

Five former MPs join PML-N

LAHORE (NNI): Five former MNAs and MPAs announced joining the PMLN after a meeting with former prime minister and PMLN president Shehbaz Sharif. Former MNAs Sardar Mansab Dogar, Farooq Raza Manika and Gaddi Nasheen from Jhang, Nizam-ud-Deen Sialvi, former MPAs Asif Abbas and Mian Majid Nawaz joined the PMLN and reposed confidence in the party leadership including the supreme Nawaz Sharif, Shehbaz Sharif.

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Israel-Hamas battles create havoc in Gaza hospitals

GAZA STRIP, Palestinian Territories (AFP/APP): Heavy fighting between Israeli forces and Hamas trapped thousands of people in Gaza's hospitals on Sunday, as medics and aid workers warned patients will die in the crippled facilities unless there is a pause in the battle.

Bright flares lit up the night sky over Gaza City and blasts echoed across the city. AFP television images showed, as Israel's air and ground campaign to destroy Hamas brought the fight to key medical installations.

"If we do not stop this bloodshed immediately with a ceasefire or at the bare minimum a medical evacuation of patients, these hospitals will become a morgue," the medical aid group Doctors Without Borders warned early Sunday.

Al-Shifa Hospital in Gaza City, the biggest in the territory, is "totally surrounded and bombardments are going on nearby", the hospital's director, Mohammad Abu Salmiya, said in a statement late on Saturday.

"The medical team cannot work and the bodies, in their dozens, cannot be managed or buried," he said.

Inside the hospital, Doctors Without Borders surgeon Mohammed Obeid said there was no water, power, food, or internet for about 600 post-operative patients, 37-40 babies and 17 people in intensive care.

Countless other people are seeking refuge in the hospital grounds.

Two babies died in the Al-Shifa neonatal unit after power to their incubators was cut off and a man also died when his ventilator shut down, the surgeon said in an audio message

posted on social media.

"We can see actually the smoke around the hospital. They hit everything around the hospital and they hit the hospital many times," he said.

A sniper had shot four patients within the hospital, he said, with one man hit in the neck and another in the abdomen. People trying to leave the grounds to seek safety further south in Gaza had faced bombardments, the surgeon said. The UN's World Health Organization expressed alarm at the situation in Al-Shifa.

"WHO is gravely concerned about the safety of health workers, hundreds of sick and injured patients, including babies on life support, and displaced people who remain inside the hospital," director-general Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus said in a statement. The Israeli military has denied strikes or a siege at Al-Shifa hospital, and has repeatedly accused Hamas of using medical facilities as command centres and hideouts.

Hamas has denied the accusations. The Israeli army also said it would "provide the assistance needed" to help "babies in the paediatric department to get to a safer hospital" on Sunday, at the request of Al-Shifa staff. Twenty of Gaza's 36 hospitals are "no longer functioning", according to the UN's humanitarian agency.

The Palestinian Red Crescent Society also called on the international community and humanitarian groups to intervene "immediately and urgently" to protect people in Al-Quds Hospital, also in Gaza City.

Artillery shelling nearby was "causing the building to shake", the

Red Crescent said Saturday, reporting "intense shooting at the hospital" where there were about 500 patients and more than 14,000 people seeking shelter.

Infants were facing dehydration because of a lack of breast milk alternatives, it said.

Other hospitals crippled by the fighting include the Indonesian hospital in north Gaza, where the director Atef Al-Kahlot said lack of fuel forced the facility to cut power to their desalination plant, medical scanners and lifts.

"The hospital is working with 30-40 percent of its capacity," Al-Kahlot said. Hamas fighters smashed through the militarised border with Israel on October 7, killing around 1,200 people, mostly civilians, and taking about 240 people hostage, according to the most recent Israeli figures. Israel's campaign in response to wipe out Hamas has killed more than 11,000 people, also mostly civilians and thousands of them children, according to the latest figures from the health ministry in Hamas-run Gaza. The ministry has not updated tolls for two days citing the collapse of hospital services. The families of Israeli hostages spoke of their agony at a rally in Tel Aviv Saturday. "I came here to shout for my kidnapped parents which are already 35 days not here with us, kidnapped in Gaza. We don't know their situation and we need them to be released immediately," said Yair Mozes, whose parents were both kidnapped from Nir Oz, a kibbutz in southern Israel.



RIYADH: Caretaker Prime Minister, Anwaar-ul-Haq Kakar departs for Pakistan after completing his three day official visit of Kingdom of Saudi Arabia.

PM reminds int'l community to intervene solution of Palestine issue

ISLAMABAD (APP): Caretaker Prime Minister Anwaar-ul-Haq Kakar, during his participation in the Joint Arab Islamic Extraordinary Summit in the Saudi Capital of Riyadh on Saturday, has reminded the international community to promptly intervene and implement a durable solution to Palestine issue as the five-week ceaseless Israeli's military aggression led to genocide and stoked fears of engulfing the region into wider conflict.

He underscored the urgency of bringing an end to Israel's aggression and brutality with an immediate and unconditional ceasefire, lifting of the siege of Gaza, and rapid and unhindered humanitarian and relief assistance. The prime minister of Pakistan was among the prominent leaders of the Muslim world that vociferously and very candidly highlighted the root causes leading to the current humanitarian crisis with over 11,000 deaths in Gaza due to Israel's indiscriminate aerial and ground blitz after October 7.

The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia hosted the Joint Arab Islamic Extraordinary Summit considering the human catastrophe that befell upon the Palestinian territories with Israel's belligerent military invasion.

The summit assumed significance as it brought the Muslims leaders from across the globe and continents together on one platform, expressing a unifying stance and forging a spirit of brotherhood and affinities for the unfortunate civilians of Gaza undergoing horrors of usage of globally banned arsenal and weapons by Israel occupation forces.

Caretaker Prime Minister Kakar, in his remarks, reaffirmed that a permanent solution to the conflict was in the establishment of a secure, viable, contiguous and sovereign state of Palestine on the basis of pre-June 1967 borders with Al-Quds Al-Sharif as its Capital.

He stressed that the Israeli occupa-

tion forces were acting in clear violation of the international humanitarian and human rights laws, and their indiscriminate and disproportionate use of force amounted to war crimes and crimes against humanity.

He also reiterated Pakistan's solidarity and support for the Palestinian people and their right to self-determination. The prime minister regretted that they were witnessing another war in Gaza which was 'a genocide', sharing his pains at the distressing and miserable images of the women and children in the backdrop of bombs being dropped at hospitals, refugees' camps and ambulances as Israel had turned Gaza into a living hell. "Israel's incessant flouting of international laws with impunity had few parallels in history, he said, adding "I condemn these atrocities in the strongest terms."

He called upon the international community to hold Israel accountable for its crimes, urging the UNSC members to rise above their differences and urgently perform their primary responsibility of maintaining peace and security in the region.

"Human lives cannot be sacrificed at the altar of technicalities," he added. Prime Minister Kakar opined that billions across the globe wanting peace and progress and development, and the world could not afford to be pushed into the brink of another war.

He also proposed for initiation of proceedings at the International Court of Justice (ICJ) against Israel for its war crimes and crimes against humanity, besides the establishment of a special commission of inquiry by the United Nations Secretary-General to investigate these war crimes.

During his three-day visit, the prime minister also held meetings with the Arab and Islamic countries leaders on the sidelines of the main event. The prime minister met with Saudi Crown Prince and Prime Minister of KSA Mohammed bin

Salman, Kuwaiti Crown Prince Sheikh Meshal Al Ahmad Al Jaber Al Sabah and Malaysian Prime Minister Anwar Ibrahim on the sidelines of the summit. During their meeting, the prime minister and the Saudi crown prince underlined the need for an urgent international collaboration geared towards stopping Israel from brutal and indiscriminate aggression against the besieged and innocent Palestinians.

They further emphasized the urgency of lifting the blockade of Occupied Gaza to facilitate the delivery of vital humanitarian aid and medical assistance to the affected population. While in his meeting with Crown Prince of the State of Kuwait Sheikh Meshal Al Ahmad Al Jaber Al Sabah, they expressed their deep concern over the alarming situation in Gaza with the staggering death toll and wholesale destruction of civilian infrastructure amidst the ongoing Israeli aggression and siege.

In a meeting with Prime Minister of Malaysia Anwar Ibrahim on the sidelines of the Joint Arab Islamic Extraordinary Summit, the prime minister reiterated Pakistan's strong condemnation of the ongoing brutal campaign by the Israeli forces.

The bilateral ties and cooperation were also discussed during these meetings. The Joint Summit called for an immediate ceasefire, end to ongoing Israeli aggression and siege of Gaza, deaths and destruction, the opening of a humanitarian corridor and immediate implementation of two-state solution.

The leaders denounced the forced displacement of residents of Gaza and the occupation of the territory by the Israeli armed forces. The Israeli aggression had so far killed more than 11,000 civilians while razing to ground the residential buildings and roads infrastructure in the indiscriminate and brutal aerial and ground assaults that also targeted hospitals, refugees' camps and schools.

Syed Arshad Hussain Shah appointed as Caretaker Chief Minister of KP

Syed Adnan

PESHAWAR: In a significant development for the province of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Syed Arshad Hussain Shah, a distinguished jurist hailing from Mansehra District, has been appointed as the Caretaker Chief Minister. His extensive legal background includes serving as the Judge of Peshawar Highcourt and Chief Judge of the Supreme Appellate Court in Gilgit-Baltistan from 2019 to 2022.

Mr. Shah has previously held the position of Minister for Law, Auqaf, and Human Rights in the caretaker cabinet of Muhammad Azam Khan. On August 19, 2023, he was inducted into the provincial cabinet of the Caretaker Chief Minister, Muhammad Azam Khan, and entrusted with the crucial portfolios of Law, Auqaf, and Human Rights. His tenure in this role continued until the unfortunate demise of Muhammad Azam Khan, leading to the dissolution of the cabinet.

Following these events, on November 12, Mr. Shah was nominated as the next Caretaker Chief Minister of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. His nomination was endorsed by Akram Khan Durrani, the former Leader of the Opposition in the Provincial Assembly, and received agreement from Mahmood Khan, the former elected Chief Minister. In a ceremony presided over by Governor Ghulam Ali, Mr. Shah was sworn in as the Chief Minister



on the same day. Notably, Syed Arshad Hussain Shah comes from a well-educated family background, with one of his brothers currently serving as a Secretary to the Government of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, and another in the Islamabad Police as DIG.

While the newly appointed Caretaker Chief Minister is expected to face challenges, including the

persistent issue of terrorism in the province and the dire financial situation, his diverse portfolio and demonstrated competence inspire hope for effective governance. Observers anticipate a controlled and strategic approach to addressing these challenges, offering optimism for improved administration in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa under his leadership.

5 US service members killed in plane crash

NEW YORK (Agencies): Five American service members were killed when a military aircraft crashed into the Mediterranean during a training exercise, the US European Command (EUCOM) said on Sunday. EUCOM did not specify the type of plane or where it was flying from, but the United States has deployed a carrier strike group to the area as part of efforts to prevent the Israel-Hamas conflict from spiralling into a regional conflict.

"During a routine air refuelling mission as part of military training, a US military aircraft carrying five service members suffered a mishap and crashed into the Mediterranean Sea. All five of the service members onboard the aircraft were killed," EUCOM said in a statement on the November 10 accident. US President Joe Biden, in a statement from the White House, paid tribute to the victims, who as he noted died on the weekend when Americans annually honour military veterans. "Our service members put their lives on the line for our country every day," Biden said.

PML-N, MQM-P agree on forming 'grand alliance' in Sindh

KARACHI (NNI): Pakistan Muslim League Nawaz (PML-N) and Muttahida Qaumi Movement Pakistan (MQM-P) have agreed on forming a grand alliance in Sindh.

A delegation of PML-N central leaders reached Karachi to hold talks with major opposition parties in Sindh including MQM-P, Jamiat Ulema-e-Islam Fazl (JUI-F) and Pakistan Muslim League Functional (PML-F) ahead of the general elections 2024.

After holding a meeting with MQM-P leaders at Bahadurabad headquarters, PML-N leader Khawaja Saad Rafique along with MQM-P convenor Dr Khalid Maqbool Siddiqui held a press conference.

Rafique thanked MQM-P leaders for welcoming the PML-N delegation. He said that the time has arrived to ensure equal distribution of resources through

Provincial Finance Commission (PFC) Awards and legal and constitutional protection.

He expressed hopes that the entire country would benefit from PML-N and MQM-P collaboration. He added that it is the right time to expand the scope of the charter of democracy.

Elaborating on future strategy, Rafique said that PML-N and MQM-P would constitute joint teams ahead of the general elections 2024.

He, however, clarified that both parties did not hold talks on seat adjustment.

The PML-N leader said that they also held talks with JUI-F and Pir Pagara-led PML-F. He hinted at forming a grand alliance in Sindh to develop Karachi and the entire province.

He said that PML-N and MQM-P have close contacts for the past 2.5 years, whereas, positive results would be yielded

after talks with other political parties in Sindh.

Dr Khalid Maqbool Siddiqui said that the PML-N and MQM-P talks would become a political milestone for national security and prosperity.

He said that the governments in the Centre and the province have always had reservations. Siddiqui said that a caretaker set-up should also be established after the completion of the mayor and deputy mayor's tenures.

He added that the country would only achieve development goals after the just distribution of resources. He urged political parties to accept the mandate.

The MQM-P convenor demanded to give constitutional cover to the local government (LG) for the sake of democracy.

On Tuesday, the PML-N and MQM-Pakistan announced to contest the 2024 general elections jointly.

PESHAWAR (NNI): In an attempt to eradicate polio from the tribal belt, the Atmanzai Jirga in North Waziristan has announced to launch a joint campaign with the Pakistan Army and the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa government to eradicate the perilous polio virus from the region.

In this regard a regional committee consisting of credible and senior leaders of Jirga has also been formed. Atmanzai Jirga fully supported the Pakistan Army initiative to make a polio-free North Waziristan as local authorities actively leveraging their resources to eliminate the virus not only from North Waziristan but also from other merged districts. After the announcement of Jirga, future genera-

tions in North Waziristan will be protected from deadly diseases like polio.

The joint initiative is poised to safeguard future generations from the devastating impacts of polio, echoing a commitment to public health and well-being in the region. The collaboration aims not only to treat current cases but also to implement preventive measures to ensure a sustained polio-free environment.

Expressing solidarity with the efforts of the Pakistan Army, the Atmanzai Jirga emphasized the active participation of the local populace in fostering prosperity and development. The people of North Waziristan also vowed to contribute significantly to the suc-

cess of the campaign. The Atmanzai Jirga extended its gratitude to the security forces and government institutions for their role in raising awareness among the local population, acknowledging their positive impact in the ongoing polio awareness campaign.

The joint endeavor to make North Waziristan polio-free is hailed as a guarantee for a prosperous Pakistan, underlining the collective commitment of the community, military, and government to ensure the well-being and prosperity of the nation.

Atmanzai Jirga also thanked the security forces and government agencies for creating awareness among the local people in this regard.

President should represent all political parties: Solangi

LAHORE (APP): Caretaker Minister for Information and Broadcasting and Parliamentary Affairs Murtaza Solangi here on Sunday said President Dr. Arif Alvi should represent all political parties in accordance with the law and the Constitution for fostering unity in the country.

Talking to media, Solangi said that the President's role was not limited to one party, urging

him to speak on behalf of all the political parties.

He said if President Alvi continued to speak for one political party, it would undermine his own credibility. To a query, he said the country would be governed by the elected representatives, adding adherence to the Constitution should be a collective commitment.

Highlighting the essence of democracy as a platform for dialogue, Solangi dismissed

concerns over complaints and grievances, stating that every party and individual had the right to voice their concerns at appropriate forums including courts and the election commission.

As regards the upcoming elections, Solangi pledged the caretaker government's full cooperation and assistance to the Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP), in accordance with the law and the

Constitution. He commended the competence and the sense of responsibility showed by the current ECP management, noting that they were adhered to the action plan outlined for the elections. To another query, the minister said that every crisis had a solution. The people of Pakistan will determine the country's future course on February 8, 2024, a date slated for the elections, he added.

PML-Q seat adjustments

LAHORE (NNI): Pakistan Muslim League-Quaid (PML-Q) leader Chaudhry Shafay Hussain stated on Sunday that his party is not merging with any other political party. In a statement issued here, Hussain clarified that there would be seat adjustments in some constituencies with the Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz, but the PML-Q would maintain its individual identity.



Enhanced security measures issued for Diwali celebrations

KARACHI (APP): Inspector General of Police (IGP) Sindh, Riffat Mukhtar Raja, on Sunday has directed the implementation of heightened security measures for the celebration of Diwali, the revered Hindu festival.

The directive emphasizes the implementation of robust security measures across police ranges, districts, and zones to safeguard attendees participating in the three-day Diwali festival, particularly during the Lakshmi Puja religious ceremony, according to spokesman for Sindh Police. The security measures aim to protect priests, important figures, and event administrators. IGP Sindh Riffat Mukhtar stressed the importance of increased intelligence efforts, urging swift and prioritized actions, enhanced coordination with other law enforcement agencies, and the imperative sharing of information in the pursuit of comprehensive security for the occasion.

MCL removes 146 encroachments in city

LAHORE (APP): The Metropolitan Corporation Lahore (MCL) carried out an anti-encroachment operation and demolished illegal structures in the provincial capital.

An MCL spokesperson told the media here on Sunday that an anti-encroachment squad removed 146 encroachments during 24 hours from various locations of the city. Seventy encroachments were removed from Data Ganj Bakhsh zone, 10 from Ravi zone, eight from Gulberg zone, nine from Aziz Bhatti zone, 18 from Shalimar zone, 21 in Nishtar zone and 10 from Wahga zone. A total of 95 warning notices and challans were issued during the period.

During the operation, 252 banners were removed and at least five selling points of vulture meat for charity, popularly known as 'cheel gosht', were cleared. The planning wing of the corporation stopped contraction activities at three sites and issued final warnings to them, while services wing replaced and repaired 290 street-lights. The anti-smog spray was also conducted at 44 roads of the city which covered almost 109-km area.

MCL Chief Officer Iqbal Freed supervised the encroachment operation and warned that the operation would continue till clearance of the city roads and bazaars. He urged citizens to cooperate with the MCL and its anti-encroachment squads to eliminate encroachments and bring back the lost glory of the provincial capital.

Multan-Sukkur Motorway M-5 closure due to fog

ISLAMABAD (APP): In a precautionary measure to ensure the safety of commuters, the entry of all kinds of traffic from RYK Toll Plaza (559 SB) has been restricted due to fog in patches and decreased visibility in the area of Beat- 27 of Motorway Zone MW (C-II) MULTAN, Sector-II, M-5. The diversion is being established at 579 rukan pur to 525 Azampur.

Speakers stress inter-faith harmony at 'Building bridges' dialogue

LAHORE (APP): An inter-faith harmony dialogue titled 'Building bridges' was organised by the Presbyterian Education Board (PEB) at Naulakha Presbyterian Church, here on Sunday.

Prominent religious personalities including Pakistan Ulema Council (PUC) Chairman Hafiz Tahir Mehmood Ashrafi, Ruet-e-Hilal Committee Chairman Abdul Khabeer Azad, Kul Masalik Board Chairman Asim Makhdoom, Naulakha Presbyterian Church Senior Pastor Dr Majid Abel, Data Darbar Masjid Khateeb Mufti Ramzan Sialvi,

Maulana Zubair Abid, Prof. Mehmood Ghaznavi, Prof. Sohail Raza, Head of Presbyterian Education Board Mrs. Veeda Javed, Mrs. Margy Trimble, Miss Sheryl Burke, Rev. Emmanuel Khokhar and a delegation from Board of Education Presbyterian participated in the event.

The participants discussed promotion of religious tolerance in society, and overcoming challenges and problems in this regard. All leaders expressed their determination to work hard for promotion of religious tolerance and harmony.

Expressing his views, PUC Chairman Hafiz Tahir Mehmood Ashrafi said the Constitution of Pakistan was based on education of Quran and Sunnah. Inter-faith harmony was the basis of development and prosperity of the country, while all religions give the message of peace and love. He said that the leaders of all religions in Pakistan are spreading the message of peace and love.

Dr. Majeed Abel, who was also the mediator of dialogue, said he feels proud that the Presbyterian Education Board had a mission to spread education and 60 per cent of students in our educational institutions are from the Muslim community. Christian educational institutions have rendered endless services and produced many great names. He expressed joy on completion of 25 years on Presbyterian education institutions.

Khateeb Badshahi Masjid Maulana Abdul Khabir Azad said: "I pay tribute to the services of Dr. Majeed Abel for creating interfaith harmony because his church always spoke of peace and love. The incident of Jaranwala was very painful, but everyone condemned it and took joint steps to protect humanity."

Chairman Kul Masalik Board Maulana Asim Makhdoom said undoubtedly the Christian community had rendered many services in education and health sectors. Educating Muslim children in Christian educational institutions is undoubtedly an expression of complete trust. He also welcomed the announcement of the opening of a school by the Presbyterian Education Board in Jaranwala and promised full support. Khateeb Data Sahib Masjid Ramzan Sialvi said education had been emphasised in all religions, while in Islam also Iqra means reading. The book on Data Sahib's education is also being taught for many years. Peace and tolerance could be established in society only on the basis of education.

CM orders removing encroachments on 32 roads

LAHORE (APP): The Punjab government, on special orders of Caretaker Chief Minister Mohsin Naqvi of Punjab has decided to permanently remove temporary encroachments on 32 major roads of the city. A special meeting was held under the chairmanship of the Punjab CM, in which proposals were reviewed to remove obstacles in the flow of traffic in provincial metropolis. The CM ordered that encroachments should be removed immediately, and vehicular traffic should be run on better alternative routes in the face of development projects.

The chief minister also directed TEPA to restructure roads and intersections at 32 places. Awan Town and Multan Chungi Chowk will be redesigned on the Thokar Niaz Baig to Chaubarji Multan Road. The proposal to build an underpass from Jinnah Hospital to Karim Block was also reviewed in the meeting, while it was also agreed to solve the issue of road-engineering at 135 places.

Joint squads of police, traffic police and MCL will be deployed at 32 places, the chief minister also directed immediate steps to complete the pathwork of roads.

Inspector General Police Usman Anwar, Commissioner Lahore Muhammad Ali Randhawa, CCPO Bilal

Siddique Kamiana, Deputy Commissioner Rafia Haider, DIG Traffic Police, CTO Lahore, Chief Engineer LDA, Chief Engineer TEPA, DIG Operations and all concerned officials attended the meeting.

CM grieved over lost of lives in accident: Punjab Caretaker Chief Minister Mohsin Naqvi has expressed a deep sense of sorrow and grief over the death of six members of a family in a traffic accident in Defence. He offered heartfelt sympathy and condolences to the heirs of the deceased persons and sought a report about the sorrowful incident. Naqvi ordered to undertake a legal action against the driver responsible for the accident. "We equally share the grief with the heirs of the deceased persons," he said.

CM condoles loss of lives in traffic accident: Punjab Caretaker Chief Minister Mohsin Naqvi has expressed his deep sense of sorrow and grief over the loss of precious human lives in a traffic accident near Kharianwala.

He expressed his heartfelt sympathy and condolences to the heirs of the deceased persons. He sought a report about the incident and ordered to bring the driver responsible for the accident in the grip of law.

Students take Mega IT entry test

KARACHI (APP): As many as 20 thousand male and female students took the mega Information Technology (IT) entry test conducted by Saylani Welfare International Trust at National Stadium here on Sunday.

The test was conducted under the Saylani Mass IT Training Programme. The Consul General of the United Arab Emirates (UAE) Bakheet Ateeq Al-Remeithi was the special guest on the occasion. While addressing the entry test ceremony, the Consul General of United Arab Emirates (UAE) Bakheet Ateeq Al-Remeithi said that today was the important day for Pakistan and her nation.

He said that the future of the children was significant. He said that Pakistan had talent and UAE would support her endeavours. The CG said that he would support, whoever desired to go to UAE. He said that Saylani Welfare was doing a good job for the country. Remeithi said that the students could play their part to

change Pakistan's current situation into prosperity.

He suggested the students to foil and not share any propaganda against Pakistan on social media. He said that increased exports of Pakistan could stabilize rupee value.

Chairman of Saylani Welfare International Trust Mohammed Bashir Farooq said that Saylani Welfare had a plan to produce over 1 million IT experts, who could add approximately \$100 billion to the economy of the country. He said that Saylani was conducting the 12th entry test to produce a new batch of IT experts. He said that the Trust was famous for providing food free of cost to needy people and it was also working on various fields.

Farooq said that Saylani had stood for paying loans of the country.

He further said that he was going to Palestine tomorrow to help Palestinian brothers and sisters.



LAHORE: Maluana Tahir Mehmood Ashrafi Head of Pakistan Ulema Council talking to media at Nolakha Presbyterian Church.

