were divided into two pools. Matches of the tournament would be played at Shalimar Cricket Stadium Margalla Road F-6/3 and PAF Cricket Ground E-9. The inauguration ceremony of the said event would take place on Monday dated 13th November 2023 here at the Shalimar Cricket Stadium. The semi-finals and final would be played on November 16-17 at Shalimar Cricket Ground. Teams of Islamabad, Bahawalpur, Gujranwala and Multan were placed Pool A while Lahore, AJK, Peshawar and Okara are in Pool B. Monday's fixtures: Islamabad Vs Gujranwala, AJK Vs Okara, Bahawalpur Vs Multan and Peshawar Vs Lahore.

Donald to quit Bangladesh post

DHAKA (Agencies): Allan Donald will leave his post as Bangladesh's fast-bowling coach following the World Cup, officials and media said Friday, days after his public criticism following the "timed-out" row involving skipper Shakib Al Hasan. Bangladesh will wrap up a disappointing Cricket World Cup campaign in India against Australia in Pune on Saturday. "I'm done and going home," Bangladesh's Daily Star newspaper quoted the South African Donald as saying in Pune. The 57-year-old's relationship with the Bangladesh Cricket board has soured after he criticised Shakib for his central role in the "timed-out" controversy involving Sri Lanka's Angelo Mathews on Monday. Mathews had exceeded the two minutes allowed for a batsman to take strike as he attempted to secure the strapping on his helmet in their fiery World Cup clash in New Delhi. Shakib refused to withdraw his appeal and Mathews became the first player in the 146-year history of international cricket to be given timed out. "I think it really overshadowed a clinical performance by Bangladesh. I'm sort of a bit still shocked about it to be honest. It's just my values that I have as a person and as a cricketer," Donald told the CricBlog website. Bangladesh's cricket authorities were reportedly unhappy with Donald's public criticism and sought a written explanation from him. BCB chief executive Nizam Uddin Chowdhury said the former bowling great had not requested to renew his contract.



AHMEDABAD: Rassie van der Dussen was off to a fluent start.

World Cup 2023 South Africa beat Afghanistan with Rassie van der Dussen

AHMEDABAD (Agencies): Rassie van der Dussen hit an unbeaten 76 to take South Africa to a nervy five-wicket win over Afghanistan in their final World Cup group game.

Gerald Coetzee took 4-44 as the Proteas bowled Afghanistan out for 244 after Azmatullah Omarzai made an unbeaten 97 to rescue the innings from 116-6.

South Africa made hard work of the chase but held their nerve to get over the line in the 48th over.

Defeat officially ended Afghanistan's chances of making the top four.

Jonathan Trott's side needed to win a highly improbable 438 runs to overhaul New Zealand on net run rate and stay in contention to reach the knockout stages

but, after opting to bat first, lost wickets in clusters.

After a steady start, they lost three wickets for four runs to slip from 41-0 to 45-3 and then another mini collapse saw them lose three wickets in four overs midway through the innings.

However, Azmatullah held Afghanistan together with a well-paced knock, biding his time before accelerating late on, but three dot balls to end the innings left him three shy of a maiden international century.

In reply, South Africa, who have dominated sides when batting first but struggled chasing, started well with openers Quinton de Kock and Temba Bavuma putting on 61.

They fell in quick succession but Van der Dussen and

Aiden Markram continued the momentum with a 60-run stand.

However, every time the Proteas appeared to be cruising, Afghanistan took a wicket to drag them back and when David Miller was dismissed with 62 still needed, the game was in the balance.

Van der Dussen and Andile Phehlukwayo remained composed, though, and having whittled down the runs required, they finished it in a hurry with the latter going six, four, six to seal the win.

With a number of players struggling with slight injuries throughout the game, South Africa now have a few days to rest and recover before their semi-final against Australia.

29th Palmolive Sindh Women's Swimming C'ship 2023

F.P. Report

KARACHI: Excitement is on the rise as the 29th Palmolive Sindh Women's Swimming Championship approaches, showcasing one of Pakistan's biggest female sporting events.

Annually organized by the Karachi Women's Swimming Association (KWSA), this competition attracts nationwide recognition as a prime platform for nurturing emerging talent and celebrating record-breaking achievements that can propel Pakistan's female swimmers to international championships.

Since the inception of this mega event in 1991, Colgate Palmolive has been committed to this cause and continues to play an active and unwavering role being the principal sponsor for 32 years (with a 3-year gap in the middle due to the COVID-19 Pandemic). Palmolive takes great pride in its commitment to support this prestigious competition year after year. Giving Pakistan's talented female swimmers a chance to display their talent and hone their skills.

The 29th Palmolive Sindh Women's Swimming Championship 2023 provides a platform for these dedicated young girls to build their confidence in participating both at home and abroad. Amongst many accolades, many of our young girl swimmers who have excelled at this event have won medals at the South Asian Games, South Asian Swimming Championships, and the Islamic Women's Games. They have represented Pakistan at top international World Swimming Championship, taking in every opportunity to raise the national flag high and make Pakistan proud.

Empowering Pakistani sportswomen with the same opportunities to compete as their male counterparts, Palmolive continues to prove itself as a socially responsible brand. Palmolive has been playing an invaluable role in developing swimming as a sport in Pakistan for almost three decades now as it strongly believes in women's ability to go for gold in achieving, succeeding, and breaking records.

Open to female participants across Sindh, the 29th Palmolive Sindh Women's Swimming Championship 2023 will be held on 11th - 12th November, 2023 at the Karachi Gymkhana. This year over 300 participants are expected to compete from schools, clubs and as individuals; this includes Karachi Grammar School, Beaconhouse School System, Karachi Club, Karachi Gymkhana, Karachi American School, The City School, LDKs, Bayview Academy, DHA Sports Club Moin Khan, The CAS School, The Intellect School, The Ivy School and Haque Academy to name a few. The swimming events will include all FINA official events.

The Opening Ceremony will be held at 8.30 a.m. on Saturday, 11th November, 2023 and will be graced by Mrs. Saima Kazi, wife of Karachi Gymkhana Swimming Pool Convenor. The medal presentation ceremony will take place on Sunday, 12th November 2023 at 4.30 p.m. The Closing Ceremony will be open to all.

Sports brings nations together: Jahangir

ISLAMABAD (APP): Former squash world champion and legend Jahangir Khan believes that sports bring nations together as players were the ambassadors of the games.

Regardless of the sports players were involved in, the success was possible only with hard work and discipline, he said on the occasion of a dinner given by South Asia Taekwondo Federation President Omar Saeed in honour of Prof. Kyu Seok Lee, President of the Asian Taekwondo Union at a local hotel here Friday.

Kook Hyun Jung, Technical Delegate of the 5th Asian Open Taekwondo Championship, PTF President Col (R) Waseem Janjua, Supervisory Board Head Stephen Fernandez, Combaxx Sports Director of Public Relations Farah Saeed, Marketing Manager Sara Mir, Ji Young Kim, Dong Hyun Kim and other guests were also present on the occasion.

Jahangir said for further promotion and development of the sport of Taekwondo in the country, the patronage of the government institutions as well as the role of private sectors was a welcome and worthy of emulation. Other institutions should also play their role in sponsorships, he said.

Lee said we wish that taekwondo in all member countries including Pakistan, would continue to grow.

I will remember and promise you that I will visit Pakistan again very soon, he said.

Regarding the championship hosted by Pakistan, Lee said they value the best arrangements of the Pakistan Taekwondo Federation. This is a memorable one. It was an event for Waseem Janjua and his team are to be congratulated. In the end, souvenirs and awards on behalf of South Asia Taekwondo Federation President Omar Saeed were distributed among the guests.