Second phase of Raiwand Ijtimia concludes

LAHORE (APP): The second phase of three-day Tableeghi Ijtimia concluded at Raiwind on Sunday with special prayers led by Maulana Muhammad Ibrahim for the prosperity and solidarity of the country and unity of the Muslim world (Ummah).

Hundreds of thousands of people from across Pakistan and other countries attended the annual congregation in Raiwind, some 36 kilometers from Lahore. Thousands of people from across the city reached the venue in the morning to attend the special prayer that started at around 8:45am and concluded at 9:05am.

Before Ijtemia-dua, Maulana Muhammad Khurshid briefed the participants about proper manners for offering dua.

Maulana Khurshid gave instructions to delegates sitting in the 'pandal' before the prayer, the concluding prayer was given by Maulana Ibrahim of India and every eye was full of tears during the prayer and everyone was praying before Allah

and asking for His mercy.

Emotional scenes were witnessed when Maulana Muhammad Ibrahim prayed to Almighty for forgiveness of sins, setting aside differences and making Pakistan a strong and stable welfare state with a trembling voice while tears in his eyes.

He prayed Almighty to end our collective problems and make Pakistan a peaceful

country, bring unity among people fighting against each other due to differences in faith. He prayed Allah to enable Muslims to follow the teaching of the Holy Quran and the Sunnah of the Holy Prophet (PBUH) in letter and spirit.

He also prayed for the unity of entire Muslim Ummah by setting aside all differences.

After the prayer, thousands of groups set out in the way for Islam at home and abroad and hundreds of people also registered their names to join the Tablighi Jamaat for three and four-day Chilla.

According to Ijtimia administration sources, the second and final session of Ijtimia 2023 started from November 9. The people from Kohat, Hangu, Karam and Kazai Agency, Tirah, Dara Adam Khel, Sada, Mardan, Malakand, Dargai, Swabi, Ghazi, Tarbela, Gilgit, Besham, Bitgram, Mansara, Chalas, Abbottabad, Kohistan, Haripur, Torgnar, Bahawalnagar, Bahawalpur, Rahimyar Khan, Lodhran, Gujranwala, Gujarat, Sheikhpura, Hafizabad, Sialkot, Narawal and Mandi Bahauddin participated in the second phase of Ijtimia.

According to estimate, more than 700,000 people participated in the concluding prayers.

When they started leaving, a massive traffic congestion was observed on Raiwind Road and later Multan Road and Ferozepur Road. On the occasion, foolproof security arrangements were made by the police and sanitation arrangements by the administration.

Gilgit-Baltistan Pavilion enthralls visitors at Lok Mela

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Gilgit-Baltistan (GB) pavilion has emerged as a captivating attraction at the ongoing Lok Mela at Lok Virsia Islamabad, captivating visitors with its vibrant cultural tapestry as the pavilion, which proudly presents the region's rich heritage and traditions, has garnered immense interest from attendees. A jam packed musical night was held on late Saturday at Lok Virsia and this time it was Gilgit-Baltistan that has to entertain the audience with their melodious songs. A large number of people

from all provinces enjoyed the folk songs presented by the musicians in different regional languages of GB with the beats of their traditional musical instruments.

A throng of curious visitors has been drawn to the GB pavilion, eager to explore the diverse array of cultural artifacts, handicrafts, gemstones, showpieces, and delectable local delicacies on display. The exquisite craftsmanship, unique gemstones, and tantalizing local cuisine presented by the artisans have garnered widespread praise.

There were some appetizing food dishes that local people love to eat in which some of traditional cuisines that are a special trademark of this stunning valley were showcased in the event. The food lovers from diverse cultures were seen enjoying the regional cuisines at different food stalls and the major attractions for the visitos were included dumplings (Mamtoos), Dodaa, Lakhman, Suman, Chapshuro, Gyalang, Buroshapik/Ghilmindi, Diram Pitti, Tumoro Tea, Hoilo Garma, Harisa, Molida and Shopan.

Alarm bells ring as Lahorites brace for another smoggy winter

LAHORE (APP): Despite claimed efforts by the authorities, year after year deteriorating environmental situation in Lahore has exposed millions of residents to the worst form of smog and ailment as the city falls among the most polluted metropolians of the world.

As the winter is yet to set in full swing, smoggy and misty atmosphere has engulfed the city with Air Quality Index remaining unhealthy for all age groups. Usually thick smog occurs in December or January, but this time its emergence during October has cautioned provincial administration and city masters of a messy winter ahead.

Punjab Environmental Protection Department has revealed that on Tuesday (Nov 07) the maximum level of pollution in terms of particulate matter (pm 2.5) was recorded 326 at Town Hall, 292 at Lahore College for Women and 225 at Punjab University.

According to Punjab EPD, 0-50 concentration of pm 2.5 is good, 51-100 is satisfactory, 101-150 is moderate, 151-200 is unhealthy for sensitive groups and from 201-300, it is unhealthy, and 300-400 very unhealthy for everyone.

Although independent reports mention this level exceeding 400 at some places yet the Punjab EPD does not authenticate this figure. Therefore, even based on the EPD figures, the situation is still much worrisome. "EPA has set up 14 special squads to monitor environmental degradation round the clock and each district has a smog control committee headed by Deputy Commissioners to address stubble burning issue," said Zaheer Abbas Malik Director General Punjab EPA. Highlighting EPA's measures for smog control, he mentioned launching a project for creating an environment-friendly atmosphere wherein citizens would be identifying pollution-causing elements.

"The EPA has lodged 3132 FIRs against pollution-causing units, imposed Rs 318 million fines besides sealing 4219 smoke emitting industrial units in Punjab during March to November 2023," he said.

"We have also launched an "eco-

watch" app, to check our staff's live location, their activities to combat smog and collect real-time data on fines imposed against polluters," he added. Overpopulation is a major issue leading to environmental degradation with experts voicing concerns about a substantial climate-induced migration in different areas. The UN Population Division has projected that nearly 50% per cent Pakistani population will be residing in unplanned urban areas by 2025.

This trend is clearly visible in Lahore where the population has crossed 13 million and it is becoming catastrophic for municipal authorities to effectively manage urbanization and a swiftly growing population.

"Smog has been declared as disaster and the provincial management has been advised to take immediate measures to combat it," remarked Provincial Disaster Management Authority (PDMA) Punjab spokesman Ch. Mazhar Hussain.

He said the Deputy Commissioners have been authorized as Relief Commissioners to take action against smog-contributing outfits. "We are organizing seminars at educational institutes on smog control as a mobile application - SANS - has also been launched where citizens especially university students can voluntarily file complaints against polluters." Cognizant of the situation, Caretaker Punjab Chief Minister Mohsin Naqvi has ordered strict action against polluters. An Anti-Smog Cell has been set up besides constituting a 15-member committee to address smog-related issues.

Lahore Police and Punjab Safe Cities Authority (PSCA) have jointly started action against smoke emitting vehicles and Lahore Waste Management Company (LWMC) and other agencies are lodging FIRs and penalizing those setting waste material on fire in open.

On the Chief Minister's direction, the LWMC and WASA have deployed "mist queen" vehicles for cleaning roads and smog remediation. A Mobile Control Unit (MCU) has also been activated for the elimina-

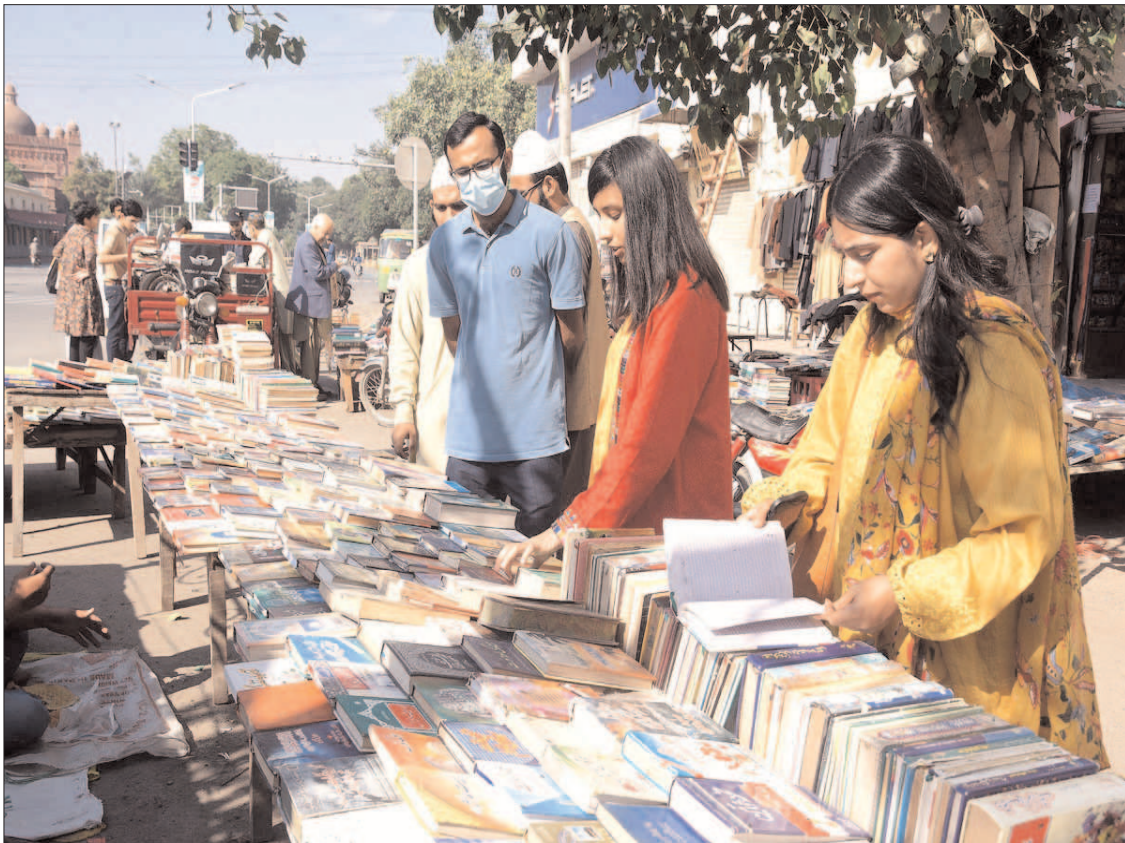
tion of smog at the Local Government and Community Development Department.

Now whatever the measures, the health experts believe that substantial exposure to harmful air quality leads to diseases like asthma, lung damage, bronchial infections, strokes, heart problems and reduced life expectancy. Particulate matters especially those less than (10 pm) pose serious health risks as they penetrate deep into the lungs and even the bloodstream in some cases.

According to reports, almost all major hospitals in the city like Services Institute of Medical Sciences, Sir Gangaram, Mayo, Mian Munshi, Ittefaq and other hospital received thousands of patients with respiratory and lung diseases during last year's smoggy season.

"Exposure to such particles can have detrimental effects on lungs and heart," said Dr. Adnan-ul-Qamar, Medical Superintendent Mian Munshi Hospital. "Scientific studies have also consistently linked particle pollution to exposure to a variety of diseases." In this context, he mentioned ailments like irregular heart rhythms, aggravated asthma, reduced lung function, increased respiratory symptoms like airway irritation, coughing and breathing and even premature death in individuals with heart or lung ailments.

Despite all measures by authorities, massive urbanization still remains a serious challenge and during the last couple of decades, Lahore has substantially lost tree cover area due to housing societies' expansion and infrastructure development. Moreover, thousands smoke smoke-emitting vehicles could be seen roaming around besides pollutants oozing out of industrial units and burning of crop residue at fields along Lahore-Multan and Lahore-Islamabad motorways. Therefore, since the major responsibility lies with the administration, there is a need to tighten the noose around "Baboos" deputed at Districts and Tehsils surrounding Lahore for effective action against environmental law violators.



LAHORE: People busy in selecting and purchasing old books from roadside setup in Provincial Capital.

Deadly diseases like diabetes can be controlled by healthy lifestyle and food: Governor

PESHAWAR (INP): Governor Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Haji Ghulam Ali Sunday said that by adopting a healthy lifestyle and healthy food, dangerous and deadly diseases like diabetes could be controlled. Diabetes is a silent killer, diagnosis and proper management of this disease takes time and diabetes is a serious health challenge, he added.

To deal with this, we need to change our lifestyle, he said and added that as a result of prevention of diabetes, the risk of other diseases could also be reduced and in this context philanthropists should serve humanity. "I will fully cooperate with the welfare institutions engaged and serving the ailing humanity," he said while addressing a function organized by Omar Diabetes Foundation on the occasion of World Diabetes Day at Governor House here Sunday.

Omar Foundation Chairman Justice (Retd) Mian Mohammad Ajamal, CEO Dr. Umar Rohab, Professor Dr. Abrar Ahmed, Dr. Sheikh Fahad Falah, members of the Board of Directors, diabetes experts, social and political personalities and representatives of the business community also participated in the ceremony.

Chairman Umar Foundation Justice (Rtd) Mian Muhammad Ajamal, Professor Dr. Abrar Ahmad and CEO Dr. Umar Wahab while addressing the ceremony, informed the Governor and other stakeholders about the Omar Foundation were performing by serving the people in Islamabad, Muzaffarabad and Peshawar.

He said that Pakistan was the third largest country in the world in terms of the prevalence of diabetes, where there were more than 30 million diabetic patients. Almost every fourth person is suffering from diabetes, he said, adding, "It can also cause heart failure, which can be prevented by a charity organization like Omar Diabetes Foundation providing free treatment facilities to poor people and so far more than 40,000 patients have been treated free of charge.

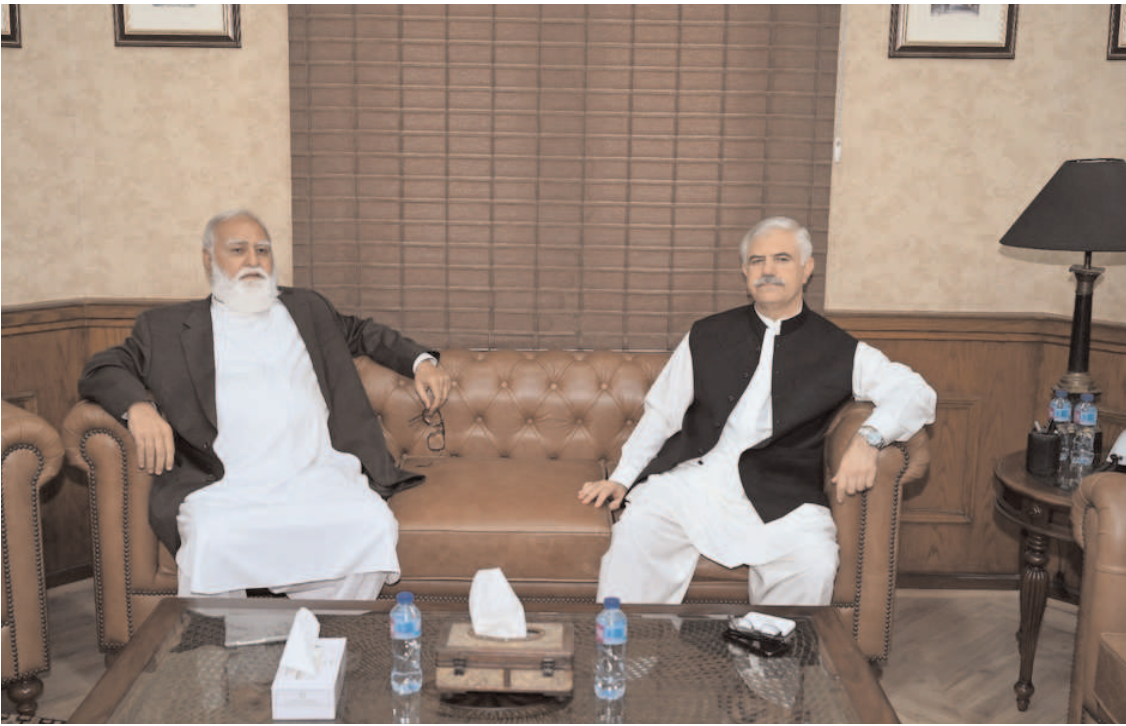
Addressing the ceremony, the Governor said that service to suffering humanity was the greatest worship and Omar Foundation was providing selfless free treatment services for the completion of a healthy society and complete eradication of diabetes, which was not only commendable but also for the eradication of diabetes.

There is also a practical struggle and people who consider the selfless service of suffering humanity as their motto have a dignified position in the society. Like Omar Foundation, the welfare organizations across the country are also working along with service, he expressed.

The Governor paid tribute to Omar Foundation for the awareness about diabetes and the free treatment of poor patients, free supply of medicines and insulin. He said that the services of this institution would be introduced throughout the country for the treatment and awareness of diabetes and assured full patronage and cooperation with this institution.

The Governor said that all the research was being done today to maintain a healthy body and that was already there in ablution and five times daily prayers. He said we have to focus on quality food while avoiding overeating for ourselves and our children to stay healthy.

On this occasion, a walk was also organized to raise awareness about diabetes. At the end of the ceremony, shields were given to doctors and other staff. The Governor was also presented with a guest of honor shield by the institution.



PESHAWAR: Former Chief Minister Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Mahmood Khan and JUT's leader Akram Khan Durani in their consultative meeting.

Groom shot dead in Peshawar

PESHAWAR (INP): A 22-year-old groom was shot dead on Charsadda Road in Peshawar on Sunday. The groom, Adnan Umarzada, was taking his bride home after their wedding ceremony when he was suddenly fired upon. The bride miraculously survived the attack.

According to police, Umarzada was shot by unidentified assailants who fled the scene on a motorcycle. He was rushed to the hospital, but succumbed to his injuries on the way.

ASP Faqirabad Syed Talal Ahmed Shah said that a formal case will be registered on the report of the deceased's relatives, and that a comprehensive investigation has been launched to trace the accused involved in the incident.

The motive for the attack is still unknown, but police are investigating all possibilities, including sectarian violence and targeted killing.

The killing of Umarzada has shocked and saddened the people of Peshawar. Many have condemned the attack and called on the authorities to bring the perpetrators to justice.

Mayor condoles death of CM

PESHAWAR (APP): Mayor of Peshawar Haji Zubair Ali Sunday expressed his deep sorrow over the sudden death of Caretaker Chief Minister Muhammad Azam Khan and has said that he is deeply saddened by the demise of the Chief Minister.

Mayor Pashawar went to Parrang District Charsadda and participated in the funeral prayer of caretaker Chief Minister Mohammad Azam Khan and expressed his condolences to the family members of the deceased.

He prayed to Allah Almighty for forgiveness of the deceased and patience for the bereaved family. He appreciated and paid tribute to caretaker Chief Minister Azam Khan for his services as Chief Secretary and other administrative positions in the province.

The report said that 287 illegal persons were also deported and another 678 families entered Afghanistan through Torkham, the report of the Home and Interior Department, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa said.

With this a total of 15938 families have returned to Afghanistan since September 17 which includes 57285 men, 44460 women and 11230 children, the report said. So far, 200,200,975 illegal persons have been sent back to their homeland, according to the Interior Department.

Evacuation of foreigners from KP continues

PESHAWAR (APP): Another 2857 illegal persons returned home and the returnees include 678 men, 642 women and 1,390 children, Home and Interior Department, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa said in a report issued on Sunday.

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Professor Dr. Fayyaz Al Hasan, Secretary Professor Dr. Abdul Ghaffar, Coordinator Abdullah.

He said that this workshop is very important for experts and analysts and it is hoped that this series will continue. He said that the Higher Education Commission and universities should focus on quality education, research and training, and create more facilities in providing opportunities for research, curricular and co-curricular activities to students.

Agricultural University Peshawar has always been focusing on quality education. Finally, he distributed accreditation certificates to the heads of different departments of Agriculture University Peshawar on behalf of National Agriculture Education Accreditation Council, HEC.

Coordinator of the workshop Prof. Dr. Ahmed Rahman thanked Vice Chancellor Prof. Dr. Jahan Bakht, Chairman NAEA Prof. Dr. Fayyaz Al Hasan, Secretary Prof. Dr. Abdul Ghaffar, Program Coordinator Abdullah, heads of departments and other guests.

Clean, transparent conduct of MDCAT test:

Govt to provide necessary resources

PESHAWAR (APP): Federal Health Minister Dr. Nadeem Jan has said that Khyber Medical University (KMU) Peshawar has brought together all the health sectors under one umbrella and government will provide necessary resources for clean, transparent conduct of MDCAT test.

In the past, the concept of medical education was limited only to MBBS and BDS, but now under KMU, the education and training that is being given in dozens of innovative fields from BS to PhD level is the most need of the time.

It is a demand but it is also providing quality knowledge and research opportunities to our students in different fields of health in their own province.

These views were expressed by the Federal Minister of Health as a chief guest at the inaugural ceremony of Biosafety and Bio risk management (BRM) Training Lab at KMU and distribution of scholarship certificates to deserving students on Sunday.

He said that the protection of the health care providers in Pakistan will be ensured and all necessary facilities will be provided and the policy of the proposed act of ICRC for prevention of violence and damage to property will be strictly implemented.

On this occasion, VC KMU Prof Dr. Zia ul Haq, Director General Health Shaukat Ali, Mr. Kouassi Koman Deputy Health Coordinator ICRC from Irory Coast, Registrar KMU Inamullah Khan Wazir, Deans and heads of various faculties and departments of KMU were also present. He said that the proposed plan prepared by KMU for the clean and transparent conduct of the MDCAT test to be held on November 26 is commendable.

Strict arrangements should be made for which the federal and provincial governments will provide security, administrative and technical resources on a priority basis.

VC Prof. Dr. Zia ul Haq, while briefing the Federal Health Minister, said that the clean and transparent conduct of the MDCAT has been accepted as a challenge, all the arrangements for the successful conduct have been completed and working as a team with

concerned departments.

Federal Minister said in his address that the service rendered by KMU to the society through PHRL in Covid-19 pandemic is unforgettable, 1.8 million Covid PCR tests have been done, Apart from Corona tests, KMU also provides testing facilities for notable diseases including CCHF and MPox etc for the health departments. On the occasion, KMU Vice-Chancellor Prof Zia ul Haq added that the Public Health Reference Laboratory required consistent funding from the provincial government.

More than 75 trained employees of the lab are working on contract basis, they deserve to be regularised because KMU-PHRL is conducting more than 40 tests for serious and communicable diseases noteworthy for a government facility," he said.

At the end of the ceremony, the Honorable Federal Minister distributed scholarship certificates to deserving medical students.

Earlier, the Chief Guest also inaugurated the Biosafety & BRM Training Lab at KMU and planted a sapling in the lawn of KMU.

Flood risks mitigation: Experts lay stress on empowering locals

PESHAWAR (APP): Environmental experts at an international workshop noted that empowering local communities to assume a central role in flood risk mitigation is paramount, given that they are the most directly affected by such events.

"By equipping these communities with the requisite resources and technical knowledge and tools for effective water management, we can transform this flood from a risk into an economic opportunity," observed the experts.

The workshop titled

"Hill Torrents: Turning Risk into Opportunities", was organized by International Water Management Institute (IWMI) Pakistan with support from USAID

"This workshop was marked by engaging discussions, collaborative presentations, and expert insights, as community members and stakeholders gathered to address water-related issues and explore solutions in the challenging context of hill torrents," said Dr. Sarfraz Munir, Researcher, IWMI Pakistan.

"Through this consultation, our aim is to foster collaboration and engagement with relevant government departments, policymakers, the private sector, academia and, most importantly, the local communities.

We are committed to listening to and learning from firsthand experiences, as we collectively work towards addressing and mitigating the challenges posed by changing rainfall patterns and the increasing threat of floods," said Mr. Muhammad Nawaz, Development Specialist, USAID/Pakistan.

The Community Listening Session" served as a platform where community members were convened to engage in a meaningful dialogue regarding their experiences and challenges while confronting with the heavy rainwater originating from the hills in the form of hill torrents.

This interactive gathering provided an invaluable opportunity for community elders to share their perspectives and insights.

The communities who participated in the discussion were from the Daraban Zam, Tank Zam and Gomal Zam areas, of District Tank and Dera Ismail Khan, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa.

This constructive exchange was enriched by informative presentations delivered by representatives from non-governmental organizations (NGOs), the private sector, and the public sector.

Distinguished speakers included Engr. Tariq Ali from the Irrigation Department, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Munawar Khatak of HELVETAS Pakistan, and Engr. Zahoor Ahmad from Ages Consultants, Peshawar.

The event featured an enlightening panel discussion chaired by Nazim Ali, a USAID representative, focusing on the priorities of public and non-governmental sectors. This panel brought together key stakeholders from the public and private sectors, along with representatives from NGOs, to exchange views and highlight collective priorities.