ICC suspends Sri Lanka over gov't interference

NEW DELHI (Agencies): The International Cricket Council (ICC) has suspended Sri Lanka with immediate effect after "government interference" in the running of the sport in the country.

On Monday, the country's sports minister announced that the entire that the entirety of the cricket board had been sacked.

The minister installed an interim committee led by former captain Arjuna Ranatunga but otherwise lacking in cricketing experience that included the sons of two politicians.

However that interim committee was subsequently struck down by the courts, with the old Sri Lanka Cricket (SLC) board reinstated. The changes came after a difficult Cricket World Cup that leaves Sri Lanka likely to miss out on qualification for the 2025

Champions Trophy.

And while the conditions of their suspension are still to be decided, the news from the ICC comes as another significant blow to cricket in the country.

"The International Cricket Council (ICC) Board has suspended Sri Lanka Cricket's membership of the ICC with immediate effect," the ICC said in a statement.

"The ICC Board met today and determined that Sri Lanka Cricket is in serious breach of its obligations as a Member, in particular, the requirement to manage its affairs autonomously and ensure that there is no government interference in the governance, regulation and/or administration of cricket in Sri Lanka.

"The conditions of the suspension will be decided by the ICC Board in due course." Sri Lanka, who are

led by former England seamer and coach Chris Silverwood, won just two of their nine World Cup group games.

They had reached the final of the 2023 Asia Cup ahead of the tournament, but were thrashed by India after being bowled out for 50.

Silverwood's side fared little better against the hosts during the World Cup, registering 55 all out in response to India's total of 357-8. Sri Lanka are currently ninth in the standings, with only the top eight finishers qualifying for the Champions Trophy in two years' time.

They are level on points with England, Bangladesh and the Netherlands, who all have one more match to play. The city of Colombo, meanwhile, is due to host the men's U19 Cricket World Cup in January and February of next year.

Bangladesh outplay Pakistan, win ODI series

ISLAMABAD (APP): Bangladesh women downed Pakistan women by seven wickets in the third ODI at the Shere Bangla National Stadium in Dhaka on Friday.

The win also means the hosts claim the ODI series 2-1 and secure four vital points of the ICC Women's Championship 2022-25.

After opting to bat first, Pakistan managed to score 166 for nine in their allotted 50 overs. Opening batters Sadaf Shamas and Sidra Amin provided a solid 65-run start to the innings. After the departure of Sadaf (31, 61b, 2x4s) in the 20th over, Sidra was joined by Muneeba Ali, who staged a comeback in the side after missing out in the second ODI due to injury.

She scored 14 off 36, which included one four before getting out to Shorna Akter in the 31st over. After the departure of Muneeba, Sidra kept losing her partners on the other end and eventually, the tourists ended up scoring 166 for nine. Sidra returned undefeated on 84 off 143 balls, smashing three fours.

For Bangladesh, Nahida Akter was the most successful bowler, taking three wickets for 26 runs. Rabeya Khan was another contributor with the ball, grabbing two wickets for 35 runs from 10 overs.

In turn, Bangladesh's opening pair Fargana Hoque and Murshida Khatun knitted a 125-run partnership for the first wicket. Fargana top-scored for her side with a 113-ball 62, hitting five fours. Her partner, left-handed Murshida scored 54 off 106 balls, which included six boundaries.

Bangladesh achieved the target in the 46th over for the loss of three wickets with skipper Nigar Sultana and Sobhana Mostary the two batters not out at the end. Fargana was named player of the match while Nahida for her tally of seven wickets bagged the player of the series award.

Pakistan women's team would head home on Saturday having taken part in the three-match T20I and three-match ODI series. The touring side earlier lost the T20I series 2-1, which was held in Chattogram.

The Player of the Match was Fargana Hoque (Bangladesh women) while Player of the Series is Nahida Akter (Bangladesh women).

Scores in brief: Pakistan 166-9, 50 overs (Sidra Amin 84 not out, Sadaf Shamas 31; Nahida Akter 3-26, Rabeya Khan 2-35).

Bangladesh 167-3, 45.4 overs (Fargana Hoque 62, Murshida Khatun 54; Nashra Sundhu 2-27).

Green shirts main goal to qualify for Asian Games: Stephen

ISLAMABAD (APP): Pakistan Football team head coach Stephen Constantine on Friday said our main goal for the Green shirts was to qualify for the Asian Games

and for that, the players were training tirelessly.

"The preparation of Pakistan team is complete, we are trying to make it perform better," he said in a presser along with players here at Pakistan Sports Complex.

Pakistan team was to play the upcoming FIFA World Cup 2026 Qualifier Round 2 matches scheduled to be held on November 16 against Saudi Arabia in Saudi Arabia followed by a home leg against Tajikistan on November 21 at Jinnah Stadium.

Speaking about the qualifiers, he said Saudi Arabia was a better team than us but we would compete well against them.

"Pakistan team consists of talented players but we are not yet ready to play the football world cup. Our main goal is to qualify for the Asian Games, not the World Cup," he said.

Stephen said Pakistan team need more effort. The Pakistani football team is learning in every match and is improving. Pakistan will leave for Saudi Arabia and the morale of all the players is high, he said.

He said: "The team has time till March and we can learn a lot in this period of time. If the Pakistan team qualifies for FIFA World Cup, I will be very glad."

Bilal, Hamza bag ITF Pakistan Jrs Tennis boys doubles title

ISLAMABAD (APP): Pakistan's Bilal Asim and Hamza Roman won the boys doubles finals of ITF Pakistan Juniors Leg-1 Tennis Championships 2023 here at PTF-SDA Tennis Complex on Friday.

Bilal and Hamza beat Ahmed Nael Qureshi and Huzaima Abdul Rehman by 6-2, 6-3. In boys singles semifinals, Kamonpanyakorn Thadapong (Thailand) beat Ahtesham Humayun (Pakistan) by 6-3, 6-0 and Yoshito Oda (Japan) beat Bilal Asim (Pakistan) by 6-0, 6-0.

In girls doubles finals, Viktoriia Sedova (Russia), Hinata Wada (Japan) beat Anastasia Melnikova (Russia), Madina Omarova (Kazakhstan) by 6-3, 6-0.

The girls singles and boys singles final would be played on Saturday. The qualifying matches of ITF Pakistan Juniors Leg-2 matches would kick off on the same day.

‘No pressure’ Babar Azam blasts critics as World Cup dream slips away

KOLKATA (Agencies): Pakistan skipper Babar Azam blasted his critics on Friday, telling them "it's easy to give advice on TV" as he refused to surrender his World Cup dreams.

Pakistan have to defeat defending champions England by at least 287 runs on Saturday to oust New Zealand as the fourth and last semi-finalist on net run rate. Failure to do so will spark more questions over Azam's captaincy, a position he has held for three years.

"I have not performed the way I should have in the World Cup, that's why people are saying that I am under pressure. I am under no pressure," insisted the 29-year-old. "Everyone has their own point of view, their own way of thinking. Everyone is saying something different. He should be like this, or like that.

"If someone has to give me advice, everyone has my number. It is easy to give advice on TV. If you want to give me some advice, you can message me," Azam has made 282 runs at the tournament with an average of just over 40 and four fifties.

However, as captain, he has overseen four defeats in eight games including a shock loss to Afghanistan and a shattering one-wicket defeat to South Africa.

They stayed alive in the tournament last weekend when Fakhar Zaman's unbeaten 81-ball 126 not out inspired a rain-hit win over New Zealand despite the Black Caps having piled up 401-6.

Azam insisted his team has not given up hope of pulling off victory over England despite the huge margin required. "It's not like this matter is not in the

back of the mind. It's in our mind and we will try to do it," said Azam.

"But we can't just go in and start firing blindly - we want that but with proper planning, how we want to play the first 10 overs, then the next 20 - how we have to achieve that target.

"There are a lot of things in this, like partnerships, which player will stay in the pitch for how long. I would say if Fakhar is in the match for 20 or 30 overs, we can achieve that. We can do this and we have planned for this."

Pakistan have never scored more than 361 against England, which they achieved at Southampton in 2019. Their biggest victory over the English is 108 runs 22 years ago. Pakistan, the 1992 champions, started the World Cup with wins over the Netherlands and

Sri Lanka but then suffered back-to-back losses to India and Australia.

Defeats to Afghanistan and the Proteas followed before victories over Bangladesh and New Zealand revived their slim semi-final hopes.

Azam, however, pointed to the defeat against South Africa in Chennai as a crucial setback. "We were hurt by the defeat in the South Africa match. We should have won the Afghanistan game as well and it's because of those defeats that we are at this stage."

He added: "My goal was to finish matches and win them with my performance and there were expectations from me and I accept that I have not done what was expected of me."

Despite likely elimination on Saturday, Azam said that Pakistan should not be written off. "Do you think



Babar Azam attends a practice session

we have lost all World Cups since 1999?" Azam asked.

"If you look in the T20 World Cup, we were in the Asia Cup (2022

final), we played in the final in Australia (T20 World Cup 2022).

"It's not that we are not playing well in the World

Cups, we are not able to finish well. "You can't say that we haven't done well since 99, we have dominated and we were number one."



In brief

IRSA releases 110,000 cusecs water

ISLAMABAD (APP): Indus River System Authority (IRSA) on Friday released 110,000 cusecs water from various rim stations with inflow of 58,500 cusecs. According to the data released by IRSA, water level in River Indus at Tarbela Dam was 1514.82 feet and was 114.82 feet higher than its dead level of 1,398 feet. Water inflow and outflow in the dam was recorded as 30,700 cusecs and 55,000 cusecs respectively. The water level in River Jhelum at Mangla Dam was 1193.40 feet, which was 143.40 feet higher than its dead level of 1,050 feet. The inflow and outflow of water was recorded 9,800 cusecs and 37,000 cusecs respectively. The release of water at Kalabagh, Taunsa, Guddu and Sukkur was recorded as 71,400, 41,700, 35,600 and 7,100 cusecs respectively. Similarly, from River Kabul, a total of 8,600 cusecs of water released at Nowshera and 4,400 cusecs released from River Chenab at Marala.

Two bike lifter gangs busted

RAWALPINDI (APP): Rawalpindi District Police in their ongoing operations against car and bike lifter gangs managed to bust two gangs and rounded up their five members besides recovering 14 motorcycles, and other items from their possession. According to a police spokesman, Taxila police conducted a raid and rounded up two members of Hamza bike lifter gang including Hamza, ringleader and Yasin and recovered five stolen motorcycles, Rs 4000, two mobile phones and other items. In another raid, Rattaamral police busted a gang and rounded up three accused, Zakir, Waseem and Jawad and recovered four stolen motorcycles and other items. In third operation conducted by Saddar Baroni Police, a bike lifter namely Nayab was sent behind bars and police recovered five stolen motorcycles from his possession. Separate cases have been registered against the accused while further investigations are under process. Senior Superintendent of Police, Operations, Faisal Saleem appreciated the performance of police teams and directed them to accelerate operations against car, bike lifters and other lawbreakers.

AIOU inks MoU with FGEI (C/G)

ISLAMABAD (APP): Allama Iqbal Open University (AIOU) signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with the Federal Government Educational Institutions (C/G) yesterday. According to MoU, both institutions will collaborate in teacher training, research activities and other areas of mutual interest. Vice Chancellor AIOU, Prof Dr. Nasir Mahmood and Director School Affairs, FGEI (C/G), Brig Shahid Bashir signed the MoU. On this occasion, Dr. Nasir Mahmood said that signing ceremonies are not enough, implementation of these MoUs within the time frame is necessary for the benefit of the community. Dr. Nasir Mahmood expressed the hope that the collaboration between the two institutions will benefit the people deprived of education. He added that the AIOU will provide full support to FGEI in the training of teachers and head teachers in inclusive education under its ongoing project GPE/Kix. Brig Shahid Bashir emphasized strengthening the



ISLAMABAD: Caretaker Minister for Privatisation, Fawad Hasan Fawad chairing meeting of Privatisation Commission Board.

Minister urges filmmakers to highlight Pakistan's true image, culture identity to local, int'l community

ISLAMABAD (APP): Caretaker Federal Minister for National Heritage and Culture Jamal Shah Friday stressed for boosting 'screen tourism' and reviving of cinemas in which film makers should highlight country's culture identity for local youngsters and international tourists.

Talking to a Private news channel, he said, "In Pakistan over 4000 new Cinemas are required to revive our entertainment industry, adding, present government had been taking measures to promote them to create a knowledgeable, educated and well-informed society that could enjoy peace and prosperity." He said, "Our regional languages, literature, culture and art will only defined the identity of a nation for our future generations, adding, poets, drama and film writers should highlight Pakistan's rich culture for not only educating the future generation but also promoting tourism at the

global level."

Minister said, "The government is promoting Pakistan's narrative, focusing on heritage, youth engagement, and tourism through screen tourism, adding, I wish to raise more awareness of the importance of viable cultural infrastructure as a way to stimulate our creativity, improve our quality of life and have tangible impacts on our economy."

Replying a question, minister stressed the need of promoting and projecting traditional culture as well as working for the uplift and betterment infrastructure of heritage sites in country. "It is need of hour to promote our culture sensibly to attract more international tourists in Pakistan," he added.

To another question, he regretted that preserving cultural heritage was never been a priority for the Pakistan government's annual budget plan but present government was focusing more in this sec-

tor as 'cultural heritage promotion' had huge importance for a country's development which would provides economical gains, protects a state's identity, and pride, and reminds people of their common history and progress alive.

"Pakistan is blessed with a huge number of ancient and historic places," he said. "These places promotion will keep us linked to our past and conserve our culture and customs for centuries."

"We need to spread knowledge among the youth through conventional and digital means," he said.

Provinces should enhance the capacity of local communities to benefit economically through cultural tourism, he added.

"Our duty is to sensitize communities on responsible tourism and provide easy access to cultural tourist sites and festivals," he said.

Mother Child Health Centre inaugurated

ISLAMABAD (APP): Caretaker Federal Minister for Health Dr Nadeem Jan here Friday inaugurated the state of the art Mother and Child Health Center in Tangi, Charsadda.

A large number of local residents participated in the opening ceremony.

Addressing the ceremony, Dr Nadeem Jan said, "He is working on the agenda of strengthening and reforming the health system in the short term."

He said, "A strong primary health care system will strengthen the health system of the country."

Dr Nadeem Jan said, "The government is making efforts to provide modern facilities to the rural people." Dr Nadeem Jan said, "The government is ensuring the provision of quality medical facilities to the poor people."

He said, "The society cannot develop without health and education development." Dr Nadeem Jan said, "An ambulance and cath lab will be provided to the hospital soon."

He said, "An integrated strategy to ensure universal health coverage has been formulated." Dr Nadeem Jan said, "The caretaker setup has laid the foundation of a strong health system in Pakistan."

"The coming governments will continue this strongest system," he added.