Weather is likely to remain dry & cold in KP

PESHAWAR (APP): The weather is likely to remain dry and cold in most districts of the province, Meteorological Department officials told media men here on Sunday. He said predicted fog in Charsadda, Nowshera, Mardan, Swabi and Bannu districts and heavy fog in the city and its surroundings in Peshawar as well. The minimum temperature in the city will be 11 and maximum 25 degrees Celsius, the official of the Meteorological Department said. The lowest temperature recorded in Kalam is minus one centigrade, 3 degrees in Malam Jabba, 4 degrees in Kakol and 5 degrees in Chitral, he added.

KP, China Window sign MoU to promote Pak-China friendship, culture

PESHAWAR (APP): A Memorandum of Understanding has been signed between the Provincial Department of Local Govt, Elections and Rural Development (LGE&RDD) and China Window, a Chinese cultural center established in Peshawar.

According to MoU both institutions will jointly promote Pakistan-China friendship, Chinese culture, will support for development and improvement in various areas of life throughout the province, including Peshawar, said a press release issued here on Sunday.

The MoU signing ceremony was held in the conference room of the Local Government Department.

Secretary Local Council Board Mian Shafiqur Rehman and Administrator of China Window Amjad Aziz Malik signed the memorandum.

Secretary Local Government, Elections and Rural Development Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Dawood Khan, Special Secretary Establishment Local Government Muhammad Masood Khan and Director China Window Intiaz Ahmed were also present on the occasion.

According to the MoU, a corner will be established in China Window regarding the development of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, support will be provided for teaching Chinese language in Peshawar Municipal School and

College, cultural cooperation will be enhanced, steps will be taken to increase cultural relations between Abbottabad and Kashgar and Peshawar and Urumqi which has already got the status of sister cities.

According to Secretary Local Government and Rural Development Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Dawood Khan, the signing of the memorandum of understanding on behalf of the Local Government Department of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa will strengthen Pakistan-China friendship.

Talking to media, he said that while the China Window is playing its positive and constructive role in the promotion of Chinese culture in Peshawar, now the Department of Local Government is also at the public level will play its constructive to promote friendship ties between two brotherly countries.

He said that the Local Government Department will also join hands China Window to promote culture, tourism, education and industrial development of both the countries along with the China Window.

Dawood Khan further said that he is happy that the people of Peshawar and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa value Pakistan-China friendship and in the future China is interested in the economic development of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa.

Varsities urged to integrate climate change into curriculum

PESHAWAR (APP): Universities can generate in-depth knowledge on problems and solutions related to climate change by engaging students and faculty to direct their research and theses toward climate change to provide valuable facts and evidence for developing policies and programs relevant to the country.

These views were expressed by Aftab Alam Khan, an international expert on climate change and CEO of Resilient Future International while delivering keynote speech at a seminar organized by Department of Environmental Sciences and Green Youth Movement University of Swabi on Sunday.

Aftab Alam, while expressing regret over climate change impacts in all sectors, suggested that universities needed to integrate climate change into the curriculum of different disciplines, such as management sciences, economics, engineering, psychology and political science.

He shared his successful experience of integrating climate change into the economics curriculum of a university in Punjab.

He added that climate proofing of curriculum was

essential to prepare our future workforce to address the impacts of climate change such as drought, floods, heatwaves and subsequent economic and non-economic losses.

Aftab Alam Khan also advised the students to direct their efforts to three categories of climate actions: adaptation, mitigation and loss and damage for an organized contribution against climate crisis.

Referring to the upcoming international conference on Climate Change, termed as Conference of Parties, COP-28, in Dubai (29 Nov-12 Dec 2023),

he added.

The government of Pakistan fought for climate justice in last year's international climate conference (COP27) in Egypt and a conducive agreement on the Loss and Damage Fund would be a sign of global acknowledgment, he added.

Professor Dr. Mukhtar Alam Khan, Dean Faculty of Sciences, University of Swabi highlighted the challenges of climate change and the role of universities in to fight against climate change.

Dr. Sarzamin Khan, Head of Environmental Sciences, Dr. Muhammad Nasimullah Qureshi, Head of the Chemistry Department, and Dr. Nazish Huma Khan also addressed the seminar.

the newly launched Agricultural Quality Accreditation Automation System, writing accreditation inspection committee reports and applying skills learned in field inspections.

About 80 program evaluators representing various fields of agriculture and allied sciences participated in this workshop. These participating experts and analysts included most of the professors, associate professors and senior assistant professors from University of Agriculture Peshawar, Bacha Khan

University Charsadda and Abdul Wali Khan University Mardan.

On behalf of University of Agriculture, Peshawar, Prof. Dr. Ahmadur Rehman was the coordinator and chief organizer of the workshop who presided and addressed the opening ceremony of the workshop.

Vice-Chancellor, University of Agriculture Peshawar Professor Dr. Jahan Bakht while addressing the closing ceremony of the workshop welcomed all the participants including Chairman NAEAAC



PESHAWAR: President KP PPP Women Wing Senator Robina Khalid presiding over a party meeting regarding Bilawal's visit to Peshawar.

Agri aarsity hold accreditation training workshop

PESHAWAR (APP): National Agriculture Education Accreditation Council (NAEAC) Higher Education Commission Islamabad organized the first training workshop for new Program Evaluators, Subject Specialists at University of Agriculture Peshawar here on Sunday.

The primary objective of this training workshop is to improve the evaluation skills of new program evaluators in initiating the external evaluation and accreditation process of degree programs and the Participatory SWOT analysis for the external peer review process and NAEAC's best practices had to be understood.

Chairman of the workshop Prof. Dr. Fayyaz Al Hasan and Secretary Prof. Dr. Abdul Ghaffar welcomed the Vice Chancellor Prof. Dr. Jahan Bakht and other participants explained the objectives of the workshop such as different terms and methods of quality assurance, quality assurance analysis, and external quality assurance.

These included identifying steps to be taken, using

the newly launched Agricultural Quality Accreditation Automation System, writing accreditation inspection committee reports and applying skills learned in field inspections.

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In brief

Police seized NCP items

DERA ISMAIL KHAN (APP): The district police have foiled a smuggling attempt and seized non-custom paid (NCP) items including 700 liters of Iranian diesel during the checking of several vehicles in the limits of Darazinda Police station here Sunday. According to the police spokesman, Following the directions of District Police Officer Dera Abdul Rauf Babar Qaisrani, a team of Darazinda Police station led by SDPO Darazanda circle Sherullah Khan along with SHO Fawad Khan inspected several vehicles. During the checking, the police recovered NCP items including 113 boxes of cheese, 05 sacks of chalia, 22 boxes of chocolate, 36 packets of chocolate, 90 packs of cigarettes, 03 boxes of almonds, 13 cartons of cream, and 700 liters of Iranian diesel. The estimated worth of the recovered goods was around Rs 1.6 million which was later handed over to the customs authorities for further legal action.

5 die, 10 hurt in road accident

FAISALABAD (INP): Five people were killed while eight others were injured on Sunday when a speeding bus, heading to Faisalabad from Lahore, crashed into a car at Darma Wala Morri, an area in Khurrianwala, rescue sources said. After getting hit by a bus, the car collided with a tractor trolley parked nearby. Those sitting inside the car died on the spot, while tractor trolley's driver Abdul Qayyum died too. The other deceased were identified as Waleed, Raza, Mateen and Manzoor. Three passengers travelling in the bus received minor injuries while five were seriously injured. Rescue1122 personnel shifted the injured as well as the dead to Allied Hospital, Faisalabad, while the police reached site of the incident for investigation.

Adulterated milk disposed

DG KHAN (INP): Punjab Food Authority (PFA) has raided and disposed of 1500 liters adulterated milk here Sunday. According to PFA spokesperson, the food safety team has raided at railway road, checked the milk carrying vehicle and milk collection centre. The milk was found with adulteration of water, presence of fat less natural ingredients during test through latest Lactoscan machine. The citizens were asked to dial PFA helpline 1223 in case of any complaint.

Eight outlaws arrested

SARGODHA (APP): Police have arrested eight accused and recovered narcotics and weapons from them. A spokesman said on Sunday that during the ongoing drive against drug-pushers and criminals, the police teams of different police stations conducted raids, arrested eight accused and recovered 50 litres of liquor, six pistols 30-bore and one gun 12-bore from them. They were identified as Muhammad Faisal, Navveed, Akhtar, Faheem and others. Cases were registered against the accused.

82 power pilferers netted

MULTAN (APP): MEPCO teams raided and caught 82 power pilferers in a day during an ongoing operation across the region on Sunday. The task force teams have raided various places and registered cases against 64 power pilferers while 19 power pilferers were arrested on the spot while stealing electricity.

Secretary pays visit to govt schools

SWABI (APP): Secretary Education Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Syed Mohtasim Billah Shah made a surprise visit to various government schools in Swabi district and transferred 29 teachers to remove schools besides directing them to cut their one-day salaries.

During his visit, he said, he had received complaints about the teachers being ordered to close the schools prematurely besides most of the timely on leave without submitting their leave applications.

On the occasion of this visit, he also inspected the Government Shaheed Moazzam High School, Kadi, where the school was found to be closed prematurely.

During his visit to the school, he ordered for transferring 13 teachers from Government Shaheed Moazzam High School Kadi. He directed the district education officer Swabi to issue notification for the transfer of all these teachers.

All the staff of Govt. Shaheed Moazzam High School, Kadi, has been replaced and cut down their one day salaries. Secretary Education Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Mohtasim Billah Shah issued instructions to the teachers of all government schools to restrict working hours.

Traffic Police launches awareness campaign to raise awareness about traffic: Traffic Warden Police started a traffic

awareness campaign to raise awareness among the general public.

The Traffic Warden Police (TWP) distributed awareness pamphlets among the drivers and passengers in different squares. According to the details, in view of various public complaints, the Swabi Traffic Police has taken measures to protect young drivers, without license, black glasses and especially without helmets from any unpleasant accidents.

A traffic awareness campaign has been launched to create awareness among the motorcyclists. In order to save, distributed awareness pamphlets among the drivers, in this context, Swabi Traffic Police is giving education from time to time to enforce the traffic rules and make the citizens aware of the traffic rules, the purpose of which is not only to save the citizens from accidents but also to overcome the traffic problems in the city.

Chhota Lahore Police foil an attempt of smuggling to Punjab: Chhota Lahore Police foiled the attempt to smuggle drugs to Punjab province and arrested three members of the inter-provincial smugglers gang here on Sunday.

A heavy consignment of will be smuggled, on which under the supervision of DSP Lahore Roohul Amin Khan, SHO Lahore Sub-Inspector Liaquat Shah Khan along with other policemen blocked various roads and highways.

During the search, a large amount of drugs were recovered from the motor vehicle after controlling the traffic, the arrested suspects belong to Afghanistan and Khyber district, who were trying to smuggle drugs to Punjab through the motor vehicle, and their motor vehicle is Alto No LOC-1380. A total of 3022 grams of hashish and 996 grams of ice have been recovered from the boxes.

The accused drug dealers were identified as Shahid son of Mian Rehman of Afghanistan, president District, Khyber, and Muhammad Umar, son of Gandhir Khan, resident of Warsak Road, Khyber District, admitted their involvement in drug trafficking during the initial investigation.

The entire network has been identified, whose arrest is also expected soon, the motor car used in drug smuggling has been taken into police custody. Provincial drug dealer Alamgir Khan son of Rajwali Sukna Warsak Road Peshawar was also arrested.

The accused belongs to Peshawar district who was transporting ice and heroin to Punjab through a private flying coach.

A total of 415 grams of heroin and 310 grams of ice were recovered from his possession.

Further investigation has been started by registering a case against, the accused are related to organized drug gang.

Disable children of stage protest in Abbottabad

ABBOTTABAD (APP): In a demonstration of solidarity with the Muslim population of Palestine and condemnation of the atrocities committed by the Zionist forces, the Association for Physically Disabled Children and Women on Sunday held a protest in Abbottabad.

The protest, attended by notable figures including Dr. Aram Sadiq, former MPA Amina Sardar, Chairperson of Special School Sobia Shaukat, Sameena Kouser Rajput, Chairperson of SEEM Special School, Sadiya Sajid Awan from RISE Special School, and Zeb-un-Nisa from

Orion School, aimed to shed light on the discrimination faced by physically disabled children and women in the wake of the heinous acts perpetrated by the Zionist forces.

During the protest, strong condemnation was expressed for the ethnic cleansing in Palestine and the blatant violations of human rights laws. The speakers urged Muslim leaders to take practical steps to stop the ongoing atrocities in Palestine.

Sobia Shaukat, the founder and chairperson of the SEEM Institute, remarked that today's youth seem to be losing them-

selves in the vibrant colours of social media, neglecting the actions and sacrifices of their predecessors.

The speakers highlighted the silence surrounding the cries of Muslim daughters and children in Palestine and the desecration of Masjid Al-Aqsa. The protest from physically disabled children and women in Abbottabad is a determined voice, aiming to awaken Muslim leaders and youth.

They emphasized that the global Muslim community must continue raising its voice for the protection of the rights of Muslims in any region.

CTP issues 326,365 challans to violators

MULTAN (APP): The City Traffic Police (CTP) has issued 326,365 challans to traffic rules violators and generated revenue of over Rs 106.8 million during the ongoing ten months of fiscal year 2023.

Talking to APP here on Sunday, the CTP Spokesman Muhammad Adnan said that the department was not only ensuring uninterrupted traffic flow on roads of the city but also issuing challans to road users over violations under the supervision of Chief Traffic Officer (CTO) Muhammad Naeem Shahid.

He said that the traffic wardens have issued 326,365 challans to traffic rules violators during last ten months including 43,056 in January, 15,241 in February, 23,260 in March,

32,997 in April, 39,493 in May, 33,302 in June, 30,278 in July, 34,368 in August, 34,769 in September and 39,601 challans in the month of October 2023.

Besides issuing challans to violators, the CTP officials were also taking other actions against the violators including the registration of FIRs, impounding vehicles and cancellation of license and route permits. He said that the city traffic police have impounded 9646 vehicles over violations while cancelled driving license of 18 drivers and suspended route permits of 37 passenger vehicles, he added.

The department has also got registered FIRs against 231 violators under PPC laws while handed over 17 bidders to the concerned police stations during a spe-

cial crackdown against vagrancy act violators.

Adnan further disclosed that police officials took action against 14800 vehicles using tinted glasses, 22244 over one-way violations, 345 speed limit violators, 1688 underage drivers and removed four illegal blue light during the above said period.

He maintained that a special force was being paid on use of helmet under public safety and issued tickets to 140607 motorcyclists over helmet violations.

CTO has directed officials of the department to ensure strict action against rules violators and added that zero tolerance policy was being adopted against violators in order to ensure uninterrupted traffic flow in the city.

Rs.453.8m fine imposed on 3694 power pilferers

FAISALABAD (APP): The Faisalabad Electric Supply Company (FESCO) caught 3,694 power pilferers during the last 65 days and imposed Rs. 453.8 million fine for stealing electricity in various areas of the company during the ongoing special anti-power theft drive.

Spokesman Tahir Sheikh said here on Sunday that over 9.813 million detection units were charged. A sum of over Rs. 270.8 million was also recovered from the defaulters.

He said that 3506 cases were registered against power theft in various police stations whereas the police also arrested 3060 pilferers so far.

He further said that the

FESCO teams detected electricity theft at 1183 points in Faisalabad district and imposed a fine of Rs.143.4 million on them under the head of 3100,000 million detection units.

In Jhang district, the FESCO teams caught 394 electricity thieves and imposed a fine of Rs.55.8 million under 1343,000 detection units.

Similarly, 399 cases of electricity theft were detected in Bhakkar district and the company handed down the power pilferers with a fine of Rs.50.3 million under 985,000 detection units.

He further said that 393 electricity thieves were caught from Chinot district

and they were imposed a fine of Rs.56.3 million under 1230,000 detection units.

In Khushab district, 126 consumers were found involved in electricity theft and they were handed down with a fine of Rs.18.9 million for 392,000 detection units.

The FESCO teams also caught 470 power pilferers from Mianwali and they were fined with Rs.46.7 million for 1030,000 detection units.

In Sargodha district, 400 cases of electricity theft were detected. Hence, a fine of Rs.42.5 million was imposed on the electricity thieves under 933,000 detection units.



SIALKOT: Ameer Jamaat-e-Islami Pakistan Siraj-ul-Haq addressing Labaik ya Palestine Youth Convention at Murray College.

Free medical camp organized F.P. Report

KHAR: In a collaborative effort between the NGO Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) General Secretary Umar Ayub has accused the Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) of planning to rig the upcoming general elections.

In a statement on social media, Ayub alleged that the ECP is planning to appoint District Returning Officers (DROs) and Assistant District Returning Officers (ADROs) of grade 17 and 18 who have less than one year of retirement. He claimed that these officers will be specially rewarded if they follow the instructions of rigging, and

will be shown the retirement stick if they fail. Ayub said that this is a clear attempt to rig the elections, and that it is pushing Pakistan towards a path where there will be no way to restore democracy.

"The rigging plan before the general elections makes it clear that we are entering dark days," he said.

The PTI spokesperson has also condemned the negative propaganda campaign carried out against the party, and said that PTI is the only political party that fully believes in the observance of the constitution and the law.

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‘One war for another’ Ukrainian refugees return from Israel

KYIV (AFP/APP): Tetiana Kocheva fled her home in Ukraine's northeastern city of Kharkiv after Russia invaded last year, taking refuge in Israel's coastal town of Ashkelon, near Gaza.

Her husband had worked in Israel in the past, and she thought taking their three children there -- away from Russian attacks -- would guarantee living in peace.

But then came October 7, when Hamas attacked Israel, leading to a war that has since killed thousands.

Like several thousand other Ukrainian refugees, Kocheva fled war for a second time.

"If I am killed then at least it's on my native land," the 39-year-old said.

When Russia attacked Ukraine in February 2022, Kocheva spent ten days hiding in a basement in Kharkiv, which almost fell to the Russian army. Five months into the invasion, the family left for Israel.

They began a new life in Ashkelon, some 10 kilometres (six miles) from Gaza.

During the surprise attack by Hamas -- which killed some 1,200 people -- she felt she needed to leave.

"My hands started to shake and I had the same feeling that I did when it all started in our country," she said.

Israel then launched a military campaign in the Gaza Strip. Palestinian militant group Hamas has said over 11,000 have since died.

Kocheva slept in a shelter again, recalling endless sirens and explo-

sions. Then she decided she had to flee. "When it intensified... I started to panic," she said.

"I got scared, I realised that I needed to come home."

The family was evacuated to central Israel, where they stayed several days, before going back to Kharkiv.

War is still a feature of life in Kharkiv -- while being firmly under Ukrainian control, the city is regularly hit by Russian attacks. Sirens are still a regular part of life.

But for Kocheva, it was a relief to be back. "I walk here, it's my native land, my flag, I don't know how to express it, I am happy," she said.

Kyiv has said that some 4,000 Ukrainians have left Israel since the Hamas attack.

In the capital Kyiv, Anna Lyashko and her eight-year-old daughter Diana were also back from Israel.

They had fled to Israel in the first weeks of Russia's invasion. In March last year. They had been living close to areas of the Kyiv region that fell to Russian forces early in their attack, living without "electricity, water or communication", the 28-year-old mother said. "My daughter was very scared and I decided to leave," the 28-year-old said.

She decided to take her daughter to Israel, where she had a relative.

But when hostilities started in Israel last month, it brought her back to the day Russia invaded Ukraine.

"My first feelings were the same as 24th of February (2022) in

Ukraine," she said.

"Someone called me in the morning and said 'Anna, war has started', it was exactly the same feeling I had in Ukraine."

She said her daughter had "fear in her eyes" and that she "understood that I could not stay".

They flew out of Tel Aviv a week later, with the help of the Ukrainian embassy.

As her daughter played in fallen leaves in a Kyiv park, Lyashko said the pair were also happily home, reunited with family.

Sitting in her office on the opposite side of the Dnipro River in Kyiv, Oksana Sokolovska said she thought Israel would be "the safest country in the world" when she fled Russia's invasion there.

Like many women with children, the 39-year-old lawyer left Ukraine with her three children at the start of the war last year.

"I had no right to risk their lives," she said. As she spoke Hebrew, she chose Israel as their destination and they settled in Rishon LeTsiyon, near Tel Aviv. But she, too, spent October 7 in a shelter with her children. "Massive bombing started," she said.

Once again, she took a quick decision to leave Israel.

"It is difficult to leave one war for another," she told AFP.

But Sokolovska was nonetheless "happy to be home."

"Right now in Kyiv, the situation is calmer than in Israel," she said, almost two years into the Russian invasion. "It is the only reason why I came back."

Fighting breaks out as Mali army closes on Tuareg rebel town

BAMAKO (AFP/APP): Mali's army drove closer on Saturday to the town of Kidal clashing with Tuareg separatist and rebel groups in what could signal the start of fighting for the strategically important northern crossroads. Since seizing power in a coup in 2020 the African country's military rulers have made a priority of re-establishing sovereignty over all regions and Kidal could become a key battleground.

Military, political and rebel sources all reported the clashes.

But details such as a casualty toll or tactics involved could not be confirmed independently in the remote region. The rebels in Kidal cut telephone links on Friday in anticipation of an army offensive following several days of airstrikes.

The Permanent Strategic Framework (CSP), an alliance of predominantly Tuareg armed groups said it had been involved in "vigorous combat" against a convoy of army soldiers and mercenaries from Russia's Wagner group.

The CSP post on social media said "considerable losses" had been inflicted on the convoy which had retreated.

However, an army officer told AFP: "We are a few dozen kilometres (miles) from Kidal."

"We are continuing our progress to secure the whole territory," he said, on condition of anonymity.

Two local elected representatives, also speaking anonymously because of the sensitivity of the topic, said there was fighting near Kidal.

"Fighting has started -- there's a lot of shooting," one said, adding that large numbers of Wagner fighters, which the ruling junta called in two years ago, were present.

Another local official said "civilians are fleeing the city. We have to expect a lengthy conflict".

Some 25,000 people live in the Kidal desert area, a key site on the road to Algeria and a historic hotbed of insurrection.

The army had Thursday announced the start of what it termed

"strategic movements aimed at securing and eradicating all terrorist threats in the Kidal region".

A large military convoy stationed since early October at Anefis, some 110 kilometres to the south, set off towards Kidal.

Tuareg rebels took up arms again in August and the population have since braced for a confrontation.

The Tuaregs previously launched an insurgency in 2012, inflicting humiliating defeats on the army before agreeing to a ceasefire in 2014 and a peace deal in 2015.

The uprising in 2012 coincided with insurgencies by radical Islamist groups who have never stopped fighting Bamako, plunging Mali into a political, security and humanitarian crisis that has spread to neighbouring Burkina Faso and Niger.

The withdrawal of a UN peace-keeping mission since the army took power has added to instability.

One officer spoke Saturday of fighting near to a Kidal camp which the UN force recently vacated.

Sporadic violence as Nigerian states vote for governors

ABUJA (AFP/APP): Violence and vote-rigging claims marred elections for governors in three Nigerian states on Saturday despite a heavy security presence.

State elections are fiercely contested in Nigeria where governors are powerful figures and clashes, killings and voter intimidation are common.

Tense political rivalries played out in Bayelsa state in the south, Imo in the southeast, and Kogi in the centre of the country.

The electoral commission said one of its officials was abducted, while monitoring groups said at least two people were shot, including a man allegedly running off with a ballot box. Counting began in the afternoon and results were expected to start coming in overnight on Saturday.

The voting took place amid sweeping travel restrictions and police deployed helicopters and gunboats, while the army sent troops to "reinforce security". The civil society

Transition Monitoring Group said a man was shot in Anyigba, Kogi state, after allegedly trying to "disrupt the election by snatching the ballot box." It shared footage of a bloodied body on social media.

In a separate statement, it said "political thugs were reportedly killed by the military in Anyigba and Idah town" in Kogi.

The army and police did not respond to a request for confirmation.

The Centre for Democracy and Development (CDD), which observed the polls, also said a person trying to flee with a ballot box in Anyigba was "shot and killed by military officials".

It said another person was shot in Famge, near Bayelsa's state capital Yenagoa, without providing further details.

The CDD warned of low turnout at certain polling stations, saying some people were "scared of coming out to vote due to fear of violence". It described

widespread vote-buying, with some people exchanging their ballots for hand-outs of rice.

The Economic and Financial Crimes Commission said it had arrested 14 people over suspected vote-buying across the three states.

Observers were watching the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) closely after the presidential election earlier this year, when critics and the opposition said delays uploading results and technical problems created opportunities for rigging votes.

On Friday INEC said an official was "abducted while waiting to board a boat" in Bayelsa, adding on Saturday that they had been released. Another boat carrying election documents capsize, it said, affecting more than 5,000 voters.

The commission also announced it was suspending the election in parts of Kogi state over reports of electoral malpractice. INEC said it had "done everything possible to guarantee that the weekend's election was "free, fair, and credible."

In Imo state, local media reported scuffles as votes were collected.