Korean embassy organizes reunion of 2023 GKS

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Embassy of Korea in Pakistan has orchestrated a reunion for the participants of 2023 Global Korea Scholarships (GKS), where alumni shared their experiences in Korea and how this academic journey influenced their professional paths. The 2023 GKS Reunion boasted the presence of key figures, including Ambassador Park Kijun of Korea in Pakistan, Kashif Jehan, the Director for scholarships at the Higher Education Commission, Ahtisham Hussain, Head of the Department of Korean Language and Culture, and various GKS alumni.

Following absorbing presentations by the GKS alumni, Ambassador Park Kijun expressed sincere appreciation for each student. He underscored the crucial role of cultural and educational exchanges between Korea and Pakistan, deeming them pivotal in fortifying bilateral relations and fostering people-to-people interactions between the two nations.

NA speaker remembers Captain Sarwar Shaheed on his birth anniversary

ISLAMABAD (APP): National Assembly Speaker Raja Pervaz Ashraf on Friday paid tribute to the courage and bravery of Captain Muhammad Sarwar Shaheed, Nishan-e-Haider on his birthday anniversary being observed today (Friday).

The NA speaker in his message on the occasion said Raja Mohammad Sarwar Khan sacrificed his life while defending the homeland. "His courage and valour will always be remembered in the history of the country," said Ashraf.

He said true nations never forget their martyrs who have made unforgettable sacrifices for the defense of the country.

The NA speaker prayed to Allah Almighty for high ranks for the martyr.

Captain Sarwar Shaheed was born on November 10, 1910, at Singhori village in

Tehsil Gujjar Khan.

He received the commission in 1944 and served at the Punjab Regiment in the newly formed Pakistan Army.

In 1947, he voluntarily took part in the battle of Kashmir.

During the battle, the Indian troops were outflanked and were forced to retreat to the Northern Areas.

Captain Sarwar launched an attack causing heavy casualties at Uri Sector.

His regiment received heavy machine-gun fire along with grenades and mortar fire. He was killed by machine-gun fire as he along with five other men were cutting barbed wires. He was posthumously awarded the highest military award of Pakistan, Nishan-e-Haider in recognition for his bravery.

HEC holds workshop to encourage varsities revenue generation thru non-traditional means

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Higher Education Commission (HEC) under the Higher Education Development in Pakistan (HEDP) project conducted an extensive capacity-building session for public sector universities on financial autonomy and revenue generation. The purpose was to encourage higher education institutions (HEIs) to develop projects that enable them to generate funds and revenue on their own. Seventy-five senior finance officials, including Vice Chancellors, treasurers, and registrars from various public sector HEIs attended.

The workshop was focused on 26 HEIs to whom the project has disbursed Rs. 30 million each for this activity to equip these to submit their planned projects on time and learn from other HEIs' experiences.

The allocation of public funds for the higher education sector in Pakistan remains low compared to international standards. The situation remains vulnerable owing to competing demands from other sectors on Pakistan's national budget. Moreover, except for Sindh, the financial contribution by the provincial governments for HEIs

is also negligible. Realising this, HEC is encouraging public sector HEIs to enhance the revenues from non-traditional sources beyond government grants and student fees. It is one of the key development objectives of the HEDP project, where the governance of the higher education sector is to be strengthened by revenue diversification and fund generation from non-traditional sources.

Accordingly, after consultations with around 100 HEIs across Pakistan, two frameworks - one for revenue enhancement and fund generation and the other for improving financial autonomy for public sector universities have been developed. Relevant stakeholders comprising the senior management of public sector HEIs from across Pakistan were engaged to review, improve, and provide feedback on this draft framework.

Despite legal and institutional challenges, some of the HEIs have made substantial progress on this initiative and in their brief presentations they shared their project ideas that others can take advantage of. These included Khyber Medical University, Peshawar; University of Engineering and Technology (UET), Lahore; UET Taxila; Hazara

University Mansehra; IBA Sukkur; University of Sargodha; and Karakorum International University, Gilgit. Vice Chancellor BUTEMs Dr. Khalid Hafeez and Vice Chancellor Hazara University Dr. Jameel Ahmed were chief guests on the occasion. They shared several local and international examples to make the most of this funding opportunity. Project Coordinator HEDP Dr. Masood Hussain shared multiple examples from the West and neighboring countries as to how they started this journey years ago and are now benefiting from it.

Members were also briefed that under Component 6, overall, more than 100 HEIs were given substantial financial support focusing on their IT readiness and making them self-sustainable. This is in addition to the public grant funding from the HEC regular stream for public sector universities. HEDP is a five-year project (2019/20 - 2023/24) being implemented by HEC to expand upon its key higher education priorities. It aims to support research excellence in strategic sectors of the economy, improve teaching and learning, and strengthen governance in higher education.

Islamabad Admin launches anti-dengue fumigation drive

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Deputy Commissioner has urged residents to cooperate with the authorities' efforts to control the dengue virus.

He has also advised people to take precautionary measures to avoid being bitten by mosquitoes, such as wearing long sleeves and pants, using mosquito repellent, and emptying any stagnant water around their homes. The anti-dengue fogging drive is part of a larger effort by the city administration to combat dengue fever. Other measures include increasing awareness among the public about dengue fever and its prevention, improving sanitation arrangements in the city, eliminating breeding grounds for mosquitoes, and providing treatment to dengue patients in government hospitals.

The fogging drive is being carried out under the supervision of the Deputy Commissioner Islamabad Irfan Nawaz Memon the Director of Health Services Metropolitan Corporation. Health teams are fanning out across the city, spraying insecticide in residential areas, schools, slums, gardens, parks and other public spaces.

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The city administration has also appealed to the private sector to cooperate with

its efforts to control dengue fever. Various businesses and other organizations have been urged to take measures to prevent mosquito breeding on their premises.

The anti-dengue fogging drive is expected to have a significant impact on the spread of dengue fever in Islamabad. By killing mosquitoes and reducing the mosquito population, the fogging drive will make it less likely that people will be bitten by infected mosquitoes and contract the disease.

The other measures being taken by the city administration are also expected to help reduce the number of dengue cases. By increasing awareness, improving sanitation, and eliminating breeding grounds, the city administration is making it more difficult for mosquitoes to thrive and spread the disease.

ANF seizes over 207 kg drugs in six operation

RAWALPINDI (APP): Anti-Narcotics Force (ANF) while conducting six operations across the country managed to recover over 207 kg drugs and arrested seven accused, said an ANF Headquarters spokesman here on Friday.

He informed that in an operation near G.T.Road, Attock, ANF recovered 10 kg charras and 520 grams heroin from a rickshaw and arrested an accused, resident of Attock. In another operation at a house in Narowal, 7.5 kg heroin was recovered.

The spokesman informed that in third operation in Mianwali, 3.5 kg charras concealed in a motorcycle was recovered while an accused resident of

Waziristan was rounded up.

In fourth operation conducted in Sambrial, 2100 grams charras was recovered from the possession of an accused, a resident of Waziristan.

He informed that in another operation near Chungi No 26, Islamabad, ANF recovered 98.4 kg opium and 84 kg charras and arrested two accused residents of Peshawar and Khyber.

1000 intoxicated tablets were recovered from a vehicle intercepted near Ring Road Peshawar. Two accused residents of Khyber were netted during the operation.

Separate cases have been registered against the accused while further investigations are under process.



ISLAMABAD: A picturesque sight unfolds as flowers bloom along the Islamabad Expressway.

Foreign tourists visit Ghazni

GHAZNI (Agencies): Officials of the Department of Information and Culture in Ghazni say that 20 foreign tourists from Germany, Sweden, and Spain traveled to the province to visit its historical sites. During the meeting with Hamidullah Nisar, the director of information and culture at Ghazni, the tourists said: "Foreign media have spread negative propaganda about Afghanistan and have not shown the real image of Afghanistan to the world."

Khorog Afghan Consul

KABUL (Agencies): After the Afghan Ambassador to Tajikistan tore up the introduction letter of a Taliban diplomat, Naqibullah Dehghanzada, the acting head of the Afghan consulate in the city of Khorog, Tajikistan, stated that this consulate directly operates under the protection and supervision of the Taliban's Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Zia Ahmad Takal shared a video of Naqibullah Dehghanzada on the social media platform X.

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

Raisi at ECO calls for economic support for Afghanistan, inclusive govt



KABUL (Agencies): Ebrahim Raisi, the president of Iran, called on ECO members to support economic improvement and reconstruction in Afghanistan. Speaking at the Economic Cooperation Organization (ECO), Raisi said Iran is ready to facilitate transit for any kind of humanitarian assistance to the people of Afghanistan. He also stressed the need for the formation of an inclusive government in Afghanistan.

"I want to refer to Afghanistan, which is an important country in the neighborhood of the Islamic Republic of Iran and also a main member of ECO," Raisi said. "We are still waiting for [the formation of] an inclusive, responsible, and responsive government with effective existence of all ethnic groups in Afghanistan. Of course, as we announced before, the ECO organization has to attend to a supportive program for Afghanistan to

help the noble people of the country and to help with the reconstruction and economic development of that country." Meanwhile, speaking at the Economic Cooperation Organization (ECO), Pakistan's caretaker prime minister Anwar ul Haq Kakar highlighted the significance of Afghanistan for regional connectivity and the execution of regional projects like CASA-1000, the Trans-Afghan Railway and TAPI.

"We are all aware of the fact that Afghanistan plays a critical role in regional connectivity. Connectivity projects such as CASA-100, Trans-Afghan railways, TAPI and others," he said. The Turkish President, Recep Tayyip Erdogan, also stressed the importance of stability in security in Afghanistan. He also said that Ankara had sent a shipment of 510 tons of food, health and clothing materials to Afghanistan on Tuesday.

Iron mining operations commence in Ghourian

GHORYAN (Agencies): The authorities of the de facto administration that iron mining has commenced in the Ghoryan District of Herat Province. The Ministry of Mines and Petroleum of the Islamic Emirate announced in a newsletter that the mining operation was officially inaugurated on Thursday, the 18th of Scorpio, by Shahabuddin Delawar, the acting head of the ministry. The head of the Ministry of Mines and Petroleum of the Islamic Emirate stated that over 30 years, this mine will be extracted by four domestic and foreign companies and processed within the country. According to a press release from the Media Office of the Islamic Emirate in Herat Province, Mr. Delawar stated that \$5,570,000,000 has been invested in this mine. The head of the Ministry of Mines and Petroleum of the Islamic Emirate added that the majority of Afghanistan's needs will be met through this mine, ensuring eco-



nomie progress for the country. Sheikh Shahabuddin Delawar further mentioned that with the oil and gas reserves in Herat, the country's situation will change, and the people of Afghanistan can be confident that their economy will advance. Meanwhile, Noorahmad Islami, the governor of Herat Province in the

Islamic Emirate, stated that with the start of iron ore mining in Ghoryan, the residents of Herat will be employed. It should be noted that the contract for the extraction of iron ore in Ghoryan, Herat, was signed on the 9th of September of this year with four domestic and foreign companies. According to reports,

the first block of this mine's contract has been awarded to "Watan-e-Darakhsan" company, the second block to "Sahel Sharq-e-Middle East" company, the third block of the Ghoryan iron mine to the national company "Shamsh" and the fourth block's extraction contract to "Bakhtar Steel" company.

Returned refugees from Pakistan say they were deprived of schooling

KABUL (Agencies): A number of families who have recently entered the country through Torkham crossing say that the government of Pakistan did not allow their children to go to school and most children and teenagers have been deprived of education. These families want the caretaker government to provide education for their children in addition to providing other facilities. "They did not allow our children to go to school or to be educated and they do not pay attention to refugees," said Wakil Ahmad, a deported refugee. These children and teenagers who were expelled from Pakistan and returned to the country asked the caretaker government to provide them with education opportunities. "We didn't study any lessons and were only busy with our work and we didn't have money to go to school. There we had to pay for school and it was not free," said Jamaluddin, a deported child from Pakistan. "There were free schools, but they didn't enroll us in them. I studied



up to the fifth grade, and then we were busy with our work," said Ramazan Khan, a child. "I want the Taliban to arrange government schools in Afghanistan as much as possible. There are many poor people in Afghanistan that want to study and work," said Usman Khan, a deported child. The Acting Minister of Refugees and Repatriation said that they

formed a commission to deal with the challenges of the refugees deported from Pakistan and this commission will deal with their challenges. "To deal with the challenges of the refugees, a commission has been formed that will solve all the problems and challenges of these refugees based on the plan that has been developed," said Khalil Rahman Haqqani,

acting minister for refugees and repatriations. Based on the information of the local officials of Nangarhar, after the announcement of the deadline by the interim government of Pakistan to deport illegal refugees, about 55,000 families have entered the country through the Torkham crossing and thousands of other families are waiting to enter from the other side.

Biden could be preparing to 'upgrade ties' with Kabul: WPR



KABUL (Agencies): A former US diplomat and current professor at the City University of New York, Annie Pforsheimer, in a piece for World Politics Review wrote that the "administration of US President Joe Biden has quietly begun to soften Washington's stance on the Taliban as a sponsor of ter-

rorism, despite an authoritative report by United Nations experts in June 2023 noting the strong and symbiotic links between the Taliban, the Haqqani network, al-Qaida and other terror groups." She wrote that the ongoing US consultation with "Taliban authorities at a technical level, based on

the reality of the group's physical control of Afghanistan, is necessary to advance specific and urgent interests, such as the release of US hostages and out-migration of Afghans processed for US residency." But additional and relatively senior overtures to the Islamic leadership, she said, "would require a shift

in the policy landscape." Political analyst Torek Farhadi called for the removal of economic sanctions on Afghanistan. "What the Biden administration is doing, we don't know about it but the economic sanctions should be lifted on Afghanistan because with the return of the refugees, the suffering of the people has increased," he said. However, the Islamic Emirate said that it doesn't want conflict with any country and that it wants to have good relations with all countries including the US. "In the Doha agreement, it was indicated that Afghanistan and the US should have good relations in the future, so the negative impact of the war time is eliminated. A new chapter based on multilateral cooperation should be opened," Mujahid said. Ahmad Khan Andar, political analyst, said that the US had provided mass aid to Afghanistan during the past two-years.

UN officials call for urgent action on women's rights issues in Afghanistan

KABUL (Agencies): Amna Mohammed, the Deputy Secretary-General of the United Nations, and Roza Otunbayeva, the head of UNAMA, called for immediate action on the situation of women in Afghanistan during the Organization of Islamic Cooperation meeting. Amna Mohammed, speaking at the Organization of Islamic Cooperation meeting held on Wednesday in Jeddah, Saudi Arabia, under the theme "Women in Islam," expressed concerns about the situation of women in Afghanistan. She urged that the restrictions imposed by the Taliban administration be urgently addressed.