Kogi state, led by the APC, was seeking to avoid a repeat of 2019 polls, which saw deadly violence and electoral malpractice.

The 2019 vote in Bayelsa was also blighted by violence and abuses including killings, abductions and intimidation.

Gift Meeting, a caterer in Yenagoa, told AFP the election was "not worth anyone dying for."

She believes the Peoples Democratic Party (PDP), in power in the state, but in opposition nationally, will win comfortably in Bayelsa. Nigeria has a long history of electoral violence since the country emerged from military rule in 1999 and many vote results end up challenged in the courts.

German big wave surfer turns to science to tame the breakers

MUNICH (AFP/APP): Sebastian Steudtner already holds the world record for the largest wave ever surfed, but as the giant wave season begins, the German is looking to science and technology to chase a new high.

Harnessing the technical prowess of racecar maker Porsche and autoparts specialist Schaeffler, Steudtner is seeking to dwarf his record 26.21-metre (86-foot) wave set at the Portuguese surfers' Mecca of Nazare three years ago.

"With the world record wave I realised I've reached a limit for how fast my board can go," Steudtner told AFP of his last run, involving the wave reaching the equivalent of around eight storeys.

"Together with Porsche, we asked ourselves how we could make the board faster and more stable," said the 38-year-old Bavarian.

Surfers who increase their speed can take on bigger swells -- although

it's not just a question of a "need for speed" but a question of safety as well.

"Speed is so important to us because the bigger the wave, the more speed I have to have to get away from it," said Steudtner.

"The power of the wave is an absolute force," he said, "like having several buildings pushing you."

Steudtner said the pressure of riding the biggest waves means surfers need to know their equipment will allow them to focus on the run itself.

Describing his record-breaking Nazare run in 2020, when he added almost two metres to the previous mark, he said: "I shoot across the wave at 80 kilometres (50 miles) an hour and concentrate 100 percent."

"I don't think about the past, the present and the future. I'm in the flow. I don't have time to think 'wow, this wave is beautiful'."

Steudtner first fell in love with surfing at the age of nine when he boogie boarding in France.

With his parents' blessing, Steudtner traded landlocked Bavaria for Hawaii to pursue a career in surfing at the age of 16. He worked on construction sites to earn money, while learning to surf in his own time.

"I've made a lot of decisions in my life that nobody understood at the time".

His burning curiosity may have taken him across the world but it has also propelled changes to the sport itself.

Technological innovations could take the sport "to a higher level", he said.

In order to truly let surfers harness and master the force of the ocean, surfboards need not only to be faster, but also more stable and manoeuvrable at extreme speeds.

Porsche engineers helped develop a new board with an adapted nose, tail and edges to improve the hydrodynamics.

Schaeffler developed a friction-reducing coating which helps the board glide through the water.

Through tests in a

wind-tunnel simulator, Steudtner was able to see how he should position himself on the board as it handles monster waves.

"Through changes to the board and altering Sebastian's stance, we were able to reduce air resistance by 20 percent," said Markus Schmelz, a project manager at Porsche.

The innovations "made the board faster and more stable at high speeds".

The new board, coloured yellow and black, has since been delivered.

Steudtner, who trains daily in the gym to build up his muscle strength, was set for autumn and winter chasing big waves.

Accompanied by a team of almost 30 people, including military doctors, Steudtner said he hopes to "understand the journey of the waves in the ocean".

With the power of science and design in tow, the Germans may be only days away from testing the board on the biggest stage of all. "I'll have to give my best".

Francis dismissed a bishop in Puerto Rico, Daniel Fernandez Torres, in similar fashion in March 2022, with the Vatican again giving no reason.

Torres claimed he had been told he had not been "obedient" to the pope and did not have sufficiently good relationships with fellow bishops.

Media reports at the time noted he had supported those who refused compulsory coronavirus vaccinations.

In a statement published on Saturday, Cardinal DiNardo, who is also Archbishop of Galveston-Houston in Texas, explained the process with Strickland.

After the visit to the Tyler diocese, "the recommendation was made to the Holy Father that the continuation in office of Bishop Strickland was not feasible", he said.

The decision to ask Strickland to resign -- and ultimately dismiss him -- followed "months of careful consideration", he added.

There are more than 120,000 Catholics in the diocese of Tyler, out of a total population of more than 1.4 million people, according to the US Conference of Catholic Bishops.

Pope dismisses US bishop who was prominent critic

VATICAN CITY (AFP/APP): Pope Francis on Saturday dismissed US bishop Joseph Strickland, a prominent conservative who had repeatedly criticised his papacy, following concerns over the clergyman's leadership and governance.

The Vatican did not explain the move, a rare sacking in the Catholic Church, where troublesome senior clerics are normally encouraged -- or told -- to resign. But a US cardinal said it was linked to an inquiry ordered by Francis into "all aspects of governance and leadership" of Strickland's Tyler diocese in Texas.

Cardinal Daniel DiNardo, also of Texas, said the so-called apostolic visitation in June had reported back that it was "not feasible" that the bishop stay in office.

He revealed that Strickland, 65, had been asked on Thursday to resign, but refused -- prompting Francis to step in. "The Holy Father has relieved from the pastoral governance of the diocese of Tyler (US) Joseph E. Strickland," the Vatican said in a statement.

It said the bishop of Austin, Joe Vasquez, had been named as apostolic administrator of the dio-

cese, but gave no further details.

"I stand by all the things that were listed as complaints against me," Strickland told a conservative Canadian Catholic website in an article published Saturday, adding that he did not implement some of Francis's reforms because "I can't starve out part of my flock."

"I'd do it the same way again," he was quoted by LifeSiteNews as saying.

Strickland was appointed by Benedict XVI in 2012, and became one of the most prominent critics of his successor, Pope Francis. The Argentine pope, 86, has sought since taking office 10 years ago to forge a more compassionate Church, open to different views.

But he has faced intense opposition from critics -- particularly in the United States -- who accuse him of causing confusion and failing to uphold key Catholic beliefs. In a message earlier this year on X, formerly Twitter, Strickland said that while he recognised Francis as the pope, "I reject his programme of undermining the deposit of faith".

Many of Francis' critics complain he is not outspoken enough on abortion

and too compassionate towards homosexuals and divorcees.

Francis, in turn, lamented earlier this year the "strong reactionary attitude" of some Catholics in the US, who he said do not understand the "evolution in the understanding of matters of faith and morals". The Vatican has not commented on its inquiry into the Texas diocese, but Strickland previously said that two US bishops spent a week conducting interviews -- including with him -- about the situation there.

In a blog post in September, he addressed rumours that he would be asked to leave voluntarily.

"I cannot resign as bishop of Tyler because that would be me abandoning the flock" under his care, he wrote. "I have also said that I will respect the authority of Pope Francis if he removes me from office as Bishop of Tyler."

He added that he loved Jesus Christ and the Church, and "my only desire is to speak His truth and live God's will to the best of my ability".

Commentators say it is extremely rare for a bishop to be directly relieved of their position -- but not

Fly larvae: Costa Rica's sustainable protein for animal feed

GUAPILES (AFP/APP): Raised in vertical farms and stuffed with fruit waste, fly larvae have been turned into animal feed, as a new Costa Rican venture in sustainability is demonstrating.

The Central American nation, one of the most biodiverse places on Earth, has put a lot of energy and creativity into the goal of becoming the greenest, most sustainable country in Latin America.

In Guapiles, a farming town just 60 kilometers (37 miles) north of the capital San Jose, an innovative company has turned the tables on the flies that have always buzzed annoyingly around the crops -- putting them to work.

The black soldier fly (Hermetia illucens) is native to tropical climates such as Costa Rica's, with its larvae incessantly gobbling up organic waste.

"It's a high-quality protein," Miguel Carmona, president of the company ProNuvo, told AFP.

So fly larvae can provide "healthier" proteins for animals and with less environmental impact than feed based on animal (beef or fish) or vegetable (soy) protein, the 52-year-old businessman explained.

The company's final products, in the form of dried larvae, protein powder or insect oil, are exported -- for now only to the United States, although one Costa Rican fishery is already using them in its tilapia farm in the north of the country.

The flies are raised in cages in a greenhouse at about 40 degrees Celsius (104 Fahrenheit) and in high humidity. They live for a week and lay about 500 eggs each before dying. Four days later, the eggs hatch and the larvae begin to feed on organic waste from banana, mango and papaya plantations.

Over the next 14 days, they gain 10,000 times their original weight, Carmona explained. "These larvae are then converted into very rich proteins and oils and fats for animal feed," Gabriel Carmona, general manager of ProNuvo and Miguel's brother, told AFP.

Not even the waste goes to waste: the excrement deposited by the larvae makes an ideal fertilizer for the same fruit plantations.

"We are practicing a sustainable business," said Miguel Carmona.

"We are using waste from other industries to make a high-quality protein without having the environmental impacts that overfishing, soy and livestock have today," said the company president.

According to ProNuvo, the production of one ton of beef requires 30,000 square meters (7.5 acres) of land, and soybeans require 3,000 square meters. Vast areas are thus deforested, sharply reducing the numbers of carbon dioxide-absorbing trees. Yet, the fly larvae farm requires only 300 square meters.

Cybersecurity experts have said inadequate safeguards and the stockpiling of sensitive customer information have made Australia a lucrative target for hackers. Medibank, Australia's largest private health insurer, said in November 2022 that hackers had accessed the data of 9.7 million cur-

The same applies to water use. Production of a ton of beef protein requires 15.4 million liters of water (4.1 million gallons), while soybean crops require 1.6 million liters. The larvae consume barely 10,000 liters. The production time for a ton of larvae protein is also substantially shorter: flies take 14 days, soybeans six months, and cows 36 months. The farm in Costa Rica is the first in Latin America to produce insect protein, according to Miguel Carmona.

"Pioneers of the region," he said proudly.

With food, grain and fertilizer prices increasing due to the war between Russia and Ukraine, other innovative projects are underway elsewhere. There is work in Kenya and Uganda, for example, on using the black soldier fly in the production of organic fertilizers. And in Europe, the larvae are being sold as a protein supplement for animals -- available to order online.

Australia holds cyber crisis talks as ports disrupted

SYDNEY (AFP/APP): Australian government agencies held crisis talks on Sunday in response to a cyber incident that has disrupted operations at key ports across the country.

Port operator DP World halted internet connectivity at ports in Sydney, Melbourne, Brisbane and Fremantle on Friday to prevent "any ongoing unauthorised access" to its network, a spokesperson said.

The ongoing disruption has not prevented containers from being taken off vessels, but trucks needed to transport them have not been able to drive in or out of the terminals, DP World senior director Blake Tierney said in a statement.

"The company is working around the clock to restore normal operations safely," he added.

Australian Federal Police have said they are investigating the incident.

The "interruption is likely to continue for a number of days and will impact the movement of goods into and out of the country", National Cyber Security Coordinator Darren Goldie said on X, formerly Twitter.

"DP World Australia has advised it has restricted access to its Australian port operations while it investigates the incident," he added. After holding emergency meetings on Saturday, Goldie again convened the National Coordination Mechanism on

Sunday with representatives from government, maritime and logistics sectors to manage the government's response. Australia's National Emergency Management Agency also attended the talks. Goldie, an air marshal in the Royal Australian Air Force, was appointed the inaugural national coordinator last July in response to several cyber attacks.

Cybersecurity experts have said inadequate safeguards and the stockpiling of sensitive customer information have made Australia a lucrative target for hackers. Medibank, Australia's largest private health insurer, said in November 2022 that hackers had accessed the data of 9.7 million current and former customers, including medical records related to drug abuse and pregnancy terminations.

Just two months earlier, telecom company Optus fell prey to a data breach of similar scale in which the personal details of up to 9.8 million people were accessed. Those two incidents were among the largest data breaches in Australian history. Optus, Australia's second-largest phone provider, apologised to its more than 10 million customers last week over a "technical network outage" that crashed electronic payments, disrupted phone lines used by emergency services and stopped people accessing government services.

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Gaza invasion and Arab-Islamic Summit

Saudi Arabia hosted the emergency summit of the Muslim nations in response to the exceptional circumstances taking place in the Palestinian Gaza Strip. The summit brought together leaders from Arab and Asian nations, who called for an immediate end to the war on Gaza. Saudi Arabia's Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman said Israel bears responsibility for the crimes committed against Palestinian people, and reiterated the call for an immediate ceasefire during his opening remarks at the Arab-Islamic Summit. The Saudi crown prince stressed the Kingdom's 'unequivocal' rejection of the continued Israeli aggression in Gaza and the forced displacement of residents. He pointed to the double standards in applying international humanitarian law, condemning the international community's silence towards the violations against Palestinian civilians.

The leaders of Muslim nations from across the globe gathered in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia and mulled over the current dire security and humanitarian situations in war-torn Gaza and the ongoing genocide of Palestinians at the hands of Israeli military and Jewish settlers. The Muslim leaders mulled over different scenarios and possible solutions to the prevailing crisis which can spill over into a regional conflict any time in future. During the Summit, Iran's President Ibrahim Raisi called for unity of the Muslim Ummah and urged for coordinated and collective action against the occupying forces which is weighing a genocide of Palestinian people. Prime Minister Kakar suggested Muslim leaders approach the UN Secretary-General to establish a special commission of inquiry to investigate Israel's war crimes and crimes against humanity in Palestinian territory. According to him, the Muslim nations through the platform of the OIC should work to prosecute the Jewish state at the UN, the International Court of Justice (ICJ) and the International Criminal Court (ICC) to hold the rogue Israeli regime responsible for its heinous acts in the West Bank and Gaza.

The war in Gaza has entered its second month, brutal Israeli bombardment and unceasing airstrikes have killed over 11000 Palestinians, resulting in injuries to countless innocent people including women and children. The Israeli military has launched its ground attack on Gaza and a mass exodus of Palestinians is underway to the South. According to reports, Israel has planned to establish a new security Structure in Gaza and to assume a permanent role in the Palestinian territory which would be entirely disastrous for the Palestinians and will further complicate the scope for a two-state solution of the Palestine issue.

The entire world has cried out against inhumane atrocities and brutal treatment of Palestinians by the Israeli government and its military. There have been anti-Israel voices within the EU bloc, while multiple Latin American countries severed their ties with Tel Aviv because of its blatant violations of the global humanitarian laws in Palestinian territory. The cabal of Muslim leaders gathered in Riyadh under the banner of the OIC amid intensified hostility between Israeli Jews and Palestinian Muslims and the worst living conditions in Gaza and the West Bank. Previously, all Muslim nations had been urging Israel to cease its warcrimes against innocent Palestinians that did not reach the ears of the Jewish State, now they prepared to echo a collective call for the same purpose but failed to chart out any retaliatory action against their staunch enemy to achieve their darley needed agenda either way. In fact, the Muslim Ummah is currently embattled with its internal issues together with security challenges, sectarian rivalries and economic glitches hence it is unable to announce an ultimate for the Jewish state to stop its brutality or face the collective military might of the Muslim bloc. Apparently, no solitary call or collective request would be acceptable to Israel or its Western allies until it is backed with the full penalty. The solution is very obvious but demands courage, commitment and unity of the Muslim nations to rescue poor Palestinians from the clutches of the Occupiers.

President's pro-parry legacy

The Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP), without quoting the name of President Arif Alvi, has informed the nation that efforts were underway by a high official to make the electoral process doubtful as the electoral watchdog was committed to ensuring the transparency and fairness of the forthcoming election. Recently, President Arif Alvi sent a letter to the caretaker PM, raising the PTI's concerns regarding the erosion of fundamental rights and a level playing field for all political parties in the run-up to the upcoming general elections. Meanwhile, the Presidency also issued a statement urging the caretaker government to make efforts as a neutral entity to provide a level playing field for all political parties.

A saga of a level playing field has been resonating in recent days from across the political spectrum ahead of nationwide polls in the country. The complaints of no provision of a level playing field have been raised by the majority of political groups including the PPP, the PTI, ANP as well as MQM-P despite the ECP having issued the electoral code and guidelines for all political groups to observe those guidelines for smooth, transparent and fair run of the election. Realistically, a level playing field in the electoral process is crucial for ensuring fairness, transparency, and the integrity of democratic elections. Hence, the provision of an equal opportunity to all political parties and candidates to compete for votes, regardless of their resources or political influence is of utmost importance. It is the fundamental duty of the ECP to provide a conducive environment for all political groups to launch their campaign in a free, fair and unrestricted manner within the jurisdiction/limits set the authority. The caretaker government has to assist the ECP and ensure the 100% implementation of the orders of the election authority until the full transition of the government.

Historically, a three-member team of Pakistan Tahreek-e-Insaf (PTI) met the Chief Election Commissioner a few days ago and handed him a 24-point Charter of Demands (CoD) comprising the party's demands which the party leadership considers necessary for transparency and level playing. As said, the CEC assured the PTI team of consideration of those points. It is also pertinent to mention that the caretaker PM already declared that all registered political parties including the PTI are allowed and free to contest election and there is no bar on any political group in this regard. After having done all that, the politically motivated move of Dr Alvi really neither matches his personality nor suits the dignity and prestige of his office. Historically, the President and governors are non-political positions in the country's system but political appointments have always earned disgrace and travesty to those prestigious offices throughout the past. If our leaders will not align their conduct with the decorum of their public offices it would tarnish their image and abuse their office in the long run.

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Saudi Arabia leading the way on growing Arab-Africa ties

Dya-Eddine Said Bamakhrama

The city of Riyadh, the capital of Saudi Arabia, will this week host two significant summits: the Arab-African Summit and the Saudi-African Summit. These meetings aim to enhance the cooperation between Arabs and Africans and are expected to result in important decisions based on mutual support and integration.

The depth of human relations and cultural ties between Africa and the Arabian Peninsula is summarized by the fact that half of Arabs are Africans and a third of Africans are Arabs. This connection is supported by geography and history, with evidence suggesting that the Arabian Peninsula used to be part of Africa before geological changes separated them.

Many experts, including the Arab-African thinker Dr. Ali Al-Mazrouei, believe that Arabs and Africans used to live on one continent before the geological separation that began with the emergence of the Red Sea and was completed in the 19th century with the digging of the Suez Canal.

Al-Mazrouei has developed a scientific model called "Afrabia" to illustrate the historical and geographical relations between the Arabian Peninsula and Africa. This model is based on several determinants.

One is that the majority of Arabs currently live in Africa and the largest Arab lands are located on this continent. Another is that Africa is the primary continent where Muslims constitute the majority. It is also possible that the name "Africa" can be traced back to the Berber language, in which it referred to what is now known as Tunisia, meaning the continent derived its name from what are now known as the Arabs of Africa.

Al-Mazrouei also pointed out that historical evidence points to human migrations and movements between Africa and the Arabian Peninsula. There is evidence of an Arabian presence on the East African coast and the Horn of Africa prior to the birth of Prophet Muhammad. On the other hand, the first muezzin in Islam, Bilal ibn Rabah, had African ancestry. This is evidence of an African presence in Makkah and Madinah before Islam, which means Afrabia is a phenomenon that preceded the Prophet's migration.

The spread of the Arabic language in Africa further strengthens the connection between the two regions. Original and widespread languages in Africa include Swahili in the east of the continent and Hausa in the west, both of which were influenced by Arabic and Islam. But linguistic ties between Africa and the Arabian Peninsula are older than Islam. Everyone knows that Arabic is a Semitic language, but what many do not know is that Amharic, the dominant indigenous language in Ethiopia, is also a Semitic language. It is worth noting that historians are divided over whether Semitic languages first appeared in Ethiopia before moving to the Arabian Peninsula or

aim to contribute to this vision.

Arab-African cooperation has experienced various stages. Initially, in the 1960s, Arab-African relations were characterized by cooperation and solidarity in the fight against colonialism and the pursuit of independence. However, these relations declined significantly for various reasons, including political developments, foreign influence and a lack of coordination and a unified political vision among Arab countries regarding the importance of engaging with the African continent.

This lack of communication and cooperation is evident in the limited number of meetings that took place between the two sides over a span of 36 years.

The first Arab-African

summit took place in Egypt in 1977 and emphasized cooperation based on the charters of the Arab League and the Organization of African Unity (now the African Union). It supported the struggle of the Palestinian people and challenged the apartheid regime in South Africa. It also issued an action pro-

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The second summit, held in Libya in 2010, had symbolic and political significance but did not result in substantial progress. The third summit occurred in Kuwait in November 2013. Saudi Arabia has a long history of cooperation with Africa, as demonstrated by King Faisal's tours in the 1960s and 1970s, development efforts by the Saudi Fund for Development and the Islamic Development Bank, and the charitable support provided by the Saudi aid agency KSrelief.

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strengthening relations between countries.

Additionally, the Council of Arab and African States Bordering the Red Sea and Gulf of Aden — established about two years ago under Saudi Arabia's leadership and with the membership of Djibouti, Somalia, Sudan, Eritrea, Egypt, Jordan and Yemen — plays a crucial role in Arab-African integration and efforts to enhance security, politics, investment interests and navigation traffic in the Red Sea and Gulf of Aden region, which is very important for international trade.

Therefore, Saudi Arabia can play a significant role in promoting Arab-African cooperation for the following reasons.

The Kingdom enjoys remarkable global political and economic weight and has the lead in communicating with the countries of the African continent, whether through the Organization of Islamic Cooperation, which includes 27 African countries among its 57 members, or through the development projects of the Islamic Development Bank in Jeddah, the Saudi Fund for Development, the Saudi Development Center and KSrelief, as well as educational scholarships.

Saudi Arabia enjoys strong and sustainable relations with all African countries and unparalleled favor and acceptance in all Islamic countries because it is home to the Two Holy Mosques, which have special significance for Muslims.

The Kingdom has tremendous potential to carry out shuttle diplomacy between countries, in addition to its ancient diplomatic heritage and balanced foreign policy, which enable it to play an influential leadership role in strengthening Arab-African cooperation.

Saudi Vision 2030, led by Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman, is not only a Saudi vision, but rather a global vision with its great contents and goals. It is possible to benefit from it in terms of promoting Arab-African cooperation through trade, investment and cultural exchanges.

Meanwhile, Djibouti can play an important role in the efforts to enhance Arab-African cooperation. It is the bridge between Africa and the Arabian Peninsula, with a unique geographical location overlooking the Bab Al-Mandab Strait, which has great strategic economic and political importance. Djibouti also has the largest free trade zone in Africa, which can contribute to developing Saudi Arabia's trade and investment exchanges with the continent.

In conclusion, I would like to express my full confidence that the Arab-African and Saudi-African summits will be successful, leading to important recommendations and decisions that will improve relations and foster greater integration and cooperation between the two sides, particularly in the fields of economics and development, benefiting both the Arab and African peoples.

US is the big loser in Gaza

Maria Maalouf

The war in Gaza between Israel and Hamas represents a serious challenge to the US. It is a difficult test for the network of contacts Washington has been building throughout previous decades to ensure a balance in its interests between Arab countries and Israel.

Obviously the US is failing to achieve this strategic equilibrium in its relationship between the Arabs and the Israelis. There are many accusations by most of the nations of the world, especially Arab and Muslim states, that Washington is endorsing Israel's attacks against civilians in Gaza. They point to the US supplying Israel with the weapons being used to kill Palestinians in Gaza. They also charge the US with giving \$14 billion to Israel to carry on the war, and say that the sending of two air-craft carriers to the eastern Mediterranean shields Israel from any armed assault by any power.

Arab media outlets view the US as culpable in the Oct. 7 attack. They also perceive the US as responsible for the military conflagration that the Middle East is undergoing at present. Arab media platforms refuse to believe the US is serious about making peace in the Middle East, and say it is doing nothing to end the fighting between Israel and Hamas. Accordingly, Washington is not an honest broker for peace in the Middle East. Shamefully, US Secretary of State Antony Blinken's shuttle diplomacy in the region has been unable to convince the Israeli government to

sincerity in creating a Palestinian state. They were dismayed by the refusal of the US Congress to give aid to the Palestinians on the grounds that it would go to Hamas. This, of course, was not true.

On the other hand, war is an uncertain development. No war in history has an assured outcome. Hence, any substantial political outcomes must take into account not only US strategic objectives, which include the defense of Israel, but also the local conditions in which the strategy for achieving those objectives must play out. Considering the US failed to effectively define its goals separate from Israel, any analyst must focus on several strategic trends operating now in the Middle East.

First, Turkiye will try to make its role more significant. Ankara and President Recep Tayyip Erdogan will express greater solidarity with Hamas. This will strain US-Turkish relations further. Second, the continuation of the Saudi-Iranian detente will be inevitable. The two countries will focus on Gaza and not on their regional rivalry. Third, the role of Qatar most likely will be enhanced. Washington so far has been unable to persuade Qatar to cease its relationship with at least the political wing of Hamas. Qatar will pressure the US to force Israel to stop the war in Gaza in return for its changing relations with the leaders of Hamas.