On the other hand, Roza Otunbayeva, the head of the UN Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA), also shared her views at the conference, calling for a global consensus to resolve the legal issues concerning women's rights in Afghanistan. "An overwhelming 46 per cent of women express their firm belief that recognition should not occur under any circumstances," Otunbayeva said. "Additionally, 50 per cent of women shared the view that recognition should be granted only once de facto authorities lift the restrictions on women's education, employment, and mean-

ingful participation in inclusive government," she added. However, women's rights activists argue that the responses from the United Nations and Islamic countries have not been beneficial in securing the rights of Afghan women. Soraya Paikan, a woman's rights activist, says that the reactions of the United Nations and Islamic countries have been merely declarative and have not yielded any tangible results in ensuring the rights of Afghan women. It should be noted that in the past two years, as the Taliban administra-

tion came to power, more than 50 decrees against women's freedoms have been issued in Afghanistan. These decrees have affected various aspects of women's lives, including restrictions on education and a ban on working in government and non-governmental offices. Meanwhile, Zabihullah Mujahid, the spokesperson for the Islamic Emirate, responded to the Deputy Secretary-General of the United Nations by stating that, except for a few "minor" issues, women's rights in Afghanistan are preserved within the frame-

work of Islamic law. Amna Mohammed emphasized in her speech that more than 130 million girls worldwide are deprived of education, and this issue is more pronounced in Afghanistan. She further stressed, "We are suffering in this regard." It has been over two years since girls from the sixth grade have been deprived of education, and the fate of university women is still uncertain. However, the Islamic Emirate believes that women's rights in Afghanistan have been secured.

Afghans who helped Army given homes at Weeton Barracks

KABUL (Agencies): Afghans who helped and supported the UK forces during the conflict in their home country will be offered temporary accommodation at a barracks. Up to 55 families, who have a legal right to be in the UK, will be housed in service family accommodation homes in Weeton Barracks near Blackpool.

Fylde Council said families would start to arrive from Friday. The Ministry of Defence (MoD) said: "We owe a huge debt of gratitude to all who worked for, or with, UK forces. That's why we have committed to relocating all eligible Afghans and their families to the UK, a commitment we will honour."

The homes were being offered "on a transitional basis while they await more settled accommodation across the UK", the MOD added. The properties are not currently in use by service personnel. Under the Afghan Relocations and Assistance Policy (ARAP) scheme, Afghan citizens who worked with the UK government in "exposed or

meaningful roles" in the conflict in Afghanistan may be eligible to be relocated to the UK, along with their family members. A Fylde Council spokeswoman said it was informed by the MoD of the decision. "The MoD will provide all the required care for the families which will include basic provisions, employment support, health, education, and orientation to the UK," she said. "The maximum stay for any family will be six weeks whilst the MoD arrange settled accommodation around the UK." She added: "The council is grateful for the support that many Afghans provided to our forces during the recent conflict and will look to engage the families with the local community during their short stay at the barracks." The authority said the properties would be used until all the families had been accommodated elsewhere or when the regiment was scheduled to return in 2024.





RIYADH: Special Assistant to Prime Minister for Human Rights and Women Empowerment Mushaah Hussain Malik called on Dr. Mohammad Bin Abdulkarim Al-Issa, Chairman of Organization of Muslim Scholars and Secretary General of the Muslim World League.

Solangi vows to protect media workers' rights

F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: Caretaker Minister for Information and Broadcasting Murtaza Solangi on Friday said all-out efforts would be made to protect the rights of journalists and media workers to further strengthen democracy in the country.

Addressing a seminar on "International Day to End Impunity for Crimes against Journalists", he stressed on a collaboration between the government and media organizations for evolving an emergency mechanism to respond to any untoward incident against journalists and media workers efficiently. The caretaker government had been taking steps to prevent any crime against journalists, he said while citing different occasions when he himself took the lead to protect journalists and media workers' rights during the last couple of months.

"The journalists are supposed to report news but it is very unfortunate that sometimes they themselves become a news," he regretted. Solangi vowed to ensure arrest of those who were involved in the killing of senior journalist Jan Mohammad Mahar.

He said the government would ensure job security of journalists and media workers at all the costs. A clear mechanism in that regard was mentioned in the PEMRA (Pakistan Electronic Media Regulatory Authority) Amendments Act. He urged the journalists to

Minister calls for discussion on current PIA status

F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: Caretaker Federal Minister for Parliamentary Affairs, Murtaza Solangi, on Friday called for a comprehensive discussion on current status of Pakistan International Airlines (PIA) during the next session of Upper House. Murtaza Solangi, who is also the Information Minister, said it would be appropriate, if detailed discussion on the current status of PIA was carried out in the presence of Ministers for Aviation and Privatization during the next session.

Responding to a calling attention notice about PIA and any suspension of its flight operation, he said both ministers would also apprise the House of the factors that led to huge losses of the Airlines. He pointed out that the Airlines had been grappling with multiple problems for several years. He specifically mentioned a minister of the PTI previous government whose irresponsible statement regarding fake pilot degrees, adversely affected PIA's reputation, leading to loss of some international routes.

He said that the overstaffing in PIA was not only limited to one government department. He said that throughout the world, governments were not running airlines, railways, and transport. He said that it was the prerogative of the Parliament to formulate policy on major public issues. The current government was following the policy of the previous government and had included PIA in the privatization list, he added. The minister said that Pakistan State Oil (PSO) was also an autonomous entity and could not supply fuel without funds. However, he said that due to efforts of the current government, the flights of PIA had been restored, that had been halted due to the fuel shortage.

inform people about the facts and real issues so that the parties and candidates contesting elections proposed concrete steps for addressing the same. The minister said the caretaker government was committed to uphold democracy and rule of law in the country. "We are legally and morally bound to provide a level-playing field to all the political parties during elections."

He said likewise, the media was also ought to do honest reporting on the elections especially by sensitizing the masses about facts and real issues. As regards the elections, he said announcement of the polls' date had removed all the doubts in that regard. "We are saying from the very beginning that the Election Commission will fulfill its responsibility in accordance with the law."

Wasi Shah, Indonesian Minister vow to boost ties

LONDON (APP): Minister Wasi Shah's dynamic participation and strategic engagements during the 3-day World Travel Mart in London have resonated positively with the Pakistani community. Notably, the pivotal meeting with Indonesia's Minister of Tourism, Sandiaga Salahuddin, at the Pakistan Pavilion marked a significant milestone.

Upon Salahuddin Sandiaga's arrival, Minister Wasi Shah and the entire Pakistan Pavilion extended a warm welcome. The subsequent discussions, described as memorable and historic, emphasized the potential for fostering new avenues of tourism collaboration between Pakistan and Indonesia.

Minister Wasi Shah underscored the importance of youth involvement in the tourism industry, advocating for regular training to harness their potential. Expressing satisfaction at the significant number of Indonesian students studying in Pakistan, he highlighted the demographic similarities between the two nations and the immense mutual benefits achievable through collaborative tourism efforts.

The Ministers explored the diverse tourism potential of Pakistan, ranging from deserts and oceans to the world's oldest archaeological sites, emphasizing the country's rich natural beauty. Minister Wasi Shah's appreciation and understanding of Indonesia were commended by Minister Salahuddin, who expressed the intention to strengthen the connection and explore the signing of a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) on tourism in the coming days.

Both ministers shared enthusiasm regarding the strong religious ties between the two countries, emphasizing that such bonds would facilitate a sense of familiarity for travelers. The meeting concluded after approximately 45 minutes, setting the stage for enhanced cooperation in the field of tourism between Pakistan and Indonesia.

Cipher case hearing against Khan, Qureshi adjourned

ISLAMABAD (PPI): A special court established under the Official Secrets Act on Friday adjourned the hearing of the cipher case against PTI chairman Imran Khan and senior party leader Shah Mahmood Qureshi without any proceedings at Adiala Jail.