Fourth, a fair question is how successful and deci-

The West is unethical in its attitudes toward the Middle East. It endorses Israel's savagery against the Palestinians, while pretending it defends human rights and democracy. The Arabs assert that Western hypocrisy about freedom and liberty paved the way for their complicity in Israel's barbarity toward the Palestinians. Against the backdrop of Arabs' loss of faith in the US, Russia is gaining influence in the region. Moscow can tell the peoples of the Middle East that it renounces Israel's killing of innocent Palestinians and, therefore, is a friend of Arabs and Muslims. Other countries, such as China, can also gain prestige in the Middle East as the US is denounced by the region's Arab population.

accept a limited cease-fire to deliver urgent humanitarian assistance.

There is also the increase in the number of attacks against US military bases in both Syria and Iraq. The potential is high that there will be more targeting of US military facilities in both countries if the war in Gaza continues. All Arab nations are worried that the Gaza war could escalate into a wider regional crisis. Arabs are hearing the voices coming from the US that perceive the war against Hamas as a war against Iran. The strategic rationale for the Arab nations is that extending the war by attacking Iran could push the whole Middle East into a state of turbulence and chaos, causing a great deal of instability. This will force many people to label the US as the real enemy of the Arabs and Muslims.

Arab countries believe that Israel is acting in a brutal way and that the US is doing nothing to stop it. The Middle East is about to explode. The West is unethical in its attitudes toward the Middle East. It endorses Israel's savagery against the Palestinians, while pretending it defends human rights and democracy. The Arabs assert that Western hypocrisy about freedom and liberty paved the way for their complicity in Israel's barbarity toward the Palestinians.

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The war in Gaza may revive the two-state solution. However, Arab nations doubt Washington's

sive will the Israeli ground offensive be? Israel has not declared victory. It pulled out of previous wars, including conflicts with Lebanese Hezbollah in 1996 and 2006, before finishing its military purposes, due to political and diplomatic factors. Hamas could be hoping for the same outcome. This suggests that the group could still be operating underground and maintaining parts of its military infrastructure when the war ends.

Fifth, how much damage could be caused by several statements by Israeli officials, such as the one attributed to Minister of Heritage Amichai Eliyahu, who said dropping an atomic bomb on Gaza was "a possibility"? This could quickly invite Moscow to affirm nuclear deterrence similar to what happened on Oct. 22-23, 1973 when the US and the Soviet Union raised their nuclear preparedness during the Ramadan War.

Certainly, Arab countries will endorse such a potential nuclear strategic move by the Kremlin. Sixth, how much dispute will occur if Israel takes actions to reoccupy and govern Gaza? This could cause friction between the US and Israel. Blinken played down these prospects. Yet, it seems that Israel is determined to remain in Gaza for a long time. Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu told ABC News that "for an indefinite period, Israel will have the overall security responsibility" for the enclave.

The war in Gaza has seriously undermined US credibility and deterrence. Washington cannot prevail on Israel to hold off the fight in Gaza even for a few hours. In conclusion, the US will not gain any political or strategic advantage from the Gaza war. It could even lose economically if the conflict goes on for a long time and the price of oil rises to a record high.

AI regulation battle is only just beginning

Given the pace of development in artificial intelligence in recent years, it is remarkable that the US has only just released clear regulations concerning the technology. At the end of October, President Joe Biden issued an executive order to ensure “safe, secure, and trustworthy artificial intelligence.” The directive sets out new standards for all matters of AI safety, including new privacy safeguards designed to protect consumers. While Congress has yet to enact comprehensive laws dictating the use and development of AI, the executive order is a much-needed step toward sensible regulation of this rapidly developing technology.

Casual observers might be surprised to learn that the US did not already have any such AI protections on the books. A gathering of 28 governments for the AI Safety Summit in the UK last week revealed that the rest of the world is even further behind. Those attending the forum, which was held at the historic former spy base Bletchley Park, managed to agree to work together on safety research to avert the “catastrophic harm” that could come from AI. The declaration, whose signatories include the US, China, the EU, Saudi Arabia and the UAE, was a rare diplomatic coup for the UK, but light on detail. The US used the event to brandish its own new guardrails as something that the rest of the world should follow.

You do not need a degree in computing to understand that AI is a crucial part of one of the most profound technological shifts humanity has experienced. AI has the power to change how we think and educate ourselves. It can change how we work and make certain

jobs redundant. AI systems require massive amounts of data generally collected on the open Internet to deliver these results. Chances are that some of your data is being fed into large language models that power AI platforms, such as ChatGPT.

This is just the tip of the iceberg. AI is being deployed in Israel’s operations in Gaza to help make decisions of life and death. Israel’s Military

Biden’s executive order specifically addresses issues related to AI safety, consumer protection, and privacy. The directive requires new safety assessments of new and existing AI platforms, equity and civil rights guidance, and research on AI’s impact on the labor market. Some AI companies will now be required to share safety test results with the US government. The Commerce Department has been directed to create guidance for AI watermarking and a cybersecurity program that can make AI tools that help identify flaws in critical software. While the US and other Western countries have been slow to draft comprehensive AI regulations, there has been some movement in recent years. Earlier this year, the National Institute of Standards and Technology outlined a comprehensive AI risk management framework. The document became the basis for the Biden administration’s executive order. Critically, the administration has empowered the Commerce Department, which houses the NIST, to help implement aspects of the order.

Intelligence Directorate said that the military is using AI and other “automated” tools to “produce reliable targets quickly and accurately.” One unnamed senior officer said the new AI-powered tools are being used for the “first time to immediately provide ground forces in the Gaza Strip with updated information on targets to strike.”

This is a grave escalation in the use of AI, not just for Palestinians but also the international community. The technology being tested in Gaza will almost certainly be exported as part of

Israel’s large and powerful weapons technology sector. Put simply, the AI algorithms used to attack Palestinian targets could soon crop up in other conflicts from Africa to South America.

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The challenge now will be securing buy-in from leading US technology companies. Without their cooperation and a legal framework to punish companies that fail to follow the rules, Biden’s order will not amount to much.

There is still a lot of work to be done. Technology companies have largely been able to develop with little oversight over the past two decades. This is partially due to the interconnected world of tech, where firms have created new products or services outside the US.

Amazon’s groundbreaking AWS cloud hosting technology, for example, was created and developed at the University of Cape Town in South Africa, far from the reach of US regulators.

With honest buy-in from leading companies, the Biden administration could seek more comprehensive laws and regulations. Direct government involvement in technology always runs the risk of stifling innovation. Yet, there is a clear opportunity for smaller countries with knowledge economies to step in. Countries such as Estonia and the UAE that have invested in their knowledge economies and have small populations — and regulatory environments — can follow Biden’s lead with AI safeguards. This would have a powerful effect in cities such as Dubai, where multinational tech companies have set up regional offices. Because there is less red tape in these smaller countries, AI regulations can be pushed through quickly and, perhaps more importantly, amended if they stifle development too aggressively.

Given the hyper-connected world of technology development, the international community cannot wait for larger countries or blocs such as the US and EU to push through legislation first. Instead, new markets that have their tech economies to consider should push ahead with regulations that work for their needs.

The development of AI technology is happening at a remarkable pace. Because it is so essential to the overall technology sector, we do not have the luxury of waiting for world leaders to act first. It is time to lead by example, and AI regulations are an ideal place to start.

It is time to plan for the aftermath of war

One of the most difficult challenges for leaders in the midst of a raging war is to develop a vision of peace for its aftermath, when the bloodshed and destruction have ceased, and by that to avert their recurrence. Moreover, it is the task of political leaders to not only have a post-war plan, but also to bring on board their societies, which are by now traumatized and living in fear.

In the face of the horrors we have been witnessing since Oct. 7 on both sides of the border between Israel and Gaza, it might sound naive, almost outlandish, to talk about a comprehensive resolution of the Israeli–Palestinian conflict, even beyond Gaza. But this is what responsible and courageous governments should do, and without delay.

For now, the message from Israel is that the war will not end until it has destroyed Hamas. A spokesperson for the Israeli military repeated that message this week, saying: “The mission (inside Gaza) is to engage with Hamas and simply to dismantle each and every Hamas stronghold that is buried. The directive is definitely to kill or capture all the leaders of Hamas.” Whether this is an achievable objective is a moot point; besides, what does it mean to destroy Hamas, since it is also a political movement, and more importantly an ideology, that can be defeated only by an alternative and more appealing one, which gives answers to their needs?

The reason there is already an urgent need to address the future of Gaza, and without losing sight of the bigger picture of Israeli–Palestinian relations, is that in the absence of any constructive plan, the conduct of the war threatens to be dictated by reactions to events and political pressure, and not by long-term strategic thinking.

For instance, earlier this week Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu not only ruled out a general ceasefire, which is a real worry considering the death toll among Gaza’s civilians, children in particular, but when asked who should govern the enclave at the end of the war, he also told America’s ABC News that “Israel will for an indefinite period ... have the overall security responsibility (in Gaza), because we’ve seen what happens when we don’t have that security responsibility.”

This is already a change to Israel’s war objectives as declared immediately after Hamas’s attack last month, but it is vague about exactly what “security responsibility” means. Was he seriously suggesting reoccupying the Gaza Strip, 18 years after Israel withdrew and dismantled its settlements there? This would be a folly that would only prolong the conflict, and increase friction between Israel and the people of Gaza, the rest of the Palestinians, and the region. It also follows another dangerous development in which a number of far-right politicians, including from Netanyahu’s coalition, have called for rebuilding the settlements there as a security guarantee.

Neither another occupation of Gaza nor a rebuilding of settlements is plausible, and such suggestions need to be nipped in the bud. Hence, not surprisingly, US Secretary of State Antony Blinken was quick to reiterate while attending a meeting of G7 foreign

Yossi Mekelberg

ministers this week in Japan that Washington opposes both Hamas rule and an Israeli reoccupation of Gaza. He also warned against any future blockade or siege, as well as any plan to reduce its territory. One must hope that this message was heard clearly by Israel’s decision-makers.

By the time the last bullet in this war is shot and the inevitable and desperately needed cease-fire is called, two devastated and traumatized societies, mourning their dead, living in fear and having no trust in the other side, will be left to lick their wounds. Hardly an ideal situation in which to talk peace, but also one that underlines the need for new thinking about Israeli–Palestinian relations, and for a new leadership to emerge in both societies.

The spectacular, appalling and horrific collapse of the old order requires a departure from previous perceptions that occupation and blockade provided security. How, then, should the fundamen-

fies the West Bank and the Gaza Strip could be both sustainable and legitimate, and have the competency to negotiate a political settlement with Israel that will guarantee both peoples’ security and prosperity.

The previous combination of a blockade, sustaining Hamas, and a peculiar model of poverty and misery management has not worked, either for Israel and even less for the people of Gaza. The PA in its current state cannot march into Gaza supported by Israeli bayonets. As a consequence, there is a need for the international community to shoulder responsibility, at least in the interim period, with a strong regional presence, to ensure reconstruction of the territory, and to build political and municipal structures that will then merge with those in the West Bank, after 16 years of being run separately.

But it cannot stop there, and what will be needed is a future Israeli government that is capable of internalizing that good fences, even if they cost a billion dollars, do not necessarily make

Certainly, Egypt cannot be expected to take sole control of Gaza, even on an interim basis, as Cairo has no desire to assume this role. In the long run, only the return of a Palestinian governing body that is elected by the Palestinian people, and unifies the West Bank and the Gaza Strip could be both sustainable and legitimate, and have the competency to negotiate a political settlement with Israel that will guarantee both peoples’ security and prosperity. The previous combination of a blockade, sustaining Hamas, and a peculiar model of poverty and misery management has not worked, either for Israel and even less for the people of Gaza. The PA in its current state cannot march into Gaza supported by Israeli bayonets. As a consequence, there is a need for the international community to shoulder responsibility, at least in the interim period, with a strong regional presence, to ensure reconstruction of the territory, and to build political and municipal structures that will then merge with those in the West Bank, after 16 years of being run separately. But it cannot stop there, and what will be needed is a future Israeli government that is capable of internalizing that good fences, even if they cost a billion dollars, do not necessarily make good neighbors, and that the only path to long-term peace, security and prosperity is one based on a two-state solution that ensures everyone’s rights, including that of self-determination.

of the Israeli–Palestinian conflict be resolved? What methods of resisting the occupation are legitimate, and which should be condemned outright? And who are the domestic and regional actors who could play a positive role in finding a peaceful settlement? Potential spoilers of such a settlement could be offset by including them in any future peace process.

A long-term Israeli occupation of the Gaza Strip could and should not be an option. Certainly, Egypt cannot be expected to take sole control of Gaza, even on an interim basis, as Cairo has no desire to assume this role. In the long run, only the return of a Palestinian governing body that is elected by the Palestinian people, and uni-

good neighbors, and that the only path to long-term peace, security and prosperity is one based on a two-state solution that ensures everyone’s rights, including that of self-determination.

To this end, the 2002 Arab Peace Initiative could still be a highly constructive basis. In one way or another it should be an inclusive peace process that allows the wider Middle East to become stakeholders and guarantors, and by that also marginalizes the persistent spoilers of such an agreement. The shocking carnage we have seen over the past month should also send a clear message that there are no winners from letting this conflict fester, only losers, and if left unresolved, it will spread like wildfire.

‘Double Dutch’ poll signals Europe’s changing political mood

The phrase “double Dutch” is sometimes defined as language that is unintelligible. That phrase seems an apt description of the upcoming election in the Netherlands, the outcome of which is hugely difficult to decipher.

This matters given the stakes in play. For one, the Netherlands has the fifth-largest economy in the EU, and is an influential player on the world stage in wide-ranging policy debates. For instance, the Netherlands was the first non-G7 country to negotiate bilateral security commitments with Ukraine. It took the lead last summer, along with Denmark, in moving toward donating F16 aircraft to Kyiv, and setting up a training center in Romania.

The election is also important as it may well give a good indication of the bloc’s political mood going into next year’s big European Parliament election year. Other recent polls have shown a rightward drift across the continent, although last month’s Polish vote saw Donald Tusk’s centrist coalition potentially winning power.

The Nov. 22 Dutch ballot is taking place in the aftermath of the collapse of the fourth coalition government of Prime Minister Mark Rutte, the EU’s second-longest serving leader after Hungary’s Viktor

Orban. This is leaving a political vacuum, with Rutte potentially moving to a big international job, possibly as the next NATO secretary general.

The context, too, is the recent history of the rise of the far right in the Netherlands. Today, it is the Freedom Party of political maverick Geert Wilders that tends to get most media coverage on the political far right. It is plausible that Wilders could become a coalition kingmaker if there is a big swing to conservative and anti-establishment parties. While Wilders is the far-right man of the moment, others of a similar ilk have previously made their mark in the nation’s political discourse, including anti-immigrant populist Pim Fortuyn, who was assassinated in 2002.

In this context, there has been much Dutch political volatility in recent years, which was most recently showcased by the success of the populist Farmer-Citizen Movement, or BBB. Formed in 2020, the pro-farmer political party topped the Dutch provincial elections in March, yet its forecast vote share has since fallen from over 20 percent to well below 10 percent.

Driving this political turbulence is the collapse of the Dutch political center ground, as has been the case in several other European polities. Parties

Andrew Hammond

of the center-right and left have seen their vote share fall off a cliff to around 40 percent today from double that figure in the 1980s.

The latest signal of the volatility that this political vacuum has left is that a three-month-old party, the New Social Contract, has topped some recent opinion polls. The spectacular rise of the NSC reflects popular discontent with a series of government scandals.

NSC leader Pieter Omtzigt left Rutte’s last government in 2021 after helping expose a welfare scandal that brought down the administration. Tax authorities had wrongly denied child benefit payments to more than 20,000 families, incorrectly accusing them of fraud.

This anti-government sentiment has also helped turn the political agenda in a more populist direction. One example is fiscal policy. The Dutch are traditionally known in Europe for their fiscal caution, yet the current Rutte coalition has overseen the most expansionary set of policies in the country’s modern history. Moreover, election manifesto plans of the key parties point to the likelihood of a continued expansionary fiscal policy that follows the trajectory of the outgoing coalition.

Another good example is the green transition, and

who will pay for it, in a nation which is the world’s second-largest agricultural exporter. One specific issue that has surfaced during the campaign is over nitrogen emissions. Under a Dutch law introduced by Rutter, nitrogen emissions have to be reduced by 50 percent by 2035, a deadline the prime minister has proposed to bring forward to 2030.

Farmers, a powerful political bloc, as the BBB underlined earlier this year, have expressed concerns, as livestock manure and chemical fertilizers are big emitters. Transport and broader industry are also key emitters of nitrogen oxides.

The politics of this issue has forced even former European Commission Green Deal and climate chief Franz Timmermans onto the defensive. Currently leader of the green-left bloc ahead of the upcoming ballot, Timmermans has recently made a big U-turn on this question.

This is politically embarrassing for the former EU commissioner, who is campaigning on a pro-green agenda. His platform includes plans to reduce Dutch greenhouse gas emissions by 65 percent by 2030, significantly beyond the 55 percent EU target.

Within this cauldron of discontent, the outcome of the election is highly uncertain given the tightness of

polls. Three main party blocs — the NSC; Rutte’s People’s Party for Freedom and Democracy, now led by Dilan Yesilgoz-Zegerius; and Timmerman’s Green-Labour alliance, are seeking to make a polling breakthrough.

However, this is complicated by the Dutch proportional voting system, which means that the Netherlands has seen only coalition governments for over 100 years. No party may win more than 20 percent of the vote (or 30 of 150 seats) in the context of a splintering of smaller parties. About 20 parties have seats in the current legislature, and more than two dozen are running this time, with any party that wins 0.67 percent of the vote assured of winning a seat.

The other key consequence of this hyper-fragmentation is that the eventual coalition may take months to form. Rutte’s last coalition took a remarkable 271 days to establish, and this means he may have to remain caretaker prime minister well into next year.

All things considered, the Dutch election is one of the most unpredictable polls in the nation’s recent political-volatile history. One risk is that a weak government ultimately emerges that turns the traditionally outward-looking country more inward at a time of growing geopolitical tension.

Sinem Cengiz

dented toll that Israel’s raids on Gaza have taken on journalists.

Despite all the harrowing circumstances, it is worth noting that the UN Security Council passed a historic resolution in 2006 that called for an end to impunity in the killing of journalists. In 2012, all of the major UN agencies agreed on a comprehensive Plan of Action on the Safety of Journalists. The Geneva Conventions also offer special protections to journalists and media staff. However, such resolutions and conventions mean little, if anything, to countries engaged in inhumane warfare against civilians. While Israel conducts its deadly attacks on Gaza, it has

warned international media outlets like Reuters and Agence France-Presse that it cannot guarantee the safety of their journalists operating there. By doing so, Israel is effectively preventing journalists from covering the war from inside the Gaza Strip.

It is also important to acknowledge that disinformation and propaganda are also weapons of war and they have been effectively employed by the Israeli side during the ongoing conflict. Since the Gulf War, there has been a rapid shift in the center of gravity from the power of weapons to the power of information. As George Orwell wrote in 1946, “the great enemy of clear language is

insincerity.” Unfortunately, this war has shown that many Western journalists — either by personal choice or institutional pressure — opt for insincerity in their coverage of Israel’s war on Gaza.

Some in the Western media are repeating the disastrous mistakes they made in various other conflicts in this region. For example, CNN reporter Sara Sidner had to issue an apology last month after defending Israel’s claims that Hamas beheaded babies, acknowledging that the reports were not confirmed. In the social media era, everybody shares whatever they wish. There are even websites specializing in publishing and spreading fabricated news. One may not be able to prevent individuals from

distorting the facts, but it is worrisome to see journalists, whose duty it is to inform the public with accurate information, spreading such news without even bothering to check its veracity.

Another significant issue with Western coverage of the ongoing war is the narrative it presents. In much of the Western media’s reporting on this war, there is little mention of the decades-long Israeli oppression and military occupation directed at the Palestinians or the Israeli settlements that have devastated the lives of Palestinians. It is as if the Oct. 7 attack happened out of the blue.

So, while bombs continue to rain down on besieged Palestinians in Gaza, it is essential to highlight two

points: the need to protect journalists who are risking their lives to report on the war and the problematic journalistic conduct of the Western media.

The words used by journalists are deliberate, with many using them to shape a specific narrative. However, journalists bear a great responsibility when covering the ongoing war. They need to have reliable knowledge of the historical and ideological contexts. Journalists may not be historians, but they are required to inform the public about what is happening. Their terminologies, narratives, images and videos are making history and shaping perceptions, which is why it is very important to be truthful and tell the whole story.

Israel’s war on Gaza puts journalists in peril

Prominent war journalist Kareem Shaheen noted in a post on X last month: “I thought I was desensitized to violent images after covering Syria. I guess I was not.” It has been more than a month since Israel’s war on Gaza began. The violent images and videos circulating online are more widespread and intense than anything we have witnessed in any previous conflict, even those in Syria and Ukraine.

While the Gaza Strip has been under intense Israeli bombardment, the journalists covering these events are also bearing the brunt of the war. Israel’s assault on Gaza has taken a heavy toll on journalists. At the time of writing, the Committee to Protect Journalists indicated that at least 39 jour-

nalists and media workers were among the estimated 11,000 people killed since the war began on Oct. 7. According to this organization, the first few weeks of the war were the deadliest period for journalists covering the conflict since 1992, when it began tracking such data.

In the Syrian war, the Middle East saw the highest number of journalists killed, averaging about 63 per year, while the Iraq war averaged about six annually and the Yemen conflict five. The number of journalists killed in Gaza has already surpassed that of the Ukraine-Russia war, which began in February 2022.

Journalists covering the conflict from Gaza City are working under especially

perilous conditions amid the Israeli airstrikes and a ground invasion, while also facing the possibility of their family members being killed. In one instance, Al Jazeera’s Gaza bureau chief Wael Dahdouch was broadcasting live images of the besieged territory when he received news that his wife, son, daughter, grandson and at least eight other relatives had been killed in an Israeli airstrike. Moments later, live footage showed Dahdouch entering Al-Aqsa Hospital to find his son’s body in the hospital’s morgue. Among the latest to be killed was Palestinian journalist Mohammed Abu Hasira, along with 42 family members, near Gaza City. These tragedies are just some of the many examples of the unprece-



Meher highlights importance of digital transformation

ISLAMABAD (APP): Coordinator to Minister of State and Federal Tax Ombudsman Meher Kashif Younis here on Sunday said the global Information Technology (IT) services market is expected to grow from \$1.3 trillion in 2022 to \$2.1 trillion by 2025 and Pakistan must prioritise digital transformation of businesses to meet the global challenges.

Speaking at a seminar on “Impact of Digital Transformation of Businesses” organized under the aegis of Gold Ring Economic Forum, a strategic think tank, he said that digital transformation and IT export were vital for economic growth and competitiveness in the 21st century, said a news release.

He said that Pakistan had made significant progress in this sector in recent

years. By predicting future trends, we can anticipate that there will be more opportunities and challenges for Pakistani businesses in this sector in the coming years, he added.

Meher Kashif said that the digital economy was growing rapidly and it was expected to contribute significantly to the country's economic growth in the coming years.

Pakistan is a developing country with a population of 240 million, 65 percent of whom are between 15 and 40 years old. It has a growing internet penetration rate of 23 percent year-on-year, and a vibrant mobile market with more than 170 million subscribers, he expressed.

He said some of the key technologies that hold transformation potential for Pakistani businesses

include mobile internet, cloud computing, big data, AI, fintech, internet of things and remote sensing, advanced robotics, and additive manufacturing.

These technologies, he said can enable businesses to improve their productivity, quality, agility, customer experience, and market reach, he remarked.

He said Pakistan Software Houses Association (P@SHA), the IT export revenue of Pakistani businesses has reached \$3.5 billion in 2022, up from \$2.5 billion in 2020.

He said that there was a need for a conducive regulatory environment that supports innovation, protects intellectual property rights, ensures data security and privacy, facilitates online payments and transactions, and promotes cross-border trade and col-

laboration.

Meher Kashif Younis, who is also Chairman Kyrgyzstan Trade House, said the digitalization can help Pakistan increase its GDP per capita by 3-5 percent over the next three years and will create new opportunities for businesses to sell their products and services online.

He said businesses that have invested in digital transformation have seen a higher rate of growth in their IT exports than those that have not.

Businesses that have implemented digital technologies such as cloud computing, big data, and AI have seen an average increase of 30 percent in their IT exports in the past year, compared to 20 percent for businesses that have not implemented these technologies, he added.



LAHORE: People buying old warm clothes at Empress Road.

FBR carried out 429 raids in crackdown

ISLAMABAD (APP): In an unprecedented effort to tackle the issue of non-duty paid/counterfeit cigarettes, the teams of the Federal Board of Revenue (FBR) have recently carried out a remarkable 429 raids across the country.

The dedicated efforts resulted in the seizure of approximately 16 million Non-Duty paid/counterfeit cigarette sticks, according to a news release issued here on Sunday.