Special court judge Abul Hasnat Zulfarnain conducted the hearing of the case at Adiala Jail. Both PTI chairman and vice chairman Shah Mahmood Qureshi were brought to courtroom. FIA prosecutor Zulfiqar Naqvi, Shah Khawar and Rizwan Abbasi appeared before the court while Salman Safdar, Ali Gohar and Umair Niazi represented the PTI chairman. Wife and daughter of PTI leader Shah Mahmood Qureshi were also present in the court during the hearing.

Taimur Malik and Faiza Shah appeared in the court on behalf of Shah Mahmood Qureshi. Due to absence of defence counsels, statements of the prosecution witnesses could not be recorded. The court, while summoning three more witnesses, adjourned the hearing of the case till November 14.

Earlier, the Islamabad High Court (IHC) had adjourned the bail application hearing of the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf Vice Chairman, Shah Mahmood Qureshi, in the cipher case till Wednesday.

Justice Naqvi raises issues with SJC inquiry — calls for CJP, 2 other judges to recuse themselves

F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: Supreme Court's Justice Sayyed Mazahar Ali Akbar Naqvi — who was due to submit his reply to the show cause notice issued to him by the Supreme Judicial Council (SJC) on complaints registered against him on Friday — instead raised objections on Chief Justice of Pakistan (CJP) Qazi Faez Isa and two other members of the council.

"Their participation in the proceedings resulting in a show cause notice being issued to me taints those proceedings, inter alia, with bias and makes all orders passed in such proceedings as being without lawful authority and of no legal effect," Justice Naqvi stated about the top judge and Justice Naeem Akhtar Afghan in the 18-page document submitted to the SJC.

The judge objected that CJP Isa and Justice Afghan being the chairman and member of the inquiry commission, respectively, investigating the audio leaks case against him, cannot participate in the SJC's proceedings against him. "The [inquiry commission] proceedings are sub judice. The same alleged audio leaks which were referred to the inquiry commission are subject matter of the complaints against me before SJC. The SRO is still in the field. S.R.O. 596(I)/2023 dated May 19, 2023 is attached as Annex L. Order of the Supreme Court dated May 26, 2023, passed in Constitution Petitions No.14 to 17 of 2023 is attached as Annexure M," he stated.

Justice Naqvi then urged the two judges to recuse themselves from

hearing the complaints against him in the SJC. Moreover, he maintained the same about Justice Sardar Tariq Masood, basing his objection on the claim that the judge is "disqualified from hearing those complaints as a member of SJC after having expressed an opinion on the complaints against me".

He said that Justice Masood's opinion expressed in a couple of letters established that "he has already formed a view in the matter". Justice Naqvi said that Justice Masood deliberately delayed his opinion till the change in the composition of the SJC following former CJP Umar Ata Bandial.

Moreover, the judge maintained that Justice Masood is also one of the judges who are facing a complaint against him before the SJC. Justice Naqvi also stated in his objections that the proceedings against him are discriminatory and violative of Article 25 of the Constitution.

"The complaints against me are frivolous. They are all based on conjecture and false allegations. None are supported by evidence. They are, therefore, liable to be dismissed," he maintained. He added that "there was no discussion or enquiry into the allegations" against him. Justice Naqvi sought the details of the reference against him in the SJC and all the evidence and records related to it before any orders on the matter.

"I also reserve my right to submit that the proceedings against me are politically motivated and lack legality, propriety and transparency." The show-cause notice was issued to Justice Naqvi a day after the SJC met — for the first time in three years to

discuss complaints filed against superior court judges — under CJP Isa. SJC is the only constitutional forum that has the power to remove judges of superior courts on different charges.

It is a forum of accountability of judges of the superior courts and top government officials, which is comprised of five members, including the Chief Justice of Pakistan, two senior-most judges of the Supreme Court, and two most senior chief justices of high courts. Besides Justice Naqvi, complaints have been filed against other judges of the superior court. However, it is unclear whether notices or action against other judges was discussed.

Justice Masood, senior judge of the Supreme Court and member of SJC, had submitted his legal opinion on the misconduct complaints filed against apex court Justice Naqvi in September this year, according to The News. Several misconduct complaints were filed against Justice Naqvi during the tenure of former chief justice Umar Ata Bandial. Justice (ret'd) Bandial had referred the matter to Justice Masood for examining it and giving his legal opinion.

Initially, the misconduct complaint against Justice Naqvi was filed with the SJC by a Lahore-based lawyer Muhammad Dawood. Later on, Pakistan Bar Council (PBC) Vice Chairman Haroon Rashid filed misconduct complaint against the SC judge after an audio leak emerged purportedly featuring a conversation about the fixation of the case before a particular bench or judge with former Punjab chief minister Pervaiz Elahi.

UNHCR delegation, KP CM discuss repatriation of illegal foreigners

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: A three-member delegation led by the representative of United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) for Pakistan Ms. Philippa Candler called on the caretaker Chief Minister Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Muhammad Azam Khan here at Chief Minister's House on Friday and discussed with him matters related to repatriation of illegal immigrants living in the province.

Chief Secretary Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Nadeem Aslam Chaudhry and Additional Chief Secretary Home Muhammad Abid Majeed were also present on the occasion. The Chief Minister while talking to the delegates has said that the repatriation process of illegal immigrants is in progress smoothly so far adding that all possible facilities are being extended to the immigrants going back to their homeland voluntarily, and the provincial government has allocated special funds for this purpose.

"The immigrants returning back to their countries are being treated humanely, and humanitarian aspect of the matter is fully taken care of whereas elderly people, women and children are being accorded special treatment as per the traditions of the land," he said adding that specific transit points have been set up for temporary stay of such immigrants having all the required facilities.

The Chief Minister maintained that an effective grievance redressal mechanism had also been put in place to address any kind of complaints or concerns of the immigrants on immediate basis adding that all out efforts are being made to ensure that every single immigrant going back home gets proper treatment and no one is mistreated; and special directives have been issued to all the relevant departments, district administrations and police to this effect.

Special cabinet meeting approves increase in stipends of TMOs

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: Under the chairmanship of Syed Masood Shah, the Provincial Minister for Establishment, Administration, and Inter-Provincial Relations, a special cabinet meeting of the provincial government was convened at the Civil Secretariat in Peshawar. The meeting was attended by cabinet members, including the Chief Secretary of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, administrative secretaries, and other senior officials. The agenda included discussions on various issues related to healthcare and administration in the province.

During the meeting, decisions were made regarding outsourcing of different hospitals in different districts. Recommendations were also considered to increase the monthly stipends for trainee medical officers in the hospitals. Dr. Riaz Anwar, the Special Advisor on Health, addressed the press conference following the cabinet meeting, emphasizing the crucial role of trained medical doctors in the healthcare system. He highlighted the demand for the medical community for a stipend increase, stating that although a 30% increase was desired, given the economic conditions of the province, a 10% increase was deemed feasible. The cabinet has approved a 10% increase in their stipends.

Secretary Health, Mahmood Islam, mentioned that there has been no increase in the stipends of trainee medical officers since 2017. He acknowledged the sacrifices made by the medical community and expressed the government's commitment to addressing their concerns. Regarding the situation of the diphtheria outbreak in the province, the Health Department is fully alert to the situation. Currently, there are 269 reported cases of diphtheria across the province. He emphasized the importance of timely vaccination, stating that if parents had administered protective vaccines to their children on time, the current situation might have been avoided. Secretary Health shared that the province has an ample supply of anti-diphtheria serum. Directives have been issued to establish isolation wards in MTIs (Medical Teaching Institutions) and DHQs (District Headquarters Hospitals) for managing diphtheria patients. The cabinet has emphasized the importance of merit and compliance with regulations in outsourcing hospitals. These decisions and initiatives reflect the commitment of the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa government to address healthcare challenges and improve the overall administrative framework in the province.