On the direction of Chairman FBR, Malik Amjed Zubair Tiwana, Member Inland Revenue Operations, Mir Badshah Khan Wazir supervised the whole exercise.

According to him, the success of this exercise would convey an unequivocal message to the duty evaders to forthwith halt their illicit practices.

He also reiterated to continually fight the issue till its logical conclusion. It was further resolved that in the next phase of the drive, criminal proceedings would be initiated against such culprits.

Brazil to resume import tax

SAO PAULO (APP): Brazil, Latin America's biggest economy, will resume levying taxes on imported electric and hybrid cars, as a way to spur the country's automotive industry development.

The Brazil's Ministry of Industry, Development, Trade and Services said in a statement that the goal of the tax is to help develop the sector's productive chain and speed up the reduction in carbon dioxide emissions from Brazilian-made vehicles.

The tax will resume in January 2024 and be gradually increased until it reaches 35 percent of the value of imports in July 2026.

The measure was approved by Brazil's Foreign Trade Chamber (Camex).

According to state-run news agency Agencia Brasil, Camex also decided to reinstate the import tax on 73 chemical products, which was cut by 10 percent in May of last year.

Halal food exports:

Shahzad stresses to explore new avenues

ISLAMABAD (INP): Chairman Pakistan Hitech Hybrid Seed Association (PHHSA) Shahzad Ali Malik Sunday said as we navigate through dynamic global markets, it is crucial to explore new avenues for Halal food to propel Pakistan exports to new heights.

Talking to a delegation of exporters and industrialists, he said today its dire need to harness the potential of Halal food products on a global scale, taking inspiration from the success of Thailand in this domain, said a news release here.

He said Thailand has set an exemplary benchmark in leveraging its culinary heritage to become a significant player in the interna-

ional food market. He said Pakistan, with its rich and diverse culinary traditions, particularly the Halal food sector, possesses similar potential.

Shahzad Ali stressed the need for adopting a comprehensive strategy that involves market research, product adaptation, and targeted marketing to position Halal food products as a symbol of quality and authenticity.

Collaboration with relevant stakeholders, participation in international food exhibitions, and establishing a strong online presence can further amplify the reach of our products.

Understanding and adhering to international

food safety and quality standards is imperative, Malik added. Certifications and compliance will not only boost consumer confidence but also facilitate smoother entry into global markets, he added.

Shahzad Ali Malik Sitara-I-Imtiaz said by drawing inspiration from Thailand, we can push Halal food exports to unprecedented levels. He said dedication and expertise are vital in making this vision a reality.

He said several government agencies also played a significant role along with private sector in expanding the outreach of their businesses especially in the Halal sector.

ICCI, MCI collaborate to enhance trade environment

ISLAMABAD (APP): As part of an ongoing effort to enhance the business environment in Islamabad, a collaborative meeting was held between the Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry (ICCI) and the Metropolitan Corporation Islamabad (MCI), led by Chief Officer Rana Waqas Anwar.

The meeting, held at the invitation of ICCI President Ahsan Zafar Bakhtawari, brought together key stakeholders from both organizations to discuss pressing concerns and explore potential solutions.

During the meeting, a comprehensive range of

issues affecting the business community was addressed, including cleanliness of commercial centers, provision of facilities, and overall infrastructure development. Recognizing the vital role of MCI in addressing these challenges, the ICCI expressed its readiness to collaborate on various projects to improve the business landscape of Islamabad.

In response, Chief Officer Waqas Anwar reaffirmed MCI's commitment to prioritizing the needs of the business community and pledged to take swift action in addressing the concerns raised during the meeting.

He also acknowledged the significance of the private sector's contribution to Islamabad's economic growth and reiterated MCI's dedication to creating a conducive environment for businesses to thrive.

The meeting concluded with a renewed sense of cooperation between the ICCI and MCI, signaling a positive step forward in addressing the challenges faced by Islamabad's business community. Both the parties ICCI and MCI have expressed their commitment to working together to enhance the city's business environment and foster economic growth.

Prioritizing national security crucial to achieve goal

ISLAMABAD (APP): Former President SAARC Chamber of Commerce and Industry Iftikhar Ali Malik Sunday said apart from the importance of fostering durable relationships with neighbouring countries, prioritizing the national security is paramount, and enforcing immigration policies is a crucial step in

achieving this goal.

Talking to a delegation of industrialists led by Muslim Khan Buner here, he said the implementation of this policy will lead to a more secure and stable Pakistan, where citizens can thrive without the looming threat of terrorism and insecurity, said a press release issued here.

He said the presence of

illegal immigrants, not only from Afghanistan but from various countries, poses challenges to the socioeconomic fabric of our nation.

He said a balanced and humane approach to immigration issues will not only protect our national interests but also contribute to regional stability.

PIAF for taking admin measures, raising export to curb rupee slide

F.P. Report

LAHORE: Pakistan Industrial and Traders Associations Front (PIAF) has said that beside increasing exports and controlling imports the government will have to take administrative measures, as a large demand of cash dollars are seen in the market.

PIAF Chairman Faheemur Rehman Saigol said that massive fall of rupee value continued to damage the economy, as the Pakistani currency continued its slide, reaching more than one month low above Rs286 against the US dollar in the inter-bank market this week.

In a statement issued here today, he observed that the rupee's slide is attributed to the increased demand for foreign currency in the domestic economy, primarily driven by higher sales of automobiles, cement, petroleum oil products, and the repatriation of profits by foreign companies operating in the country.

He urged the govern-

ment to control volatility of rupee against the US dollar, as the industrial revival and economic growth is not possible without stability of local currency. He said that the massive devaluation of currency fuelled inflationary pressures, adding that two major factors contributed to the price hike. First, the prices of food and commodities as well as fuel prices skyrocketed in the international market, and second, the depreciation of the exchange rate by 30 percent also led to higher inflation, he added.

Faheem Saigol argued that this devaluation of the currency was dictated by the IMF through prior actions and it has nothing to do with macroeconomic fundamentals. He said that there was a complete breakdown of economic policy making, as the country's fiscal policy had become subservient to monetary and exchange rate policies.

PIAF Chairman said that the US dollar continued to rise against the rupee, reaching a record high

amidst growing current account deficit. The government needs to devise a strategy on war-footing to increase foreign investment in Pakistan so as to stop the upward trajectory of the dollar, he added.

He said that the monetary tightening and exchange rate depreciation resulted in higher inflation, public debt and debt servicing. The empirical evidence showed that the one percent monetary tightening hiked the inflationary pressure by 1.3 percent in the case of Pakistan, he added.

He said that 10 percent devaluation of the currency raised the Consumer Price Index (CPI)-based inflation by 0.6 percent.

As a result, he said, the 30 percent depreciation resulted in increasing inflationary pressures by approximately two percent.

This indicates that from the inflation standing at 11.5 percent on a monthly basis, nearly two percent comes through depreciation of the exchange rate, he pointed out.

Pakistan's central bank reported an improvement in the country's foreign exchange reserves (held by SBP), with an increase of \$14 million to reach \$7.50 billion in the week ending October 27. This suggests that the supply of foreign currency has been better than the demand for the US dollar in the market.

Simultaneously, the IMF is conducting a relatively smooth review of Pakistan's domestic economy under its ongoing \$3 billion loan program. Pakistan has met nearly all the conditions required for the review. The market anticipates that the Fund will approve the second tranche of its loan, amounting to \$700 million, upon the completion of the economic review, which will further boost foreign exchange reserves. He suggested that the domestic currency may stabilize around its current fair value of approximately Rs285 per dollar soon due to fluctuations in the demand and supply of foreign currency.

400 new products, technologies, and services introduced at CIIE

SHANGHAI (INP): This year over 3400 companies from 128 countries attended the six sessions of China International Import Expo (CIIE), releasing over 400 new products, technologies, and services, China Economic Net (CEN) reported.

According to the report, the CIIE witnessed more and more enterprises growing from exhibitors to investors.

Meanwhile, their confidence in the Chinese market and Chinese opportunities has been unwavering", said a quote from Archer-Daniels-Midland Co, a US agricultural origination and processing company that has been participating in CIIE for 4 years in a

At the CIIE, the company has debuted a series of products and signed contracts with multiple Chinese grain enterprises. One can find countless

cases as such in the grand six-day expo lasting from Nov. 5 to 10.

"China's unswerving practice of high-level opening-up has enabled the annual China International Import Expo (CIIE) to attract top enterprises in the world like a huge magnet", said Zhu Linbo, President for China at ADM.

This year, over 3400 companies from 128 countries attended the Business Exhibition. Among them, over 200 companies have participated in CIIE every year since its inception six years ago. To debut innovations at CIIE has become an increasingly common practice for exhibitors.

At the exhibition stand of Johnson & Johnson, over a third of the products are displayed for the first time in China.

With full attendance at all six sessions of CIIE, the company still managed to

present a new look by releasing an updated Chinese brand logo.

"CIIE is a stage to debut and gather global innovative products, and it is also a gravitational field that continues to promote the acceleration of innovation", the company said.

Behind the zeal of participating companies from around the globe are the boundless opportunities in the open Chinese market.

Global hotel management company Marriot International, in its sixth-time presence at China International Import Expo (CIIE), announced its Sheraton Hotels and Resorts brand will soon exceed 100 stores in China.

"From 2016 till now, our group has nearly doubled the number of hotels in China with three new brands launched.

We have full confidence in China's culture and

tourism market and look forward to continuously breaking new milestones in China", the company said.

Anu Rathinde, Vice President of Johnson Controls and President for Asia Pacific at the company, said that China is so big that it takes a long time for anybody to truly understand it.

"As the market grows, it's required that we launch new products, expand the scale, get into digital platforms, and foster innovation.

Even with 26 years of experience in China, I still have things to learn", he told China Economic Net (CEN).

It is learned that the company, which has been attending CIIE for six consecutive years, has already confirmed its presence at the 7th China International Import Expo (CIIE) to be held next year.

Constant borrowing exposes country to debt vulnerabilities, lifts cost

F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: The Federation of Pakistan Chambers of Commerce and Industry's Businessmen Panel (BMP) has said that the growing debt stock carries

significant fiscal costs and exposes the country to debt vulnerabilities, as highlighted in the Pakistan Development Updates various reports.

FPCCI former president and Businessmen Panel Chairman Mian Anjum Nisar emphasized that persistent fiscal deficits and debt repayments have resulted in consistently high annual gross financing needs, averaging 27% of GDP over the past decade. This level is notably higher than the emerging market threshold of 15%.

The leader of the BMP said that in the past two decades, Pakistan has witnessed two consecutive years of the highest budget deficits in 2022 and 2023. He pointed out that for the current fiscal year, a budget deficit of 7.7% of the GDP is anticipated, a staggering Rs1.3 trillion above the government's target. He expressed concerns over these persistent large budg-

et shortfalls, which have led to the rapid accumulation of public debt. This, in turn, has crowded out private investment and contributed to macroeconomic volatility.

Referring to the SBP data, he unveiled an alarming 39% increase in the external debt of the federal government, reaching Rs24.2 trillion within a year. A substantial Rs6.7 trillion increase in external debt was primarily attributed to currency depreciation. As of Sept 2023, external debt stood at Rs17.4 trillion, excluding the International Monetary Fund (IMF)'s liabilities.

Out of the total external public debt of \$85.18bn, the government owed \$64bn to multilateral and bilateral development partners including IMF which meant more than two-thirds (i.e. 75pc) of the total external public debt was on concessional terms with a longer maturity, 16pc (i.e.

\$13.5bn) from international capital markets and foreign commercial banks, and 7pc (i.e. \$7bn) of the total external public debt constitutes deposits from friendly countries like China and Saudi Arabia.

Mian Anjum Nisar said that this unsettling trend has raised concerns about fiscal sustainability and the adverse impacts of steep currency devaluation come at a time when the World Bank has cautioned Pakistan about the growing risks of its macroeconomic framework.

For the past one and half year, the country is facing a serious financial crunch and continually relying on borrowing to meet its financial needs.

FPCCI former president and Businessmen Panel Chairman said that high cost of doing business has proved to be dangerous for businesses, as ever-increasing cost of production is the real threat to the economy

amidst frequent upward revisions in policy rate and continuous fluctuations in rupee against dollar.

Mian Anjum Nisar said that the government liquidity and external vulnerability risks are elevated and there remain considerable risks around to secure required financing to fully meet its needs for the next few years. He said that constant hike in power tariff has pushed the electricity prices higher and added to the already soaring cost of trade and industry. He asked the government to shut down all expensive oil-based power plants to ensure availability of cheaper energy for consumers. He condemned the government for shifting power distribution companies' inefficiencies' burden to the consumers by jacking up the tariff under the guise of Fuel Charges Adjustment.

He observed that the aggressive economic meas-

ures, high borrowing rates, inflation, oppressive taxation and unstable currency have been negatively affecting running businesses.

With a view to deal with fiscal challenges he asked the economic managers to work on the three-way strategy by implementing short-term goals that will help to keep generating resources for smooth fiscal operations, medium-term goals where they should focus on financial inclusion, documenting the economy by designing a system where all businesses can be registered and properly document their income including collection of sales tax, initiating the process of privatization as well as improving governance by introducing reforms in each sector. As a long-term goal, the country must focus on improving its human capital, and revamping IT sectors by extending facilitations and providing all the requisite supports. In

the same way, we also need to work on designing a comprehensive and proactive strategy to tackle challenges related to strengthening border security and implementing effective and comprehensive Anti-Money Laundering and Terrorist Financing measures holding accountable and taking to task all those who are involved in illegitimate activities, undermining both our economy and national interests.

He stated that the significant jump in electricity prices and hike in gas tariffs to meet the IMF condition will put additional burden of billions of rupee on consumers.

He observed that it is unfortunate that the authorities in all governments continued to approve billions of rupees' additional burden on consumers through a direct tariff increase and an indirect increase through the withdrawal of subsidies given to exporters

and farmers earlier.

In its monthly report on Foreign Economic Assistance (FEA), the Economic Affairs Division (EAD) said against its annual target of \$17.6bn, total FEA in the July-September quarter amounted to \$3.527bn when compared to just \$2.234bn of the same period last year, an increase of 58pc. Total inflows recorded by the EAD in September came in at \$321 million against \$316m in August.

Major FEA during the first quarter flowed in at \$2.89bn in July soon after Pakistan reached an agreement with the International Monetary Fund (IMF) for a fresh short-term program.

This FEA is in addition to \$1.2bn released by the IMF on July 13 as the first tranche of the \$3bn Stand-By Arrangement (SBA) and \$1bn by the United Arab Emirates that are separately accounted for by the State Bank of Pakistan (SBP).

Court Notice

In the court of khadijah Rehman judge family court matta Swat. case# 176/FC, institution 2023. Next Hearing date 22/11/2023. Subject. Shaista Rani VS Hussain shah. Notice to defendant. 1. Hussain shah s/o Pervaz r/o Pashtoonai tehsil Matta district Swat.(Presently Abroad) Whereas the above named cannot be served in ordinary manner it is therefore proclaimed or through dually authorized agent or pleader in the court on 22/11/2023 at 8.30. Ex-parte proceeding will be initiated against you. Seal of the court.



In brief

Shahzad bags silver in WBPF event

WONJU CITY (Monitoring Desk): In a major achievement, Pakistan's Shahzad Qureshi claimed a silver medal in the ongoing 14th WBPF World Bodybuilding and Physique Sports Championships & Congress held here in South Korea. Shehzad Qureshi won a silver medal for Pakistan as he finished second in the 90 KG event. He fell short of his Indian rival, who bagged the silver while a Korean athlete claimed the bronze in the same category. Notably, this was Pakistan's second medal in the ongoing event. Arsalan Baig won the silver for the country in the Physique category. It is pertinent to mention that former Asian Champion Shahzad Qureshi also bagged a bronze medal in the men's master bodybuilding category last year after he finished third out of 20 participants competing in the category.

World Cup Qualifier Round 2

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Pakistan football team trained intensively in Al-Ahsa, Saudi Arabia, on Sunday in preparations for the upcoming FIFA World Cup 2026 Qualifier Round 2 match against Saudi Arabia on November 16. The team practiced intensively under the supervision of head coach Stephen Constantine. The national team which was placed in Group G would play the first match of round 2 against Saudi Arabia on November 16. Group "G" includes Pakistan, Saudi Arabia, Jordan and Tajikistan. Pakistan would play a home leg against Tajikistan on November 21 here at Jinnah Stadium. Pakistan squad includes Goalkeepers- Yousuf Butt, Salman Ul Haq and Hassan Ali; Defenders- Abdullah Iqbal, Haseeb Khan, Mamoon Moosa Khan, Mohibullah, Muhammad Sohail, Muhammad Saddam, Junaid Shah, Rao Umar Hayat and Muhammad Hamza Munir; Midfielders- Rahis Nabi, Alamgir Ghazi, Rajab Ali, Ali Uzair, Imran Kiyani and Harun Hamid; Forwards- Shayak Dost, Otis Khan, Fareed Ullah, Abdul Samad Arshad, Muhammad Waleed Khan and Adeel Younas; Team Officials- Stephen Constantine (Head Coach), Rogerio Ramos (Goal Keeper Coach), Claudio Altieri (Performance Coach), Muhammad Ali Khan (Manager), Azam Khan (Doctor), Muhammad Abdullah (Physio), Haider Ali (Media) and Abdul Qayyum (Masseur).

Shiffrin takes slalom

LEVI (AFP): Mikaela Shiffrin won the World Cup slalom at Levi on Sunday to chalk up her 89th career victory, despite skiing with a knee injury she suffered in training. Shiffrin took advantage of a mistake on the second run by Olympic slalom champion Petra Vlhova, who won the first race in Levi on Saturday and was ahead after Sunday's opening run. The American, who already holds the record for the most World Cup wins, finished 0.18sec ahead of Leona Popovic of Croatia with Germany's Lena Duerr third, 0.30sec behind Shiffrin. Shiffrin, who finished fourth in Saturday's race, suffered a bruised knee in a training crash last week but said it had not affected her race. "I didn't feel pain when I was skiing, it's just that I didn't train in the last 11 days," Shiffrin said after Sunday's victory.



BENGALURU: KL Rahul's 62-ball hundred became the fastest by an Indian in a Men's ODI World Cup.

Irtaza Hussain annexes 16th CNS Amateur Golf Championship title



ISLAMABAD, (APP): Irtaza Hussain clinched the 16th Chief of the Naval Staff Amateur (CNS) Golf Cup 2023 title at Margalla Greens Golf Club on Sunday.

Chief of the Naval Staff Admiral Naveed Ashraf, who was the chief guest at

the closing ceremony congratulated the winners for their remarkable success and appreciated their skills, said a press release. He lauded the high standards of the game that provided exciting and quality entertainment to the participants. He com-

mended the untiring efforts of MGGC staff and organizers for the seamless conduct of the championship.

He also appreciated the consistent and generous support from sponsors, management of MGGC Islamabad and media fraternity, without which he said the event would not have been such a resounding success.

Around 300 golfers from across Pakistan participated in various categories included Men Amateurs, Lady Amateurs, Seniors and Juniors. The closing and prize-distributing ceremony was attended by various civil and military dignitaries including officers, organizers, sponsors, golfers and media fraternity.

Homa win means McIlroy will claim fifth Race to Dubai

DUBAI (Agencies): Northern Ireland's Rory McIlroy will win a fifth Race to Dubai title at next week's season finale after Max Homa won the Nedbank Golf Challenge.

The European season ends with the DP World Tour Championship in Dubai. The point standings after Homa's first DP World Tour win means that world number two McIlroy, 34, cannot be caught by second-placed Jon Rahm.

American Homa converted his overnight one-shot lead into a four-stroke win at the event dubbed Africa's major. The 32-year-old Californian carded a six-under-par 66 to finish on 19 under in Sun City, South Africa, ahead of Ryder Cup rival Nicolai Hojgaard.

Hojgaard's Danish compatriot Thorbjorn Olesen, who launched an early charge but slumped in the final holes at the Gary Player Country Club, finished on 14 under.

American Justin Thomas finished fourth, seven shots behind Homa after Englishman Dan Bradbury missed a putt on the final hole and slipped to fifth.

Scotland's Colin Montgomerie finished the year atop the Tour's Order of Merit a record eight times, although McIlroy is the first to reach five titles since the Race to Dubai format was introduced in 2009. McIlroy is more than 2,000 points ahead of Rahm with just 2,000 available to the winner of next week's DP World Tour Championship.

Homa, playing in his first tournament since the Ryder Cup in Rome last month, had a one-shot advantage at the start of the final round at the casino resort. The world number eight was caught by Olesen, who went on the charge with six birdies in an outward 31, before an eagle on the ninth hole allowed Homa to retake the lead.

He then had a lucky break on the 14th when a wayward shot hit an official's buggy and landed back in play before birdies on the next two holes, including a 38-foot putt on the 16th, stretched Homa's lead to three. "It was a crazy day because I got off to such a good start but Thorbjorn was playing unbelievably and kept pushing us along," said Homa. A double bogey by Olesen on the 17th increased Homa's lead and ended the contest, with Hojgaard moving into second place.

World Cup: India beat Netherlands to complete perfect group stage

BENGALURU (Agencies): Shreyas Iyer and KL Rahul hit centuries as India made it nine wins from nine group-stage games with a 160-run victory over over the Netherlands.

After the top three all scored fifties, Shreyas and Rahul put on 208 in Bengaluru to take India to their second highest World Cup total, 410-4.

Shreyas ended unbeaten on 128, while Rahul's 62-ball ton is the hosts' fastest at a World Cup.

In reply, the Netherlands started well but fell away to be bowled out for 250.

With qualification long since assured and a semi-final against New Zealand, in Mumbai on Wednesday, much of the pre-game focus was on Virat Kohli and whether he could surpass Sachin Tendulkar's record and make his 50th one-day international century.

India batting first gave him a chance but he was made to wait as openers Rohit Sharma and Shubman Gill shared a stand of 100, doing so in quick time. Gill made a 30-ball half-century but there were cheers when he departed as it brought Kohli

to the crease.

Rohit went for 61 but Kohli, after a slightly tentative start, settled into his innings and looked assured at the crease, making the moment he was bowled by Roelof van der Merwe for 51 all the more shocking to those in attendance at the M. Chinnaswamy Stadium. Shreyas and Rahul helped them move past that surprise with a boundary-laden partnership that helped India score 126 runs in the last 10 overs.

Shreyas reached his first World Cup ton from 84 balls in the 46th over and was joined on three figures by Rahul, who hit back-to-back sixes to start the last to reach the milestone.

Despite losing Wesley Barresi early, the Netherlands started well with a number of eye-catching shots from Max O'Dowd and Colin Ackermann in the powerplay.

But Ackerman was dismissed in the 13th over and, while there was never any sort of collapse, wickets fell at regular intervals before, with the chase long since abandoned, Teja Nidamanuru holed out in the 48th over to bring the match to a close.

Dominant India set for knockout challenge

No Kohli century means this was not quite the dream day for India but it was another very comfortable win. So much so that Kohli was one of four part-time - at best - bowlers given a chance once the Netherlands' chances went from slim to fractionally-more-than-nil. He was even able to take his first ODI wicket since 2014.

The damage had been done with the bat and that the top five all passed 50 and Rahul made his first score of note for a month only adds to the increasingly long list of positives for India.

However, impressive as they have been, their real test starts now. No one even contemplated a scenario in which they failed to make the last four. This tournament has always been about whether they can get over the line in an ICC event for the first time since 2011.

New Zealand, who sent them packing at the same stage four years ago, stand in their way. India look to have all the tools to make this another home World Cup to remember and have two more games to prove it.



LIVERPOOL: Mohamed Salah of Liverpool celebrates after scoring the team's second goal during the Premier League match.

Salah extends scoring streak to send Liverpool joint top of Premier League

LIVERPOOL (AFP): Liverpool moved level on points with Manchester City and Arsenal at the top of the Premier League as Mohamed Salah extended his scoring streak at Anfield with a double in a 3-0 win over Brentford on Sunday.

The Egyptian took his tally for the season to 12, nine of which have come at Anfield, as Liverpool continued their perfect record at home this season.

Nine of Salah's goals have come from Darwin Nunez assists and the Uruguayan played provider to break the deadlock after being frustrated in front of goal earlier in the first half.

Twice Nunez had the ball in the net only to be ruled offside. But his clever pass into Salah was met with a calm finish into the far corner to open the floodgates on 39 minutes.

Salah is the first player

ever to score in each of Liverpool's first six home league games of a season.

Brentford had their chances as Allison Becker was needed to make great saves to deny Ethan Pinnock and Bryan Mbeumo.

However, there was no way back for the Bees once Salah was left unmarked to head in Kostas Tsimikas' cross to the back post on the hour mark.

Diogo Jota then fired in the third 16 minutes from time as Liverpool made it nine wins and 27 goals from nine games at Anfield in all competitions this season. City can restore their three-point lead at the top of the table when the champions travel to Chelsea later on Sunday.