He further stated that coordination mechanisms between the UNHCR and the concerned provincial departments would be further strengthened in order to complete the repatriation process amicably.

Speaking on the occasion, representative of UNHCR Ms. Philippa Candler said that UNHCR is thankful to the government of Pakistan and its people for hosting such a large number

of refugees for the last several decades. She also appreciated the efforts of the provincial government for making special arrangements for the repatriation of the illegal immigrants and extending them all the required facilities. She hoped that coordination between the provincial government and UNHCR will continue till the end to facilitate the repatriation of immigrants to the maximum.

Pakistan calls out Israel to end carnage in Gaza

F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan on Friday said the "backers of Israel" must prevail upon it to abandon the plans for settler colonialism, forced displacement, and ethnic cleansing of the Palestinian people.

Briefing newsmen at her weekly press conference in Islamabad, Foreign Office Spokesperson Mumtaz Zahra Baloch said "As an occupying power, Israel must fulfill its obligations under the Fourth Geneva Convention and forthwith end the carnage in Gaza."

Mumtaz Baloch said Pakistan was deeply concerned about the heinous crimes being committed against the Palestinian people as Israeli forces continued with their "campaign of terror and brutality" in Gaza. She said over a month, the people of Gaza had been subjected to the worst forms of collective punishment. "Israeli forces are committing crimes against humanity with impunity as they indiscriminately massacre defenceless civilians and

deliberately deprive them of food, water, shelter, and medical care," she added.

Mumtaz Baloch said the use of phosphorus bombs and threats of nuclear holocaust were being made against a people under occupation who were being forcibly evicted from their land. She said as a tragedy of epic proportions unfolds in Gaza, the United Nations Security Council must act to fulfill its responsibility to uphold peace and call for an urgent and unconditional ceasefire, lifting of the siege, and commencement of rapid, unhindered humanitarian assistance.

The spokesperson said Pakistan welcomed the forthcoming Extraordinary Islamic Summit being held on 11th November in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia. The OIC Summit has been convened in response to the unprecedented Israeli attacks on Gaza and its environs, which have posed a grave threat to the civilian population and precipitated a humanitarian crisis.

She said Prime Minister Anwaar-ul-Haq Kakar will participate in the Extraordinary Islamic Summit, while Foreign Minister Jalil Abbas Jilani will join the Council of Foreign Ministers preceding the extraordinary session. "Pakistan will continue to play its role to advance international consensus and galvanize efforts for an urgent end to Israeli aggression against the Palestinian people and urgent provision of relief assistance to the people of Gaza," she said.

On the situation in Indian Illegally Occupied Jammu and Kashmir, she said India must comply with its international obligations and respect the rights and freedoms of the Kashmiri people who have an inalienable right to self-determination. "Pakistan will continue to extend political, diplomatic, and moral support to our Kashmiri brothers and sisters for the just and peaceful settlement of the Jammu and Kashmir dispute in accordance with the UN Security Council Resolutions," she said.

196,413 illegal foreigners repatriated

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: The repatriation of illegal foreigners to their home countries including Afghanistan continued via Torkham border through which 196,413 unlawful immigrants were repatriated till November 9, 2023.

According to the Home Department Govt of KP, 1239 illegal foreigners were deported so far from different areas of the country via Torkham border including 287 from Punjab, 81 from Islamabad, 24 Azad Kashmir and 846 from Khyber Pakhtunkhwa.

A total of 14,683 families including 55,394 male, 42,921 female and 98,098 children were repatriated through the Torkham border.

Through Angor Adda South Waziristan border, 3056 illegal foreigners repatriated to Afghanistan. Collectively, 197,652 illegal foreigners repatriated to their home countries including Afghanistan. On November 9 last, 3035 illegal foreigners repatriated through the Torkham border.

All ex-ministers returned official cars: Senate told

F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: Caretaker Minister for Parliamentary Affairs and Information and Broadcasting Murtaza Solangi on Friday informed the Senate that no former federal ministers, ministers of state, special assistants or advisors to the prime minister (SAPM) have taken official vehicles with themselves rather, all such vehicles had to hand over to the cabinet division in a week on expiry of the respective government's tenure.

Replying to various supplementary questions during Question Hour, the minister said that later the cabinet division utilized the said vehicles. He also clarified that he and other incumbent caretaker ministers had 1800cc cars. As per rule 24 of the Rules for Use of Staff Cars 1980, Federal Ministers/Ministers of State/Advisors/Special

Assistants to the Prime Minister with the status of Minister/Minister of State were entitled to use 1800cc cars to be provided by the respective Ministry, he said.

However, the minister said in case of non-availability of the suitable entitled car with the Ministry concerned, the Cabinet Division provides the vehicles from its pool for the use of Federal Ministers/Ministers of State. In response to a question raised by Senator Bahramand Khan Tangi, the minister said presently, serving Officers in BS-20-22 of the Federal Government were not entitled to have any official/personal staff at their residences. The government would carry out an exercise to take information from the concerned departments and in case of any violation, a report would be presented before the house,

he said.

He said complete details of grade-21 and 22 officers belonging to Balochistan would also be placed before the House. To a separate question, Murtaza Solangi apprised the house that no separate funds were sanctioned against PWD Colony, G-8/4 (152 Cat-V flats), and funds sanctioned in residential buildings in routine maintenance work. However, no funds utilized for PWD Colony G-8/4 (152 Cat-V flats) for the last two years. To a supplementary question, he said that electricity to the Qasr-e-Naz building owned by the federal government has been disconnected due to non-payment of dues since June. The matter would be presented in the cabinet meeting, he added. To another question, he said under the Rule of Business private counsels could be hired in complex and challenging court cases.

Alvi phones Abbas, flays Israeli brutalities

F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: President Dr Arif Alvi made a telephone call to the President of Palestine Mahmoud Abbas and expressed his heartfelt sympathies and grief on behalf of the people and government of Pakistan over the atrocities being committed by Israel against people of Palestine for over seven decades.

He deplored that what was happening in the Gaza was very painful and the entire Pakistani nation was deeply saddened by the brutalities and reign of terror unleashed the Israeli security forces, says a statement issued here on Friday. The President strongly condemned the lethal bombing by Israel that even did not spare schools and hospitals and its barbaric actions resulted in killing of thousands of Palestinians, including women and children, healthcare workers, journal-

ists and UN aid workers.

He said the current situation in Gaza was the reaction of decades of apartheid and unjust policies of Israel. He condemned Israel for ethnic cleansing against the Muslims and pushing them out of their territories.

Talking to his Palestinian counterpart, President Arif Alvi regretted over the lack of action on the part of the international community to stop Israel from its murderous campaign against the people of Gaza. He assured the Palestinian President that Pakistan would continue to support resolving the Palestinian dispute in accordance with the relevant UNSC's resolutions.

The President urged the international community to make efforts for urgent ceasefire, opening of unhindered humanitarian corridor to Gaza, stopping further displacement of the Palestinians

from their homeland and permanent solution to the Palestinian dispute in accordance with UN Security Council's resolutions.

He said if two states solution was not acceptable to Israel, then one state solution was the only way where Jews, Muslims and a good percentage of Christians could live to exercise equal political rights. Talking to his Pakistani counterpart, the Palestinian President said Israel was committing genocide in Gaza. He called for stopping Israel from fighting against the Palestinian territory. He also demanded for opening of a corridor to Gaza to ensure the delivery of humanitarian assistance as there was no food, medicine and electricity available to the people of Gaza. President Mahmoud Abbas thanked Pakistan for supporting the Palestinian cause and sending humanitarian assistance.