Fortress Villa Park

Aston Villa made it 13 consecutive home wins in the Premier League as Unai

Emery's side eased past Fulham 3-1.

Antonee Robinson's own goal and a sweet strike from outside the box by Villa captain John McGinn put the hosts in command by half-time.

A superb counter-attack, rounded off by Ollie Watkins, secured the points midway through the second half, before Raul Jimenez pulled a goal back for Fulham. Victory lifts Villa up to fifth and within a point of the top four.

West Ham snapped their streak of three consecutive Premier League defeats with a thrilling 3-2 victory over Nottingham Forest.

Lucas Paqueta's fine strike had given the Hammers a perfect start after three minutes, but they needed to rely on their threat from set-pieces to turn the game around in the second half. Goals either side of the break from Taiwo Awoniyi and Anthony Elanga had put Forest 2-1 up.

However, two James Ward-Prowse corners were headed in by Jarrod Bowen and Tomas Soucek to ease any rising pressure on David Moyes. Brighton may have enjoyed famous back-to-back victories over Ajax in the Europa League, but the Seagulls struggles domestically go on after Sheffield United snatched a 1-1 draw from the Amex.

Roberto De Zerbi's men were in complete control as Simon Adingra opened the scoring. But Brighton were forced to see out the final 20 minutes with 10 men when Mahmoud Dahoud was sent-off and the Blades took advantage to level through Adam Webster's own goal. A point edges Sheffield United off the bottom of the table and within four points of safety.

Pakistan's dismal World Cup ends in misery

Shahid Afridi

PESHAWAR: In the last match of the ICC Cricket World Cup 2023, Pakistan faced a defeat by 93 runs at the hands of England, concluding Pakistan's journey in the World Cup.

This is the first time in the history of the Cricket World Cup that Pakistan had to face defeat in five matches. Pakistan secured the fifth position in the ICC Cricket World Cup 2023. Afghanistan was sixth, England seventh, Bangladesh eighth, Sri Lanka ninth, and the Netherlands tenth.

The first semi-final between India and New Zealand is scheduled to be played on November 15 at Wankhede Stadium in

Mumbai at 1:30 PM, while the second semi-final between Australia and South Africa will take place on November 16 at Eden Gardens, Kolkata, at 1:30 PM. The final will be held on November 19 at Modi Stadium, Ahmedabad, between the successful teams from the semi-finals.

Pakistan's performance in the ICC Cricket World Cup 2023 is concerning, having faced five defeats, highlighting the failure of the coaching staff. The defeat against Afghanistan was particularly shocking, leading to Pakistan's elimination from the semi-final race. However, Pakistan's performance in warm-up matches revealed their potential, raising questions about their inconsistency.

In the ICC Cricket World Cup 2023, Pakistan won four out of nine matches, with a notable match against Afghanistan where they played 50 overs, scoring 282 runs at the loss of seven wickets. In other matches, they were all out for 286 runs against the Netherlands on October 6, achieved the target of 345 runs in the 47th over against Sri Lanka on October 10, faced defeat with 191 runs against India on October 14, scored 305 runs before being bowled out in the 46th over against Australia on October 20, and got out at 270 runs in 46.4 overs against South Africa on October 27. On October 31, Pakistan chased the target of 205 runs in the 33rd over

against Bangladesh.

November 4 turned out to be fortunate for Pakistan when secured a victory against New Zealand in Bangalore. New Zealand scored 401 runs, and Pakistan, at 26 overs with one wicket down, had scored 200 runs when rain intervened, and Pakistan won by 21 runs. On November 11, in the match against England, Pakistan's entire team was bowled out for 244 runs in the 44th over.

Fakhar Zaman, with an average of 73.33, scored 220 runs in four matches, including the best innings of 126 not out. Additionally, he hit 14 fours and 18 sixes. Mohammad Rizwan scored 395 runs with an average of

65.83, including one century and one half-century. His best innings were 131 not out. Salman Aga scored 51 runs with an average of 51 in three matches.

Abdullah Shafique scored 336 runs with an average of 42 in eight matches, with the best innings of 113 runs. Babar Azam scored 320 runs with an average of 40 in nine matches, including the best innings of 74 runs. Saud Shakeel scored 241 runs with an average of 34.42, and Imam-ul-Haq scored 162 runs with an average of 27.

In the bowling department, Mohammad Wasim took ten wickets for 215 runs in 38.1 overs, with the best bowling figure of 3/31. Shahin Afridi secured 18



In brief

Death anniversary of Shakeb Jalali observed

ISLAMABAD (APP): The death anniversary of famous Urdu Ghazal poet Shakeb Jalali was observed here on Sunday. His real name was Syed Hassan Rizvi and he was born on October 1, 1934, in Jalal town near Aligarh. After partition, he came to Pakistan in 1950. Shakeb Jalali had a unique way of poetry, and gave an innovative tone to Urdu ghazal undoubtedly. His first poetry collection "Roshni Aye Roshni" was published in 1972, just six years after his tragic death, and included in a few important poetry collections of Urdu. Sang-e-Meel published his complete poetical works as Kulliyat-e-Shakeb Jalali in 2004. On November 12, 1966, the tragic news of his death made the literary world sad after he committed suicide under a train in Sargodha.

Railways to introduce TDAS

ISLAMABAD (APP): Pakistan Railways is set to introduce the 'Train Driver Assistant System' (TDAS) to help train drivers a clear view of the railway tracks up to an impressive distance of 700 meters. "The technology aims to enhance the safety and efficiency of train operations during adverse weather conditions, particularly in the presence of dense smog and fog," an official in the Ministry told APP. The system, he said the TDAS is set to revolutionize the way trains navigate through foggy landscapes. It promised not only to avert potential accidents but also to facilitate smooth rail travel when visibility is severely compromised. He said the capabilities of this digital system extend beyond improved visibility; it can also identify and monitor vital elements such as signals, level crossings, gates, track obstructions, and other potential hazards within the same 700-meter radius. The official said this comprehensive approach to training management promises to reduce the risk of accidents significantly. Initially, he said the department was planning to install the anti-fog device in four engines. However, Pakistan Railways has outlined a strategic expansion plan, with the ultimate goal of equipping all trains with this life-saving technology in the coming year. He said in a move to combat the persistent challenge of fog-related train delays, Pakistan Railways has joined hands with the University of Engineering Taxila (UET) to introduce a cutting-edge 'Digital Railway Driving System.'

Growing traffic woes in Islamabad

ISLAMABAD (APP): Road users in Islamabad are grappling with severe traffic congestion, particularly at the city's main entrance, Faizabad, during peak hours. The presence of Islamabad Traffic Police personnel, combined with operational police, has intensified the situation, leading to allegations of undue stops and stringent penalties for alleged traffic violations. The Safe City cameras at this entry point are touted as potential proof of the traffic chaos, although authorities have yet to address the mounting concerns. This surge in traffic policing practices follows a recent increase in fine amounts for traffic violations. Residents report instances of misbehavior by traffic police officers, with arguments and confrontations becoming commonplace. It is claimed that engaging in discussions or disagreements with the police can result in escalated fines and the imposition of additional penalty sections.



ISLAMABAD: Woman visiting stall during "Folk Festival Lok Mela" at Lok Virsa.

Mushaal meets Chief Advisor to His Excellency Pope Francis of Vatican city

ISLAMABAD (APP): Special Assistant to Prime Minister for Human Rights and Women Empowerment Mushaal Hussein Mullick had a comprehensive meeting with Chief Advisor Adel to His Excellency Pope Francis head of the Catholic Church, the bishop of Rome and sovereign of the Vatican City State. They discussed matters of mutual interest including Interfaith, working towards co-existence, eliminating the possibility of discord, violent or non-violent, said in a press release issued here on Sunday.

Both the dignitaries agreed that the teachings of all religions are based on peace, love and harmony and a true follower of any religion can never think of provoking hatred against

other faiths.

They reaffirmed their commitment that through broader dialogue and effective communication, each side will be able to understand the other dispassionately and curb those prejudices that give rise to hatred and conflict in religion.

The Chief Advisor to His Excellency Pope Francis Head of the Vatican invited Mushaal to visit the Vatican City and send the message of peace and interfaith harmony to the world as a Muslim woman of the 21st century. Mushaal said that it was need of the time to develop and identify mystical interpretations around the true moderate and tolerant message of Islam to the world and become an enabler towards meaningful inter-

faith dialogues.

The guiding idea is not to tamper with the basic tenets of Islam or any faith but to present them in a form wrapped with the message of love, tolerance and moderation, as the Sufis did in order to avoid a clash of civilizations and resolve global conflicts.

Both agreed that religious leaders, as spiritual guides and moral authorities, have a profound influence on their followers.

Their collective voice can be utilized as a powerful force for the peaceful settlement of issues concerning humanity, especially the conflicts of the Palestine-Israel and Kashmiri as human lives are priceless regardless of caste, colour, creed, religion and nationality.

PPP to start election campaign from KP next week

ISLAMABAD (APP): Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP) is likely to start an election campaign next week from Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP) for general polls to be conducted on February 8, 2024, by the Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP).

"Chairman PPP, Bilawal Bhutto Zardari will lead the election campaign and address the public during the corner meetings and public gatherings in different cities of the province," official sources of PPP told APP. The local leadership and workers of KP have been directed to finalize all the necessary arrangements regarding the election campaign by the party chief in the province.

FBR crackdown on Non-Duty paid cigarettes with 429 raids

F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: In an unprecedented effort to tackle the issue of Non-Duty Paid/Counterfeit cigarettes, the teams of the Federal Board of Revenue (FBR) have recently carried out a remarkable 429 raids across the country.

The dedicated efforts resulted in the seizure of approximately 16 million Non-Duty paid/counterfeit cigarette sticks, according to a news release issued here on Sunday.

On the direction of Chairman FBR, Malik Amjed Zubair Tiwana, Member Inland Revenue Operations, Mir Badshah



Khan Wazir supervised the whole exercise.

According to him, the success of this exercise would convey an unequivocal message to the duty evaders to forthwith halt their illicit practices.

He also reiterated that he will continue to fight the issue till its logical conclusion. It was further resolved that in the next phase of the drive, criminal proceedings would be initiated against such culprits.

Health advocates urge to strengthen GHWs on tobacco products

ISLAMABAD (APP): The public health advocates have issued a compelling plea for an immediate expansion of Graphic Health Warnings (GHW) on tobacco products within the country.

In a statement issued by the Society for the Protection of the Rights of the Child (SPARC), these activists have conveyed profound apprehension regarding the devastating impact of tobacco consumption on public health, particularly among children. They contend that fortified GHWs can assume a pivotal role in diminishing tobacco usage and averting associated health hazards.

Malik Imran Ahmed, the Country Head of the Campaign for Tobacco-Free Kids (CTFK), has emphasized the urgency for Pakistan to take immediate measures to augment the size and visibil-

ity of GHWs on tobacco products. The prevailing health warning, currently set at 60%, frequently goes unnoticed by consumers, including vulnerable children, owing to its diminutive dimensions and discreet placement. It's worth noting that Pakistan's neighbouring countries such as India, Sri Lanka, Nepal, the Maldives, and Myanmar have adopted significantly larger GHWs.

Imran has recommended increasing the GHW size to encompass a minimum of 85% of the primary display areas of cigarette packs and other tobacco products. This decisive action would guarantee that the warnings become conspicuous and easily discernible for all consumers, with particular consideration to children, serving as a continuous reminder of the perils associated with tobacco consumption.

Free and fair polls – a key to strong democracy

ISLAMABAD (APP): Free and fair elections, through inclusivity, accountability and transparency, are fundamental in democracy, ensuring the rule of law and enabling people to have a final say in decision-making and state affairs.

The legitimacy of democracy, in any form, is rooted in the support and will of people to an extent where people firmly believe that their will is respected through a transparent process in vote casting and counting processes. Within an atmosphere of elections that uphold freedom and fairness, a multitude of voices can actively participate in the political process. This inclusiveness not only strengthens democratic institutions but also reflects the diverse tapestry of beliefs and ideologies within the country. Ensuring the significance of each vote, Pakistan can pave the way for a just and prosperous society where the rule of law is ensured, people will take precedence, the constitution fully adheres and democratic institutions enjoy full liberty.

Globally, the conduct of free and fair elections contributes to elevating Pakistan's standing and cultivating trust with its international partners. It showcases the nation's dedication to democratic principles and human rights. Establishing and fortifying democratic processes and institutions is a shared duty of the governments, the electorate, political entities and other state stakeholders. Genuine and periodic elections are vital for safeguarding the rights and interests of the people. The practical experience underscores that everyone's right to participate in their country's government is crucial for the effective enjoyment of fundamental freedoms.

Civil society organizations and the media are pivotal in overseeing elections and guaranteeing their fairness. This section underscores their contributions and stresses the importance

of maintaining their independence.

By fostering transparent electoral processes, elected officials are held accountable for their actions. This accountability is instrumental in combating corruption and ensuring that the government operates for the benefit of all citizens, rather than a select few. Keeping in view the vitality of electioneering and electoral process, the Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) is putting in sincere efforts to guarantee free, fair and undisputed elections in the country.

Prime Minister Anwaar ul Haq

Kakar's recent meeting with Chief Election Commissioner (CEC) Sikandar Sultan Raja also reflected their dedication to ensuring free and fair elections.

"The ECP and its nationwide election officials, poll workers and volunteers are committed to diligently ensuring a smooth and transparent election process," said an official of the Election Commission. "We are completing preparations to ensure that the core of democracy rests on the representation of people where each vote is acknowledged and tallied." He mentioned conducting various awareness sessions, especially with the students by the ECP in collaboration with the Pakistan Institute of Legislative Development and Transparency (PILDAT) and the United Nations Development Program (UNDP) since November 2021. So far 707 students' orientation sessions have been conducted besides 34 media workshops facilitated by the ECP's Media Coordination and Outreach Wing (MCO) in collaboration with key civil society organizations. These sessions involved a diverse array of participants, spanning women, minorities, transgender individuals, people with disabilities, academia, bloggers, volunteer students and local print and electronic media.

Around 26,000 voter education brochures were dispatched to Balochistan, 100,000 to Sindh and 30,000 to Khyber Pakhtunkhwa for the awareness of the general public.

In the preparations process, the ECP initiated an SMS service to check vote status by sending CNIC number to 8300 or verification through the District Election Commissioner's office in their area, delimitation of constituencies is being finalized for official release on November 30.

The ECP is also set to enlist over one million individuals for the polling process as a list of Presiding Officers, Assistant Presiding Officers and polling staff is being finalized for nationwide deployment.

Like always, the ECP has also finalized the code of conduct for international observers and is engaged with Meta and Facebook to explore strategies for raising awareness about the electoral processes.

Both organizations engaged in fruitful discussions that encompassed translating Facebook community standards into Urdu and regional languages to address societal polarization. Since, a stereotype preparations module for the conduct of elections is revealed by the ECP prior to each election, yet the challenge with this office remains as to how to make the elections credible as we have a checked history of election results.

It is very rare that all political parties accept the results with open hearts. No matter, there can also be political ill will of these parties but at least the Election Commission should ensure that no figure is raised towards it. Furthermore, in this age of digital and social media when it is difficult to hide information like the past, the ECP must have to set its course keeping in mind the use of the latest gadgets for the flow of information about electioneering and declaration of results.

History will never forget world's 'criminal silence' over Israel's Gaza genocide: Nilofar

ISLAMABAD (APP): Chairperson National Commission on the Status of Women (NCSW) Nilofar Bakhtiar has said that history will never forget the criminal silence of the world's leading human rights leaders on the genocide of Palestinians in Gaza.

Addressing the International Conference on 'Women in Islam: Status and Empowerment' jointly organized by the OIC and the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia in Jeddah on Wednesday, she said Israel's ongoing attacks in the Gaza Strip were a huge political and humanitarian disaster. The NCSW chairperson said the Palestinian

people were facing indescribable pain.

More than 7,700 Palestinians had been killed and over 19,740 injured and that number was increasing. About 2,400 or 66 percent were the children among the total dead, she added.

Nilofar said schools and hospitals were being bombed the blockade (of the Gaza Strip) has been tightened. She said the Israeli occupation meant enslaving the Palestinian people, with brutalities, illegal detentions, imprisonment and extrajudicial executions. She said Israel's continuous occupation of

Palestinian territories and the mistreatment of Palestinians was a question mark on the "sleeping conscience" of the powerful people of the world.

She criticized the international community for not taking adequate measures to stop the illegal occupation of Palestinian territories.

She regretted that some member countries of the United Nations tried to justify the Israeli aggression. How could the indiscriminate bombing of the entire population (of Gaza) be called a defensive operation with the vague aim of destroying Hamas, she questioned.

TRT film festival sheds light on global humanitarian woes

ISLAMABAD (APP): The TRT Humanitarian Film Festival was organized to shed light on global humanitarian issues providing an essential platform for filmmakers to address humanitarian concerns from their unique perspectives.

This marked the festival's fifth year and during the event, organized by Türkiye Radio and Television (TRT) in Istanbul, the participants engaged in in-depth discussions on significant topics including war, conflict, women's rights, the climate crisis, and more, while connecting with film producers and industry professionals.

The Festival also centered on other topics including migration crisis, environmental pollution, hunger, famine, homelessness, and poverty while emphasizing importance of humanity.

The TRT Special Award at the festival was presented to film "Night" by Palestinian Director Ahmad Saleh.

On the occasion, General Director of TRT, Mehmet Zahid Sobaci and Türkiye Directorate of Communications, Fahrettin Altun presented awards to the winning films at a ceremony held at the end of the Festival. Addressing the ceremony, General Director of TRT thanked the producers and directors for their participation and said the Festival was a result of TRT's "human-centered" approach.

"We must lift the blockade in the world's mind," Zahid Sobaci said and noted that they needed to bring stories of unheard cries to the world and that the TRT Special Award given to the film "Night", tells the story of the tragedy in Palestine, was a testament to TRT's mission. Sobaci said, "Since October 7, Israel has been carrying out a comprehensive massacre against people of

Gaza. They are committing atrocities without discrimination, targeting infants, children, women, and sick people. Israel has been demolishing hospitals, sacred places, schools, refugee camps, and committing crimes against humanity while the West attempts to suppress and silence conscientious citizens who take to streets in support of Gaza. "Our President, Recep Tayyip Erdogan stands in solidarity with people and cries out for justice in public squares. Using all available means to strive for peace and, through his unwavering stance, he is upholding dignity of humanity," Sobaci maintained.

Emphasising the importance of TRT Humanitarian Film Festival project, Sobaci, said, "For years, imaginary heroes, supposed righteousness, and certain concepts have been produced from a single Center and presented to us as if they were a set of universal values.

Now, we must lift blockade in the world's mind. And here, the responsibility lies with us, with you."

General Director TRT, further maintained, "As Türkiye's public broadcaster, we adopt a human-centered approach in all our television and radio channels, digital news platforms, mobile applications, and international digital platform called Tabii."

He expressed his pleasure in hosting the participants, who focus on humanitarian issues, and holding the Humanitarian Film Festival in Türkiye. "A week ago, we celebrated the centenary of our Republic, we have been striving for the well-being of this region for a thousand years, you are in a country that has always used its power, technology, and will in favour of the oppressed," he added.



ISLAMABAD: A group photo of participants of Alumni ceremony titled "Bachpan se Pachpan tak" with Principal Prof Sabah Faisal held at Islamabad College for Girls (ICG) F6/2.

Construction work resumed

BALKH (Khaama Press): Local officials in Balkh province say that construction work on a water supply network has resumed after two years of suspension. This is one of the largest water supply networks in Balkh – a project started under the former government. The project, which will cost 260 million afghanis will be completed in two months. The water project will provide more than 100,000 people with drinking water.

Afghan national shot dead

KABUL (Khaama Press): An Afghan national was shot dead and his wife was wounded in a shooting allegedly carried out by her first husband in neighbor country, local media reported on Sunday. The deceased, Meer Afzal, and his wife, Saira Afzal, 35, intended to move to Afghanistan along with her 14-year-old daughter Ambareen from her first husband, amid the ongoing process of deportation of Afghans to their home country.

Guterres offers assessment of Afghanistan to UNSC

KABUL (TOLONews): The UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres, in an assessment of the situation of Afghanistan to the UN Security Council, recommended a roadmap for reintegration of the country into the international system.

On 16 March 2023, the UN Security Council unanimously adopted Resolution 2679 requesting the Secretary-General to provide the Security Council an independent assessment on Afghanistan, no later than 17 November 2023.

In the assessment seen by TOLONews, Guterres stated that the urgent needs of the Afghans require a general shift away from politically driven aid approaches towards increased and more sustainable assistance, “especially in key sectors such as food security, livelihoods and health.”

Guterres stressed that the mechanisms to support engagement should be created and a UN Special Envoy should be appointed to ensure sufficient and dedicated resources to facilitate engagement among international and Afghan stakeholders, spearhead coordination and

connect with the proposed and existing platforms.

After the Islamic Emirate came to power in August 2021, Afghanistan plunged into a dire political, economic and humanitarian crisis. The Islamic Emirate, the current ruling party in Afghanistan, has not yet been recognized by any country as it failed to fulfill its commitment at international levels, the assessment said.

The document also emphasized adherence to principles of non-discrimination, ensuring respect for women’s rights and their full participation as well as the respect for fundamental rights and freedoms of all Afghans.

The assessment also highlighted priority areas of building confidence between international and Afghan stakeholders, and among Afghans themselves as:

- Expanding international assistance that contributes to the basic needs of the Afghan people.

- Establishing economic dialogue and reforms to begin to resolve the many barriers to economic recovery.

- Enable partial restoration

tion of regular transit, trade, and other means of connectivity between Afghans and the world.

- Encouraging and assisting activities that help Afghans realise their political, economic, cultural and social rights.

Referring to the international concerns about the use of Afghan soil as threats to other countries, planning and financing of terrorist acts, and the production, sale and trafficking of illegal narcotics; the UN Secretary-General suggested ‘effectively’ requiring

coordination and cooperation between the de facto Afghan officials and the international stakeholders on a “bilateral and multilateral basis.”

The assessment also stressed supporting bilateral and multilateral security cooperation; cooperating with international counter-narcotics efforts; strengthening international borders, including effective border controls; expanding international cooperation and assistance in areas that advance regional and global priorities; reviewing and updating relevant provisions of the UN 1988 Sanctions list and gradually

resuming diplomatic engagement inside Afghanistan.

The document recommends that the international community and Afghan stakeholders begin a more coherent political engagement process, arguing that more integrated and coherent international engagement should be pursued through a performance-based roadmap.

Referring to the Afghan de facto authorities who insist on recognition as the legitimate government of Afghanistan, he said: “Doing so (offering recognition) comes with acceptance of their obligations and commitments in international conventions, and good faith measures to comply with these through policy, legislation and in practice.”

The document underscored the impact of the restrictions imposed by the interim Afghan government, saying that it is important to emphasize the commitments and obligations of the State of Afghanistan as a “signatory to the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, and as a party to the CEDAW, ICCPR, ICESCR.

Obligations under the CEDAW, ICCPR, ICESCR, and other instruments include ensuring that women and girls enjoy equal rights with men to education at all levels, employment and occupation, and to participate in government policy-making and other forms of public life.”

Progress would be indicated by measurable steps to implement fulfilling Afghanistan’s treaty obligations and other commitments under international law; taking meaningful steps to improve Afghanistan’s compliance with its treaty obligations, notably with regard to equal treatment and access; reinforcing and establishing inclusive forms of governance that are accessible and serve all sections of the population, across the country.

Guterres stressed the need to pursue intra-Afghan dialogue to achieve more inclusive governance.

“A national political dialogue that reflects the views and participation of all Afghans should lead to the establishment of a predictable rule of law-based governance and an inclu-



sive constitutional order that enshrines the rights of citizens in law and creates a predictable legal landscape,” the document said.

Measurable progress on upholding the obligations of the “State of Afghanistan” and on inclusive governance and intra-Afghan dialogue will pave the way toward the end state of full normalization and integration of Afghanistan within the international system, the document stated.

According to the docu-

ment, several recommendations are proposed for “an Afghanistan at peace with itself and its neighbors, fully reintegrated into the international community,” including:

- A series of proposed measures that can be taken immediately and aimed at addressing the basic needs of the Afghan people and strengthening trust through more structured engagement.

- A call for international attention to and cooperation on issues that impact

regional and global security and stability.

- A proposed roadmap for political engagement designed to reintegrate Afghanistan fully into the international community, in line with the State of Afghanistan’s international commitments and obligations, and with a degree of domestic input and inclusivity conducive to future peace and stability.

- A set of mechanisms and formats to ensure the coordination and implementation of all the above.

Russia delivers 40 metric tons of humanitarian aid to Afghanistan

KABUL (Khaama Press): In response to a recent earthquake in Herat, Russia’s Defense Ministry has dispatched two special flights carrying approximately 40 metric tons of humanitarian aid to Afghanistan, as announced by the Russian Foreign Ministry.

“Humanitarian cargo weighing some 40 metric tons was delivered to Kabul by two special flights of the Russian Defense Ministry on behalf of the Russian government and the

Moscow-based Afghan Business Center,” Russia’s diplomatic agency said on its website.

“Therefore, Russia continues to provide humanitarian assistance to the friendly Afghan people affected by a recent devastating earthquake in Herat,” Russia’s Foreign Ministry added.

Meanwhile, the Russian embassy in Kabul said on social media platform X, “Approximately 40 tons of humanitarian aid from the

Government of the Russian Federation and the Afghanistan Trade Center in Moscow, headed by Mr Mohammad Nader Shah, was delivered to Kabul on two special flights arranged by the Ministry of Defense of Russia.”

The Taliban officials revealed that this significant contribution, comprising food and non-food items, was delivered at Kabul Airport. Several officials, including the acting minister of the ministry,

were present during the handover ceremony.

The aid package includes critical items such as 5,000 kilograms of formula, 10,000 kilograms of sugar, 2,181 packages of oil, 1,000 warm woollen blankets, 1,000 quilts, and 756 pairs of cotton socks, 120 packs of camel wool socks, 132 types of wool socks, 350-bed sheets, and 1,000 children’s jackets.

On October 7, the European-Mediterranean Seismological Center con-

firmed a powerful 6.2 magnitude earthquake striking Afghanistan.

The epicentre, located 42 kilometres northwest of Herat, a city with 272,000 residents and the administrative hub of Herat Province, struck at a depth of ten kilometres.

Tragically, the earthquake resulted in over 2,400 fatalities and left at least 2,000 individuals with injuries, as reported by the Afghanistan National Disaster Management Authority.

Media playing essential role in collecting aid

KABUL (TOLONews): Officials in the Islamic Emirate say that media reports in the country have played an essential role in collecting aid for the refugees deported from Pakistan.

The spokesman of the Islamic Emirate told TOLONews that depicting the gaps and problems faced by newly returned refugees by the media has helped the aid process.

However, some analysts also consider the role of the media to be important and effective in covering the moment-to-moment arrival of refugees and the coherence of aid to them.

Following the part of the special debate program of TOLONews with the participation of the officials of the Islamic Emirate, the private sector and some analysts and aid activists, referencing the coherence of public aid and aid institutions for the forcibly deported refugees from Pakistan, said the officials in the Islamic Emirate consider the role of the media important in order to organize the collection and delivery of aid to the large number of recently returned refugees.

Zabihullah Mujahid, in a conversation with

TOLONews said that the media has played an important role in regulating the affairs of the refugees by broadcasting various aspects of the problems of refugees.

“Our country’s media followed up on the issue of refugees in a very responsible way.

All our television channels, all our media and radio tried very hard in the area of seeking help and in the area of listening to complaints, and had good reports.”

Zabihullah Mujahid said. At the same time, the Ministry of Economy, which is responsible for the coordination of emergency aid to refugees, emphasized that it is implementing programs in various sectors, including attracting and collecting aid and settling refugees.

“Different committees that have been formed in this direction have taken important steps in attracting and collecting aid, as well as the issue of housing and shelter, and also making important programs to create employment in the private and public sectors, related to the capacities among our refugees,” said Abdul

Latif Nazari, deputy minister of economy. Some analysts considered the wide coverage of the arrival effective, and said the highlighting the challenges of refugees deported from Pakistan was important, particularly their emphasizing the importance of the media.

“Thanks to the blessings of our country’s media, they make everyone aware of how the refugees entered Afghanistan, what they are doing, what they are eating and what their health status is, whether they are well or not,” said Ahmad Ferdaws Behgazin, an economic analyst.

Officials in the Islamic Emirate, referring to the effectiveness of the assistance provided by aid organizations and businessmen for the refugees deported from Pakistan, also announced the creation of two bank accounts that are collecting cash donations from inside and outside Afghanistan.

Eleven days have passed since the beginning of the deportation of Afghan refugees from Pakistan. According to statistics, more than 200,000 people have returned to Afghanistan from various ports from Pakistan.

More than 3,000 migrants return to Afghanistan from Turkey in 20 days



KABUL (Khaama Press): In the last 20 days, 3,090 Afghan people were flown from Turkey to Kabul due to deportation, as reported by the head of the Legal Support Directorate of the

Ministry of Refugees’ Affairs.

According to the source, among these 3,090 individuals who were deported by air, there were 7 families and 7 children.

Assistance in the form of cash has been provided to 3,083 of these individuals by the International Organization for Migration (IOM), with the total assistance amounting to

36,996,000 Afghanis. Additionally, the source states that 1,402 of them have received healthcare services through the same office, and 2,416 individuals have been added to the contact list.

However, some people with duplicate names or those not yet on the list haven’t been registered in the Ministry of Registration and Statistics database.

Meanwhile, the joint reception office, situated at Kabul International Airport, run by the Ministry of Refugees’ Affairs and the International Organization for Migration, had been temporarily inactive due to the regime change in the country.

However, it resumed operations recently and is now prepared to welcome returning individuals.

Recently, neighbouring countries such as Iran, Pakistan, and Turkey have

escalated their deportation efforts amid the ongoing severe humanitarian crisis in the country, exacerbated by the Herat earthquake.

According to the reports, over 6,000 Afghan migrants re-entered the country in a single day via the Torkham and Spin Boldak borders.

In a statement on Sunday, the Ministry of Refugees of Afghanistan disclosed that by Saturday, November 11, a total of 6,101 Afghan migrants had returned through the Torkham and Spin Boldak borders.

A significant number of refugees have been subjected to forced deportation from Pakistan, primarily stemming from the absence of proper documentation. This challenging situation highlights the urgent need for humanitarian support and coordinated efforts to address the plight of these vulnerable individuals.

Returnees want their children educated

JALALABAD (Pajhwok): Afghan repatriated families in eastern Nangarhar province have expressed concerns about the education of their children and asked government to provided education facilities for their children.

Abdullah, one of the

returnees, said that he lived in Peshawar city and his three sons were studying in schools there. He said that his children’s education left incomplete after returning to Afghanistan.

Abdullah said: “The education system here is different from the educa-

tion system in Pakistan, we can’t decide what to do about the education of our children here, our children endured many hardships to learn something there.”

Khyali Khan is another repatriate, who just returned from Pakistan’s Panjab province and ended his life as refugee.

He said his children were minor but next year they will be eligible to be enrolled in school.

He told Pajhwok Afghan News ‘Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan (IEA) government must provide their children education facilities because they could not send their children to schools in Pakistan, it is a strange country but here they are committed to educate their children.

Eid Mohammad, originally hailing from Ghazni province is another repatriate, said he lived in Islamabad. He said due to poverty he sent his children to religious schools.

He asks the government to provide both religious and scientific education facilities for their children.

Mufti Habib Hazrat Haqqani, the provincial Education Department Director, said that all the returnees’ children will be provided education facilities in Nangarhar province.

He said, with the support of some humanitarian organizations, stationery items are being distributed to repatriated children in Torkham. Some children who studied in Pakistan and want to resume their education here would be provided the examination facility on the bases of which their knowledge level would be decided and referred to the classes.

According to Haqqani, if a considerable number of returnees live in a camp, they will be provided education facilities and a school will be established for them.

The government of Pakistan has warned all Afghan refugees in that country to leave that country or they will be evicted by force.

The official figures shows, so far 50,000 families have returned to the country through the Torkham crossing.

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The official figures shows, so far 50,000 families have returned to the country through the Torkham crossing.



KABUL (Khaama Press): The Ministry of Migrant Affairs of Afghanistan has reported that more than 6,000 Afghan migrants returned to the country in a single day through the Torkham and Spin Boldak borders.

In a statement released on Sunday, the Ministry reported that as of Saturday, November 11, a total of 6,101 Afghan migrants have returned to the country through the Torkham and Spin Boldak borders.

According to the Ministry’s statement, 720 families, comprising 4,207 individuals, including 82 individuals who were

forcibly returned, have returned to the country.

Similarly, based on information from the border authorities in Torkham, Nangarhar province, 331 families, totalling 1,794 individuals, have returned from Pakistan.

The statement further indicates that the returning migrants are being registered in the offices of the Ministry of Migrant Affairs in the respective provinces and are being referred to the International Organization for Migration (IOM) for further assistance.

Meanwhile, the World Food Programme (WFP) has stated that it requires

\$400 million to procure food supplies for vulnerable Afghans during the winter.

Not long ago, the organization mentioned that this year, due to a widespread financial crisis, it had reduced food assistance to 10 million people in Afghanistan.

Recent earthquakes in Herat and the ongoing return of migrants from Pakistan and Iran are increasing the daily demand for assistance in Afghanistan, with more than 29 million people in the country currently in need of humanitarian aid, according to the World Food Programme.

No plan to privatize any state-owned unit until elections: IMF told

ISLAMABAD (NNI): Briefing the International Monetary Fund (IMF) about the progress made on its privatization programme so far, the government has conveyed to it that it has no plan to privatize any state-owned unit until the next general elections. Sources in the Finance Ministry stated that at the same time, the government had assured the Fund that it would keep working on its privatization programme at a brisk pace.

They informed that a headway had been made on the privatization of the Pakistan International Airlines (PIA), which was expected to complete by February 2024-end. Right now, 27 units were on the government's privatization list, sources said, adding that eight from the financial and real estate sectors were also included in the list.

Similarly, they went on to say, four units from the industrial sector and 14 from the energy sector were also on the list. Likewise, they informed, the government was actively pursuing the privatization of Pakistan Steel Mills (PSM) and State Life Insurance.

The government was also eyeing the privatization of Balloki, Haveli Bahadur, Guddu and Nandipur power plants, sources revealed.

Not only that, the government was also working on the privatization of all power distribution companies, they disclosed.

House Building Finance Corporation, First Women Bank, Pakistan Engineering Company, Pakistan Engineering Company and Sindh Engineering Limited were also among state-owned units the government wanted to sell, sources concluded.

Repatriation of illegal foreigners continues

--Over 217,000 illegal Afghans returned home

PESHAWAR (NNI): Another 2,857 illegal immigrants have returned to their homeland that included 678 men, 642 women and 1,390 children, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Home Department said in a report issued on Sunday.

The report said that 287 illegal persons were also deported and another 678 families entered Afghanistan through Torkham, the report said.

With this, a total of 15,938 families have returned to Afghanistan since September 17 which included 57,285 men, 44,460 women and 11,230 children, the report said. So far, 200,200,975 illegal persons have been sent back to their homeland, according to the Home Department.

According to another report, thousands of unregistered Afghan citizens are returning to their homeland through Torkham and Chaman border daily.

Transit camps for illegal foreigners have been established in various districts of KP and Balochistan, which have all the daily facilities.

According to details, 2,957 illegal Afghans returned to Afghanistan on Saturday (November 11). So Far 217,355 illegal Afghans have returned to their home.

The caretaker government of Pakistan has made foolproof arrangements for the safe return of illegal immigrants.

On October 3, an apex committee of the National Action Plan (NAP) meeting

chaired by Caretaker Prime Minister Anwaarul Haq Kakar gave all foreign nationals living illegally in the country until October 31 to leave voluntarily or face deportation.

After the expiry of the deadline, the caretaker government has swung into action against illegal immigrants. Mostly Afghan nationals staying in Pakistan as undocumented illegal immigrants. Repatriation of illegal afghan nationals through the Chaman and Torkham borders has been underway. The FC and the Afghan government have agreed to keep the Torkham border till 11 at night to ensure smooth repatriation of the illegal immigrants.

Smog remediation case fixed at LHC for today

LAHORE (APP): The case related to smog remediation in Lahore High Court has been fixed for hearing on Monday, November 13, (tomorrow).

Justice Shahid Karim of the Lahore High Court will hear the case, while Syed Kamal Haider, member of the Environmental Commission, will present a report on the implementation of court's earlier orders. LHC spokesperson told APP that Deputy Attorney General (DAG) Asad Ali Bajwa will appear on behalf of the federal government. The representatives of EPD, LDA, PHA, Traffic and other departments concerned will also present. It is worth mentioning here that earlier on November 3, 2023, the Lahore High Court (LHC) had ordered demolition of smoke-emitting factories, failed to adopt corrective measures for reducing their emissions to combat the ongoing smog crisis in the provincial metropolis.

A hearing related to smog condition in Lahore was held in the LHC on November 3, where the court had ordered the relevant authorities to seal all smoke-emitting factories, and made it clear that these factories will face demolition if they do not comply promptly. The court had also directed the authorities to collect affidavits from the owners of industries to ensure that they commit to taking the necessary steps to mitigate their pollution impact in the city.

Zardari, Bilawal wish Hindu Community

KARACHI (APP): Former President Asif Ali Zardari and Chairman of Pakistan People's Party (PPP) Bilawal Bhutto Zardari have extended their heartfelt greetings to Pakistan's Hindu community on 'Diwali', the festival of lights, and expressed their best wishes for them.

The former President and PPP Chairman, in their separate messages on the occasion of Diwali, said that this festival was a symbol of light and joy as well as a message of victory of light over darkness and good over evil.

They said that PPP believed in inter-faith tolerance and harmony as well as brotherhood and unity. Equal rights had been given to minorities in the Constitution-1973 given by the former Prime Minister Shaheed Zulfikar Ali Bhutto. Shaheed Mohtarma Benazir Bhutto fought throughout her life for the protection and development of the rights of the minorities. Former President Asif Ali Zardari as the President of the country started celebrating National Day of Minorities on August 11 every year. He started celebrating 11th August every year as National Day of Minorities.



KARACHI: A large number of people participating in the solidarity conference for the people of Palestine organized by Pakistan Markazi Muslim League at Shahra e Quaid.

UN condemns 'acts of war' on Gaza hospitals

—OIC group to meet UNGA chief

UNITED NATIONS (APP): There can be no justification for any "acts of war" in or around any healthcare facilities, senior UN officials said Sunday amidst reports that Gaza's largest hospital has come under attack by Israeli forces as they battle the Palestinian resistance fighters in the besieged enclave.

But the Israeli occupation military denied having targeted Al-Shifa Hospital, which they claim is above a Hamas command post. At the same time, the Israeli military admitted that fighting is happening "around" the hospital. UN relief and humanitarian affairs chief, Martin Griffiths, tweeted that in light of "horrific reports of attacks", there could be "no justification for acts of war in healthcare facilities leaving them with no power, food or water and shooting at patients and civilians trying to flee."

"This is unconscionable, reprehensible and must stop," he said.

"Hospitals must be places of greater safety and those who need them must trust that they are places of shelter and not of war."

Also tweeting, the head of the World Health Organization (WHO), Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus, said that the WHO's regional agency had lost contact with its contacts at Al-Shifa. "There are reports that some of those who fled the hospital have been shot at, wounded, or killed. The latest reports say the hospital was surrounded by tanks", he wrote.

"WHO is gravely concerned about the safety of health workers, hundreds of sick and injured patients, including babies on life support, and displaced people who remain inside

the hospital." WHO also called for an immediate humanitarian ceasefire in Gaza "as the only way to save lives and reduce the horrific levels of suffering", Tedros added.

"WHO also calls for the sustained, orderly, unimpeded and safe medical evacuations of critically injured and sick patients. All hostages must receive appropriate medical care and be released unconditionally."

The UN's Resident and Humanitarian Coordinator for the Occupied Palestinian Territory, Lynn Hastings, reinforced the call for an immediate humanitarian ceasefire, stressing that civilian infrastructure "cannot be used for military operations." "Patients, medical staff as well as displaced people taking shelter must be protected", she tweeted.

"Principles of proportionality and distinction must be respected."

News reports quoting a non-governmental organization representing doctors said that two premature babies have died in the last few hours at Al-Shifa after the last working generator was damaged during airstrikes.

The hospital has reportedly now run out of water, food, and electricity. Latest figures from OCHA, sourcing the health ministry in Gaza – which the UN regards as reliable – report that more than 10,800 have been killed in the enclave since the 7 October attacks and more than 26,900 injured. Earlier on Saturday, the UN Children's Fund UNICEF said that the "near total breakdown and attacks on medical and healthcare services", particularly in northern Gaza, had left lives "hanging by a thread."

Noting that medical care at the Al-

Rantisi and Al-Nasr children's hospitals in the Strip had "reportedly almost ceased" they said only a small generator remained to power the intensive care unit.

"Children's right to life and health is being denied," said Adele Khodr, UNICEF Middle East and North Africa Regional Director. "The protection of hospitals and delivery of lifesaving medical supplies is an obligation under the laws of war, and both are needed now."

Meanwhile, medical facilities in the middle and southern areas of the Gaza Strip, already overwhelmed by the sheer number of injuries that need treatment, are now having to also cope with treating the needs of an influx of hundreds of thousands of people into even more densely packed spaces, UNICEF noted.

"These existing services must be supported and strengthened to deal with the increasing challenges they face", the agency said.

Children's lives are "hanging by a thread," said Khodr. Children in the north have "nowhere to go and are at extreme risk." In New York, member countries of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) met behind closed doors to discuss the ongoing atrocities, diplomats said.

The meeting, in which Pakistan was represented by the country's deputy permanent representative to the UN, Ambassador Usman Jadoon, took place ahead of their meeting with the President of the UN General Assembly, Dennis Francis. No indication was given as to what the OIC members wished to discuss with the Assembly president.

SC fixes plea against census results for hearing

ISLAMABAD (NNI): The Supreme Court of Pakistan has fixed the hearing of an application challenging the results of the census 2023. A three-member bench, led by Justice Ijazul Ahsan, will conduct the hearing on November 13.

The petitioner, Hasan Kamran, initially contested the census results in Balochistan in the Balochistan High Court (BHC) and moved to the Supreme Court after the BHC rejected the petition. The petitioner pleaded to the apex court to declare the Balochistan High Court's August 29 decision as void. According to the petition, the population of Balochistan was reported to be around 21.7 million till the final phase of the census process.

Farah Gogi kept secret passport from unknown country for money laundering

LAHORE (NNI): Investigations have revealed that former first lady Bushra Bibi's close friend, Farhat Shehzadi alias Farah Gogi, possesses a secret passport by an unknown country named Vanuatu. This revelation has unearthed another ploy of Farah Gogi to conceal her ill-gotten wealth.

Investigations revealed that Farah got a secret passport made for an unknown country called Vanuatu for money laundering. She undertook several foreign trips to hide her wealth in different countries.

Furthermore, the son of a property tycoon was tasked with buying a secret international passport, the probe added. The property tycoon offered a businessman \$130,000 for the pass-

port. Investigations further said that on March 28, 2022, Farah's secret passport was handed over to Bushra Bibi, former first lady and the wife of former prime minister Imran Khan.

Only six days before Imran Khan's government was toppled, Farah Gogi was made to flee to Dubai.

After reaching Dubai, all the travels were made on this secret passport to evade coming on the radar of investigative agencies. To stash all the ill-gotten wealth abroad, she made secret trips on this secret passport and also maintained bank accounts through it. Just two days ago, the front-person was proved to be the owner of Rs14.5 billion worth of assets. In the three years during Imran's rule, Farah's wealth increased by Rs4.5 billion.

PML-N has always come to power through rigging: Sharjeel Memon

F.P. Report

KARACHI: The leader of the Pakistan People's Party, Sharjeel Inam Memon, has stated that the Muslim League (N) has never gained power in a transparent election. The PPP will win, and the next Prime Minister's domicile will be from the Sindh province. The People's Party will hold a rally tomorrow in Thar.

While holding a press conference at Bilawal House in Karachi, Sharjeel Memon said that the upcoming year will be the year of the People's Party. The Sindh government of the People's Party has accomplished a lot, endured oppression, and faced challenges but has never left the field.

He mentioned that there are role model hospitals like SIUT in Sindh, while the PML-N has not built a single hospital in Punjab. The People's Party has undertaken projects in both rural and urban areas of Sindh, consistently contributing to historical developments. Even during rains in Punjab, the PML-N did not disclose how many houses they built.

Sharjeel Inam Memon criticized Imran Khan, stating that despite claiming an Islamic touch, he is celebrating the martyrdom of Muslims. He added that the PTI government has damaged the country's economy, and in 2018, an incom-



petent person was imposed on Pakistan. The People's Party does not want such individuals in 2024; the people's vote will decide, and no incompetent person will be imposed on the country. Ineligible parties will be rejected by the people, ensuring that no ineligible candidate is imposed after the people's opinion.

Memon also remarked that those who come to Sindh during rains always return to Sindh. The PML-N only remembers Sindh during election days, neglecting it when in power. He emphasized that after the general elections, the Prime Minister will be from the People's Party. Efforts to form alliances against the PPP during every election in Sindh are futile.

He highlighted that the People's Party government has achieved historic milestones in the country, and Bilawal Bhutto has been instrumental in raising the country's profile. The party

advocates against trading and believes that the parties that connect with the people will come to power. Memon reiterated that the PML-N has never won in a transparent election, always relying on rigging. He expressed a desire to move forward, forgetting past bitterness. Memon criticized the PTI, PML-N, and Karachi parties for talking about dividing people, contrasting the People's Party's emphasis on uniting the country. He stated that the People's Party has never engaged in divisive politics for power.

Regarding the economy, he mentioned that the PML-N failed to fix it in one and a half years, and people from Punjab come to Sindh for treatment. People's Party, unlike other parties, has rendered valuable services in the field of health.

Memon praised Asif Ali Zardari for his generosity and global contributions. He clarified that when Imran

Khan claimed his government was overthrown by the White House, Asif Ali Zardari attributed it to Bilawal House, not the White House.

Memon credited Bilawal Bhutto Zardari for forming the PDM alliance and criticized the PML-N's leadership for their inability to make a statement before PDM. He revealed that conspiracies started in PDM, and they were asked to resign from the assemblies. However, the People's Party opposed it, stating that if they had resigned, Imran Khan would have ruled for five years, leading to the complete destruction of the country's economy.

He clarified that the People's Party has no enmity with PML-N and MQM. Asif Ali Zardari brought everyone together and democratically removed a Prime Minister. Memon expressed confidence that the People's Party would sweep Sindh, regardless of any alliances made by other parties. Regarding recent speeches in the PMLN rally in Lahore, Memon noted that they were against their own Finance Minister and Prime Minister. He assured that the People's Party would save Pakistan economically and in defense, vowing not to repeat the politics of the 90s, during which there was not a single political prisoner during their government from 2008 to 2013.

At least 40 Indian workers trapped

MUMBAI (Agenices): At least 40 construction workers were trapped on Sunday after the road tunnel they were building collapsed in northern India, with rescuers scrambling to reach them beneath piles of debris. The collapse occurred early on Sunday morning in the Himalayan state of Uttarakhand when a group of workers were moving out and replacement workers were going in.

"About 200 metres (218 yards) of the tunnel have collapsed," Durgesh Rathodi, a state disaster response official, told AFP from the site. "About 40 to 41 workers are trapped inside. Oxygen is being supplied through the debris, but more rubble is coming down as rescuers try to remove the obstruction," he said.

JI Emir Siraj meets Hamas chief Ismail Haniyeh in Qatar

DOHA (NNI): Emir Jamaat-e-Islami Sirajul Haq met with Palestinian group Hamas chief Ismail Haniyeh in Qatar on Sunday.

The central leadership of Hamas was also present in the meeting with Sirajul Haq.

Director of Foreign Affairs of Jamaat-e-Islami Asif Luqman Qazi was also there. JI director information Quaiser Sharif said that during the meeting Ismail Haniyeh gave a detailed briefing to the JI chief on the current situation in Gaza.

On the occasion Ismail Haniya offered thanks to Jamaat-e-Islami and Pakistani nation. Sirajul Haq said the

entire Pakistan nation and the Muslim Ummah stand with you.

Siraj-ul-Haq invited him to address the historic Gaza March in Lahore on November 19.

Quaiser Sharif said Emir Jamaat-e-Islami Sirajul Haq returned to Pakistan after a six-day visit and in the last six days, he visited Iran, Turkey and Qatar. He said Sirajul Haque will address the Palestine Convention in Sialkot today.

The purpose of the visit is the joint action plan of the Muslim Ummah on the situation in Palestine.

The struggle of Jamaat-e-Islami for the unity of the Ummah on the basis of common values and common feelings. Leader

of Jamaat-e-Islami met with Ayatollah Agha Qomi, adviser on foreign affairs and other leaders in Tehran.

Emir Jamaat-e-Islami Siraj-ul-Haq also met with the Speaker of the Turkish Parliament Noman Kurtulmosh and discussed situation in Gaza. Siraj-ul-Haq emphasized the joint role of the governments of Muslim countries, including Turkey, to save Gaza.

Siraj-ul-Haq also addressed the Palestine March in Istanbul.

The Jamaat-e-Islami leader Siraj-ul-Haq met with leaders of global Islamic movements and met with the heads of political parties in Turkey.